Description

The course focuses on collective decision-making, both from theoretical and more applied view. We will start with classical results from Social Choice theory. We will then look at strategic behavior in collective decision-making: elections, voting in committees, agenda selection and legislative bargaining. We will study both preference aggregation and information aggregation in voting, as well as theories of participation and turnout. Finally, we consider more applied topics, such as: coordination games and revolutions, political campaigns, and dynamics of political institutions.

Students are expected to attend and participate in class discussion, as well as make a presentation about a paper from the reading list at the beginning of a class. By the end of the term, students are expected to write a paper which either explores an original idea, or has a critical review of several related papers. The recommended textbook for the class is Austen-Smith and Banks “Positive Political Theory (I, II)”.

The tentative reading list for each of the ten classes is below.

**Lecture 1. Social choice, Arrow’s theorem, dictatorships and oligarchies.**


**Lecture 2. Social choice with restricted preferences.**


**Lecture 4. Legislative bargaining.**


Baron, David, and Renee Bowen. Dynamic Coalitions, mimeo.

**Lecture 5. Classical voting models. Retrospective versus prospective voting, probabilistic voting models. Electoral competition.**


**Lecture 6. Models of candidate entry and voter turnout.**


**Lecture 7. Information aggregation in voting and communication**


**Lecture 8. Formal models of political campaigns**


Lecture 10. Forward-looking considerations: voting for voters, choosing institutions, etc.


Roberts, Kevin (1999), Dynamic Voting in Clubs, mimeo. [http://economics.ouls.ox.ac.uk/12043/1/te367.pdf](http://economics.ouls.ox.ac.uk/12043/1/te367.pdf)
