Course syllabus PPGC66 H3 PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

Fall 2020

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Course description: PPGC66 is an introduction to the concepts, theories, and analytical tools used by social scientists to understand policy making. Topics covered include utility theory, social choice, institutions, data and evidence interpretation, policy analysis, basic game theory, and the policy process. Throughout the course, students will apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to explain real-world policy making.

Format: PPGC66 consists of eleven online lectures, nine mandatory online tutorials, two optional review tutorials, a two-part research essay, three short reflection papers, and two 120 minute closed-book online examinations. Students are encouraged to comment on the material and post questions to the online discussion boards. In tutorials, students will complete exercises designed to hone their analytical skills.

Students may view lecture videos and complete tutorial exercises whenever is most convenient in a given week. Lectures and tutorial assignments are posted to Quercus by 1pm each Monday. The class discussion board is moderated daily. Please be mindful of due dates.

Readings: All readings are posted to the PPGC66 Quercus page.

Grading Scheme and Course Requirements:

Midterm exam (19 October)	17%
Paper proposal (due 26 October)	10%
Term paper (due 4 December)	20%
Final exam (22 December)	33%
Tutorial assignments (see weekly schedule)	15%
Reflection exercises (see weekly schedule)	5%

Exams: The midterm will take place online on 19 October. The midterm will be available for twenty-four hours, but students must complete the exam within 120 minutes of beginning (that should be <u>plenty</u> of time). The final exam will be held online on 22 December from 12 - 2pm. Both exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions <u>based on the material covered in lecture</u>. The final exam is cumulative but will emphasize material covered after the midterm. Both are closed-book examinations. Students are expected to complete exams in a quiet space with personal electronic devices turned off and all other applications closed. Students are expected to refrain from discussing exams on the days in which they are held. Please familiarize yourself with the university's policies on academic offenses.

Paper proposal: Students must submit a 3-5 page summary of the policy or policies they wish to analyze in their final essays. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure an early start on the term paper. It is not necessary at this stage to include any theory or explanation; rather, the proposal should focus on empirical description. Proposals can be single or (preferably) double-spaced and employ three-quarter or one inch margins. The assignment is due by 11:59pm on 26 October. Late assignments will be penalized five percentage points per day late, beginning at 12:00am. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric for the assignment are posted on the course Quercus page.

Essay assignment: Devise a deductive theory and test it against a case or cases of policymaking from the real world. As noted in the Week 1 lecture, a deductive theory is one which specifies predictions in advance. Finer details are covered in the Week 9 lecture. Do not hesitate to get in touch with the instructor for guidance on how to structure your essay.

Students may draw on readings from the course syllabus, peer reviewed journal articles, monographs, edited volumes and official sources. Media and other reports may be cited for their empirical content. Outside research is only required for the empirical component of the assignment; students may rely entirely on material covered in the course for the theory component of the assignment. Students should start their papers early, work on them daily, and seek guidance from the instructor (the earlier the better). The minimum word count is 2,500 words, including abstract, bibliography, notes, and tables. Papers may include all or a portion of the text from the paper proposal assignment. Essays should be written in the format of a scholarly article, be single or (preferably) double-spaced, employ three-quarter or one inch margins, and use APA or Chicago style references. The assignment is due by 11:59pm on 4 December. Late papers will be penalized five percentage points per day late, beginning at 12:00am. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric for the assignment are posted on the course Quercus page.

Tutorial assignments: Tutorial assignments are intended to refine students' analytical skills. Some of the problems dealt with in tutorials are quite challenging. Tutorial grades are based solely on exercise completion. Correct solutions will be given. <u>Only material covered in lectures will appear on exams</u>. Tutorial assignments are due by 11:59pm Sunday of the assigned week. Late tutorial assignments will not be accepted, except in extenuating circumstances.

Reflection exercises: Students will be required to submit three 500-700 word reflection papers throughout the term (see weekly schedule). Reflection papers are due by 11:59pm Sunday of the assigned week. Late reflection papers will not be accepted, except in extenuating circumstances. Grades will be based on whether the response satisfactorily answers all aspects of the question and clarity of writing.

Assignment submission: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. <u>Submission to Turnitin is voluntary</u>. Students who wish to submit written assignments by other means must make arrangements with the instructor at least one week prior to the assignment due date.

Missed tests, late assignments, extensions and absences: Extensions will be granted, and absences excused, only in the event of documented necessity. Late assignments will be penalized five percentage points per day late. No assignments will be accepted after 7 December, except under extenuating circumstances. If a student must submit an assignment after 7 December, a petition through the faculty administration may be required.

Grade appeals: Grades for assignments may be appealed, first, to the course instructor and, subsequently, to the department. Students should be advised that regraded assignments may receive a lower mark than the one given by the original evaluator.

Discussion boards: There are two online discussion boards for the course. One discussion board is moderated by the instructor and is intended for students' questions and comments. The other discussion board is solely for student discussion, and is not moderated by the instructor. See the Quercus main page.

Anonymous feedback: Help improve the course as it is delivered by submitting anonymous feedback at: https://tinyurl.com/PPGC66feedback

Office hours: office hours will be held virtually on Mondays from 3 – 5pm. Students may book fifteen minute slots at https://tinyurl.com/PPGC66OH. E-mail the instructor if other arrangements are necessary.

Accessibility needs: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require assistance or have any accessibility concerns, please visit: https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/

Academic misconduct: Make sure the information in your essays, assignments and tests is your own and in your own words. Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be handled according to the rules in the university's Code of Behaviour. For further information, see the University of Toronto's policy on academic integrity at: https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/academic-integrity

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 (September 14): introduction

Topics covered: policy instruments, the policy process, the scientific method, institutions and institutionalism, advocacy coalitions, policy paradigms, constitutions (constituent policy), institutional design

Optional reading:

North, Douglass. (1990). An introduction to institutions and institutional change. In *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance* (pp. 3-10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilder, Matt. (2017). Comparative public policy: Origins, themes, new directions. *Policy Studies Journal*, 45(S1): 47-65.

Further reading:

Hall, Peter. (1993). Policy paradigms, social learning and the state. *Comparative Politics*, 25(3): 275-96.

Sabatier, Paul. (2007). The need for better theories. In P. Sabatier (ed.) *Theories of the policy process*, 2nd ed. (pp. 3-17). Boulder, CO: Westview.

DeLeon, Peter. (1999). The stages approach to the policy process: what has it done? where is it going? In P. Sabatier (ed.) *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 19-31). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Hall, Peter & Taylor, Rosemary. (1996). Political science and the three new institutionalisms. *Political Studies*, 44(5): 936-57.

Schmidt, Vivian. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth 'new institutionalism.' *European Political Science Review*, 2(1): 1-25.

Howlett, Michael. (2011). Policy design and implementation tool choices. In *Designing public policies* (pp. 41-59). London: Routledge.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank et al. (2014). The advocacy coalition framework: foundations, evolution, and ongoing research. In P. Sabatier & C. Weible (eds.) *Theories of the policy process*, 3rd ed. (pp. 183-223). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Schlager, Edella. (2007). A comparison of frameworks, theories, and models of policy processes. In P. Sabatier (ed.) *Theories of the policy process*, 2nd ed. (pp. 293-320). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Jones, Bryan. (2001). Traces of eve. In *Politics and the architecture of choice*. (pp. 3-23). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simeon, Richard. (1976). Studying public policy. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 9(4): 548-80.

Wilder, Matt. (2016). Whither the funnel of causality? *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 49(4), 721-41.

Week 2 (September 21): regime types

Topics covered: constitutions, electoral systems, governing institutions, interest intermediation, representation, institutional friction

Required reading:

Lijphart, Arendt. (2012). Introduction. In *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six Countries*, 2nd ed. (pp. 1–8). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tsebelis, George. (2002). Introduction. In *Veto players: How political institutions work*. (pp. 1-6). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hall, Peter & Soskice, David. (2001). Preface. In P. A. Hall & D. W. Soskice (Eds.), *Varieties of capitalism: The institutional foundations of comparative advantage* (pp. v–viii). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. (1990). Introduction. In *Three worlds of welfare capitalism* (pp.13-19). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brennan, Geoffrey, & Buchanan, James. (1985). Preface. In *The reason of rules: Constitutional political economy*. (pp. ix-xiv). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further reading:

Hall, Peter & Soskice, David. (2001). An introduction to the varieties of capitalism. In P. A. Hall & D. W. Soskice (Eds.), *Varieties of capitalism: The institutional foundations of comparative advantage* (pp. 1–68). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. (1990). The three political economies of the welfare state. In *Three* worlds of welfare capitalism (pp. 21-62). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lijphart, Arendt. (2012). Constitutions: Amendment procedures and judicial review. In *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six Countries*, 2nd ed. (pp. 204–25). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Buchanan, James & Tullock, Gordon. (1962). The organization of human activity. In *The calculus of consent: Logical foundations of constitutional democracy* (pp.41-59). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Blais, André et al. (2010). Public spending, public deficits and government coalitions. *Political Studies*, *58*(5): 829-48.

Franzese, Robert. (2002). Introduction. In *Macroeconomic policies of developed democracies* (pp. 1-61). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tsebelis, George (2002). Macroeconomic policies. In *Veto players: how political institutions work* (pp. 187–207). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tutorial exercise: preference ordering using notation

Reflection paper due: what about policymaking is interesting to you? What do you hope to get out of this course?

Week 3 (September 28): social choice I —policymaking as group (committee) decisionmaking

Topics covered: preference ordering, Condorcet's paradox, the (im)possibility theorem

Required reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth. (2010). Getting started with group choice analysis. In *Analyzing politics*, 2nd ed. (pp. 41-52). New York: W.W. Norton.

Further reading:

Black, Duncan. (1948). On the rationale of group decision-making. *Journal of Political Economy*, 56(1): 23-34.

Arrow, Kenneth. (1963). The general possibility theorem for social welfare functions. In *Social choice and individual values*, 2nd ed. (pp. 46-60). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Riker, William. (1961). Voting and the summation of preferences: an interpretive bibliographic review of selected developments during the last decade. *American Political Science Review*, *55*(4): 900-11.

Tutorial exercise: marginal rate of substitution, indifference curves and budget constraints

Week 4 (October 5): social choice II —spatial models and multidimensional choice situations

Topics covered: spatial models, winsets, decision rules, median voter theorem, the chaos theorem

Required reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth. (2010). Spatial models of majority rule. In *Analyzing politics*, 2nd ed. (pp. 90-155). New York: W.W. Norton.

Further reading:

Ordeshook, Peter. (1986). Individual preference and individual choice. In *Game theory and political theory: an introduction* (pp. 1-52). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Niou, Emerson & Ordeshook, Peter. (2015). Politics as a game. In *Strategy and politics* (pp. 1-43). New York: Routledge.

Hotelling, Harold. (1929). Stability in competition. The Economic Journal, 39(153): 41-57

Downs, Anthony. (1957). An economic theory of political action in a democracy. *Journal of Political Economy*, 65(2): 135-50

McKelvey, Richard. (1976). Intransitivities in multidimensional voting models and some implications for agenda control. *Journal of Economic Theory*, *12*(3): 472-82.

Tutorial exercise: modelling winsets (mandatory) graphing problem sets (optional exam review)

Reflection paper due: lay out your ideas regarding case study topics for the upcoming essay outline assignment

Reading break — no class

Week 5 (October 19): midterm exam

Week 6 (October 26): agenda-setting

Topics covered: agenda procedures, mobilization, entrepreneurship, heresthetics, veto power, gatekeeping

Required reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth. (2010). Legislatures. In *Analyzing politics*, 2nd ed. (pp. 369-406). New York: W.W. Norton.

Laver, Michael, & Shepsle, Kenneth. (1996). Theory, institutions and government formation. In *Making and breaking governments: cabinets and legislatures in parliamentary democracies* (pp. 3-18). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Laver, Michael., & Shepsle, Kenneth. (1996). Governments and parliaments. In *Making and breaking governments: cabinets and legislatures in parliamentary democracies* (pp. 277-88). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further reading:

Cobb, Roger, Ross, Jennie, & Ross, Marc. (1976). Agenda building as a comparative political process. *American Political Science Review*, *70*(1): 126-38.

Kingdon, John. (1995). The policy window, and joining the streams. In *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*, 2nd ed. (pp. 165-95). New York: Harper Collins.

Schattschneider, E.E. (1960). The scope of bias and the pressure system. In *The semisovereign people* (pp. 20-45). New York: Hold, Rinehart Winston.

Downs, Anthony. (1972). Up and down with ecology —the "issue-attention cycle." *Public Interest*, 28(1): 38-50.

Mueller, Dennis. (2003). Why so much stability? In *Public choice III* (pp. 114-27). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shepsle, Kenneth. (1979). Institutional arrangements and equilibrium in multidimensional voting models. *American Journal of Political Science*, 23(1): 27-59.

Shepsle, Kenneth & Weingast, Berry. (1981). Structure-induced equilibrium and legislative choice. *Public Choice*, *37*(3): 503-19

Riker, William. (1986). Preface. In *The strategy of rhetoric* (pp. ix-xi). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Riker, William (1986). Conclusion. In *The strategy of rhetoric* (pp. 142-52). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Skogstad, Grace & Wilder, Matt (2019). Strangers at the gate: the role of multidimensional ideas, policy anomalies and institutional gatekeepers. *Policy Sciences*, *52*(3): 343-66.

Tutorial exercise: expected utility

Week 7 (November 2): preference origins ---psychology, culture, discourse, and ideas

Topics covered: attention, bias, cognitive friction, heuristics, culture, framing, persuasion, satisficing

Required reading:

Jones, Bryan. (2001). Adaptation and its limits. In *Politics and the architecture of choice* (pp. 24-53). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jones, Bryan. (2001). Procedural limits on adaptive choice. In *Politics and the architecture of choice* (pp. 54-83). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kahan, Dan & Braman, Donald. (2006). Cultural cognition and public policy. *Yale Law and Policy Review*, 24(1): 149-72.

Further reading:

Jones, Bryan. (1994). A change of mind or a change of focus. In *Reconceiving decision-making in democratic politics: attention, choice, and public policy* (pp. 78-102). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Blyth, Mark. (2013). Paradigms and paradox: the politics of economic ideas in two moments of crisis. *Governance*, 26(2): 197-215.

Schmidt, Vivien. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: the explanatory power of ideas and discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1): 303-26.

Wilson, Rick. (2011). The contribution of behavioural economics to political science. *American Review of Political Science*, 14(1): 201-23

Simon, Herbert. (1985). Human nature in politics: the dialogue of psychology with political science. *American Political Science Review*, *79*(2): 293-304.

Kahneman, Daniel & Tversky, Amos. (1979). Prospect theory: an analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47(2): 263-91.

Kahneman, Daniel & Tversky, Amos. (1983). Choices, values, and frames. *American Psychologist*, *39*(4): 341-50.

Tversky, Amos & Kahneman, Daniel. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: heuristics and biases. *Science*, *185*(4): 1124-31.

Tutorial exercise: regression basics —design and interpretation

Week 8 (November 9): punctuated equilibrium theory

Topics covered: punctuated equilibrium theory, policy subsystems, policy image, venue change

Required reading:

Baumgartner, Frank & Jones, Bryan. (1991). Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems. *Journal of Politics*, 53(4): 1044-74.

Jones, Bryan et al. (2009). A general empirical law of public budgets: a comparative analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(4): 855-73.

Further reading:

Baumgartner, Frank & Jones, Bryan. (1993). Punctuated equilibria in politics. In *Agendas and instability in American politics* (pp. 3-24). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jones, Bryan & Baumgartner, Frank. (2005). How government processes information and prioritizes problems. In *The politics of attention* (pp. 7-28). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baumgartner, Frank & Jones, Bryan. (2015). Search, information, and policy agendas. In *The politics of information* (pp. 5-18). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Redford, Emmette. (1969). Micropolitics and subsystem politics. In *Democracy in the administrative state* (pp. 83-106). New York: Oxford University Press.

Redford, Emmette. (1969). The macropolitical system. In *Democracy in the administrative state* (pp. 107-31). New York: Oxford University Press.

Tutorial exercise: policy analysis with interrupted time-series

Week 9 (November 16): methods, methodology, and policy analysis

Topics covered: case studies, large-N analysis, mixed methods, case selection

Required reading:

Mahoney, James. (2008). Toward a unified theory of causality. *Comparative Political Studies*, *41*(4/5): 412-36

Lieberman, Evan. (2005). Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. *American Political Science Review*, *99*(3): 435-52.

Further reading:

Geddes, Barbara. (1990). How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis*, 2(1): 131-50.

Rohlfing, Ingo. (2008). What you see and what you get: pitfalls and principles of nested analysis in comparative research. *Comparative Political Studies*, *41*(11): 1492-1514.

Schlager, Edella. (2007). A comparison of frameworks, theories, and models of policy processes. In P. Sabatier (ed.) *Theories of the policy process*, 2nd ed. (pp. 293-320). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Witt, Michael & Jackson, Gregory. (2016). Varieties of capitalism and institutional comparative advantage: A test and reinterpretation. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(7): 778-806.

Tutorial exercise: interpreting game matrixes

Reflection paper due: *outline your ideas so far regarding a deductive theory of policymaking to be implemented in the final essay assignment*

Week 10 (November 23): types of goods and governance

Topics covered: collective action, joint production, coordination, leadership, cooperation, defection, path dependence

Required reading:

Axelrod, Robert (1984). The problem of cooperation. In *The evolution of cooperation* (pp. 3-23). New York: Basic Books.

Picciotto, Robert. (1995). The fundamentals of institutional design. In *Putting institutional economics to work* (pp. 6-12). Washington, DC. World Bank.

Schneider, Mark & Teske, Paul. (1992). Toward a theory of the political entrepreneur: evidence from local government. *American Political Science Review*, 86(3): 737-47.

Further reading:

Phillips, Peter. (2007). Governing production, marketing and consumption. In *Governing transformative technological innovation* (pp. 233-65). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Muller, Dennis. (2003). The reason for collective choice —allocative efficiency. In *Public choice III* (pp. 9-43). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gruber, Jonathan. (2011). Public goods. In *Public finance and public policy*, 3rd ed. (pp. 181-204). New York: Worth Publishers.

Olson, Mancur. (1971). The by-product and "special interest" theories. In *The logic of collective action*, 2nd ed. (pp. 132-68). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Frohlich, Norman, Oppenheimer, Joe & Young, Oran. (1971). Introduction. *Political leadership and collective goods* (pp. 3-11). Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. (1990). Reflections on the commons. In *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action* (pp. 1-28). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. (2010). The comparative study of public economies. *The American Economist*, *61*(1): 91-107.

Scharpf, Fritz. (1993). Coordination in hierarchies and networks. In *Coordination in hierarchies and networks* (pp. 125-66). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Pierson, Paul. (2000) Not just what, but when: timing and sequence in political processes. *Studies in American Political Development*, 14(1): 72-92.

Tutorial exercise: cost-benefit analysis

Week 11 (November 30): principal-agent relationships

Topics covered: span of control, capture, bureaucratic drift (agency-slippage)

Required reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth. (2010). Bureaucracy and intergovernmental relations. In *Analyzing politics*, 2nd ed. (pp. 407-44). New York: W.W. Norton.

Miller, Gary. (1992). The indeterminacy of cooperation. In *Managerial dilemmas* (pp. 199-215). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further reading:

McCubbins, Matthew, Noll, Roger & Weingast, Berry. (1989). Structure and process, politics and policy: Administrative arrangements and political control of agencies. *Virginia Law Review*, *3*(2): 431-82.

McCubbins, Matthew, Noll, Roger & Weingast, Berry. (1987). Administrative procedures as instruments of political control. *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization*, *3*(2): 243-77.

Stigler, George. (1971). The theory of economic regulation. *The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science*, 2(1): 3-21.

Dixit, Avinash. (1997). Studies of incentives in government bureaucracies. *The American Economic Review*, 87(2): 378-82.

Dixit, Avinash. (2002). Incentives and organizations in the public sector: an interpretive review. *The Journal of Human Resources*, *37*(4): 696-727.

Wilson, James Q. (1989). Bureaucracy and the public interest. In *Bureaucracy* (pp. 365-78). New York: Basic Books.

Tullock, Gordon. (1985). Rents and rent seeking. In Rowley et al. (eds.) *The political economy of rent seeking* (pp. 33-9). Boston: Kluwer.

Tutorial exercise: making deductive arguments

Week 12 (December 7): equity and welfare

Topics covered: redistribution, justice, optimality

Required reading:

Sen, Amartya. (2017). Justice and equity. In *Collective choice and social welfare, expanded edition* (pp. 337-64). New York: Penguin.

Rawls, John. (2001). The argument from the original position. In *Justice as fairness: a restatement* (pp. 80-134). Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Further reading:

Acemoglu, Daron & Robinson, James (2001). Inefficient redistribution. *American Journal of Political Science*, *95*(3): 649-61.

Buchanan, James & Tullock, Gordon. (1962). Democratic ethics and economic efficiency. In *The calculus of consent* (pp. 253-68). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Sen, Amartya. (2017). The idea of rights. In *Collective choice and social welfare, expanded edition* (pp. 420-46). New York: Penguin.

Sen, Amartya. (2009). Introduction. In The idea of justice (pp. 1-30). Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Sen, Amartya. (2009). Rawls and beyond. In *The idea of justice* (pp. 52-74). Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Scharpf, Fritz & Mohr, Mathias. (1994). Efficient self-coordination in policy networks: a simulation study. Max Planck Working Paper 94(1): 2-61.

Wilder, Matt. (2018). Debating basic income: distributive justice and the normative-technical nexus. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *51*(2): 279-303.

Tutorial exercise: interpretation problem sets (optional exam review)