

University of Pennsylvania Department of Economics  
**Econ 0420: Political Economy**  
Spring 2024

<b>Lectures</b>	Tuesday & Thursday 12:00pm-1:30pm (TOWN 313).
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Deniz Selman</b> ( <a href="mailto:denizs@econ.upenn.edu">denizs@econ.upenn.edu</a> ) <i>Office Hours:</i> TBA & by appointment.
<b>TA</b>	<b>Priyanka Goonetilleke</b> ( <a href="mailto:goonep@sas.upenn.edu">goonep@sas.upenn.edu</a> ) <i>Office Hours:</i> TBA.
<b>Description</b>	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.
<b>Prerequisites</b>	Econ 0100 and 0200 (or Econ 0110). Credit cannot be received for both Econ 0420 and Econ 4420.
<b>Readings</b>	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.
<b>Lectures</b>	Lectures will be a combination of me presenting new material and class discussion of that material. It is important that you come to class prepared to participate. Looking over lecture notes and doing the readings is not a substitute for attending and participating in class. <i>Use of laptops is not allowed during lectures.</i> <i>There will be no class on Tuesday 12 March. (Enjoy an extended spring break!)</i>
<b>Homework</b>	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: <b>(1) Tuesday 6 February, (2) Tuesday 19 March, (3) Thursday 11 April, (4) Tuesday 23 April.</b> <i>No late homework assignments will be accepted.</i> You are free to discuss homework assignments with others. However, each student must submit a personal copy for grading.
<b>Quizzes</b>	There will be three in-class quizzes held on these dates: <b>(1) Thursday 8 February, (2) Thursday 21 March, (3) Thursday 25 April.</b> NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES: <i>You will receive a zero for any quiz that you miss for any reason.</i> 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.
<b>Exams</b>	<b>Exam 1: Thursday 15 February (in class).</b> <b>Exam 2: Thursday 28 March (in class).</b> <b>Exam 3: Tuesday 30 April (in class).</b> <i>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.</i> MAKE-UP POLICY FOR EXAMS: Only students who contact me <i>before</i> an exam <i>and</i> 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: <a href="http://economics.sas.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/course-information/guidelines/policies">http://economics.sas.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/course-information/guidelines/policies</a> .
<b>Grading</b>	Homework Assignments (16%), Best Two Quizzes (15%), Three Exams (23% each).

**Course Outline**    **0) Some basic game theoretical tools...**

*(tentative)*

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**

Herd Behavior and Information Cascades

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

Voting in Multicandidate Elections: Sincere vs. Strategic Voting

Voting with Incomplete Information: The Swing Voter's Curse

**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