

PPHA 31610  
Analytical Politics II: Political Institutions  
(Winter 2023)

## 1 Contact information

### 1.1 Instructors:

- **Luis Martinez:** sections 1, 2, 3
  - **Email:** [luismartinez@uchicago.edu](mailto:luismartinez@uchicago.edu)
  - **Class time:** Tue and Thu, 08:00-09:20am, 09:30-10:50am, 11:00am-12:20pm (All in Keller 1022)
  - **Office hours:** Tue 01:00-02:00pm and Thu 02:00-03:00pm, [Calendly](#)
  
- **Arduino Tomasi:** sections 4, 6
  - **Email:** [atomasi@uchicago.edu](mailto:atomasi@uchicago.edu)
  - **Class time:** Tue and Thu, 02:00-03:20pm (Keller 1022), 03:30-04:50pm (Keller 0021)
  - **Office hours:** Thu 05:00-06:00pm [Calendly](#)
  
- **Zhaosong (Victor) Ruan:** section 5, 7
  - **Email:** [zruan@uchicago.edu](mailto:zruan@uchicago.edu)
  - **Class time:** Tue and Thu, 02:00-03:20pm, 03:30-04:50pm (All in Keller 1002)
  - **Office hours:** Wed 11:00am-12:00pm and 02:00-03:00pm, 15-min slots (Keller 3099), [Calendly](#)

## 1.2 Teaching Assistants

- **Head TAs:**
  - Giorgio Farace (farace@uchicago.edu)
  - Ben Shaver (blshaver@uchicago.edu)
  - Office hours: TBD
- **Administrative TA:** TBD
- **TAs:** TBD

## 2 Course description

This course introduces students to core topics in the political economy of public policy. Its substantive objective is to familiarize students with the crucial role of politics in all realms of public policy. The course covers three major themes. First, we study workhorse models in political economy that allow us to understand the interplay between political preferences, institutions and behavior in various settings (i.e., electoral politics, non-democratic regimes). Second, we examine real-world political institutions and their impact on policy and economic outcomes (i.e., electoral systems, levels of government, bureaucratic delegation). Lastly, we analyze important political agents and the drivers and consequences of their behavior (i.e., voters, media, special interests).

Methodologically, the course aims to build and expand on the skills that students are developing in all three core sequences of the MPP program: microeconomics, statistics, analytical politics. We use formal mathematical models (mostly game theory) to organize ideas around each topic and derive testable implications. We complement this formal analysis by studying empirical research in economics and political science to test these predictions and gain insight into real-world events. The course assignments require students to work on abstract problem-solving, but also to connect the topics discussed to real-world policy issues. The course also provides an opportunity to develop and strengthen writing skills that allow students to advocate for a policy agenda with different audiences.

## 3 Course content

This is a nine-week course and we have organized the course material into eight week-long modules (i.e., two class meeting with the instructor per module). In one of the class meetings for each topic, one (1) academic article will be discussed in more detail. We will also use one of the class meetings in the quarter for the midterm exam and will reserve the final class meeting for a conclusion session. The content of each module and the required reading is listed below. Slides for each class meeting will be available on Canvas beforehand.

- Week 1: The spatial model of politics

- Reading: *Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?* Lori Beaman, Raghendra Chattopadhyay, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande, Petia Topalova. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(4), 2009, p. 1497-1540.
- Week 2: Political regimes
  - Reading: *Dictatorship, Higher Education and Social Mobility*. Maria A. Bautista, Felipe Gonzalez, Luis R. Martinez, Pablo Muñoz, Mounu Prem. Working paper. 2020.
- Week 3: Political accountability
  - Reading: *Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil’s Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes*. Claudio Ferraz, Frederico Finan. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(2), 2008, p. 703-745.
- Week 4: Electoral systems
  - Reading: *Electoral Rules and Politicians’ Behavior: A Micro Test*. Stefano Gagliarducci, Tommaso Nannicini, Paolo Naticchioni. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 3, 144-174.
- Week 5: Levels of government
  - Reading: *Decentralization, Collusion, and Coal Mine Deaths*. Ruixue Jia, Huihua Nie. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 99(1), 2017, p. 105-118.
- Week 6: Midterm exam (**Tuesday February 07**)
- Week 6/7: Organizational economics of the state
  - Reading: *The Devil is in the Details: The Successes and Limitations of Bureaucratic Reform in India*. Iqbal Dhaliwal, Rema Hanna. *Journal of Development Economics*, 124, 2017, p. 1-21.
- Week 7/8: Political participation
  - Reading: *Valuing the Vote: The Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds following the Voting Rights Act of 1965*. Elizabeth U. Cascio, Ebonya Washington. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(1), 2014, p. 379-433.
- Week 8/9: Media and information
  - Reading: *Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections*. Daniel Moskowitz. *American Political Science Review*, 2020.
- Final class: Conclusion

## 4 Course materials

There is no assigned textbook for this course. However, *Political Economy for Public Policy* by Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (Princeton University Press) is a useful reference for several of the topics we will study.

The course has one shared Canvas website for all sections. We will post on Canvas all course materials, including assignments, lecture slides, pre-recorded content, and class recordings. [Canvas link](#)

## 5 Evaluations

Students will be evaluated based on three components. First, there will be two exams: a midterm and a final. These exams will be in person, individual and closed book. The midterm will take place on the Tuesday of week 6 of the quarter (February 07) and the final will be scheduled by Harris administration during finals week. Each of these evaluations is worth 30% of the final grade. Second, students will also hand in homework assignments in weeks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 (i.e., five in total). These assignments must be handed in on the Thursday of the respective week and will be made available at least one week in advance. These assignments can be handed in individually or in groups of no more than four (4) people. Two of these assignments will be randomly chosen for marking, each being worth 15% of the final grade. Third, students will produce a short article in the style of a newspaper op-ed on a specific policy issue that relates to the course material. This op-ed must be handed in individually on the Thursday of week 9 (March 02) and must meet the following requirements: 2 pages maximum, 12 pt font, 1.5 line spacing, 1 inch margin. The Harris Writing Team will provide guidance and support for the production of the op-ed, which will be worth 10% of the final grade. To summarize, the evaluations are as follows:

- Midterm on February 07 (30%)
- Final exam during finals week (30%)
- Two out of five homework assignments randomly marked (15% each)
- Op-ed due on March 02 (10%)

All grading will be anonymous and we will make every effort to return assignments within a week. If you believe that your grade on an assignment is incorrect or unfair, please submit your concerns in writing to one of the head TAs within a week of the assignment or exam being returned. **In order for your request to be addressed, you must have attended the TA sessions in which the solution to the assignment was discussed (with the exception of the final exam).** When you file a complaint, please fully summarize what you believe the problems are and why. The head TA will respond either verbally or in writing. If you still have concerns, you may submit them in writing to the instructor, who will issue a final grade (which may be higher or lower than the initial grade).

Core courses at the Harris School are graded on a rough curve. The basic target distribution is: A  $[\frac{1}{8}]$ , A-  $[\frac{1}{4}]$ , B+  $[\frac{1}{4}]$ , B  $[\frac{1}{4}]$ , B- or lower  $[\frac{1}{8}]$ .

## 6 Teaching assistants and TA Sessions

The course has XX Teaching Assistants (TAs), two head TAs and one administrative TA. Students should address all questions concerning the logistics of the course to the head TA (dates, grades, IT issues, etc.). The TAs hold weekly support sessions and grade student assignments. All TAs took the class last year and had an outstanding performance. They are in an ideal position to provide additional academic support and help students navigate through the course material and assignments.

The TA sessions serve multiple purposes. The first session will provide a refresher on basic concepts of game theory covered in AP I. Some other weeks, we will use the TA sessions to go through the solution of the homework assignments or the midterm. We will use other sessions to help students prepare for the midterm and the final (i.e., solve mock exams). In general, the TA sessions provide an additional opportunity for students to ask questions about the course material. The specific content of each TA session is listed below:

- Week 1: Game theory refresher
- Week 2: Homework 1 solution
- Week 3: Homework 2 solution
- Week 4: Homework 3 solution
- Week 5: Mock midterm solution
- Week 6: Midterm solution
- Week 7: Homework 4 solution
- Week 8: Homework 5 solution
- Week 9: Mock final solution

## 7 Academic integrity

The Harris School has a formal policy on academic integrity that you are expected to adhere to. Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) turning in someone else's work as your own, copying solutions to previous years' assignments, and receiving any unapproved assistance on exams. **We have a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty in this course.** All students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University. In addition to disciplinary sanctions, students who commit academic dishonesty will may also be penalized in their course grades, at the discretion of the instructors.

## 7.1 Recording and deletion policy

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:

- They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.
- They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.
- Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.
- Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.

## 8 Diversity and inclusion

Consistent with the University of Chicagos commitment to open discourse and free expression, we encourage students to respect and engage with others of differing backgrounds or perspectives, even when the ideas or insights shared may be viewed as unpopular or controversial. Thought-provoking discourse is facilitated when we not only speak freely but also listen carefully and respectfully to others.

## 9 Accessibility

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. The starting point is to contact [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu). Timely notifications are required in order to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented.

Students who are facing extenuating circumstances at any point during the quarter should reach out to their Academic Advisor in the Dean of Students Office for support. If you feel you need accommodations on an ongoing basis, contact Student Disability Services. [SDS website](https://sds.uchicago.edu). [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu). Phone: (773) 702-6000.

## 10 Additional academic resources

### 10.1 Harris Writing Program

If you need help with the written assignments in this course please see the Writing Program. The Writing Fellows and Coaches can help you establish best practices in terms of brainstorming, drafting, and editing your assignments, and will critically engage your writing and thinking skills. And if you are an English Language Learner the Writing Program has trained staff on hand to help you with Academic English conventions. Find the Writing Program [here](#).

If you are an English Language Learner and looking for more specialized help, our Writing Coach Matt Fleming is a highly trained linguist on hand to help you with Academic English conventions, drafting, and polishing your work. Find Matt's coaching sessions [here](#).

### 10.2 Core Course and Coding Tutoring

Harris offers free tutoring support to students in need of one-on-one help with their core courses as well as coding in Stata, R, and Python. Tutoring opens on Monday of Week 3 each quarter and students can utilize up to 10 hours total of tutoring per quarter. If you would like to learn more about the tutoring program or book an appointment, visit the [Harris Student Handbook tutoring page](#).

## 11 Health measures

- The university's guidance on health protocols and other measures related to COVID-19 are provided at the [UChicago Forward site](#).
- Barring a policy change, masks will not be required of instructors or students in classrooms, but their use is encouraged.
- Students seeking a remote learning accommodation should contact the Dean of Students, Kate Biddle at [kbiddle@uchicago.edu](mailto:kbiddle@uchicago.edu). All such requests may only be approved centrally, not by individual instructors. Our expectation is that students attend class in-person, barring short term absences as discussed below.
- **Students should not attend class or take exams if they are experiencing COVID symptoms and will not be penalized so long as they let the instructors or TAs know.** If students cannot attend class in person because they are required to quarantine, are ill or experiencing COVID symptoms, or have child-care disruptions, they are expected to contact instructors or their TAs directly about accommodations.
- To help students who are unable to attend a class for any of the reasons above, we will record at least one class session and TA session each week and upload on Canvas.
- Students and instructors are allowed to have drinks in the classroom, though we ask that food not be consumed.