

Course Outline

Wednesday January 15

1. INTRODUCTION

Wednesday January 22

2. Thinking Strategically

William Spaniel, from Game Theory 101 MOOC, lesson #1: Introduction.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSVm0C_5zrE

Wednesday January 29

3. Causal Mechanisms

Jon Elster, "Introduction," in Jon Elster, (ed.) *Rational Choice*, New York: NYU Press, 1986, 1{33.

Charles Tilly, "Mechanisms in Political Processes," in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol.4, June 2001, 21{41.

Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. 2010. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (1): 49{67

WATCH: William Spaniel, from Game Theory 101 MOOC,

{ lesson #2: The Prisoner's Dilemma.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lotsMu1J8fA>

{ lesson #3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DanTKx1FLY8>

{ lesson #4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08T9spKHVWQ>

Wednesday February 5

4. The Prisoner's Dilemma

Robert Axelrod, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7 in *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984.

Elinor Ostrom, William Spaniel, from Game Theory 101 MOOC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08T9spKHVWQ>]T
lesson #4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lotsMu1J8fA>
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Wednesday February 12

Class will be re-scheduled: Prof. Goemans is out of town (UT Austin)

5. Coordination

Russell Hardin, *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; Chapters 1-4.

WATCH: William Spaniel, from Game Theory 101 MOOC,

{ lesson #10: Battle of the Sexes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BdBWmL8tJc>

{ lesson #11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IEI4vDkML8>

Wednesday February 19

6. Coordination: Various applications { Read at least three

Randall Calvert, "Leadership and Its Basis in Problems of Social Coordination." *International Political Science Review* 13 (1992), pp. 7-24.

Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," in *World Politics*, Vol.44, No.1 (October 1991), pp.7-48.

Christian S. Crandall, "Social Contagion of Binge Eating." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1988, Vol. 55, No. 4, pp. 588-598

Gerry Mackie, "Ending Footbinding and Inhibition: A Convention Account," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 6 (December 1996), 999-1017

Barry R. Weingast, "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (June 1997), 245-263.

Thomas Schelling, "Thermostats, Lemons, and Other Families of Models," Chapter 3 in Thomas Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, New York: Norton, 1978.

Optional

Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Back Bay Books; (January 2002)

Wednesday February 26

Class will be re-scheduled: Prof. Goemans is out of town (GWU)

7. Commitment Problems

Thomas Schelling, Chapter 2, "The art of commitment," in *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966; 35-91

WATCH: William Spaniel, from Game Theory 101 MOOC,

{ lesson #16: Subgame Perfection.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSYXkDnCcPHM>

{ lesson #17: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyLKKkN5HpDY>

{ lesson #18: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSHa1pcy6v8>

{ lesson #22: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxlrKkGRpBY>

{ lesson #24: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmPDAJlpQr0>

Wednesday March 4

8. **Commitment Problems** { Read at least three

John C. Harsanyi, "Advances in Understanding Rational Behavior," Chapter 3 in Jon Elster, (ed.) *Rational Choice*, New York: NYU Press, 1986, 82-108.

Barbara F. Walter, "The critical barrier to civil war settlement," *International Organization*, 51 (3): 335-364 Summer 1997

James D. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the spread of Ethnic Conflict," Chapter 5 in David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: fear, diffusion, and escalation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998, 107-126.

Barry Weingast and Rui de Figueiredo, "Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Jack Snyder and Barbara Walter (eds.), *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Wednesday March 11

No Class: Spring Recess

Wednesday March 18

Mid Term Exam

Wednesday March 25

Students who are writing a paper for this class must hand in their one page proposal on this day.

9. **A Game Theoretic Examination of The First World War**

Scott Wolford, 2019. The Theory of War I: Commitment Problems; Armed Continent: The Anglo-German Naval Race; and Leaping into the Dark: Europe Goes to War. Chapters 2-4 in his *The Politics of the First World War; A Course in Game Theory and International Security*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp.25-99

Wednesday April 1

10. **A Game Theoretic Examination of The First World War**

Scott Welford, 2019. The Theory of War II: Information Problems; A Scrap of Paper: Belgium, France, and British Entry; Troubled Partnerships: Coalitions at War, Chapter 5-7 in his *The Politics of the First World War; A Course in Game Theory and International Security*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp.100-190.

Wednesday April 8

Wednesday April 29

LAST DAY OF CLASSES

14. **Psychological Mechanisms**

Jack S. Levy, "Loss Aversion, Framing Effects, and International Conflict, Perspectives from Prospect Theory," in Manus Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies II*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000: 193-221.

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," Chapter 5 in Jon Elster (ed.), *Rational Choice*

Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research

1. *What is the central question?*

Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?

What is being explained (what is the dependent variable and how does it vary)?

How does this phenomenon present a puzzle?

2. *What is the central answer?*

What is doing the explaining (what are the independent variables and how do they vary)?

What are the hypotheses, i.e., what is the relationship between independent and dependent variables, what kind of change in the independent variable causes what kind of change in the dependent variable?

What are the causal mechanisms, i.e., why are the independent and dependent variables so related?