

## LECTURES ON EMPIRICAL PUBLIC CHOICE

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Bernard Grofman

Professor of Political Science and Jack W. Peltason Chair of Democracy Studies

University of California, Irvine

[BGTravel@uci.edu](mailto:BGTravel@uci.edu)

Syllabus version 2

### COURSE OVERVIEW

This short course is intended to provide an introduction to empirical applications of spatial models of politics. To provide the necessary background, however, I will also discuss important theoretical models such as Arrow's Theorem and expectations about cyclical majorities. While there is a tradition of studying electoral geography – a research area to which I have contributed, my focus here is on a different notion of spatial modeling, namely the insights we gain when we view actors as making choices over a set of alternatives that be considered as being located in a one or two dimensional issue space. We can trace spatial models in economics in the sense that I am now using the term to economists such as Hotelling (1929) and Smithies (1941) who looked at locational choices of vendors who could gain advantage by locating closer to the customers they sought to serve by minimizing buyer transportation costs and thus lowering the effective price paid by consumers who shopped at their store. But, of course, in political science, the key work is by the economist Downs (1957), *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, which draws on ideas by yet another economist, Joseph Schumpeter, coming from his 1942 book *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Indeed, my second lecture will focus on Downs, and work on party competition in the neo-Downsian tradition, but I will also deal with applications of spatial models in other contexts, e.g., legislative voting and coalition formation (lecture 4) and the ideological scaling of multi-judge decisions (lecture 5). Also, half of my last lecture will deal with a different kind of unidimensionality: information pooling models of collective decision making that can be thought of as extensions of ideas in Condorcet -- where the relevant dimension (or dimensions) can be thought of in probabilistic terms vis-a-vis making the "correct" decision. Also I will consider some non-spatial models as well. In particular, in my third lecture I will look at applications of game theoretic measures of power to the understanding of weighted voted in international organizations and the EU, on the one hand, and of candidate strategies in the U.S. Electoral College, on the other.

## LECTURE OUTLINE

- (1) VOTERS Voter choice with and without ideology, voter turnout
- (2) PARTIES Electoral rules, two-party and multi-party electoral competition; centrifugal and centripetal pressures
- (3) WEIGHTED VOTING Weighted voting rules in international organizations; weighted voting in the U.S. Electoral College; the concept of power
- (4) LEGISLATURES classic social choice theory on majority rule, legislative voting in two party legislatures and voting in experimental committee games; multiparty legislative coalition models
- (5) JURIES AND COURTS Information pooling and jury decision making models; legal decisions as both outcomes and precedent in the U.S. Supreme Court

## BACKGROUND READINGS

Note: the readings below are intended as background to the topics identified above that I will be lecturing on, and the bibliographies in them should also prove helpful, especially those in the more recently published articles. However, my actual lectures will usually not directly be about these papers; rather, my lecture topics will often be broader, more in the nature of overviews of the literature, though they will also sometimes focus on some particular model and its empirical implications and/or tests. Nonetheless, most of the articles will also almost certainly be used as the basis for some short class assignments, and should be read. Starred items cover more advanced and more technical material; those less familiar with the topics should probably just skim the starred items.

1- Calvo, Chang and Hellwig. Beyond Assimilation and Contrast. *Electoral Studies*. 2014

1- Bawn and Somer-Topcu. Issue Voting Differences for Governing and Opposition Parties. *American Journal of Political Science*. 2012

1- Blais et al. The Calculus of Voting. *European Journal of Political Research*. 2000

2- Golder. Democratic Electoral Systems. *Electoral Studies*. 2005.

2- Golder and Clark. Rehabilitating Duverger's Law. *Comparative Political Studies*. 2006

2- \*Balinski and Laraki, Majority Judgment. *Operations Research*. 2014

2- Calvo and Hellwig. Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives. *American Journal of Political Science*. 2012

2- Adams and Merrill. Candidate and Party Strategies. *American Journal of Political Science*. 2008

2- Adams, Ezrow and Letter. Partisan Sorting and Niche Parties. *Western European Politics*. 2012

- 3- Tsebelis and Yatanagas. Veto Players in the EU. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 2002
- 3- Van Roozendaal et al. Voting in the EU Council 1998-2004. *Public Choice*. 2011
- 3- \*Brams and Davis. The Three-halves Rule in the U.S. Electoral College. *American Political Science Review*. 1974
- 4- \*Myerson. Fundamentals of Social Choice Theory. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. 2013.
- 4- \*Bianco, Jeliaskov and Sened. The Uncovered Set and the Limits of Legislative Action. *Political Analysis*. 2004
- 4- Schofield. Multiparty Coalition Politics. *European Journal of Political Research*. 1993
- 4- Laver and Benoit. Basic Arithmetic of Party Types. *American Journal of Political Science*. 2015
- 5- Penrod and Hastie. Modeling Jury Decision-Making. *Psychological Bulletin*, 1987.
- 5- Kornhauser-Modeling Collegial Courts, II. *Law, Economics and Organization*. 1992
- 5- Kornhauser and Sager, Unpacking Courts. *Yale Law Journal*. 1986
- 5- \*Lax. Constructing Legal Rules on Appellate Courts. *American Political Science Review*. 2007