

Economics 895

Experimental Public Choice

Department of Economics
George Mason University
Spring 2011

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Time and Place: 1:30 pm - 4:10 pm; Arlington: Founders Hall 470

Class home page:
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Course Rationale:

Experimental Public Choice is an emerging field in economics. Although public choice has been tested in the lab here or there for many years, recently there has been a large increase in interest and volume of papers. Here at George Mason University, we are particularly well situated to contribute to this research given that Mason is the home of public choice research and has an excellent experimental group.

Course Theme and Objective:

The course is designed to familiarize student with current work in experimental public choice.

The course is designed help students advance to a stage where they can begin work on a dissertation or research paper in experimental public choice.

Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 2:00pm - 3:30pm, at Carow Hall, and by appointment. If you have a question, please feel free to contact me at tstratma@gmu.edu.

Evaluations:

Grades for the course will be based on class participation and on your presentations (50%) as well as your proposal for an experimental design (50%).

To help foster the ability do academic research in a timely fashion, this class will have two writing assignments. The first is a 5-page minimum double-spaced research proposal. The proposal is due early-March. The proposal should outline the research question, identify why this is an interesting topic, outline the current literature on the topic, and identify how you will answer the question with an experiment. The topic must be in public choice. Your final research proposal that includes an experimental design is due the last day of classes.

Reading List

Experiments in Public Choice

Review paper:

Houser, Daniel and Thomas Stratmann, " Gordon Tullock and Experimental Economics" Public Choice, Forthcoming

Markets for votes

Casella Alessandra, Aniol Llorente-Saguer Thomas R. Palfrey -"Competitive Equilibrium in Markets for Votes" *Working paper*. 2010.

Rent seeking

Anderson, L. and Stafford, S. (2003) An experimental analysis of rent seeking under varying competitive conditions," *Public Choice*. 115 (1-2): 199-216.

Anderson, L. & Freeborn, B. (2010). "Varying the intensity of competition in a multiple prize rent seeking experiment," *Public Choice*, 143(1), 237-54.

Anderson, S., Goeree, J., & Holt, C. (1998). Rent seeking with bounded rationality: An analysis of the all-pay auction. *Journal of Political Economy*, 106(4), 828-53.

Davis, D., and Reilly, R. (1998). Do many cooks always spoil the stew? An experimental analysis of rent seeking and the role of a strategic buyer. *Public Choice*. 95: 89–115.

Millner, E., & Pratt, M. (1989). An experimental investigation of efficient rent-seeking. *Public Choice*, 62(2), 139-51.

Millner, E., & Pratt, M. (1991). Risk aversion and rent seeking: An extension and some experimental evidence. *Public Choice*, 69, 91-92.

Potters, J., de Vries, C., and van Linden, F. (1998). An experimental examination of rational rent seeking. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 14:783–800.

Sheremeta, R. (2009a), Experimental comparison of multi-stage and one-stage contest, working paper.

Sheremeta, R. (2011). Contest design: An experimental investigation. *Economic Inquiry*, forthcoming.

Shogren, J., and Baik, K. (1991). Reexamining efficient rent-seeking in laboratory market. *Public Choice*, 69(1), 69-79.

Joachim,W.,Yang,C. and Vogt.C. (2000), An experiment on sequential rent-seeking, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 41: 405-26.

Voting in committees and in elections

Forsythe, Robert, Roger Myerson, Thomas Rietz, and Robert Weber (1996) "An Experimental Study of Voting Rules and Polls in Three-way Elections," *The International Journal of Game Theory* 25 (September): 355-383.

Battaglini, Marco, Rebecca B. Morton, and Thomas R. Palfrey, 2009. *The Swing Voters Curse in the Laboratory*. *Review of Economic Studies*.

Eckel, Catherine and Charles A. Holt (1989) "Strategic Voting in Agenda-Controlled Committee Experiments," *American Economic Review* 79 (September): 763-773.

Deception and strategic behavior in elections

Daniel Houser, Sandra Ludwig, Thomas Stratmann, Does deceptive advertising reduce political participation? *Theory and evidence* August, 2009

Corazzini, Luca , Sebastian Kube, Michel André Maréchal, and Antonio Nicoló "Elections and Deceptions: Theory and Experimental Evidence" Working Paper, University of Zurich. 2009.

Kube, S. and C. Puppe (2009): *_(When and How) Do Voters Try to Manipulate? Experimental Evidence from Borda Elections_*, *Public Choice*, Vol. 139, pp. 39_52.

Fischbacher, U. and F. Heusi (2008): *_Lies in Disguise - An Experimental Study on Cheating_*, Working Paper.

Turnout

Adams, William C. and Dennis J. Smith (1980) "Effects of Telephone Canvassing on Turnout and Preferences: A Field Experiment," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 44 (Autumn): 389-395.

Houser, Daniel, Rebecca B. Morton and Thomas Stratmann. *Turned Off or Turned Out? Campaign Information, Advertising and Voting*. Working paper, George Mason University.

Grosser, J. and A. Schram (2008): *_Public Opinion Polls, Voter Turnout, and Welfare: An Experimental Study_*, Working paper.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino (1994) "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88 (December): 829-838.

Schram, Arthur and Joep Sonnemans (1996b) "Voter Turnout as a Participation Game: An Experimental Investigation," *International Journal of Game Theory* 25: 385-406.

Candidate attributes

Aragones, Enriqueta and Thomas R. Palfrey (2004) "The Effect of Candidate Quality on Electoral Equilibrium: An Experimental Study," *American Political Science Review* 98 (February): 77-90.

Law and Economics

Review paper:

Colin Camerer and Eric Talley (2007), 'Experimental Law and Economics', in M. Polinsky and S. Shavell (eds), *Handbook of Law and Economics*. Amsterdam: North Holland, 1621-50.

Elizabeth Hoffman and Matthew Spitzer (1986), 'Experimental Tests of the Coase Theorem with Large Bargaining Groups', *Journal of Legal Studies*, 15, 149-71.

Miscellaneous topics

Frechette, Guillaume R., John H. Kagel, and Steven F. Lehrer (2003) "Bargaining in Legislatures: An Experimental Investigation of Open versus Closed Amendment Rules," *American Political Science Review* 97 (May): 221-232.

Guarnaschelli, Serena, Richard D. McKelvey, and Thomas R. Palfrey (2000) "An Experimental Study of Jury Decision Rules," *American Political Science Review*, 94 (June): 407-423.

Goeree and Holt (2003) "Anomalous Behavior in Binary Choice Games: Entry, Voting, Public Goods, and the Volunteer's Dilemma," *American Political Science Review*.