The purpose of this course is to introduce honors students to some of the more significant ideas that have shaped political science. It will also introduce them to some of the fundamental methodological problems of studying politics. The theme I have chosen for the course is the relation between ordinary civic actors and professional political actors, or put more generally, the relation between institutionalized politics and none-institutional or extra-institutional politics. Among the questions we will ask are the following:

1. Are only professional politicians capable of making competent and responsible decisions or do ordinary citizens have an equal capacity? How do these two kinds of actors interact?
2. Under what circumstances do ordinary people take politics into their own hands and under what circumstances do they leave politics to professional politicians and established political parties?
3. Why have political scientists been often inclined to view the political behavior of ordinary citizens as motivated by crowd psychology, apathy, or momentary passions? Why do other political scientists claim it is rational for citizens not to involve themselves in politics? Why might some political scientists think both views are wrong?
4. Should we study daily resistances to power, protests, and rebellions, in the same way as we would study voting, parties, interest groups, professional politicians, and political leaders?
5. Can active civic engagement be institutionalized and if so, under what conditions?
6. In what sense are the political beliefs of citizens are they shaped by ideologies, and to what extent are they shaped by interests? Why do people often vote against their interests?

In answering these questions we will discover that different answers are intertwined with the different methods we use in the study of politics. Indeed, we will discover often times that the methodological approach we take to understanding both institutional politics (party competition, struggles among political leaders, voting, and legislating) and extra-institutional politics (protests, local resistance, revolutions and civic engagement) will lead to widely varying accounts both of their political meaning and of their efficacy. In effect different methodological approaches will tell us different “stories” about what is politically going on—and this is so whether we study voting, the conflict among political parties, or the meaning of a protest movement and its demands. In this course, we are going to encounter a number of different kinds of approaches to the study of politics and often we will notice that they provide different stories for what appears to be the same political phenomenon. Here are some of the approaches we will discover: 1) the interpretive approach in which we seek to understand how political actors understand themselves; 2) the quantitative approach in which we aggregate different events or opinions to see if the correlate with certain political variables; 3) the rational choice approach in which we model political actors as if they were rational economic agents each trying to maximize their interests given limited knowledge; 3) the historical sociological approach which tries to lay out the long range developmental trends through which political structures and political agents emerge and the way these trends enable and constrain political action; 4) the political theory approach that seeks to understand politics as a realm in which fundamental
political principles are fought over, realized or undermined; 5) the political ideological approach in which political initiatives and political conflicts are viewed as struggles among political ideologies—rough systems of concepts that help mobilize people and give direction to parties, movements, and actors. Even as you engage with the fundamental tension in this course between institutional and extra-institutional politics, I would hope you would also recognize that the different methodologies political scientists employ will lead to different accounts of this tension.

**Required Books**
Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett)
Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge)

**Readings on E-Reserve on Blackboard** (password: pos496)
Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (chapters 20-23)
Robert Dahl, *Who Governs* (selection on the political entrepreneur)
Taylor Branch, *The Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63* (selection on the Montgomery Bus Boycott)

**Part I: Institutional Politics**
August 27, Introduction to course.

Professional Politics and Political Leadership
September 3, Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” in *The Vocation Lectures* (focus on pp. 32-76)
September 5 No class.
September 10 Finish Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” focusing on qualities necessary for a vocational politician and Weber’s concept of political responsibility.

Party Competition, Elitism, and Political Leadership
September 17 chapters 22-23 (“Another Theory of Democracy,” “The Inference”) (e-res).

Pluralism, Political Leadership, and the Political Entrepreneur
Monday, September 30 First Paper due on Weber, Schumpeter and Dahl and professional politics. Hard copy in Hu0B16 and e-mail me attached copy.

Voting and Elections: why voters vote against their interests or do they?
October 1, Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* pp. 1-95 (e-res)


October 10 Criticisms of rational choice model: Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economist & Democracy* ch. 5 (a criticism of Downs) (e-res)

October 17, Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, chs. 10. Read either ch 6 (“Homer Gets a Tax Break”) or 9 (“Inequality and Political Representation”) as well.

**Part II: Extra-Institutional Politics—How do Ordinary People Deal with Power and Domination?**

The Debate over Collective Movements:


October 29 Mancur Olsen, *The Logic of Collective Action*, ch. 6

October 31 and November 5, Albert Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements* (entire)

**Monday, October 28, Second Paper Due on Downs vs. Bartels on inequality in voting and whether and why voters vote against own interests. Hand in hard copy in Hu0B16 and e-mail me attached copy.**

Contentious Politics and Repertoires
November 7, Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* chs 1-4
November 12, Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* chs.5-8

Historical Study of Crowds and Protest

November 19, Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: The King Years*, selection on Montgomery Bus Boycott (e-res).

Possible additional reading on modern protests and resistances.

Recommended, James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, chapter 7 “Beyond the War of Words,” (e-res).
Part III: “Institutionalizing” Civic Engagement: Culture and Political Participation
November 28, No class-Thanksgiving.
**December 2, Third Paper Due On How to Study Social Movement and Contentious Politics**

Part IV: The Meaning of Revolution: Constituting Political Liberty?
December 3, Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, chapters 1-2 (recommended ch. 3)
November 5, Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, chapters 6
December 10, Summing Up: Putnam vs. Hannah Arendt
**Thursday, December 19, take home final due. Hard copy in Hu0B16 and e-mail me attached copy.**

Requirements
There will be three assigned papers, all based on the reading and a take home final. I will hand out the topics for the papers in class though you may reshape them as long as you consult with me. Papers should be approximately 8-10 pages long double-spaced. You may rewrite the first three papers with grades averaged in, though I will be biased toward the revised paper. Rewrites need to be handed no more than one week after the papers are returned. Each paper plus the final will count for 20% of the grade with 20% of the grade based on your participation in the seminar—this includes discussion and presentations.

Office Hours:
I am available Tu Th 11:40-12:40 in HuB16 and Wednesdays in my downtown office, Milne 220 Wed. 1-3, or 9:30 Tu, Th, in HuB16 by appointment. If these times don’t work, I am happy to arrange a meeting time.

Phone and E-Mail:
Office phone, Milne 220: 442-5277
E-mail: pbreiner@albany.edu

Some Additional Reading
Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*
Donald Green, Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice*
Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*
Charles Tilly, *Mobilization and Revolution*
Charles Tilly, Lesley J Wood, *Social Movements 1768-2012*
Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*
Jack Goldstone ed, *States, Parties, and Social Movements*
James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*
E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common*
George Rude, *The Crowd in History*
Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*