PS 559/USP 636: Political and Economic Decision-Making
Professor Birol Yesilada
Fall Quarter 2008
W 14:00 – 16:40pm @ 611 Urban Center
Office Hours: W 1-2pm and F 9-10am or by appointment (503) 725-3257

This course examines the philosophical and conceptual assumptions embodied in alternative decision-making theories in the fields of economics and political science. The course is designed to show students the differences in individual and collective decision-making processes and the technical and social challenges faced in decision-making processes in the market place and the realm of politics. Examples cover local, national, and international policy topics.

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Attendance is mandatory.
2. a. You will be expected to write literature review of weekly assignments covering five of the ten weeks of readings. Each review is worth 10 percent of course grade (total of 50 percent). There is no rigid format for the review essays. However, the critiques should focus on some or all of the following aspects: conceptualization, methodology, findings, and utility (for theory and policy). The descriptive summary of content should be minimal.
   b. You will make one class presentation of a topic of your choice. (10 percent of course grade)
   c. You will be expected to apply the tools of political and economic analysis to a particular research topic (term paper). If you have a previous term paper or empirical research, or have a thesis idea in mind, this course is an excellent opportunity to improve that previous paper or refine that thesis idea. (40 percent of course grade). Term papers are DUE week 10 in class.

Readings:

Class readings are available at Poli Sci library as well as on my web page under PS558/USP 636 (http://web.pdx.edu/~yesilada)

Course Outline:

Week1-2: Introduction to Decision Making Theories & Rational Choice Decision-Making:


Week 3: Collective Action, Public Choice and Public Goods
Joe Stevens, *Economics of Collective Choice*, Ch. 1-3, 5-6

Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action*.

Week 4: Market failure
Joe Stevens, Ch. 3-4

Week 5: Bounded Rationality and Cognitive Models


Week 6: Prospect Theory:

Week 7: Constructivist Approach


Week 8: Bureaucratic Model

Stevens, Ch. 7-11


Graham Allison “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis” *APSR* 63:3 (September 1969):689-718


Week 9: Poliheuristic Model

Special Symposium papers in *International Studies Quarterly* 6:1 (February 2005):94-150. Articles by:

Alex Mintz “Applied decision Analysis: Utilizing Poliheuristic Theory to Explaining and Predicting Foreign Policy and National Security Decisions”

David Brule “Explaining and Forecasting Leaders’ Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision”

Brandon Kinne “Decision-making in Autocratic Regimes: A Poliheuristic Approach”

Stephen Redd “The Influence of Advisers and Decision Strategies on Foreign Policy Choices: President Clinton’s Decision to Use Force in Kosovo”


Week 10: Game Theory

