The class concerns formal modeling in politics. The perspective taken is that individuals in politics are as rational and goal-oriented in their decision-making as they are presumed to be in economics. The application of rational choice modeling to understand political behaviour began in the early 1960’s. Since then the field - positive, or formal, political theory - has grown rapidly. This course provides an introduction to positive political theory and describes how formal methods may be used to analyze politics and political institutions.

The text book used in the course is *Analyzing Politics* by K.A. Shepsle and M.S. Bonchek (1997). This offers a broader overview of the field than is provided by the class, along with many applied examples, but it is not at all rigorous. In addition, we use chapters and papers from a variety of sources to supplement the lectures, and the lectures themselves may cover material not covered in any of the texts. The research papers used illustrate methods used in recent research.

Assessment is via a Midterm (35%), a Final (40%) and some homeworks (25%).
Course outline and reading

1. Introduction: Cooperation and coordination; 31 March
   Olson, M. 1965 *The Logic of Collective Action* Chs 1 & 2
   Axelrod, R. 1980 *The Evolution of Cooperation* Ch 1

2. Introduction to Preference aggregation; 2 April

3. Arrow’s Theorem: power and rationality; 7 April
   Arrow, K.J. 1983, *Collected Papers, Volume I* Ch 4
   Shepsle, K.A. & M.S. Bonchek 1997, *Analyzing Politics* Ch 4

4. Majority Rule and May’s Theorem; 9 April
   Shepsle, K.A. & M.S. Bonchek 1997, *Analyzing Politics* Ch 4

5. The spatial model; one dimension: the Median Voter Theorem; 14 April
   Shepsle, K.A. & M.S. Bonchek 1997, *Analyzing Politics* Ch 5

6. Applications and Downsian competition; 16 April
   Downs, A. 1957, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* Ch 8

7. The spatial model; multiple dimensions; 21 April
   Shepsle, K.A. & M.S. Bonchek 1997, *Analyzing Politics* Ch 5

8. Binary agendas and sophisticated voting; 23 April
   Austen-Smith, D. & J.S. Banks 2005 *Positive Political Theory II* pp. 114-122
   Riker, W.H. 1986 *The Art of Political Manipulation* Ch 11
   Shepsle, K.A. & M.S. Bonchek 1997, *Analyzing Politics* Ch 6

9. The spatial model and the top cycle; 28 April

10. **MIDTERM**; 30 April
11. Probabilistic Voting Models; 5 May

12. Probabilistic Voting Models - cont.; 7 May

13. Citizen Candidate Model; 12 May

14. Legislative Bargaining Models; 14 May

15. Political Institutions and Separation of Power; 19 May

16. Political Institutions and Separation of Power, cont.; 21 May
   Lecture note: "Two-stage budgeting"

*Memorial Day: 26 May, not class*

17. Review; 28 May

18. Questions and Answers; 2 June

**EXAM:** 13 June, 9am.