Description:
Introduces students to social choice theory applied to political science. It focuses on (1) individual choice, (2) group choice, (3) collective action, and (4) institutions. It looks at models of individuals' voting behavior, the incentive structures of interest groups, and the role of institutions. The emphasis is analytical, though students are not expected to have a background in formal mathematics.

The course covers some of the major topics studied in Positive Political Theory: The aggregation of preferences from individual preferences to social preferences, voting, electoral competition and electoral systems, legislature voting and separation of powers.

This course will familiarize the students with the analytical tools of decision theory, social choice theory and, briefly, game theory (students interested in game theory are encouraged to take V53.0840: Introduction to Game Theory in Political Science). At the same time, the students will learn to systematically organize and express their thoughts and insights about political questions with the precision and logical rigor of scientific language.

Readings:
- Required textbook for the course:
- Recommended reading:
  - Riker (1982) "Liberalism Against Populism".

Requirements:
There will be homework, and a final exam. Doing the homework is both required to pass the course, and the best preparation for the final.

Tentative Schedule:
Week 1: Introduction. What is Social Choice?
Week 3: Condorcet Paradox and Arrow’s Impossibility Theorem.
Week 4: Manipulation of Social Choice Rules.
Week 5: The Spatial Model. Median Voter Theorem.
Week 8: Basic elements of Game Theory.
Week 9: Collective Action.
Week 10: Public Goods.
Week 11: Electoral Systems
Week 12: Agenda Control
Week 13: Legislative Organization and Separation of Powers.
Week 14: Make-up classes. Review of Problem Sets. Q&A.