Institutional Analysis and Design

This course is an introduction to Institutional Analysis and Design. The study of political institutions has been the bread and butter of political science since Aristotle. This course moves past classical institutionalism and treats contemporary ways of analyzing individual behavior in institutions. Try to keep an open mind. In the course you will be reading material gathered from a number of different disciplines. You will be introduced to a number of ways of thinking about the role of institutions for constraining behavior as well as encouraging behavior.

Course Requirements:

The course will be run as a seminar. A seminar means that you will be treated as a "junior colleague." Everyone is expected to contribute to discussion. As a consequence, completing the reading prior to each class meeting is mandatory. This will enable you to ask questions of material that is unclear (and some of it will be) and to force the members of the seminar (including the instructor) to keep on the ball. The readings are noted below. At the end of the syllabus are additional (supplemental) readings that might be of interest. These are arranged by week.

To help you think carefully about the material, I am requiring that you write, each week from Sept. 2 through Dec. 2, a 2-3 page memorandum covering one of the readings. The memorandum should do 4 things. First, it should outline the main point to the book/article. Second, it should indicate how this book/article fits with the others that were assigned for this week. Third it should detail how well the argument or the data support the main point. Fourth it should detail any new directions or extensions that are worthwhile. Because we meet on Wednesday afternoons and I would love to see the memos before class, the memos are due on Tuesday at 12:01 pm. The memo should be emailed to me. I will try to comment on your memos prior to class. In order to make this course run smoothly everyone must turn his or her work in on time! Stragglers will be regarded with ill humor.

You will also be required to write a final paper for the class. The paper will elaborate a question that is critical in your field, the paper will develop the appropriate theoretical contribution, the paper will detail the research design used to test the concept, the paper will discuss the data that would be collected (and build appropriate tables and statistical estimates) and generate a conclusion. Your paper topic will be worked out in advance with the instructor. Note, I do not want you to actually touch data in your paper. I see no reason that you should be constrained by what’s available or what others have already done. Show some imagination.
Books.

These books are required.


Grading:

Grading is straightforward.

- Paper 40%
- Memorandum 40%
- Class Participation 20%

Course Outline:

The following represents a reading list for the semester. The management reserves the right to change the menu. I’ll try to put things up on the website, so check it for up-to-date readings. The supplemental readings (at the end of the syllabus) are for your personal edification. Some might be interesting and I continually add things to the list.

Week 1. (August 26) Writing Exercise

I want you to write a 3 paragraph memo concerning what interests you about political institutions. The first paragraph should introduce your question, making a clear case of why it is important. The second paragraph should focus on the key mechanism that you believe causes the phenomenon that interests you. The third paragraph should detail how you might study (in a scientific manner) the mechanism that you propose in the second paragraph. For sanity’s sake you should not cite anyone. Just write in plain English. Clarity, conciseness and coherence are a must. Note, this assignment should
be emailed to the instructor by 12:01 pm on Tuesday, August 25. Your essays will be discussed in class.

Readings.


**Week 2. (Sept. 2) Overview and Theoretical Concepts**


**Week 3. (Sept. 9) Historical Determinism, Culture and All That**


Lankina, T., and L. Getachew. (2012). "$\text{Mission or Empire, Word or Sword?}$" \phantomsection


**Week 4 (Sept. 16). Norms**


**Week 5 (Sept. 23). Transaction Costs and Contracting Problems.**


**Week 6 (Sept. 30). Weak Monitoring.**


Week 7 (Oct. 7). Principal-Agents and Delegation.


Week 8 (Oct. 14). Rules I

Ostrom, Elinor. *Understanding Institutional Diversity* – Chapters 1-4


Week 9 (Oct. 21). Rules II

Ostrom, Elinor. *Understanding Institutional Diversity* – Chapters 5-7


Week 10 (Oct. 28). Collective Action and Common Pool Resource Dilemmas

Ostrom, Elinor. *Understanding Institutional Diversity* – Chapters 8-9


Week 11 (Nov. 4). Endogenous Choice of Institutions and Your Research Design

I want you to write up a 5-6 page outline of your paper. In this I expect: (a) a problem statement, (b) identifying the appropriate literature (what are you doing that is new), (c) an overview of your experimental design and (d) what you expect to find. We will discuss all of your topics in class.


*Week 12 (Nov. 11). Institutions Shaping Preferences or Vice Versa?*


*Week 13 (Nov. 18). Institutional Design and Political Systems*

Week 14 (Nov. 25). Work on Your Design

Week 15 (Dec. 2). In class presentation of design

Final Paper Due 5:00 pm (Dec. 16)
Supplemental Readings

Week 2. (Sept. 2) Overview and Theoretical Concepts


Henrich, Joe, Kevin McCabe, Wulf Albers, Rob Boyd, Peyton Young, Axel Ockenfels and Gerd Gigerenzer "What is the Role of Culture in Bounded Rationality?" In Gerd Gigerenzer and Reinhart Selten (eds.) *Bounded Rationality: The Adaptive Toolbox*.


*Week 4 (Sept. 16). Norms*


**Week 5 (Sept. 23). Transaction Costs and Contracting Problems.**


**Week 7 (Oct. 7). Principal-Agents and Delegation.**


**Week 8 (Oct. 14). Rules I**


**Week 10 (Oct. 28). Collective Action and Common Pool Resource Dilemmas**


Haller, T., and S. Merten. 2008. ""We are Zambians-Don't Tell Us How to Fish!" Institutional Change, Power Relations and Conflicts in the Kafue Flats


*Week 13 (Nov. 18). Institutional Design and Political Systems*


