Course Objectives:
The focus of this course is on choices made in the political arena. In order to understand political behavior within political institutions and among the public, we will concentrate on the scientific study of politics, including the development and appropriateness of theories and models regarding political behavior. The use of rational choice analysis and elementary game theory are invaluable in this endeavor. In particular, we will learn about rational choice analysis and how the tools of this theory are utilized by political scientists to study political behavior. Thus, not only will students learn about the politics of political behavior and choice, but students also will begin to understand what it is that many political scientists do.

Baccalaureate Writing Requirement:
This is a writing intensive course which fulfills WMU’s Baccalaureate Writing Requirement. In addition to learning about analysis of political behavior and choice, students will enhance their writing skills.

Course Web Site:
The course web site, which includes course information and links to other sources of information, including this Syllabus, can be found at:
http://homepages.wmich.edu/~mhurwitz/psci4940_polchoice_sp07

Communication of Information:
Information will be communicated from the professor to students in three ways: 1) in class; 2) the course web page; 3) email. Students must activate and check your ‘wmich.edu’ email account to receive messages. Consequently, “I did not receive notice” is not a sufficient excuse.

Required Books:

Recommended Books:
**Assigned Readings:**
Readings on course reserve are available on-line through the WMU Libraries system, [http://www.wmich.edu/library/access/coursereserve.php](http://www.wmich.edu/library/access/coursereserve.php)

**Class Schedule:**
We meet every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30-10:45a.m. during the semester, with the exception of the following dates during which class is cancelled:
- Monday-Friday, March 5-9 – Spring Break
- Thursday, April 12 – Professor attending Midwest Political Science Association Conference

**Writing Assignments:**
There are three writing assignments that will be handed out during the semester. Due dates for the writing assignments are as follows:
- Writing Assignment #1: due Tuesday, February 8 (in class)
- Writing Assignment #2: due Tuesday, March 15 (in class)
- Writing Assignment #3: due Tuesday, April 24 (by 5pm)

The professor will make every attempt to return written assignments within 2 weeks of submission.

**Important Note:** Since this course satisfies the WMU Baccalaureate Writing Requirement, students must turn in all three of the writing assignments. If a student fails to turn in all of the writing assignments, s/he will receive a final course grade of “X” (no exceptions).

**Exams:**
There are four exams in this class, all of which must be taken. The exam schedule follows:
- Exam #1: Thursday, February 1 (during class)
- Exam #2: Thursday, March 1 (during class)
- Exam #3: Tuesday, April 3 (during class)
- Exam #4: Thursday, April 26, 10:15am - 12:15pm (during final exam period)

The exams consist of a variety of question types, including any combination of multiple choice and essays, both short and long. The exams are based on the entire body of material presented in class and in the readings. While the exams are not cumulative per se, much of the class material tested on prior exams remains applicable to that specifically tested on subsequent exams.

The professor will make every attempt to return exam grades within one week of the exam.

**Attendance:**
It is the professor's experience that students who do not regularly attend class tend to do poorly on exams, while students who regularly attend class tend to do much better. While this is true of most courses, it is particularly true of this course. To encourage students to attend class (and thus earn a higher grade than otherwise), attendance will be taken and is worth a portion of the final grade, but only if inclusion of the student’s attendance grade is favorable to the student’s final course grade. Thus, the final course grade is determined by whichever grading option produces the highest grade. Attendance is calculated based on the following formula: [(# of classes attended ÷ total # of classes)*100]. **Note:** if a student is more than 10 minutes late for any particular class, then s/he does not get credit for attending that class. The first day of class and exam days do not count in this equation.
Grading:
The final course grade is based primarily upon performance on the writing assignments, exams, and attendance, as there is no extra credit in this class. Notwithstanding, valuable class participation, in terms of quality and quantity, can positively affect the student's grade, particularly in borderline situations. Thus, constructive participation in class is encouraged.

The final course grade is determined by whichever of the following grading options produces the highest grade:

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Academic Honesty and Integrity:
Per WMU policy: “You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate (pp. 274-276) Catalog that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.”

WMU Turnitin Supplementary Syllabus Statement:
Students who take this class must be prepared to submit electronic copies of some or all assignments. The University expects that all students will be evaluated and graded on their own work. If you use language, data or ideas from other sources, published or unpublished, you must take care to acknowledge and properly cite those sources. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. To deter plagiarism, encourage responsible student behavior, improve student learning and ensure greater accountability, assignments for this class may be submitted to Turnitin® for plagiarism detection. Papers that are submitted to Turnitin® become part of the Turnitin® database (student identities are protected). If you choose to request that your paper(s) not become part of the Turnitin® student papers database this must be communicated to me in writing at the beginning of the course. If the results of a Turnitin® originality report may be used to charge you with plagiarism you will be notified of the result of the report, and you will be given the opportunity to respond per the regular institutional process and procedures that govern student academic conduct (http://www.osc.wmich.edu/academicintegrity/).

Late Papers:
Writing Assignments handed in past the due date will be penalized 10 points per day, commencing at time of each day the each paper is due (10:45am for Assignments #1 and #2; 5pm for Assignment #3). Thus, if a paper is handed in the morning following the date it is due, it will be penalized 20 points. Any paper received more than four days late (including weekend days) will be assigned a grade of zero (0).
**Grading Scale:**
The following numerical averages translate into final course grades:

- 90+: A (4.0)
- 85-89: BA (3.5)
- 80-84: B (3.0)
- 75-79: CB (2.5)
- 70-74: C (2.0)
- 65-69: DC (1.5)
- 60-64: D (1.0)
- 60-: E (0.0)

**Incomplete Grades:**
Note that the professor ordinarily *does not* give grades of Incomplete. Thus, a missed exam counts as a zero (0) toward the final course grade, while a paper not handed in results in a final course grade of “X.”

**Make-up Exams:**
It is completely the student's responsibility to take the exams when they are scheduled. As a general rule, make-up exams *will not be* allowed; thus, a missed exam counts as a zero (0) toward the final course grade. Notwithstanding, at the professor's sole discretion make-ups will be permitted, but only the gravest of reasons will be accepted, *if* documented in writing by the proper authority. Even if there is an acceptable reason for missing the regularly scheduled exam, permission to take a make-up will be granted *only* if the student provides the professor with prompt and proper notification; that is, the student *must* inform the professor of the reason for missing the exam with proper documentation before the exam takes place, *and* the reason must be acceptable to the professor. If a make-up is permitted, both the format and questions can, and likely will, be different from the regularly scheduled exam.

**Special Needs:**
Any student with special needs should inform the professor as soon as possible, so that appropriate accommodations can reasonably be made.

**Class Procedure:**
This is a seminar. Thus, classes are not used simply to go over the assigned readings. Instead, the readings are designed to serve as a point of departure for lectures/discussion. While class will be conducted in a lecture/discussion format, students are encouraged to ask questions or raise issues at any time about the discussion, the readings, or a contemporary political issue as would be appropriate in a seminar. Participation in class is strongly encouraged, both to add to the content of the class and potentially to benefit the student's grade (*see* the section on grading).

**Assignments:**
The schedule of assignments notes the topics to be covered, reading assignments, and the dates for exams and assignments. This schedule will be followed as closely as possible; however, the professor reserves the right to change if necessary, and students will be notified appropriately (in class, email, and/or the web page) of any changes. Additionally, there may be material handed out in class or posted on the class web page for which students additionally are responsible.
Schedule of Assignments:

Note: A reading denoted by * signifies that it is in the Assigned Readings on Course Reserve.

PART I – Analyzing Political Behavior and Choice

A. Introduction to the Scientific Study of Politics; Theoretical Applications (January 9 - 18)
Shepsle and Bonchek, chapter 1

B. Rational Choice Theory and its Usage in Analyzing Politics (January 23 - 30)
Shepsle and Bonchek, chapter 2

Exam #1: Thursday, February 1 (during class)

Writing Assignment #1: due Thursday, February 8 (in class)

C. Rational Choice Theory, Public Goods, and the Collective Action Problem (February 6 - 13)
Shepsle and Bonchek, chapters 3, 8, 9, 10
Golding, chapters 1-6

D. Developing Models: Game Theory and Other Ways of Modeling Political Behavior
(February 15 - 27)
Golding, chapters 7-12

Exam #2: Thursday, March 1 (during class)

Writing Assignment #2: due Thursday, March 15 (in class)
PART II – The Scientific Study of International Politics (March 13 - 29)

A. The Problem of Cooperation
Axelrod, chapter 1

B. The Emergence of Cooperation in International Politics
Axelrod, chapters 2, 3

C. Examples of Cooperation in International Politics
Axelrod, chapters 4, 5, 6, 7

D. Conclusions on Cooperation in International Politics
Axelrod, chapters 8, 9

Exam #3: Tuesday, April 3 (during class)

PART III – The Scientific Study of Behavior and Choice in American Politics (April 5 - 17)

A. Voting
Shepsle and Bonchek, chapters 4, 6, 7
Riker, preface, chapters 4, 8

B. Control of the Agenda (April 10 - 17)
Riker, chapters 2, 7, 12

C. Introducing New Dimensions
Riker, chapters 1, 10, conclusion

PART IV – Conclusions on the Analysis of Political Choice and Behavior

A. Is the Use of Rational Choice Theory Rational or Irrational in the Scientific Study of Politics?
(April 19)
Shepsle and Bonchek, chapter 17
Friedman, Jeffrey. “Introduction: Economic Approaches to Politics.” In Friedman (pp. 1-24)
Chong, Dennis. “Rational Choice Theory's Mysterious Rivals.” In Friedman (pp. 37-58)
Diermeier, Daniel. 1996. “Rational Choice and the Role of Theory in Political Science.” In Friedman (pp. 59-70)
Kelley, Jr., Stanley. “The Promise and Limitations of Rational Choice Theory.” In Friedman (pp. 95-106)
Lohmann, Susanne. “The Poverty of Green and Shapiro.” In Friedman (pp. 127-154)
Shepsle, Kenneth A. “Statistical Political Philosophy and Positive Political Theory.” In Friedman (pp. 213-222)
Taylor, Michael. “When Rationality Fails.” In Friedman (pp. 223-234)
Green, Donald P. and Ian Shapiro. “Pathologies Revisited: Reflections on our Critics.” In Friedman (pp. 235-276)

Writing Assignment #3: due Tuesday, April 24, 5pm

Exam #4: Thursday, April 26, 10:15am - 12:15pm (during final exam period)