Syllabus

[cmcd.economia@fgv.br]

Course Name: Topics in Political Economy
Professor:

2026 FIRST SEMESTER

PROGRAM

This course offers a comprehensive overview of the micro-theoretical literature on protests. It examines how protests are modeled, with a focus on the technical tools employed to derive key results. Additionally, it explores related collective action problems, such as voter turnout in elections and contributions to public goods. Although the primary focus is theoretical, some empirical results will also be discussed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Class discussions will rely primarily on papers, but the following may be useful:
- Olson, Mancur. (1965). The logic of collective action. Contemporary Sociological Theory.
- Tarrow, Sidney G. (2011). Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- DeNardo, James. (2014). Power in numbers. Princeton University Press.
- Chenoweth, Erica. (2021). Civil Resistance: What everyone needs to know. Oxford University Press.
- Oda, Eiichiro. (1997–). *One Piece*. Shueisha.

We will discuss the following topics in class, with the papers to be reviewed highlighted with ★.
1. **Introduction and Threshold models**
   a. ★ Tullock, G. (1971). The paradox of revolution. Public Choice, 11:89–99.
   b. ★ Van Belle, D. A. (1996). Leadership and Collective Action: The Case of Revolution. International Studies Quarterly, 40(1):107–132.
   c. Lichbach, M. I. (1998). Contending theories of contentious politics and the structure-action problem of social order. Annual Review of Political Science, 1(Volume 1, 1998):401–424.
   d. Kalyvas, S. N. and Kocher, M. A. (2007). How "free" is free riding in civil wars?: Violence, insurgency, and the collective action problem. World Politics, 59(2):177–216.
   e. ★ Granovetter, M. (1978). Threshold models of collective behavior. American journal of sociology, 83(6), 1420-1443.
   f. ★ Kuran, T. (1991). The East European revolution of 1989: is it surprising that we were surprised?. The American Economic Review, 81(2), 121-125.
   g. Lohmann, S. (1994). The dynamics of informational cascades: The Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91. World politics, 47(1), 42-101.

2. Coordination and Global Games

a. ★ Global Games: Morris S, Shin HS. Global Games: Theory and Applications. In: Dewatripont M, Hansen LP, Turnovsky SJ, eds. *Advances in Economics and Econometrics: Theory and Applications, Eighth World Congress*. Econometric Society Monographs. Cambridge University Press; 2003:56-114.

b. ★ Shadmehr, M. and Bernhardt, D. (2011). Collective action with uncertain payoffs: Coordination, public signals, and punishment dilemmas. American Political Science Review, 105(4):829–851.

c. Chen, H. and Suen, W. (2017). Aspiring for Change: A Theory of Middle Class Activism. The Economic Journal, 127(603):1318–1347.

d. Lukyanov, G. (2025). Policy Signalling in Regime Change Games: A Welfare Analysis. Working paper.

e. ★ Shadmehr, M. (2021). Protest puzzles: Tullock's paradox, hong kong experiment, and the strength of weak states. Quarterly Journal of Political Science, 16:245–264.

3. Two stages coordination

a. ★ Angeletos, G., Hellwig, C., and Pavan, A. (2006). Signaling in a global game: Coordination and policy traps. Journal of Political Economy, 114(3):452–484.

b. ★ De Mesquita, E. B. (2010). Regime change and revolutionary entrepreneurs. American Political Science Review, 104(3):446–466.

c. Edmond, C. (2013). Information Manipulation, Coordination, and Regime Change*. The Review of Economic Studies, 80(4):1422–1458.

d. ★ Shadmehr, M. (2015). Extremism in revolutionary movements. Games and Economic Behavior, 94:97–121.

e. Little, A. T., Tucker, J. A., and LaGatta, T. (2015). Elections, protest, and alternation of power. The Journal of Politics, 77(4):1142–1156.

f. Shadmehr, M. and Bernhardt, D. (2019). Vanguards in revolution. Games and Economic Behavior, 115:146–166.

g. Chen, H. and Suen, W. (2021). Radicalism in mass movements: Asymmetric information and endogenous leadership. American Political Science Review, 115(1):286–306.

h. ★ Jara, P. and Matta, B. (2025). Public Coordination in Small Social Movements. Working paper.

4. **Dynamic games**
   a. Meirowitz, A. and Tucker, J. A. (2013). People power or a one-shot deal? a dynamic model of protest. American Journal of Political Science, 57(2):478–490.
   b. Gieczewski, G. and Kocak, K. (2023). Altruism in protests.
   c. Mutluer, K. (2024). Leading by example among equals. Technical report, Working Paper.
   d. ★ Correa, S. (2025). Persistent protests. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, *17*(2), 321-357.
   e. ★ Matta, B. (2026). Accepted at *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*.

5. **Information aggregation**
   a. Lohmann, S. (1993). A signaling model of informative and manipulative political action. American Political Science Review, 87(2), 319-333
   b. ★ Lohmann, S. (1994). Information aggregation through costly political action. The American Economic Review, 518-530.
   c. ★ Battaglini, M. (2017). Public protests and policy making. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132(1), 485-549.
   d. Battaglini, M., Morton, R. B., & Patacchini, E. (2020). Social Groups and the Effectiveness of Protests (No. w26757). National Bureau of Economic Research.a

6. **Empirical evidence**
   a. ★ Keddie, N. R. (1983). Iranian revolutions in comparative perspective. The American Historical Review, 88(3), 579-598
   b. ★ Madestam, A., Shoag, D., Veuger, S., & Yanagizawa-Drott, D. (2013). Do political protests matter? evidence from the tea party movement. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 128(4), 1633-1685.
   c. ★ Acemoglu, D., Hassan, T. A., & Tahoun, A. (2018). The power of the street: Evidence from Egypt's Arab Spring. The Review of Financial Studies, 31(1), 1-42
   d. ★ Cantoni, D., Yang, D. Y., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. J. (2019). Protests as strategic games: experimental evidence from Hong Kong's antiauthoritarian movement. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 134(2), 1021-1077.
   e. ★ Enikolopov, R., Makarin, A., & Petrova, M. (2020). Social media and protest participation: Evidence from Russia. Econometrica, 88(4), 1479-1514.
   f. ★ Bursztyn, L., Cantoni, D., Yang, D. Y., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. J. (2021). Persistent political engagement: Social interactions and the dynamics of protest movements. American Economic Review: Insights, 3(2), 233-50.
   g. ★ Cantoni, D., Kao, A., Yang, D. Y., and Yuchtman, N. (2024). Protests. Annual Review of Economics, 16(Volume 16, 2024):519–543.

7. **Voting: turnout paradox**
    a. Tullock, G. 1967. Toward a mathematics of politics. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
    b. Riker, William H., and Peter C. Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." American Political Science Review, 62(1): 25–42.
    c. ★ Palfrey, T. R. and Rosenthal, H. (1985). Voter participation and strategic uncertainty. American Political Science Review, 79(1):62–78.

8. **Public goods**
    a. Palfrey, T. R. and Rosenthal, H. (1984). Participation and the provision of discrete public goods: a strategic analysis. Journal of Public Economics, 24(2):171–193.
    b. Admati, A. R. and Perry, M. (1991). Joint Projects without Commitment. The Review of Economic Studies, 58(2):259–276.
    c. ★ Marx, L. M. and Matthews, S. A. (2000). Dynamic voluntary contribution to a public project. The Review of Economic Studies, 67(2):327–358.

GRADING

The evaluation for this course will be based on:
- **Two referee reports:**   15% each, due ??? and ???.
- **Class participation:**   10%.
- **Research project:**   two progress reports, 15% each, and a presentation, 30%.

The goal of the research project is to apply the tools you've learned to a research idea of your choice. The topic does not need to be related to protests—any application is acceptable. You may work individually or in pairs. Progress reports are due on ??? and ???. Presentations will take place during the last two lectures (??? and ???), and the time allotted for each presentation will depend on the number of groups.

CONTACT

- **Email:**
- **Office Hours:**   ???   (office)

DISABILITY INFORMATION

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify the instructor no later than the first week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations.

It is important to communicate any needs as early as possible to ensure that suitable arrangements can be made.