

PPE 4600-301 Political Science Capstone Cooperation: Addressing Contemporary Societal Challenges in Today's Political World

Pei-Hsun Hsieh

Fall 2023

Canvas link: <https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1741732>

Class Hours: MW 3:30 pm-5:00 pm

Class Room: Room 124 Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center

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Office Hours: W 2:00 pm-3:00 pm or by appointment

Office: 375 Cohen Hall

Course Information

Course Description

Many societal challenges, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, require people to work together to solve them. However, cooperation between individuals poses its own challenges. The question of why people cooperate (or do not cooperate) appears across disciplines under different labels, including collective action problems and social dilemmas. In this capstone seminar, we will cover a wide range of societal challenges and political behaviors that require cooperation, including addressing climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation crises, as well as social movements, and voting. Within these topics, we will discuss the similarities and differences in the problems of cooperation and how to foster it.

By the end of the course, you will be able to

- Identify key theories related to the problem of social cooperation.
- Apply your theoretical knowledge to real-world problems such as climate change mitigation and pandemic behaviors.

- Develop a behavioral research plan to study the problem of social cooperation.

Required Texts

See Course Materials @ Penn Libraries on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on class participation (20%), a quiz (10%), presentation and discussion leading (20%), a written assignment (15%), a final group project and presentation (30%), and a self-reflection on how well your group cooperated (5%). A brief description of the main requirements of each element is provided below.

- **Class Participation 20%:** By each class, you should have completed the assigned readings. There are two parts of how your class participation will be graded:
 1. **Answering questions:** During lectures, I will pose several questions for group discussion. You have to respond to my questions at least once in every class.
 2. **Your question or discussion point:** In each class, prepare at least one question or discussion point and post the question/discussion point on Canvas a day before the class.

To earn an 'A' for participation, you must complete the activities above in all but two classes (except for religious holidays, illness, and emergencies). If you miss more than two classes without an excused absence, you will be deducted one point for each subsequent class you skip. Additionally, actively engaging by posing questions and interacting during lectures is highly encouraged.

- **Quiz 10%:** An online quiz in *Week 6* on Canvas will evaluate your grasp of key concepts from readings and assigned materials. You're allowed to reference notes, readings, slides, or the internet. However, collaboration with peers is not permitted during the quiz.
- **Presentation and Discussion leading 20%:** Each of you will choose a different designated reading (see articles denoted with an * on the syllabus) and deliver a 30 to 40-minute presentation to summarize the article. You should clearly discuss the research questions, the theories and the hypotheses, the research design, the result, whether you are convinced with the interpretation of the result in the paper, and whatever interests, excites, or confuses you when you read the paper. At the end of your presentation, you should provide 2-3 questions for discussion.
- **Written Assignment (15%):** You will write an op-ed commenting on a political issue or societal challenge (e.g., climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic). In the op-ed, you should make sure to summarize one or multiple assigned readings for a general audience. Incorporate insights from one or multiple assigned readings. It should arouse the general

audience's interest and be written in simple language and without technical jargon. Discuss why the nature of the issue is a collective action problem, the challenges to addressing the issue, and what the findings in the readings suggest should be done to promote cooperation for this issue. Try to link the readings with the latest news. Ideal length: 750 to 800 words. Refer to sources like *The Conversation* (<https://theconversation.com/us>) for an example. *The assignment is due November 30, 2023.*

- **Group Final Project and Presentation 30%:** You and your group members will identify a research question about collective action problems and develop behavioral research to answer your question. The research question should have strong implications for a local or global problem in the real world. Each group will have three or four members. Your group should submit a list of members by September 27. *Your group will present a preliminary idea on November 8 and a comprehensive final presentation in the last week.* The final presentation should include a research question, motivation, a brief literature review, hypotheses, and research design. You could share a draft before your presentation if you think it will help the audience understand your presentation, but it is not required.
- **Comment on Your Group Cooperation (5%):** Since group work for the final project also could be perceived as a collective action problem, each of you will write a 300-word self-reflection on your experiences in group work and insights from assigned readings. Did you and your group members work together successfully? What were the factors that made your group cooperate or not? What practices would you adopt next time in group work? Please do not mention specific names in the evaluation. *The assignment is due December 21, 2023.*

Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus and class/reading schedule during the course of the semester. Please refer to Canvas for the most updated version of the syllabus.

Week 01:

- *Wednesday - August 30:* No class: I'll be at a conference.

Week 02: Collective Action Problems in the World

- *Monday - September 4:* Labor Day - No class.
- *Wednesday - September 6:*
 - Van Lange, Paul A.M., and David G. Rand. 2022. "Human Cooperation and the Crises of Climate Change, COVID-19, and Misinformation." *Annual Review of Psychology* 73(1): 379–402.

Week 03 Collective Action Problems: Theories

- *Monday - September 11:*
 - Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Chapter 1. Cambridge University Press.
- *Wednesday - September 13:*
 - Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapter 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - Milinski, M. et al. 2008. "The Collective-Risk Social Dilemma and the Prevention of Simulated Dangerous Climate Change." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105(7): 2291–94.

Week 04 Reciprocity

- *Monday - September 18:*
 - Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapter 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- *Wednesday - September 20:*
 - Guala, Francesco. 2012. "Reciprocity: Weak or Strong? What Punishment Experiments Do (and Do Not) Demonstrate." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 35(1): 1–15.

Week 05 Condition Cooperation and Coordination

- *Monday - September 25:*
 - Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapter 6. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - Gächter, Simon. 2007. "Conditional Cooperation: Behavioral Regularities from the Lab and the Field and Their Policy Implications." In *Economics and Psychology: A Promising New Cross-Disciplinary Field*, CESifo seminar series, Cambridge, MA, US: MIT Press, 19–50.
- *Wednesday - September 27:*
 - Cantoni, Davide, David Y Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y Jane Zhang. 2019. "Protests as Strategic Games: Experimental Evidence from Hong Kong's Antiauthoritarian Movement." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 134(2): 1021–77.
 - (skimming through) Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7–48.

Week 06 Political Institutions

- *Monday - October 2:*
 - Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Chapter 3. Cambridge University Press.
 - Molina-Garzón, Adriana, Tara Grillos, Alan Zarychta, and Krister P. Andersson. 2022. “Decentralization Can Increase Cooperation among Public Officials.” *American Journal of Political Science* 66(3): 554–69. Promising New Cross-Disciplinary Field, CESifo seminar series, Cambridge, MA, US: MIT Press, 19–50.
- *Wednesday - October 4:*
 - Hilbe, Christian, Arne Traulsen, Torsten Röhl, and Manfred Milinski. 2014. “Democratic Decisions Establish Stable Authorities That Overcome the Paradox of Second-Order Punishment.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(2): 752–56.
 - Bättig, Michèle B., and Thomas Bernauer. 2009. “National Institutions and Global Public Goods: Are Democracies More Cooperative in Climate Change Policy?” *International Organization* 63(2): 281–308.
- **The quiz is due October 5.**

Week 07 Norms

- *Monday - October 9:*
 - Bicchieri, Cristina. 2005. *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. 1st ed. Chs 1 - 2. Cambridge University Press.
 - Fehr, Ernst, and Ivo Schurtenberger. 2018. “Normative Foundations of Human Cooperation.” *Nature Human Behaviour* 2(7): 458–68.
 - (Skimming through) Gavrilets, Sergey, and Peter J. Richerson. 2017. “Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norm Internalization.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114(23): 6068–73.
- *Wednesday - October 11:*
 - Raymond, Leigh, Daniel Kelly, and Erin P. Hennes. 2021. “Norm-Based Governance for Severe Collective Action Problems: Lessons from Climate Change and COVID-19.” *Perspectives on Politics*: 1–14.
 - * Bor, Alexander, Frederik Jørgensen, and Michael Bang Petersen. 2023. “Discriminatory Attitudes against Unvaccinated People during the Pandemic.” *Nature* 613(7945): 704–11.

Week 08 Group Competition

- *Monday - October 16:*
 - Smirnov, Oleg et al. 2010. “The Behavioral Logic of Collective Action: Partisans Cooperate and Punish More Than Nonpartisans.” *Political Psychology* 31(4): 595–616.
 - * Delton, Andrew W et al. 2022. “Partisans Use Emotions as Social Pressure: Feeling Anger and Gratitude at Exiters and Recruits in Political Groups.” *Party Politics* 28(5): 845–53.
- *Wednesday - October 18:*
 - Bowles, Samuel. 2009. “Did Warfare Among Ancestral Hunter-Gatherers Affect the Evolution of Human Social Behaviors?” *Science* 324(5932): 1293–98.

Week 09 Cooperation and Fairness

- *Monday - October 23:*
 - van den Hoven, M. 2012. “Why One Should Do One’s Bit: Thinking about Free Riding in the Context of Public Health Ethics.” *Public Health Ethics* 5(2): 154–60.
 - Kline, Reuben, Nicholas Seltzer, Evgeniya Lukinova, and Autumn Bynum. 2018. “Differentiated Responsibilities and Prosocial Behaviour in Climate Change Mitigation.”
- *Wednesday - October 25:*
 - * Gaikwad, Nikhar, Federica Genovese, and Dustin Tingley. 2022. “Creating Climate Coalitions: Mass Preferences for Compensating Vulnerability in the World’s Two Largest Democracies.” *American Political Science Review* 116(4): 1165–83.
 - Scheiber, Noam. 2021. “The Achilles’ Heel of Biden’s Climate Plan? Coal Miners.” *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/08/business/economy/coal-miners-unions-climate.html> (August 11, 2023).

Week 10 Cooperation in Heterogeneous Societies

- *Monday - October 30:*
 - Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. “Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?” *American Political Science Review* 101(04): 709–25.
 - * Stephens-Dougan, Lafleur. 2023. “White Americans’ Reactions to Racial Disparities in COVID-19.” *American Political Science Review* 117(2): 773–80.
- *Wednesday - November 1:*
 - Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 1996. “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation.” *American Political Science Review* 90(4): 715–35.

- * Schaub, Max, Johanna Gereke, and Delia Baldassarri. 2020. “Does Poverty Undermine Cooperation in Multiethnic Settings? Evidence from a Cooperative Investment Experiment.” *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 7(1): 27–40.

Week 11 Social Insurance

- *Monday - November 6:*
 - (Skimming through) Hackmann, Martin B., Jonathan T. Kolstad, and Amanda E. Kowalski. 2015. “Adverse Selection and an Individual Mandate: When Theory Meets Practice.” *American Economic Review* 105(3): 1030–66.
 - Alva, P. Daniella, Talbot M. Andrews, and Andrew Delton. “The Politics of Pooling Risk: Compassion, Self-Interest, and Healthcare” *Working paper*.
 - (Skimming through) Scheve, Kenneth. 2006. “Religion and Preferences for Social Insurance.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1(3): 255–86.
- *Wednesday - November 8:* Presenting ideas for group projects.

Week 12 Trust

- *Monday - November 13:*
 - Hardin, Russell. 2002. *Trust and Trustworthiness*. Chapter 8. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
 - (Skimming through) Yamagishi, Toshio, Karen S. Cook, and Motoki Watabe. 1998. “Uncertainty, Trust, and Commitment Formation in the United States and Japan.” *American Journal of Sociology* 104(1): 165–94.
- *Wednesday - November 15:*
 - Charron, Nicholas, Victor Lapuente, and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose. 2023. “Uncooperative Society, Uncooperative Politics or Both? Trust, Polarization, Populism and COVID-19 Deaths across European Regions.” *European Journal of Political Research* 62(3): 781–805.
 - (Skimming through) Romano, Angelo et al. 2021. “Cooperation and Trust Across Societies During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 52(7): 622–42.

Week 13 Special Topics in Climate Change

- *Monday - November 20:*
 - McEvoy, David M., Tobias Haller, and Esther Blanco. 2022. “The Role of Non-Binding Pledges in Social Dilemmas with Mitigation and Adaptation.” *Environmental and Resource Economics* 81(4): 685–710.

- Hauser, Oliver P., David G. Rand, Alexander Peysakhovich, and Martin A. Nowak. 2014. "Cooperating with the Future." *Nature* 511(7508): 220–23.
- *Wednesday - November 22*: Scheduled for Friday classes.

Week 14 Small and Large-Scale Cooperation

- *Monday - November 27*:
 - * Buchan, Nancy R. et al. 2009. "Globalization and Human Cooperation." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106(11): 4138–42.
 - Enke, Benjamin, Ricardo Rodríguez-Padilla, and Florian Zimmermann. 2023. "Moral Universalism and the Structure of Ideology." *The Review of Economic Studies* 90(4): 1934–62.
- *Wednesday - November 29*:
 - Marlowe, Frank W et al. 2008. "More 'Altruistic' Punishment in Larger Societies." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 275(1634): 587–92.
 - Powers, Simon T., Carel P. Schaik, and Laurent Lehmann. 2021. "Cooperation in Large-scale Human Societies — What, If Anything, Makes It Unique, and How Did It Evolve?" *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews* 30(4): 280–93.
- **The written assignment is due November 30, 2023.**

Week 15 Presentation Week

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you cannot attend a class, please email me before the class (except for emergency reasons, please email me afterward).

Office Hour & Email Policy

If you have any questions about the course, feel free to contact/chat with me during office hours (at my office), right before/after the class, or by email. Please include "PPE 4600-301" in an email subject and your full name in main text. I will get back to you within two business days. Please follow up if I don't respond within two business days.

Missed Quiz & Late Work Policy

There is no make-up quiz and presentation except illness, death in the family, religious observance or some other unusual circumstance. Accommodations will be granted on a case-by-case basis in such cases.

Regarding the written assignment and the comment, late papers will be subject to daily three-point penalty deductions. I will not accept papers that are more than one week late.

Academic Integrity

Make sure you are familiar with Penn's Code of Academic Integrity (<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>). I have a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism and cheating, and all violations will result in substantial penalties. If you have questions about academic misconduct and plagiarism, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Resources

Academic Support and Disability Services

The Weingarten Center offers a variety of resources to support all Penn students in reaching their academic goals. All services are free and confidential. To contact the Weingarten Center, call 215-573-9235. The office is located in Stouffer Commons, 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

Academic Support

Learning consultations and learning strategies workshops support students in developing more efficient and effective study skills and learning strategies. Learning specialists work with undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to address time and project management, academic reading and writing, note-taking, problem-solving, exam preparation, test-taking, self-regulation, and flexibility.

Undergraduates can also take advantage of free on-campus tutoring for many Penn courses in both drop-in and weekly contract formats. Tutoring may be individual or in small groups. Tutors will assist with applying course information, understanding key concepts, and developing course-specific strategies. Tutoring support is available throughout the term but is best accessed early in the semester.

Disability Services

The University of Pennsylvania is committed to the accessibility of its programs and services. Students with a disability or medical condition can request reasonable accommodations through the Weingarten Center website. Disability Services determines accommodations on an individualized basis through an interactive process, including a meeting with the student and a review of their disability documentation. Students who have approved accommodations are encouraged to notify their faculty members and share their accommodation letters at the start of each semester. Students can contact Disability Services by calling 215-573-9235.

Penn Wellness Resources

You can find a number of different health resources from Wellness at Penn (<https://wellness.upenn.edu/>).

SHAC (Student Health and Counseling)

<https://wellness.upenn.edu/student-health-and-counseling>

- For Medical Services students can go to 3535 Market Street, 1st Floor. They are open M-F 9:00-4:30 and Saturday 9:00-11:30. For after-hours help call 215-746-3535 (24/7). If the issue is life threatening, call 911.
- For Counseling Services students can go to 3624 Market Street, 1st Floor West or call 215-898-7021. You or your students can call this number 24/7 and a clinician will answer. Counseling Services offers free, confidential mental health services to all students at Penn.

If You Have Financial Difficulties

It is important to me that you have the resources you need to be able to focus on learning in this course – this includes both the necessary academic materials as well as taking care of your day-to-day needs.

Students experiencing difficulty affording the course materials should reach out to the Penn First Plus office (pennfirstplus@upenn.edu).

Students who are struggling to afford sufficient food to eat every day and/or lack a safe and suitable space to live should contact Student Intervention Services (vpul-sisteam@pobox.upenn.edu).

Students may also wish to contact their Financial Aid Counselor or Academic Advisor about these concerns.

You are welcome to notify me if any of these challenges are affecting your success in this course, as long as you are comfortable doing so – I may have resources to support you.

Other Resources

- Penn First Plus (<https://pennfirstplus.upenn.edu/>)
- Cultural Resource Centers (<https://global.upenn.edu/iss/cultural-resources>)
- Marks Family Writing Center (<https://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>)

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time. I will notify you if this occurs, but it is also important that you keep up-to-date with all readings related to your class.