

PSC 281/ECO 282 Formal Models in Political Science

Fall, 2014  
T, Th 12:30-1:45  
Hylan 306

Professor Duggan  
Office: Harkness 111A  
Hours: MW 1:30-2:30pm  
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The course covers a variety of formal models used in political science. We will study the mathematical foundations of majority voting (and applications to left-right politics), general aggregation rules called "social welfare functions," the mathematical foundations of utilitarianism, strategic incentives for misrepresentation of preferences, the behavior of parties and interest groups in elections, and the possibility of agenda setting in legislatures.

Much of the analysis in the course is axiomatic. The main concepts

to provide insight into new ways of thinking about  
introduce techniques in formal analysis of politics.  
high standards of rigor: there will be some math-  
metimes provide the ideas behind the proofs of the  
s; and problem sets will require students to use math-  
are no official prerequisites for the course, but some  
emathematical reasoning is desirable.

Textbook for the course is Analyzing Politics, by Ken  
based on | but not limited to | the material in this  
Public Choice III, by Dennis Mueller, is more advanced  
interest.

The course will consist of readings from the textbook  
approximately every two weeks; possibly some short quizzes  
mid-term; and a final. One or two homeworks may  
say.

Work is permitted if it facilitates the understanding  
students involved. Students may not copy work from

Note: Because I drop the worst homework grade, the homework policy provides you with some insurance against random disasters (like, "I forgot the homework was due."). You should try not to take advantage of it too early in the semester!

Class attendance: Attendance of the lectures is not required, but it does factor into the "participation" component of the course grade, as explained below. Furthermore, because lectures will not strictly follow the textbook, failure