University of Pennsylvania Department of Economics
Econ 32: Political Economy
Spring 2022

Lectures Tuesday & Thursday 12:00pm - 1:30pm.
Please use the Zoom links on your Canvas calendar (or the Zoom tab on Canvas) to join synchronous lectures.

Instructor **Deniz Selman** (denizs@econ.upenn.edu)
Office Hours: Monday 1:10pm-2:10pm and by appointment (https://upenn.zoom.us/my/deniz).

TA **Özgür Şeker** (oseker@sas.upenn.edu)
Office Hours: TBA.

Description This course examines the effects of strategic behavior on political outcomes and government policies. Topics and applications may include voting behavior, candidate competition, voting systems, social choice and welfare, and policy divergence.

Prerequisites Econ 1 and 2 (or Econ 10). Credit cannot be received for both Econ 32 and Econ 232.

Readings Mandatory readings will be assigned throughout the semester. They will include both academic papers and recent news articles which are relevant to the topics we will be discussing in lecture.

Lectures For now, lectures will be held *synchronously* via Zoom. It is important that you come to class prepared to participate. Watching class recordings is not a substitute for attending and participating in class.

Homework There will be four homework assignments collected for grading during the semester. Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas one week before the due date and due at the beginning of lecture (no later than 12:05 pm) either as a hard copy or electronically, on the following due dates:
(1) Tuesday 1 February, (2) Thursday 3 March, (3) Thursday 7 April, (4) Tuesday 19 April.
No late homework assignments will be accepted. You are free to discuss homework assignments with others. However, each student must submit a personal copy for grading.

Quizzes There will be three quizzes held during regular class time via Canvas on these dates:
(1) Thursday 3 February, (2) Thursday 17 March, (3) Thursday 21 April.
NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES: *You will receive a zero for any quiz that you miss for any reason.* To accommodate students who must miss a quiz, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped and the average of the other three quizzes will constitute the quiz portion of your grade.

Exams **Exam 1: Thursday 10 February (during regular class time, most likely via Canvas).**
Exam 2: Thursday 24 March (during regular class time, most likely via Canvas).
Exam 3: Thursday 26 April (during regular class time, most likely via Canvas).
Exams are not cumulative: Exam 2 will only cover material from after Exam 1, and Exam 3 will only cover material from after Exam 2. **There will be no final exam.**
MAKE-UP POLICY FOR EXAMS: Only students who contact me *before* an exam *and* provide a written excuse will be eligible to take a make-up exam. Students who miss an exam and are not eligible to take a make-up exam will receive a grade of zero on that exam.
RE-GRADING POLICY: Students have one week from the day in which examinations and problem sets are returned to report errors in grading and/or to request that problems be re-graded. All such requests must be made in writing. If a student submits his/her exam for re-grading, then the student's entire exam will be re-graded with no guarantee of a higher total score.
OTHER POLICIES & PROCEDURES: Apart from these stated specifics regarding quizzes and exams above, this course complies with all departmental policies as posted on the departmental website at:
http://economics.sas.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/course-information/guidelines/policies.

Grading Homework Assignments (16%), Best Two Quizzes (15%), Three Exams (23% each).

Course Outline

(tentative)

0) Some basic game theoretical tools…

Strategic Behavior

Nash Equilibrium

1) Voting Behavior: Downsian Model and Theories of Participation in Elections

Individual Rationality and the Pivotal Voter Model

Rule Utilitarianism and the Ethical Voter Model

2) Strategic Voting

Voting in Multicandidate Elections: Sincere vs. Strategic Voting

Voting with Incomplete Information: The Swing Voter's Curse

Herd Behavior and Information Cascades

Application: Voting in Sequential Elections such as the U.S. Presidential Primaries

3) Electoral Competition

Downsian Model

Median Voter Theorem

Condorcet Paradox

4) Electoral Rules

Systems of Voting

Social Choice & Social Welfare Theory: Gibbard-Satterthwaite Impossibility Theorem