Professor Anna Bassi  
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Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 9.30-11am reserve a 15” slot @ http://meetme.so/annabassi

MEETING TIMES AND VENUE
Class meets twice per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 75 minutes in Murphey Hall, room 112. Each class starts at 11 am. Office hours are on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.30am to 11am. Please take an appointment @ http://meetme.so/annabassi. You must take an appointment at least 3 hours before the requested appointment.

OVERVIEW
This course introduces students to rational agent theory applied to political science. It focuses on individual choice and group choice. It looks at models of individuals' voting behavior, candidates’ behavior, and the group choice. The emphasis is analytical, though students are not expected to have a background in formal mathematics. The course covers some of the major topics studied in Positive
Political Theory: The aggregation of preferences from individual preferences to social preferences, voting, electoral competition and electoral systems, legislature voting and separation of powers. This course will familiarize the students with the analytical tools of decision theory, social choice theory and game theory. At the same time, the students will learn to systematically organize and express their thoughts and insights about political questions with the precision and logical rigor of scientific language.

**TEXTBOOKS**

The required textbooks for this course are:

The recommended textbooks for this course are:

Papers and extra readings used in class will be posted on Blackboard.

**GRADES**

You will be graded in this course on the basis of several factors.

- First, there will be one midterm exam and one final exam which will constitute 85% of your grade (40% and 45% respectively). These are cumulative and will test concepts you should have learned from the assigned readings and the lectures.
- Second, you will be given 2 assignments that will run between 5(minimum) and 8(maximum) pages in length. For each assignment, you will be rewarded full credit if you have made a good-faith effort to answer all of the questions and if you hand in the problem set on time. Late problem sets will not be accepted. Although you are encouraged to work on the problem sets in group, answers must be handed in on your own. You will also be graded on class participation and evidence of reading material assigned in advance.

Summing up, grades will be computed on the following basis:
- Midterm exam 40%
- Final exam 45%
- Assignments 10%
- Participation & Attendance 5%
Grades will be determined according to the following grading scale:
A: 93-100  A-: 86-92  B+: 80-85  B: 74-79
B-: 69-73  C+: 64-68  C: 60-63  C-: 57-60  F: 0-56

CLASSROOM CIVILITY
Your behavior should respect your classmates desire to learn. Each lecture begins exactly on time. Coming late is disruptive no matter how quiet you are. Do not engage in side conversations during the lecture. Eating and drinking in class should be reduced to a minimum. It is not forbidden, but please make sure that you are not disturbing others with noise and enticing aromas. Dozing off in an early morning class is not a cardinal sin, but be sure not to make a spectacle of yourself. It is extremely disrespectful to do this in an ostentatious manner. Turn off all cell phones. If you have to leave a class early, inform your instructor in advance. It is very rude to simply walk out in the middle of a lecture. Repeated occurrence of such disruptions will be reflected in the final grade.

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE
Class attendance is mandatory and part of a student’s grade. Absences may be excused only in the case of documented serious illness, family emergency, religious observance, or civic obligation. If you will miss class for religious observance or civic obligation, you must inform your instructor no later than the first week of class.

EXAMINATION POLICIES AND EXCUSES
Midterm exam: make-up exams will not be available for students who fail to notify your instructor in advance of missing an examination, nor for students without an acceptable explanation. If you have a valid reason for a makeup exam, inform your instructor a.s.a.p. A valid reason is a medical emergency, a death or serious illness in the family, and, quite frankly, very little else. In all cases, you will be expected to bring in proof.

Final exam (UNC policy): Students are expected to take their final examinations at the published date and time. The final examination for this course covers two hours and it will start promptly at the time published on http://registrar.unc.edu/AcademicCalendar/index.htm. See UNC exam policy at:

Only in exceptional circumstances are make-up exams permitted.

- **Three exams in twenty-four hours & time conflicts** If you have three final examinations scheduled by the Registrar's Office within a twenty-four hour period or two exams with conflicting exam times you may receive an "Examination Excuse" from your dean's office. To obtain an "Examination Excuse" for these reasons, meet with a full-time advisor or assistant dean on your advising team.

- **Medical Examination Excuse** If you are seriously ill during the time of your final examination, you should consult Campus Health Services about having your name entered on the "Infirmary List." To take a final examination, students on the "Infirmary List" may obtain an "Official Permit" from the Office of the Registrar. You must make arrangements to take the final examination with your course instructor and provide the instructor with your "Official Permit."

- **Other Compelling Reasons** If you have other unexpected and compelling reasons requiring you to miss a final examination, including, for example, the serious health condition of a child for whom you are the primary caregiver, you should call to make an appointment to discuss the possibility of obtaining an examination excuse with one of the assistant deans in your dean's office. In the case of the illness of a child for whom you are the primary caregiver, the University may request medical verification and a physician's statement of how long you are likely to need excused from your academic responsibilities.

**Rules About Completing Your Make-up Exam**

If you did not take a final examination for one of the reasons previously cited and you have been issued an "Examination Excuse" or an "Official Permit," you must present this excuse or permit to the course instructor when arrangements are made for a suitable time to take the final examination. In all cases in which an examination is to be rescheduled, the instructor may reschedule that examination during the final examination period, but not later than the end of the following semester. Students will need to arrange a mutually convenient time with the instructor for the make-up exam.
If you are a student athlete, inform me a.s.a.p. of interferences with your commitments as an athlete (especially conflicts with exam dates). You will be expected to bring in a letter from the athletics department.

Inform your instructor a.s.a.p. of special needs that you may have like larger printouts of quizzes and exams or extra time on an exam. You will be expected to bring in a letter from the center for students with disabilities. The sooner you notify us, the better that we will be able to accommodate you.

A fundamental tenet of all educational institutions is academic honesty; academic work depends upon respect for and acknowledgment of the work and ideas of others. Misrepresenting someone else's work as one's own is a serious offense in any academic setting and it will not be condoned. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation (e.g. papers, projects, examinations and assessments - whether online or in class); presenting, as one's own, the ideas, words or calculations of another for academic evaluation; doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; using unauthorized aids in preparing work for evaluation (e.g. unauthorized formula sheets, unauthorized calculators, unauthorized programs or formulas loaded into your calculator, etc.); and presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the instructors involved.

A student who knowingly assists another student in committing an act of academic misconduct shall be equally accountable for the violation, and shall be subject to the sanctions and other remedies described in The Student Code. Sanctions shall include, but are not limited to, a letter sent to the Dean of Students of the University; a grade of 0 on the assignment or exam; a grade of F for the course. For all course work, the Honor Code applies; the student’s signature on her/his work confirms that the Code rules were respected. [Website URL]


**Course Outline**  
**WEEK 1-2 (8/21-30)**  
Rationality, Strategy, and Politics: Introduction  
- Shepsle: Ch. 1, 2  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Introduction and Ch 1  
- Harrington: Ch.1  

**Notice:** NO CLASS ON 9/1 (Political Scientists meet for the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association)  

**WEEK 3 (9/4, 6)**  
Analyzing a strategic situation.  
- Harrington: Ch.2  

**WEEK 4 (9/11, 13)**  
Sequential games with perfect information: reasoning backward  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch 2  
- Harrington: Ch.8  

**WEEK 5 (9/18, 20)**  
Solving a game when rationality is common knowledge.  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch 3  
- Harrington: Ch.3  

**WEEK 6 (9/25, 27)**  
Stable play in simultaneous games  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch. 4  
- Harrington: Ch.4  

**WEEK 7 (10/2, 4)**  
Unpredictability and Randomized strategies  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch. 7  
- Harrington: Ch. 7  

**WEEK 8-9 (10/9 – 16)**  
**First Assignment due on 10/16**  
Sequential games with imperfect information  
- Harrington: Ch. 9  
- Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch. 5, 6
MIDTERM EXAM (10/23)

WEEK 10-11 (10/23-11/1)
Cooperation and reputation
  - Dixit and Nalebuff: Ch. 9
  - Harrington: Ch.13, 14
Shepsle: Ch. 8

WEEK 12 (11/6, 8)
Group Choice and majority rule
  - Shepsle: Ch. 3, 4

WEEK 13 (11/13, 15)
Voting systems and procedures
  - Shepsle Ch. 6, 7

WEEK 14-15 (11/20-11/29)
Second Assignment due on 11/29
The spatial model and Agenda Setting.
  - Shepsle Ch. 5
  - Handouts

WEEK 16 (12/4)
Review section and conclusions

DECEMBER, 13TH, 2012 (12 PM): FINAL EXAM