

Political Science 115: Rules of Power
Prof. Vanberg
Fall 2014

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Office Hours: Monday 3pm-4pm;
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COURSE OVERVIEW

Institutions are the "rules of the game" that structure human interactions in social, economic, and political settings. In this course, we will examine how institutions are designed or emerge, how they change, and how they affect social, economic, and political outcomes. Specific institutions we will study range from informal social norms (e.g., norms governing the use of common property) to highly complex formal institutions (e.g., presidential and parliamentary political systems). By the end of the semester, you will have learned about a range of important institutions. More importantly, you will have acquired a new analytic perspective that will allow you to think about politics from a more nuanced and critical vantage point.

CLASS ORGANIZATION

This class combines lecture and extensive discussion. In general, I will lecture on Mondays, introducing new concepts and providing you with the necessary background to understand the readings. Each Monday, I will also provide you with a set of discussion questions for that week's readings. Class time on Wednesday will typically be devoted to discussion. It is essential that you complete all reading assignments and think about the discussion questions prior to the Wednesday class, and come prepared to participate.

REQUIRED READINGS

Readings consist of academic book chapters and papers. Except for a few, they are available electronically, with a link provided from this syllabus. These readings are also available via the Sakai website for this class. Readings that are not available electronically are marked with an **, and can be obtained in hard copy in Perkins Library. Please plan ahead accordingly. I recommend that you buy the following books:

Leeson, Peter. 2011. The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Aldrich, John. 2011. Why Parties? A Second Look. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

GRADES AND EVALUATION

There are three components to your grade:

Two Exams (60 percent of your course grade): Each exam will count for 30 percent of your course grade. The dates for the exams are indicated on the syllabus.

Abstract and Paper (30 percent of your course grade): You must write an essay (approximately 5-6 pages, 12 pt. font, regular margins, double-spaced) that applies one or more of the concepts that we have encountered in this course to a contemporary or historical example of your choosing. Your paper should describe your “real world example,” explain the relevant concept(s) from class, and apply the concept to your example. To ensure that you have chosen an appropriate topic, you must submit an abstract that summarizes your paper topic. The abstract is due on October 22. The paper is due on the last day of class. *Optional:* If you wish, you may turn in a draft of your paper by November 12 to one of the TAs to receive comments/feedback. Please note that this is a courtesy intended to help you write a better paper; it is not a vehicle for ensuring a specific grade. Your paper grade will be determined by the quality of the final paper you turn in.

Class Participation (10 percent of your course grade): A significant portion of this class will be devoted to open discussion, debate, and questions. Good preparation on your part is therefore essential. You should do all assigned reading carefully before Wednesday classes, think about the discussion questions, and come ready to participate.

Course grades will be determined according to the following grading scale:

A: 93-100 A-: 90-92 B+: 88-89 B: 83-87 B-: 80-82 C+: 78-79 C: 73-77 C-: 70-72
D+: 68-69 D: 63-67 D-: 60-62 F: 0-59

EXTRA CREDIT:

You can earn 2% extra credit towards your final grade if you participate in two hours of Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) studies over the course of the semester. More information is available at: <http://www.duke.edu/web/psrp>. If you wish to participate, you can register at: <http://duke-psrp.sona-systems.com>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students and faculty at Duke are governed by the Honor Code. Any student who is caught attempting to represent someone else's work as their own or to cheat in any other manner on an exam or a written assignment will be subject to university discipline. Please review this tutorial on plagiarism: <http://plagiarism.duke.edu>.

STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGES

Students with challenges who require individualized testing or other accommodations should identify themselves and express their needs during the first week of the semester. Where the challenge is not immediately apparent, verification will be required.

APPROXIMATE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (8/25-27): Institutions: A Rational Choice Perspective

[Weingast, Barry. 1996. "Political Institutions: Rational Choice Perspectives." In R. Goodin and H-D. Klingemann \(eds.\). A New Handbook of Political Science. Oxford: Oxford University Press.](#)

WEEK 2 (9/1-9/3): Institutions and Transaction Costs

[North, Douglass C. 1991. "Institutions." Journal of Economic Perspectives. 5: 97-112.](#)

[Kuran, Timur. 2004. "Why the Middle East is economically underdeveloped: historical mechanisms of institutional stagnation." Journal of Economic Perspectives. 18: 71-90.](#)

WEEK 3 (9/8-9/10): Institutions and Coordination

[Calvert, Randy. 1992. "Leadership and Its Basis in Problems of Social Coordination." International Political Science Review. 13: 7-24.](#)

WEEK 4 (9/15-9/17): Institutions and Cooperation

** Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 3.

WEEK 5 (9/22-9/24): Coordination and Enforcement

Weingast, Barry R. 1997. "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law." American Political Science Review. 91: 245-63.

WEEK 6 (9/29-10/1): Institutions and the Principal-Agent Problem

Leeson, Peter. 2011. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-3.

WEEK 7 (10/6-10/8): Midterm Exam

Review on Monday (10/6); exam on Wednesday 10/8.

WEEK 8 (10/13-10/15): Institutional Design

No class on 9/13 - FALL BREAK

Gamm, Gerald and Kenneth Shepsle. 1989. "Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825." Legislative Studies Quarterly. 14: 39-66.

WEEK 9 (10/20-10/22): Institutional Emergence

Paper abstract is due on 10/22.

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." American Political Science Review. 87: 567-576.

Hume, David. 1777/1987. "Of the Origin of Government." In E. Miller (ed.). *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

WEEK 10 (10/27-10/29): Agenda-Setting

No class on 10/27.

** Riker, William. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 3.

WEEK 11 (11/3-11/5): Why Parties?

Aldrich, John. 2011. Why Parties? A Second Look. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (through page 43).

WEEK 12 (11/10-11/12): Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism

Mainwaring, Scott and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." Comparative Politics. 29: 449-471.

WEEK 13 (11/17-11/19): Election Laws and Party Systems

** Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

WEEKS 14 (11/24-11/26): Two visions of democracy

No class on 11/26 – Thanksgiving.

** Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

** Pinto-Duchinsky. 1999. "Send the rascals packing: Defects of proportional representation and the virtues of the Westminster model." *Representation* 36: 117-126.

WEEK 15 (12/1-12/3): Wrap-up and Exam 2

Paper is due at the beginning of the exam on 12/3.

"This course has achieved Duke's Green Classroom Certification. The certification indicates that the faculty member teaching this course has taken significant steps to green the delivery of this course. Your faculty member has completed a checklist indicating their common practices in areas of this course that have an environmental impact, such as paper and energy consumption. Some common practices implemented by faculty to reduce the environmental impact of their course include allowing electronic submission of assignments, providing online readings and turning off lights and electronics in the classroom when they are not in use. The eco-friendly aspects of course delivery may vary by faculty, by course and throughout the semester. Learn more at <http://sustainability.duke.edu/action/certifications/classroom/index.php>."