

Lingnan University
Department of Political Science
SSC4301 Policy-making, Collective Action and Public Choice
Course Schedule and Reading List
2nd Term 2017-18

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Office Hour : Wednesday: 15:30-17:20; Thursday: 12:30-13:20 & 15:30-16:20
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Course Description: This course is a theoretical course on the public choice theory of policy-making and its limitations. It examines the logic and foundation of actions of those individuals and groups involved in the policy-making process: voting and party competition, interest groups and collective action, bureaucracy and policy-making, coalition and government formation.

Aim: This course aims to equip students with: (1) a basic understanding of the economic approach of politics and its application to the substantive areas of policy-making process; and (2) a comprehension of the interactions and the dynamics among actors in each constituted part of the policy-making process.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will able:

1. to understand the multi-dimensional but related layers and stages of policy-making;
2. to explore the strategic calculation and move of the actors involved in each of policy-making stages;
3. to apply the analytical framework of public choice to the real life; and
4. to know the limitations of the public choice theory.

Assessments: Your academic performance will be assessed in the following three ways:

1. tutorial performance (25%): presentation, 15%; comments, 6%; and participation, 4%;
2. individual/group term paper (15%); and
3. written examination (60%).

Reading List

Bara, Judith and Albert Weale, eds. 2006. *Democratic Politics and Party Competition*. London & New York: Routledge.

Barry, Brian. 1978. *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy*. New York: Macmillan.

Black, Duncan. 1958/1971. *The Theory of Committees and Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buchanan, James M. and Gordon Tullock. 1962. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Coleman, James S. and Thomas J. Fararo, eds. 1992. *Rational Choice Theory: Advocacy and Critique*. Newbury Park: Sage.

- Dowding, Keith. 1995. *The Civil Service*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Down, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Collins.
- *Dunleavy, Patrick. 1991. *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Friedman, Jeffrey, ed. 1996. *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Gilboa, Itzhak. 2010. *Rational Choice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Green, Donald P. and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Laver, Michael and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1996. *Making and Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maskin, Eric and Amartya Sen. 2014. *The Arrow Impossibility Theorem*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Muller, Wolfgang C. and Kaare Strom, eds. 1999. *Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Niskanen, William A. 1971/1994. *Bureaucracy and Public Economics*. Aldershot & Brookfield: Edward Elgar. (Original title: *Bureaucracy and Representative Government*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.)
- Riker, W.H. 1962. *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- *Shepsle, Kenneth A. 2010. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Tullock, Gordon. 1998. *On Voting: A Public Choice Approach*. Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
- Udehn, Lars. 1996. *The Limits of Public Choice: A Sociological Critique of the Economic Theory of Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.

Course Schedule and Readings

24 January 2018

Housekeeping week

31 January 2018

1. Individual Preferences and Collective Choice

- Conception of choice
- Private desire and public interest
- Economic approach of politics

Gilboa, *Rational Choice*, chaps. 1, 2, 4 & 5.

Green and Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, chap. 2.

Sen, Amartya. 1997. "Maximization and the Act of Choice." *Econometrica* 65, 4: 745-779.

*Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chap. 2.

Udehn, *The Limits of Public Choice*, chaps. 1-4.

7 & 14 February, & 7 March 2018 (21 February: Chinese New Year Holiday; 28 February: Sports Day)

2. Voting

- Rational abstention
- Voter preferences (individual and aggregate)
- Voting paradoxes and Arrow's impossibility theorem

Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote? The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press).

*Down, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, chaps. 3-7, 11-14.

Dryzek, John S. and Christian List. 2003. "Social Choice Theory and Deliberative Democracy: A Reconciliation." *British Journal of Political Science* 33: 1-28.

*Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, chap. 4.

Gilboa, *Rational Choice*, chap. 6.

Maskin and Sen, *The Arrow Impossibility Theorem*, pp. 29-42.

*Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chaps. 3-7.

Tullock, *On Voting: A Public Choice Approach*, chaps. 2-8.

3. Policy and Party Competition

- Vote-maximization and median voter theorem
- Two-party and multi-party competitions
- Institutional manipulation and electoral system

Bara and Weale, chaps. 11 & 12.

Bartolini, Stefano. 2002. "Electoral and Party Competition: Analytical Dimensions and Empirical Problems" in Richard Gunther, José Ramón Montero, and Juan J. Linz, eds. *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press), chap. 4.

*Down, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, chaps. 8-10.

*Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, chap. 5.

Grofman, Bernard. 2004. "Downs and Two-Party Convergence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 25-46.

*Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chaps. 3-7.

14 & 21 March 2018

4. Interest Groups and Collective Action

- Logic of collective action
- Group size and free-rider issue
- Group effectiveness and identity

*Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, chaps. 2-3.

Harrell, Ashley, and Brent Simpson. 2016. "The Dynamics of Prosocial Leadership: Power and Influence in Collective Action Groups." *Social Forces* 94 (3): 1283-1308.

Klandermans, Bert. 2002. "How Group Identification Helps to Overcome the Dilemma of Collective Action." *American Behavioral Scientist* 45, 5: 887-901.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review* 92, 1: 1-22.

*Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chaps. 8-10.

Vasi, Ion Bogdan, and Michael Macy. 2003. "The Mobilizer's Dilemma: Crisis, Empowerment, and Collective Action." *Social Forces* 81, 3: 979-98.

28 March & 4 April 2018

5. Bureaucracy and Policy-making

- Bureaucrats' utility functions
- Budget-maximizing model
- Bureau-shaping model

Cope, Stephen. 2000. "Assessing Rational-Choice Models of Budgeting – From Budget-Maximising to Bureau-Shaping: A Case Study of British Local Government." *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management* 14 (4): 598-624.

Dowding, *The Civil Service*, chaps. 4-5.

*Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, chaps. 6-8.

Frederickson, H. George, Kevin B. Smith, Christopher W. Larimer and Michael J. Licari. 2016. *The Public Administration Theory Primer*, 3rd Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), chap. 8.

Marsh, David; M. J. Smith; D. Richards. 2000. "Bureaucrats, Politicians and Reform in Whitehall: Analysing the Bureau-Shaping Model." *British Journal of Political Science* 30, 3: 461-82.

*Niskanen, *Bureaucracy and Public Economics*.

Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chap. 13.

11 & 18 April 2018

6. Legislature, Government Formation and Policy-making

- Riker's "minimum-winning coalition"
- Coalition and government formation
- Office-seeking, policy-seeking or vote-seeking?

Bara and Weale, chap. 2.

Laver, Michael. 2008. "Governmental Politics and the Dynamics of Multiparty Competition." *Political Research Quarterly* 61, 3: 532-36.

*Laver and Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*, chaps. 1-5 & 10-13.

Martin, Lanny W. and Randolph T. Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 45, 1: 33-50.

Muller and Strom, *Policy, Office, or Votes?* chap. 1.

*Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, chaps. 1-2, 5-6, & 8-9.

*Shepsle and Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chaps. 12 & 16.

Thies, Michael F. 2001. "Keeping Tabs on Partners: The Logic of Delegation in Coalition Governments." *American Journal of Political Science* 45, 3: 580-98.

7. Limits of Rational Choice Model in Political Analysis

Boudon, Raymond. 1998. "Limitations of Rational Choice Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 104, 3: 817-28.

Friedman, ed., *The Rational Choice Controversy* (especially, Kelley's, Lane's, and Green & Shapiro's articles)

*Green and Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, chap. 8.

Udehn, *The Limits of Public Choice*.

Rubric for Assessments

Assessments	Excellent	Good	Fair	Fail
Presentation 15%	Excellent understanding of key concepts, excellent analysis, and fluent presentation 12-15 marks	Good understanding of key concepts, good analysis, and clear presentation 8-11 marks	Adequate understanding of key concepts, fair analysis, and less clear presentation 4-7 marks	Inadequate understanding of key concepts, poor analysis, and poor presentation 0-3 marks
Comments 6%	All inadequacies of the Presentation identified with excellent supplementary 6 marks	Most of the inadequacies of the Presentation identified with good supplementary 4-5 marks	Some inadequacies of the Presentation identified with fair supplementary 2-3 marks	A few inadequacies of the Presentation identified with poor supplementary 0-1 marks
Participation 4%	Active participation in group discussion 4 marks	Satisfactory participation in group discussion 3 marks	Unsatisfactory participation in group discussion 2 marks	Poor participation in group discussion 0-1 marks
Term Paper 15%	Comprehensive knowledge, arguments presented are sophisticated, and excellent presentation and extensive bibliography 12-15 marks	Adequate knowledge, well developed arguments, and good presentation and appropriate bibliography 8-11 marks	Reasonable knowledge, attempt at argument, adequate presentation and a bibliography 4-7 marks	Incomplete knowledge, limited argument, and poor bibliography 0-3 marks
Written Examination 60%	All issues identified in each question attempted and excellent answers provided 46-60 marks	Some issues identified in each question attempted and good answers provided 31-45 marks	Not many issues identified in each question attempted and fair answers provided 16-30 marks	Very few issues identified in each question attempted and poor answers provided 0-15 marks

Important Notes

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.

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