



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS

POLI 4395:
Political Science
Capstone Course
Spring 2021
Section 110 (CRN 10952)
6 PM – 8:45 PM Tues / FH 210



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Office Hours: Mon 3 PM – 5:45 PM,
Tues 5 PM – 5:30 PM, or by appointment

Catalog Description

Integrate and use fundamental concepts learned in previous political science courses to research and analyze real-world political phenomena and problems. Students present oral and written reports on their research, supplemented by appropriate internet and multimedia materials, as well as portfolios documenting their research.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The theme of the course is “Reason, Preference, and Persuasion in Politics” -- the importance, emergence, and transformation of ideologies and other political preferences. There are two major parts of the course. The first part teaches and critiques rational choice models of political decision-making and bargaining. This part of the course is intended to critique efforts to unify the study of different subfields of political science – American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and normative political theory – using methods of formal political analysis, particularly models of rational choice. Such models include:

- Decision theory (including expected utility theory and its competitors)
- Spatial models of politics (including the median and mean voter theorems)
- Game theory (and other formal models of bargaining and strategic interaction)
- Collective social choice theory (including Arrow's Theorem and the collective action dilemma)

The second part of the course examines where preferences – a vital but undertheorized part of rational choice models – come from and how they change over time. What role does persuasion play in political life?

The central learning objectives for this course are that at its conclusion, students will be able to:



1. Describe, critique, and solve models of political decision-making using rational choice theory (*Learning Outcome 1*).
2. Identify, apply (make a prediction in a particular case), and critique the empirical and normative assumptions of each of the formal models of political choice listed above under Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes.
3. Improve writing proficiency through a process of continuous revision and addition as the research portfolio progresses.
4. Distinguish between central and peripheral approaches to persuasion (*Learning Outcome 2: When shown audiovisual communication, you should be able to identify and critique both the direct message and the use of peripheral cues to persuade the viewer*)
5. Identify the political implications of texts, music, and films, including the implied claims often made by arguments that ostensibly advance innocuous or educational claims (*Learning Outcome 3*).
6. Analyze and critique the assumptions of political arguments and models (*Learning Outcome 4*)
7. Dissect, evaluate, and construct political arguments, using your critical thinking skills. Of particular importance are:
 - a. The simplified Toulmin model: A basic model of a valid argument as consisting of a *claim*, accompanied by *evidence*, which supports the claim via a *warrant* (*Learning Outcome 5: You should be able to identify the claim, evidence [if any], and warrants [implied or express] of a given argument*)
 - b. Awareness of other basic concepts in logic, particularly common logical fallacies (*Learning Outcomes 6 and 7: You should be able to spot any of the nine fallacies covered in the course in actual arguments [6] and avoid them in your own arguments [7]*)
 - c. The distinction between logos, ethos, and pathos in rhetoric (*Learning Outcome 8: You should be able to identify segments of persuasive communication that rely on each of these three elements*)

Learning Outcome 1 is assessed using the homework and final exam. Learning Outcome 2 is assessed using the literature review section of the required research portfolio. Learning Outcome 3 is assessed using in-class participation and the rest of the research portfolio. Learning Outcome 4 is assessed using the research portfolio.

Writing-Instructive Course Requirements

This is a Writing Instructive (WI) course so writing will be an integral part of my instruction and our interactions. Writing will also be a fundamental way that I measure student mastery of course content. WI means that you will have several opportunities to work on improving your writing skills. In concrete terms, this means engaging in a process of continuous revision and resubmission of drafts. Grammar and spelling errors will reduce the credit you receive, even for otherwise correct answers. See Canvas for a link to my pet grammatical peeves.

Of course, good writing requires more than correct spelling and grammar, and in longer pieces I'm looking for a thesis, for paragraphs to have topic sentences, and for well-cited and evidence-based argumentation. An argument is complete if it contains a claim (something you are trying to prove), evidence (properly-cited, of course), and a warrant (the evidence logically supports the claim). The



citation system we'll be using in this class is that of the American Political Science Association (APSA), which is a slightly modified form of the parenthetical documentation system in the Chicago Manual of Style (not the note system found in the same volume). A guide to APSA citations is available on Canvas.

Course Format

This course meets face-to-face, with supplemental materials made available online through the Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]. **We strongly recommend the latest versions of either the Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.**

Required Readings

The following **three** (3) books are required for this course. The other required readings are on Canvas. Note that a student is under no obligation to purchase textbooks from the university bookstore. Other sources, including online retailers, may offer lower prices. Do pay careful attention to delivery dates so that you have each book on time.

Frankfurt, Harry. 2005. *On Bullshit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN 9780691122946

Soules, Marshall. 2015. *Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 9780748644155

Spaniel, William. 2014. *Game Theory 101: Bargaining*. Charleston, NC: CreateSpace. ISBN: 9781503016972

Technology Requirements and Support

This course will use the Texas A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system for course readings (posted in Adobe pdf format, which can be opened by the free Adobe Reader and most modern web browsers), optional walkthrough videos related to course readings, and the Academic Integrity Exercise.

- Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.
Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password
- Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select "Chat with Canvas Support," submit a support request through "Report a Problem," or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.
- For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central.
24 hours a day, 7 days a week:
Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu
Phone: (254) 519-5466
[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]
Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.
- For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.



Grading (90/80/70/60, rounded to the nearest percentage)

- Academic Integrity Exercise: This consists of watching a brief lecture, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. Once you successfully complete this exercise, you will no longer need to do so in future political science courses.

*****Completing the Academic Integrity Exercise is a prerequisite to passing this course. It must be completed before you hand in any homework or the due date on the course calendar, whichever comes first.*****

- **Rubric: If you have not previously completed this exercise in one of my classes, then you will fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity exercise on or before the due date.** Students who have previously completed this exercise in another one of my courses do not need to repeat it for this course.
- Weekly Worksheets (20.4%). One of these is due each week after the first week, other than exam or presentation weeks. These can be found on Canvas, and are graded on a check system:
 - If the student completes the worksheet and shows his/her work properly, then the student gets full credit, even if his/her final answers happen to be incorrect.
 - If the student does not complete all but does complete (or show his/her work on) more than half of the exercise, then the student gets a check-minus (half credit).
 - If the student fails to complete (or show work on) even half of the work assigned, the student gets an X (zero credit).
- Participation (15.6%). This will be graded using a simple system. A student who attends and does little else will receive 5 points. A student who constructively participates in about half of the class will receive 10 points. A student who constructively participates throughout class will receive the full 15 points. You are expected to average 12 points per session, making consistent full participation a form of extra credit.
 - Constructive participation means making comments or asking questions that demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the week. It also means actively engaging in any in-class exercises.
 - As the amount of class time devoted to lecture increases, the amount of participation expected from students decreases proportionally. A good rule of thumb is to be sure to contribute something relevant (even just a question that shows engagement with the course material) at least twice an hour if there is no lecture or in-class exercise.
- Midterm Exam (20%). The midterm exam will be four pairs of problems that parallel the homework and in-class exercises. Students will receive the higher of the two scores for each pair. Students may use the assigned readings, any materials they have personally prepared, and course handouts on the exam.



- The grade for each question is evenly divided between whether the student followed the correct method for solving the problem and whether the student actually identified the correct solution to the problem.
- Course portfolio (40%). The centerpiece of the course is a portfolio in which students will first apply a formal model of politics to answer a puzzle in political science and then critique that model using findings in the political psychology of decision. The portfolio consists of a literature review, a theory and a corresponding rational-choice formal model, hypotheses derived from (that is, proven to be logical implications of) the model, and a critique of the rational-choice model using political psychology. There are several milestones that must be met:
 - Draft 1. *Puzzle, Question, and Article Review*. This is a brief draft focusing on your puzzle (see Appendix A for some ideas), its practical *and* disciplinary importance, and at least one journal article or scholarly book that addresses the puzzle using a formal model. Follow these steps to construct this initial draft (worth 25 points):
 - Create a cover page. Come up with a title other than “POLI 4395 Draft” or the like (you may want to save this part for last, since you may not know your thesis yet); add your name and institutional affiliation (Texas A&M University – Central Texas). [2 points]
 - Begin the draft by offering a puzzle in politics; then establish your research question and its importance for both political life and political science. This should take a paragraph or two. [6 points]
 - Then provide a thesis about where the solution to the puzzle may lie. Incorporate strategic interaction between political actors in your explanation.
 - Now discuss an article from an academic journal, a thesis or dissertation, or an academic/scholarly book that used a formal (mathematical) model to address part of all of your puzzle. **If you are trying to access academic journal articles and the like from home, then you may wish to follow the advice in Appendix B.** Once you’ve found a study with a formal model (typically expected utility theory, game theory, or social choice theory), describe its dependent variable, its theoretical approach (answer) to the question, its research design, and the author’s conclusions. Conclude your discussion of the article by examining the weaknesses of the author’s approach (especially the formal model itself, to the extent that you can figure out what assumptions it makes) and what knowledge we gain from the study (if any) over previous studies discussed by the author(s) in their literature review. [15 points]
 - Attach a works cited page in APSA format. [2 points]
 - Note that one point will be deducted for every two spelling/grammar errors in this draft, so be sure to proofread.
 - Draft 2. *Literature Review*. The literature review should revise the first draft in accordance with comments received and substantially expand the portfolio from a discussion of one article’s approach and findings to a discussion of five such pieces of academic literature and their approaches to the puzzle. Describe and critique the theories and results of at least five peer-reviewed articles, dissertations/theses, or



research monographs from scholarly presses (or all of them, if five such sources do not exist – which is the student’s burden to prove). Meeting this milestone is worth up to 50 points, depending on the quality of the work.

- Failure to clearly identify the question will result in the deduction of half of the points which the portfolio would otherwise have earned.
- For every one source fewer than five, ten points will be deducted. The exception is if the student demonstrates to the satisfaction of the instructor that all work relevant to the question has been reviewed.
 - No more than two assigned readings from class can count towards the five-source minimum.
 - For each source which does not meet the academic criteria for inclusion, up to ten points will be deducted, depending on how distant the source is from original scholarly research (for example, other literature reviews or academic textbooks are worth only 60% credit while encyclopedias are worth only 20% credit).
 - Each source discussed must clearly relate to the question. If the relationship is unclear, up to five points may be deducted.
- For every two spelling/grammar errors, one point will be deducted.
- Draft 3. *Revision and Model Development*. The student must revise the question and literature review of the portfolio in accordance with criticism of that work. In addition, the student must now add a formal model that addresses the issue. The model should be fully specified – its assumptions and definitions should be clear, as should its structure. Meeting this milestone is worth up to 70 points, depending on the quality of the work.
 - The question and literature review are worth 20 points. You will receive these points in proportion to the amount of required revision that was made in this draft. In other words, simply tacking the old literature review (without revisions) onto the new draft will result in the loss of 20 points.
 - Clearly stating the attributes of the formal model (e.g. a game, an expected utility model, an evolutionary model, etc) is worth 10 points.
 - Defining the non-standard terms in the model and listing its non-standard assumptions are worth 10 points. A non-standard term or assumption is something not already embedded in the generic class of model. For example, a game-theoretic model of deterrence need not define terms such as strategy, node, or Nash Equilibrium – these are part of game theory, and anyone who understands game theory already knows what they mean. However, the term “deterrence” would need to be defined, and any assumptions about players’ preferences would need to be clearly stated.
 - Having a complete structure to the model, so that someone with sufficient skill could use it to deduce hypotheses, is worth 20 points.
 - Justifying the attributes, each non-standard definition or assumption, and the structure of the model are collectively worth 10 points.
 - For every spelling/grammar error, one point will be deducted.



- Draft 4. *Revision and Hypothesis Generation*. The student must revise the earlier sections of the portfolio in accordance with criticism of that work. In addition, the student must solve the model and prove that it leads to at least three testable hypotheses. Meeting this milestone is worth up to 100 points, depending on the quality of the work.
 - Revisions to earlier sections of the portfolio are worth 35 points. Failure to revise will result in a 35-point deduction, while full revision in accordance with all critiques will result in no deduction.
 - The solution to the model is worth 50 points. Students must show their work (just use an appendix if doing so disrupts the flow of the portfolio).
 - Each testable hypothesis is worth five points (15 points total).
 - For every spelling/grammar error, one point will be deducted.
- Draft 5. *Taking Preferences Seriously*. The student must revise earlier sections of the portfolio and add a new section which uses findings from political psychology (including but not limited to the assigned readings on preferences and politics) to assess the validity and usefulness of the formal model and its assumptions about preference and cognition. The student should also explore methods of persuasion that would “improve” political outcomes (i.e. achieve ones the student desires) given the role that preferences play in generating the formal model’s implications. This milestone is worth 60 points – 20 for revisions to earlier work and 40 for the new section applying the political psychology of decision and persuasion to the model.
- *Final Draft*. The student must revise the earlier sections of the portfolio in accordance with criticism of that work and complete the process of generating a self-contained formal model and critical commentary on that model. The final product is worth 150 points.
 - Revisions to earlier sections of the portfolio are worth 100 points. Failure to revise will result in a 100-point deduction, while full revision in accordance with all critiques will result in no deduction.
 - The remainder of the credit is based on formatting and a brief abstract (100 words is ideal) which identifies the problem, briefly describes the model, and identifies its most interesting predictions.
 - For every spelling/grammar or formatting error, two points will be deducted.
- Research Presentation (5%). Prepare a 7-12 minute summary of your puzzle, model, and most interesting hypothesis. Do not use a script, although notes are fine. Some prepared visual aid (a handout for everyone in the class and the instructor, a PowerPoint presentation, etc) is required. You will be graded on preparation, professionalism, content, and how you address questions about your work from other students or the instructor. Your own questions of the other presenters form the participation grade for this session.
 - Rubric: Your presentation will be scored on these criteria.
 - Preparation (structure, notes, use of visual aids): 0 2 4 6 8 10 12
 - Professionalism (professional dress, conduct, language): 0 2 4 6 8 10 12
 - Content (puzzle, model, most interesting hypotheses): 0 2 4 6 8 10 12
 - Question handling: 0 2 4 6 8 10 12
 - Over/under time limits: -1 per minute over/under

POLI 4395 Course Grade Rubric

Item	Points	Percent
Worksheets	200 total (divided evenly)	20%
Participation (13 sessions)	12 per session = 156 total	About 15%
Course Portfolio	400	40%
Research Presentation	50	5%
Midterm Exam	200	20%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	1000	100%
895+ = A 795-894=B 695-794=C 595-694=D 594 or lower = F		

Regrade Policy

It is possible for me to make a mistake when grading. So if you think that I graded part or all of an assignment incorrectly, you have one week to return it to me for regrading against the rubric. You may request that all or only part of the assignment be regraded. I take no offense at this. The same policy applies to the final exam; you have one week from when grades are posted to request a regrade of one or more exam answers against the key.

Attendance, Make-Up Work, Late Work, and Incompletes

- Attendance is required. Students must inform the instructor *prior to an absence*. Send me an email stating the dates(s) you will be missing and the reason(s). (Protect yourself! Don't rely on my memory – send me something written that I can keep in my files).
 - If all else fails, you or a friend may call my office and speak to me or my voicemail. There are very few situations in life that preclude making a phone call or having a friend do so; failure to contact the instructor *prior to class* will normally rule out any sort of make-up.
 - If you have to leave early, please do the make-up participation work in Appendix B.
- Make-up work is required for any *excused* absence. It makes up for the inability of the student to participate in the class. Note that this is in addition to completing the exercises for the missed week – the two are graded separately. **When you return from an excused absence, be sure to bring the make-up work (see Appendix B for the make-up work for each session). It is your duty to have it completed, not the instructor's duty to remind you to do it.**
- Late exercises are only accepted in the case of extended excused absences such that a student could not complete the exercises during any day of the week. Because of the nature of the exercises and how we cover them in class, you cannot turn them in after class, even if it's still the same night.
- If any portion of the portfolio is late, there is a 10%/day penalty for that portion of the portfolio. This is computed as a fraction of credit earned, so that three days late = 30% penalty = student receives 70% of credit which he/she would otherwise have earned.
- Grades of incomplete are not to be used when students simply fall behind. Instead, they are used when some event such as a hospitalization or deployment effectively takes the student out of the class after the drop deadline. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.



Academic Integrity

University Code of Academic Honesty: Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

More [information regarding the Student Conduct process](https://tamuct.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tamuct-student-conduct-panel) is available at the following link: [https://tamuct.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tamuct-student-conduct-panel]. If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a report](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

Specific guidelines for this course, which supplement and do not replace University policy:

- **Violations:** There are plenty of ways to cheat listed by the Student Handbook. Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
 - Copying another student's homework. I encourage study groups, but copying must be avoided. Discuss the readings as long as you wish, but don't "share" your answers to the homework. You may not "jointly" complete any of the homework exercises in this course unless otherwise indicated on the assignment; these are to be completed by yourself alone. As an alternative to solving homework problems collectively, you can go over the final exam review or make-up problems in this syllabus to check whether you know the material. Note that if you provide another student with a copy of your homework and they copy it, both you and the copier will be deemed to have violated the policy.
 - **Using direct quotes without quotation marks.** Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn't create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase; instead, it transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the expression of the cited source's ideas in your own words.
 - Paraphrasing another person's words without citing the source.
 - Listing or citing sources in a research portfolio which were not actually consulted by the student.
- **Penalties:**
 - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of zero for the work or a deduction of 20% (two letter grades) from your course grade, whichever is **greater**. The infraction will be reported



to the TAMUCT administration, with a recommendation for probation in the case of deliberate violation or remedial education on Academic Integrity in the case of clearly inadvertent violation.

- The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** recommendation for expulsion to the TAMUCT administration.

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Professors are Mandatory Reporters

Texas State Law S.B. 212 (Effective September 1, 2019) states that:

- “An employee of a postsecondary educational institution who, in the course and scope of employment, witnesses or receives information regarding the occurrence of an incident that the employee reasonably believes constitutes **sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking** and is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident shall promptly report the incident to the institution's Title IX coordinator or deputy Title IX coordinator.”
- Further: “A person commits an offense if the person is required to make a report...and knowingly fails to make the report. ... A postsecondary educational institution shall terminate the employment of an employee whom the institution determines in accordance with the institution's disciplinary procedure to have committed [such] an offense.”

Student Resources

- **Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas:** Warrior Shield is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in Warrior Shield through their myCT email account.
 - Connect to Warrior Shield by [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in Warrior Shield, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.



- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Office of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html) web page:
[<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>].
 - Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].
 - Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit the [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html) web page [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html>]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf), please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].
 - Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.
- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.
 - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 501-5836, visit the Office of Student Success at 212F Warrior Hall, or by emailing studentsuccess@tamuct.edu.
 - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and



receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas. Note that Tutor.com **no longer offers writing support.**

- **University Writing Center:** Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This semester, the UWC is also offering online only hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.
 - Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students’ ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students’ texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!
 - Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.
- **University Library:** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 85,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.
 - Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.
 - Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].



Amendments

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing (probably by updating the syllabus on Canvas).



Course Schedule

Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings and Due Dates (to be completed before class)	Videos (Canvas)
Jan 19	Rationality and Preference in Political Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<i>A Clean Escape (optional -- 43 min)</i>
Jan 26	Rational Decision Making I: Rational Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hansson, <u>Decision Theory: A Brief Introduction</u>, Sections 1-5 and 9 (Canvas) Academic Integrity Exercise Due 	
Feb 2	Rational Decision Making II: Expected Utility and Spatial Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davis, <u>Game Theory: A Nontechnical Introduction</u>, Chapter 4: "Utility Theory" (Canvas) Morrow, <u>Game Theory for Political Scientists</u>, Chapter 2: "Utility Theory" (Canvas) Black, "On the Rationale of Group Decision-making" (Canvas) Krehbiel, "Spatial Models of Legislative Choice" (Canvas) 	
Feb 9	Game Theory I: Nash Equilibria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u>, Chapter 13 (Canvas) Axelrod, "Effective Choice in the Prisoner's Dilemma" (Canvas) 	<i>Game Theory 101: 1.1 to 1.7</i>
Feb 16	No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Class: Weather Closure 	
Feb 23	Game Theory II: Backwards Induction and Subgame Perfect Equilibria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinton, "Game Theory, Legal History, and the Origins of Judicial Review: A Revisionist Analysis of <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>" (Canvas) Bonanno and Nehring, "Agreeing to Disagree: A Survey," Excerpt (Canvas) Reeves, "The Real Tragedy of Myerson-Satterthwaite" (Canvas) Draft I Due 	<i>Game Theory 101: 2.1 to 2.5 and 2.7; Myerson-Satterthwaite Explained (optional)</i>
Mar 2	Game Theory III: Ultimatums and Bargaining Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaniel, <u>Game Theory 101: Bargaining</u>, Chapters 1-5 	<i>Bargaining 101: Chapter 1-5 Lectures</i>
Mar 9	Game Theory IV: Rubinstein Games and Commitment Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaniel, <u>Game Theory 101: Bargaining</u>, Chapters 6-11 Walter, <u>Committing to Peace: Successful Settlements of Civil Wars</u>, Chapter 2: "Theory and Hypotheses" (Canvas) Draft II Due 	<i>Bargaining 101: Chapters 6, 7, 9, and 10 Lectures</i>
Mar 16	No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Class: Spring Break 	



Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings and Due Dates (to be completed before class)	Videos (Canvas)
Mar 23	Midterm Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Expected Utility Theory, Spatial Models, and Game Theory 	
Mar 30	Social Choice: Contracts, Elections, and Social Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartwright, “The Nash Bargaining Problem” (Canvas) • Morreau, “Arrow’s Theorem” (Canvas) • Aldrich, “The Dilemma of a Paretian Liberal: Some Consequences of Sen's Theorem” (Canvas) • Stone, <u>Candidates and Voters: Ideology, Valence, and Representation in US Elections</u>, Excerpts (Canvas) • Draft III Due 	
April 6	Persuasion and Preferences I: “Boundedly Rational” Models of Decisionmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shannon, McGee, and Jones, “Bounded Rationality and Cognitive Limits in Political Decision Making” (Canvas) • Vieider and Vis, “Prospect Theory and Political Decision Making” (Canvas) • Mintz, Redd, and Tal-Shir, “The Poliheuristic Theory of Political Decision-Making” (Canvas) • Fazio et al, “Knowledge Does Not Protect Against Illusory Truth” (Canvas) • Soules, <u>Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda</u>, Preface 	
April 13	Persuasion and Preferences II: Preference Formation and the Origins of Ideologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alford, Funk, and Hibbing, “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?” (Canvas) • Jost, Halperin, and Laurin, “Five Observations about Tradition and Progress in the Scientific Study of Political Ideologies” (Canvas) • Druckman and Lupia, “Preference Formation” (Canvas) • Soules, <u>Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda</u>, Introduction and Chapters 1-2 • Draft IV Due 	<i>Foundations of Political Ideologies</i>

Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings and Due Dates (to be completed before class)	Videos (Canvas)
April 20	Persuasion and Preference III: Preference Transformation Through Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soules, <u>Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda</u>, Chapters 3-7 • Slater and Rouner, "Entertainment-Education and Elaboration Likelihood: Understanding the Processing of Narrative Persuasion" (Canvas) • Cao, "The Influence of Fiction Versus Nonfiction on Political Attitudes" (Canvas) • Krause and Rucker, "Strategic Storytelling: When Narratives Help Versus Hurt the Persuasive Power of Facts" (Canvas) • Leeper, "The Search for Real-World Media Effects on Political Decision Making" (Canvas) 	
April 27	Persuasion and Preferences IV: Political Persuasion and Propaganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soules, <u>Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda</u>, Chapter 8-10 • Nyhan and Reifler, "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions" • Nyhan et al, "Taking Fact-Checks Literally But Not Seriously? The Effects of Journalistic Fact-Checking on Factual Beliefs and Candidate Favorability" (Canvas) • Draft V Due 	<i>Electoral Propaganda</i>
May 4	Persuasion and Preferences V: The Meaning, Uses, and Ethics of Bullshit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frankfurt, <u>On Bullshit</u>, all • Green, "Speaking Bullshit to Power: Populism and the Rhetoric of Bullshit" (Canvas) • Cohen, "Deeper into Bullshit" (Canvas) • Evans, "The Republic of Bullshit" (Canvas) 	
May 11	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Presentations Due • Final Draft Due 	

Appendix A: 60 Ideas for Decision-making Paper Topics

These questions might all be usefully addressed using game theory or spatial models of collective decision-making.

A. American Politics

1. When do Presidents choose to go public with policy proposals?
2. When do Presidents decide to use executive agreements in foreign policy rather than treaties?
3. What influence does partisanship have over Presidential veto decisions?
4. Why do some Presidents issue more executive orders than others?
5. When do Presidents use force unilaterally rather than seeking Congressional authorization?
6. Are Presidents more likely to use force when their popularity ratings/economic growth fall?
7. What explains the roll-call votes of members of Congress?
8. Why are members of Congress Congressional frequently more ideologically extreme than their own constituents – even co-partisans in the electorate?
9. What causes Congressional gridlock?
10. Do campaign donations change policy in Congress/the Presidency/executive bureaucratic agencies?
11. What predicts the votes of Supreme Court Justices?
12. What predicts whether the Supreme Court will agree to hear a case?
13. What affects the choice of candidates by voters?
14. What effect do political factors have on judicial decisions to impose the death penalty?
15. When does the Supreme Court uphold executive agency decisions?
16. Does polarization at the candidate level drive polarization among the electorate?

B. Comparative Politics

1. Does state strength cause or prevent political violence?
2. What causes – or reverses -- democratization?
3. What causes genocide?
4. What causes civil wars?
5. Why do some civil wars recur?
6. Why do some civil wars end in negotiated settlements while others end only in military victory or stalemate?
7. What predicts how much foreign aid a country will give?
8. When do power-sharing agreements work?
9. Why are some countries characterized by more income inequality than others?
10. What causes domestic terrorism?
11. What causes coups d'état?
12. What effect does central bank independence have on the economy?
13. Does religious diversity promote conflict/autocracy?
14. Under which forms of government do leaders retain office the longest?
15. How does political culture affect democracy/development?
16. Does federalism promote peace/development/democratic consolidation?



17. Does resource scarcity promote conflict/autocratization?
18. Why do some countries adopt fixed exchange rates while other opt to allow their currencies to float on the global market?
19. What leads to more/less respect for human rights by leaders?

C. International Relations

1. What causes interstate war?
2. Why don't democracies fight each other?
3. Does capitalism promote international peace?
4. Does trade promote international peace?
5. What types of issues are most likely to lead to war?
6. Why do some crises escalate to war while others are resolved short of war?
7. What effects do arms races have on the probability of war?
8. What effect do outside alliances have on the probability of war?
9. When do countries follow the laws of war?
10. When do countries resolve disputes through arbitration?
11. Are revolutionary governments more aggressive?
12. When do states honor international agreements?
13. Why are some cease-fires more successful than others?
14. What determines where peacekeepers are sent?
15. What are the political causes of trade?
16. Do international organizations promote peace?
17. What causes nuclear proliferation?
18. Do nuclear weapons produce peace?
19. What counterinsurgency strategies are most effective?
20. Are power-seeking states under international anarchy condemned to fight one another?

D. Normative Political Theory

1. Which decision-rule would people seeking both their own welfare and stability adopt for determining Rawlsian distributive justice under a veil of ignorance (represented by uncertainty) – maximax, maximin, or minimax regret?
2. Given a particular political theorist's view of the social contract, what determines whether it is honored?
3. Can an expected-utility maximizer with the right preferences always act consistently with the ethical prescriptions of Mill's utilitarianism?
4. How might people overcome the collective action problem of how to enforce natural law/natural rights if they had no government?
5. Under what circumstances is Gauthier's principle of minimax relative concession likely to predict behavior?



Appendix B: Accessing research articles from home

WarriorQuest can be accessed from home, provided you have your login information (which is the same as your TAMUCT email account). If you are having trouble finding what you want, Google Scholar [<https://scholar.google.com/>] is another good place to begin. If you are working from home, it may be frustrating to be (apparently) unable to access most academic journals, but you can take the following two steps:

1. If you spot an article you cannot access from home, go to the TAMUCT library's web site [<https://tamuct.libguides.com/index>] and click on **Journal Title Search**, type in the journal's name, and see if we have access. You will be prompted to log in to our library's journal title search engine; this process is the same as logging into your TAMUCT email account. Then you can click through to the journal, paying attention to the year, volume, and issue number of the article to find what you need.
2. For some journals, there is a quicker method. It doesn't work with all library-accessible resources, but it works with perhaps half of them.
 - a. Create a new bookmark in your browser. Name it what you want – I named mine "Access through TAMUCT." For the address, type in the following line of text:
`javascript:void(location.href="https://tamuct.idm.oclc.org/login?url="+location.href)`
 - b. When you click on an article that won't let you access it, try clicking the bookmark. This will route the request through TAMUCT's servers, often granting you access. Once again, you will have to log in as prompted by TAMUCT using the same credentials as your TAMUCT email.
 - c. If the bookmark doesn't work, just use step 1 to access the material.

