

**POLS 180 § 03, Social Conflict and Cooperation
A Social Science University Seminar**

University of Notre Dame, Fall 2003
T, Th 3:30-4:45 Debartolo 330

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Office Hours: T/TH 2:00-3:15, and by appointment

Course Description

How can married couples, gas stations, thieves, and swamps help us understand the social world? Does "the will of the people" or "the public interest" really exist? Is there a "fair" way to make political decisions? This course answers these questions and many others by introducing students to positive theory, a rigorous set of tools that helps clarify key questions in political science, economics, law, and biology. Through examples drawn from several fields, we will study how the rules of the game affect the decisions people make as well as the outcomes we observe.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Notre Dame bookstore. I will also provide several handouts over the course of the semester that you will be expected to read.

Nassr, *A Beautiful Mind*
Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies*
Chwe, *Rational Ritual*
Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (Also on reserve at Hesburgh Library)
Twelve Angry Men
Brahms and Taylor, *The Win-Win Solution: Guaranteeing Fair Shares for Everybody*
Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*
Raiffa, *The Art and Science of Negotiation*

Course Requirements

On Tuesday of each week I will present material on that week's topic. No advance reading for these sessions will be required, but you should take careful notes and ask clarifying questions. On Thursday of each week we will discuss a book or series of articles related to that week's topic. You are expected to prepare a 2-3 page paper each week discussing that week's reading(s). This paper should be delivered to me via e-mail by 4:00 p.m. each Wednesday. Late papers will not be accepted.

The course requirements include these short papers and a final exam. Participation, including attendance, will influence your grade and what you gain from the class. The precise method of determining grades is as follows:

Papers: 50%
Exam: 35%
Participation: 15%

Course Schedule

August 26-28: Introduction

Note: No session on August 28.

September 2-4: Rationality

Reading: Amartya Sen, *Rationality and Freedom*, selections

September 9-11: Group Choice, Methods of Aggregating Preferences

Reading: *Twelve Angry Men*

September 16-18: Group Choice, Dilemmas

Reading: TBA

September 23-25: Nash Equilibrium

Reading: Sylvia Nassr, *A Beautiful Mind*

September 30-October 2: Game Theory

Reading: *Game Theory and Animal Behavior*, selections

October 7-9: Prisoner's Dilemma

Reading: Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*

October 14-16: Negotiation

Reading: Raiffa, *The Art and Science of Negotiation*

October 21-23: Mid-Semester Break

October 28-30: Fair Division

Reading: Brahm and Taylor, *The Win-Win Solution*

November 4-6: Collective Action

Reading: Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies*

November 11-13: Coordination

Reading: Michael Chwe, *Rational Ritual*

November 18-20: Tragedy of the Commons

Readings: Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" *Science*, New Series, Vol. 162, No. 3859. (Dec. 13, 1968), pp. 1243-1248.

Ostrom, Governing the Commons (handout)

November 25 (27th is during Thanksgiving Holiday):

Reading: Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*

December 2-4: Diplomacy Week!

December 9: Course Review

December 15, 10:30 a.m. Final Examination