

Introduction to Politics

Course code	<i>POL101</i>
Compulsory in programs	<i>Economics and Politics</i>
Level of studies	<i>Undergraduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS (48 in-class hours + 6 consultation hours + 2 exam hours, 104 individual work hours) Bachelor Studies</i>
Course coordinator	<i>Dr. Vincentas Vobolevičius, vinvob@ism.lt</i>
Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

AIM OF THE COURSE

This course introduces students to the key concepts, methodologies and fields of research in the contemporary political science, by employing the rational choice approach to analyzing politics. The general topics covered include the notion of human rationality, collective action problems, political entrepreneurship, voting, party competition and politics of coalition, as well as basic game-theory-based methods for the analysis of political phenomena.

This course does not aim to review a certain number of empirical findings regarding political events. Instead, the course is theoretical and methodological in its orientation. Students receive an overview of the scholarly thinking about politics along with the basic game-theoretic tools that will enable an analytically rigorous exploration of political and economic phenomena during the later courses of the Economics and Politics program.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	Degree level learning objectives (Number of LO)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. Define science; explain the components of the scientific method; discuss possibilities and advantages of scientific study of politics.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Midterm test, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO2. Define human rationality; contrast rationality and selfishness; discuss merits and limitations of the rational-choice explanations of political behavior.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Midterm test, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO3. Define collective action problem (CAP); explain economic solutions to CAP as well as their shortcomings; list possible political solutions to CAP and link them to contemporary schools of political thought.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Midterm test, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO4. Define political entrepreneurship; explain solutions to CAP's that arise in selecting, monitoring and replacing political incumbents.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Midterm test, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO5. List reasons for voting. Discuss consequences of vote-cycling in the context of the Condorcet Paradox, and Arrow's Theory of Impossibility. Explain solutions to the cycling	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2,	Final exam, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper

problem in terms of deliberation and agenda setting (including Median Voter Theorem).	ELO2.1, ELO 4.3		
CLO6. Explain the logic and the determinants of strategies that political parties implement prior to elections, including strategic positioning on policy issues.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Final exam, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO7. Explain the logic and the determinants of strategies that political parties implement after elections, including formation, maintenance and dissolution of governments.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Final exam, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper
CLO8. Solve game-theoretic and decision theoretic problems, such as calculating expected utility and critical conditions, solving of extensive and strategic games, defining sub-game perfection, and doing basic spatial utility modeling.	ELO 1.1, ELO 1.2, ELO 3.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1, ELO 4.3	Midterm test, final exam, homework grades, term paper	Lectures, homework, seminars, writing of term paper

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty, and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM reminds students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topic	In-class Hours		Assignments
		Lecture	Seminar	
1	Introduction Introductory comments. What is politics? What is science? Assumptions. Hypotheses. Verification of hypotheses. Deductive v. Inductive models in social sciences.	2	2	Laver pp. 1 – 17
2	The concept of rationality What people want? Characteristics of rational preference orderings. Actions, outcomes and choices. Concept of utility. Utility functions. Uncertainty and orientation towards risk. Problems with utility theory.	2	2	Laver pp. 18 – 29 <i>Homework 1</i>
3	The social interactions Private v. Public goods. Production and consumption of goods. Modeling human interactions. Basic games in extensive form. Concepts of strategy and equilibrium. Nash equilibrium.	2	2	Laver pp. 29 – 37 <i>Homework 2</i>
4	Collective action problem Rationality and free riding. Economic solutions to free riding. Thomas Hobbes' <i>Leviathan</i> and its critique. John Locke's "political society". Incentive-compatible solutions to free riding. Games in strategic form. Concept of strategy. Concept of strategy domination.	2	2	Laver pp. 38 – 50 <i>Homework 3</i>
5	Long-term interactions The concept of conditional cooperation. Implicit assumptions and their violations.	2	2	Laver pp. 50 – 67

	Rationality of punishing defectors. Bluffing and calling bluffs. Sub-game perfect equilibria. Reputation. The Tragedy of the commons parable. Conditional cooperation in large groups of people and its shortcomings.			<i>Homework 4</i>
6	Political entrepreneurs Political entrepreneurs as a solution to collective action problem. Who selects politicians? What do politicians do? Public goods v. political services. Principal – agent problem. Shirking and its prevention. The role of political rivals. Mixed strategies, and mixed-strategy equilibria.	2	2	Laver pp. 68 – 78 <i>Homework 5</i>
7	Political entrepreneurs (cont.) Limiting coercive power of the incumbents. Sustaining political opposition. The structure of competition between politicians. Payoffs for political entrepreneurs. The rationale behind political alliances. Perceptions and Nature Moves games.	2	2	<i>Homework 6</i> Review for the midterm examination
8	Midterm	2	2	
9	Voting Interpretations of the role of elections. Downsian approach to modeling voting and party competition. The paradox of voting. Rational choice attempts to explain voting.	2	2	Laver pp. 89 – 98 Edlin, A., Gelman, A. & Kaplan, N. (2007) <i>Article review</i>
10	Voting (cont.) Deciding how to vote. Credibility of political promises. Choosing between different political “packages”. Condorcet paradox and cyclical voting. Dimensions of voting. Median voter theorem, its implications and limitations. Voting on multiple issues and reemergence of voting cycles. Voter pressure groups.	2	2	Laver pp. 98 – 109 List, C., et. al. (2013) <i>Article review</i>
11	Party Competition One dimension of ideology. Unconstrained two party competition. Dictatorship of the median voter. Constrained two-party competition. The cost of changing policy positions. Multi-party competition. Entry of new political parties. Multi-dimensional ideologies. Modeling two-dimensional party competition.	2	2	Laver pp. 110 – 135 <i>Homework 7</i>
12	Politics after Elections Office-seeking and policy seeking motivations. Reputation and motivations of politicians. Minimal winning coalitions. Policy-based coalitions. The concept of a walk-away value. Minority and oversized coalitions. One dimension of coalition policy. More dimensions of coalition policy. Cabinet portfolios and structure induced equilibria.	2	2	Laver pp. 135 – 153 Review for the final examination
	Total hours	48		



	Consultations	6	
	Final exam	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assessment	Weight
Homework assignments	35%
Midterm examination	25%
Final examination	25%
Term paper	15%
Total	100%

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

Assessment consists of three different elements:

- **Written homework assignments (35%)** covering topics and methods discussed in class.
- **Midterm examination (25%)** covering material learned during the first 7 weeks of the course.
- **Final examination (25%)** covering material learned during the duration of the entire course.
- **Term paper (15%)** covering topics and methods learned in class.

It is imperative that students complete all of their homework assignments, and participate in discussions of homework assignments during the seminars. Diligent completion of the homework assignments is the only way to really learn the analytical methodology that will be indispensable during your subsequent study of political science.

The midterm as well as the final examinations will consist of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and solving of game-theoretical problems.

RETAKE POLICY

In case of a failing final grade, students are allowed a retake exam. It will cover all course material and take place on the e-learning system (in a computer lab if conditions permit). The weight of a retake is 50%. The grades for the research project, participation and presentation are not annulled and cannot be substituted by the retake.

Main reading:

Michael Laver. *Private Desires, Political Action. An Invitation to the Politics of Rational Choice*, SAGE Publications

Additional readings:

TBA

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

Programmes:

*International Business and Communication,
Business Management and Marketing, Finance,
Industrial Technology Management*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines

	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Social Science

Programmes:

Economics and Data Analytics,

Economics and Politics

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	ELO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the key economics disciplines
	ELO1.2. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions and logical consistency of causal statements
Students will have skills to employ economic thought for the common good	ELO2.1. Students will have a keen sense of ethical criteria for practical problem-solving
Students will be technology agile	ELO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	ELO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	ELO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	ELO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	ELO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper