

Professor David Primo
Harkness Hall 318
david.primo@rochester.edu

Fall 2015, Tues. and Thurs. 12:30-1:45
Office Hours: Mon. 1:30-3:30 PM, and by appt.
<http://www.rochester.edu/College/PSC/primo>

PSC 238: Business and Politics

This Version: August 31, 2015

Course Description

The focus of this course is the conflict and cooperation between business and government, with an emphasis on U.S. domestic politics. We will cover a broad range of issues affecting the business world, including regulation, lawmaking, the mass media, interest group activism, and crisis management. The course will connect ongoing political debates to theory, and guest speakers will bring their business and political experience to our class. Each meeting will feature a general topic, as well as in-depth analyses of real-world cases related to that topic. What happens when Wal-Mart tries to open a new store in a city with strong unions? Who is opposed to grocery stores selling wine, and why? How did General Motors fight back against a media report critical of its products? Is “corporate social responsibility” actually irresponsible? These are just a few of the questions we’ll answer during the semester, all while developing an understanding of what happens when politics meets economics.

Readings

There is one required textbook for the course: *Business and Its Environment*, 7th ed., by David P. Baron. Two copies of the textbook are on 2-hour reserve in Rush Rhees Library. Additional required readings are available in the Reserves section of the course Blackboard page; readings added later in the semester will also be placed here. Textbook readings for the first three classes are also available in the Reserves section of Blackboard for those students who are not able to acquire a textbook immediately.

Course Requirements

- **Exams**
There will be three closed-book exams in the course on October 1, November 5, and December 10. There is no final exam. *Make-up exams are not given—exceptions are rarely granted.*
- **Analysis Questions**
For certain classes, indicated by “HW Due” on the syllabus, you will be asked to analyze a case or answer discussion/reading questions. Questions are available in the Assignments section of Blackboard. In order to receive credit, answers should reflect careful thought. Assignments are due in class on the day the case or topic is discussed. *Late assignments will not be accepted.*

Grading

- *Exams* each count toward 30 percent of your grade.
- *Analysis Questions* collectively count toward 10 percent of your grade. You are required to turn in 6 assignments to receive full credit for this portion of your grade. If you turn in fewer than 6 assignments, your grade will be reduced proportionally. For instance, if you turn in only 5 assignments, you will receive 8.3 out of 10 points for this portion of your grade.

Teaching Assistant

There is one teaching assistant for this course. The TA is available to answer your questions about course material. The TA is also authorized to address your questions regarding exam and homework grading.

Peter Bills
Harkness Hall 109A, pbils@ur.rochester.edu
Office Hours: Tues. 3-4 PM

Course Meetings

Note 1: Exam dates are set in stone and will not change. I will give you plenty of advance notice for any other changes I make to the syllabus, and confirm what material will be covered on each exam.

Note 2: Chapters and page numbers refer to the Baron text; non-textbook readings are listed by author last name or title (if no author) and are available on Blackboard. Readings will be discussed on the days listed; for instance, the reading for the Private Politics class will be covered on September 15.

1. Tuesday, September 1: Course Overview/Introduction to the Nonmarket Environment

Reading: Chapter 1 (pp. 1-16)

2 and 3. Thursday, September 3 and Tuesday, September 8: Integrated Strategy

Reading: Chapter 2 (pp. 30-47)

Case: Amazon.com and the Amazon Tax (pp. 225-229)

HW Due (Sept. 8): Analysis questions (Blackboard; do not answers preparation questions in case)

4. Thursday, September 10: The News Media

Reading: Chapter 3 (pp. 52-69) and watch online lecture (Blackboard, available by 9/4)

Case: General Motors Like a Rock? (A) (pp. 69-71)

HW Due: Analysis questions (Blackboard; do not answers preparation questions at the end of the case)

5. Tuesday, September 15: Private Politics

Reading: Chapter 4 (pp. 74-91)

Case: Shell, Greenpeace, and Brent Spar (pp. 92-95)

HW Due: Analysis questions (Blackboard; do not answers preparation questions at the end of the case)

6. Thursday, September 17: Nonmarket Analysis for Business

Reading: Chapter 6 (pp. 132-140; 149-156)

Case: Business versus Business (pp. 158-160)

7. and 8. Tues., Sept. 22 and Thurs., Sept. 24: Nonmarket Strategy Formulation and Implementation

Reading: Chapter 7 (pp. 162-183) and Chapter 8 (pp. 195-213)

Case: Wal-Mart and Its Urban Expansion Strategy (pp. 218-220)

HW Due (Sept. 24): Answer questions 1-4 at the end of the Wal-Mart case

9. Tuesday, September 29: Nonmarket Strategy Application: Fuel Economy Standards

Reading: Review Chapters 7 and 8 (pp. 162-183, 195-213)

Case: Fuel Economy Standards 2007 (Blackboard)

10. Thursday, October 1: *Exam 1 (covers classes 1 through 8)*

*****Tuesday, October 6: No Class (Fall Break)**

11. Thursday, October 8: Crisis Management

Guest Speaker: Richard Keil, Senior Media Relations Advisor, ExxonMobil

Reading: Chapter 5 (pp. 102-116)

- 12 and 13. Tuesday, Oct. 13 and Thursday, Oct. 15: Pivotal Politics and Nonmarket Strategy**
Reading: Chapter 7 (pp. 152-156, 171-172, 174-178)
Case: Federal Express and Labor Organization (p. 188)
HW Due (October 13): Answer questions 1-4 at the end of the FedEx case
- 14. Tuesday, October 20: Antitrust**
Reading: Chapter 9 (pp. 230-238, 244-252; skim 239-243)
Case: The Microsoft Antitrust Case (pp. 257-263)
- 15. Thursday, October 22: Topic TBA**
Guest Speaker: Nomi Bergman, President, Bright House Networks
Reading: TBA
- 16. Tuesday, October 27: Regulation and Rulemaking**
Reading: Chapter 10 (pp. 264-276, skim 277-285)
Case: The FCC Media Ownership Rules (Blackboard)
- 17. Thursday, October 29: The Politics of Alcohol Sales**
Reading: Wiseman and Ellig (Blackboard)
HW Due: Analysis questions
- 18. Tuesday, November 3: Regulatory Uncertainty and Integrated Strategy**
Reading: Fremeth and Richter (Blackboard)
HW Due: Analysis questions
- 19. Thursday, November 5: Exam 2 (covers classes 9, 11-17)**
- 20. Tuesday, November 10: Occupational Speech**
Guest Speaker: Robert McNamara, Senior Attorney, Institute for Justice
Reading: Reading Packet
- 21. Thursday, November 12: Regulatory Uncertainty and Innovation**
Reading: Reading Packet
HW Due: Analysis Questions
- 22 and 23. Tuesday, November 17 and Thursday, November 19: Corporate Social Responsibility**
Reading: Chapter 20 (pp. 557-580); Reading Packet
HW Due (November 17): Analysis questions
- 24. Tuesday, November 24: Corporate Disclosure**
Reading: Reading Packet
- ***Thursday, November 26: No Class (Thanksgiving)**
- 25. Tuesday, December 1: TBA**
26. Thursday, December 3: TBA
27. Tuesday, December 8: TBA/Course Wrap-Up
28. Thursday, December 10: Exam 3 (covers classes 18, 20-27)

There is no final examination in this course.