

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2018

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Political Science  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Political Science - D0755  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Graduate  
Course Number/Catalog 7905  
Course Title Political Institutions  
Transcript Abbreviation Polit Institutions  
Course Description This class is an entry-level graduate class into the study of political institutions. The class aims to provide an overview of the field and a foundation upon which students can begin to teach themselves additional works in this literature.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Seminar  
Grade Roster Component Seminar  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites  
Exclusions  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 45.1001  
Subsidy Level Doctoral Course  
Intended Rank Doctoral

## Requirement/Elective Designation

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Provide students an overview of Political Science and a foundation upon which students can begin to teach themselves additional works in this literature
- Build students' ability to conduct scholarly research and evaluate others' scholarship
- Develop professionalization by learning the appropriate behavior of discussants and reviewers

### Content Topic List

- Foundations
  - The origins of political institutions
  - Parliamentary voting
  - Bargaining
  - Legislative organization
  - Separation of powers
  - Bureaucracy
  - Elections
- No

### Sought Concurrence

## Attachments

- syllabus POLITSC 7905.pdf: POLITSC 7905 Syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Smith, Charles William)*

## Comments

## Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Smith, Charles William	09/26/2017 04:48 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Herrmann, Richard Karl	09/26/2017 05:00 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Haddad, Deborah Moore	09/26/2017 06:16 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen, Dawn Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Oldroyd, Shelby Quinn Hanlin, Deborah Kay Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler	09/26/2017 06:16 PM	ASCCAO Approval

# Political Institutions

## Political Science 7905

Spring 2018  
Wednesday 9:00 - 11:45 a.m.

### **Syllabus v0.3**

Prof. Alex Acs  
Department of Political Science  
Office: Derby 2008  
Office hours: Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
acs.1@osu.edu

## **Course Description**

This class is an entry-level graduate class into the study of political institutions. The class aims to provide an overview of the topic and a foundation upon which students can begin to teach themselves additional works in this literature. In addition, the class hopes to build students' ability to conduct scholarly research, evaluate others' scholarship, and offer some professionalization in terms of learning the appropriate behavior of discussants and reviewers. There are no formal prerequisites, but we will not shy away from discussing theoretical models and statistical methods/results given that many of the major works use such techniques. Prior or concurrent exposure to these methods will be beneficial. All that is required, however, is a willingness to engage carefully and thoughtfully with the readings.

The concepts covered will apply to a mix of research questions in American politics, comparative politics and international relations—and class discussions will welcome further inquiry into the linkages between these fields. The class will be a lecture/seminar format. The early part of the semester will be heavy on the lecture component because it involves concepts that you may have yet to cover in your coursework. The latter part of the semester will involve more discussion.

## Books

There are two required texts for the course. (Other course readings are listed in the course schedule below and will be made available on Carmen.)

1. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (henceforth BDM). [Political Economy for Public Policy](#).
2. Robert Gibbons. [Game Theory for Applied Economists](#).

## Course Requirements

- *Midterm exam*. An in-class midterm will cover material from the readings and lectures.
- *Seminar paper*. A 15-page seminar paper on political institutions will be due at the start of the exam period. Your paper can either be a *critical* literature review or, with my permission, a piece of original research.
- *Reaction papers*. In the second half of the semester we will read collections of academic books and papers. You will randomly be assigned to two weeks where you will be responsible for writing a reaction paper that responds to *all* of the readings for that week. Reaction papers must be emailed to me two hours before class, at the latest. The goal of the reaction papers, which should be in the range of 3-5 double-spaced pages, is to critically analyze that week's readings from the perspective of theory, logic, design, method, or evidence, assessing conclusions, relationships to other works, or contribution to the development of political science. You may choose to focus on one or more of the readings. High quality papers will avoid summarization and instead present critical analysis of most or all of that week's readings (you should not just pick at smaller points within one article).
- *Presentation* For the same week in which you are assigned a reaction paper, I will assign you one paper (or book chapter(s)) for which you will be responsible for presenting to the class. The point of this exercise is to give your experience in "discussing" the work of other scholars. I will give you discretion to present the reading in the manner you see most fit, but, in general, good presentations will:
  - Summarize the main points of the reading
  - Relate the reading to the larger literature
  - Offer critiques of the reading.

Note that it is perfectly fine to incorporate points from your reaction paper into your presentation.

- *Class attendance and participation*. You are expected to attend each class and to participate in class discussion and debate.

## Grade Breakdown and Scale

- 30% midterm exam
- 40% seminar paper
- 20% reaction papers
- 10% class presentation

Your final grade will be determined using a standard conversion chart:

Letter	Prct.
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
E	0-60

## Course Policies

- *Laptops closed, cell phones off.* You are encouraged to take notes during class, though you will have to do so the old-fashioned way, with pencil and paper.
- *Course announcements.* Any course announcement will be made through Carmen, such as a syllabus change, lecture preview or a relevant current events topic.
- *Contacting me.* The best way to get in touch is through my OSU email, [acs.1@osu.edu](mailto:acs.1@osu.edu). You can also use the Carmen email system, though I check it less frequently.

## Schedule

(Readings should be completed before class)

### Introduction

Why is it important for political scientists to study institutions?

- Week 1
  - Daniel Diermeier and Keith Krehbiel. 2003. "Institutionalism as a Methodology." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. 15:123-144
  - Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2007. "Rational Choice Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. Rhodes, Binder and Rockman.
  - Elizabeth Sanders. 2007. "Historical Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. Rhodes, Binder and Rockman.
  - Timothy Besley and Anne Case. 2003. "Political Institutions and Policy Choices: Evidence from the United States." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 41:7-73
  - Roger Myerson. *On the Value of Game Theory in Social Science*.
  - John P. A. Ioannidis. [Why Most Published Research Findings Are False](#)

### Foundations

How do political scientists study institutions? We start with an overview of the theoretical concepts in the study of political and market-based institutions, paying particular attention to the game theoretic approach.

- Week 2
  - Gibbons
    - \* Chapter 1: Static Games of Complete Information
    - \* Chapter 2: Dynamic Games of Complete Information
- Week 3
  - BDM (2016)
    - \* Chapter 4: Externalities
    - \* Chapter 5: Coordination Problems
- Week 4

- BDM (2016)
  - \* Chapter 6: Commitment Problems
  - \* Chapter 7: Strategic Adjustment
- Week 5
  - BDM (2016)
    - \* Chapter 8: Dynamic Inconsistency
    - \* Chapter 9: The Need for Information
- Week 6
  - BDM (2016)
    - \* Chapter 10: Influence over Elected Officials
    - \* Chapter 11: Incentives, Institutions and Power
- Week 7 – **Midterm Exam**

## The Origins of Political Institutions

- Week 8
  - Adam Przeworski. "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition*. Volume 39 Issue 4 Page 527 - September 2004
  - Milgrom, Paul R., Douglass C. North and Barry Weingast. 1990. "The Role of Institutions in the Revival of Trade: The Medieval Law Merchant, Private Judges, and the Champagne Fairs." *Economics and Politics* 2(March): 1-23.
  - Shepsle, K. 1991. "Discretion, institutions and the problem of government commitment", in P.Bordieu y J.Coleman (eds.), *Social Theory for a Changing Society*. Boulder: Westview Press. 4.
  - Dixit, Lawlessness and Economics. Chapter 1.
  - Allison, Graham T. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review* 63 (3): 689-718.
  - Bendor, Jonathan, and Thomas H. Hammond. 1992. "Rethinking Allison's Models." *American Political Science Review* 86 (2): 310-22.

## Parliamentary Voting

- Week 9
  - Keith Poole. *Spatial Models of Parliamentary Voting*. Chapters 1 and 2.
  - McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal. 2005. "Polarization of the Politicians." Chapter 2 of *Polarized America*
  - Londregan, *Legislative Institutions and Ideology in Chile*. Chapters 1 and 2.

## Bargaining

- Week 10
  - Romer, Thomas, and Howard Rosenthal. 1978. Political Resource Allocation, Controlled Agendas, and the Status Quo. *Public Choice* 33: 27-43.
  - Krehbiel, Keith. *Pivotal Politics*. Chapters 1 and 2.
  - Canes-Wrone. 2005. Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public. Chapters 1 and 2.
  - Lisa Baldez and John M. Carey. 1999. "Presidential Agenda Control and Spending Policy: Lessons from General Pinochet's Constitution." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(1): 29-55

## Legislative organization

- Week 11
  - Weingast, Barry and William J. Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress; or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, Are Not Organized as Markets." *Journal of Political Economy*.
  - Krehbiel. 1991. Information and Legislative Organization. Chapters 2 & 3.

## The Separation of Powers

- Week 12
  - Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, Cristian Pop-Eleches, and Andrei Shleifer, "Judicial Checks and Balances," *Journal of Political Economy*. 2004.
  - Keith Krehbiel. *Pivotal Politics*. Chapters 1 and 2
  - Rivers, Douglas, and Nancy Rose. "Passing the President's Program: Public Opinion and Presidential Influence in Congress," *AJPS* 29 (1985), pp.183-96.

## Bureaucracy

- Week 13
  - Weingast, Barry and Mark Moran. Bureaucratic Discretion or Congressional Control: Regulatory Policymaking by the Federal Trade Commission," *Journal of Political Economy* 91 (1983), pp. 765-800.
  - David Lewis. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance* (Princeton University Press, 2008). Chapters 1-4



- Gailmard and Patty. 2007. "Slackers and Zealots: Civil Service, Policy Discretion, and Bureaucratic Expertise." *AJPS*
- Gordon. 2011. "Politicizing Agency Spending Authority: Lessons from a Bush-era Scandal." *APSR*
- Bendor and Hammond. "Rethinking Allison's Models." *APSR* (1992).
- McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1983. "Police Patrol versus Fire Alarms." *AJPS*.
- McNollgast. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *JLEO*.

## Elections

- Week 14

- Fenno, Richard. 1997. "U.S. House Members and their Constituencies: An Exploration" (1977). *APSR*
- Lee, Moretti, and Butler. 2004. "Do Voters Affect Or Elect Policies? Evidence from the U. S. House." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office" *American Political Science Review*.
- Gordon and Huber. 2004. "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind when it Runs for Office?" *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Lax and Phillips. 2012. "The Democratic Deficit in the States." *American Journal of Political Science*

## Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

All students believe that they know how not to plagiarize. Many of them are wrong. Every year, many of them find that out the hard way. Don’t be one of them.

The short version is that passing off another person’s work or ideas as your own is plagiarism. That includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use or paraphrasing of another person’s work or ideas. It is not enough, for example, simply to copy and paste a passage and then cite the source at the end. If the passage is taken word-for-word, it must be in quotes as well to indicate that fact.

There is an excellent video [here](#), if you have any doubts. You should be crystal clear, as the University’s policies exist to ensure fairness, and violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely.

## Disability Services

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614-292-3307, [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).