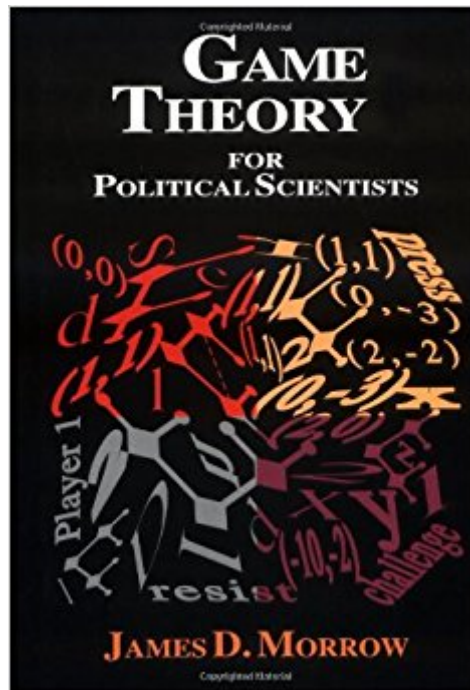




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Game Theory For Political Scientists



Synopsis

Game theory is the mathematical analysis of strategic interaction. In the fifty years since the appearance of von Neumann and Morgenstern's classic *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (Princeton, 1944), game theory has been widely applied to problems in economics. Until recently, however, its usefulness in political science has been underappreciated, in part because of the technical difficulty of the methods developed by economists. James Morrow's book is the first to provide a standard text adapting contemporary game theory to political analysis. It uses a minimum of mathematics to teach the essentials of game theory and contains problems and their solutions suitable for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in all branches of political science. Morrow begins with classical utility and game theory and ends with current research on repeated games and games of incomplete information. The book focuses on noncooperative game theory and its application to international relations, political economy, and American and comparative politics. Special attention is given to models of four topics: bargaining, legislative voting rules, voting in mass elections, and deterrence. An appendix reviews relevant mathematical techniques. Brief bibliographic essays at the end of each chapter suggest further readings, graded according to difficulty. This rigorous but accessible introduction to game theory will be of use not only to political scientists but also to psychologists, sociologists, and others in the social sciences.

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Customer Reviews

"James Morrow's superb book provides the best account of ideas from game theory tailored to the interests of political scientists, which is currently available."--The Times Higher Education

Supplement

Game theory is the mathematical analysis of strategic interaction. In the fifty years since the appearance of von Neumann and Morgenstern's classic *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (Princeton, 1944), game theory has been widely applied to problems in economics. Until recently, however, its usefulness in political science has been underappreciated, in part because of the technical difficulty of the methods developed by economists. This book is the first comprehensive attempt to adapt contemporary game theory to political analysis. It uses a minimum of mathematics to teach the essentials of game theory and contains problems (with solutions) suitable for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in all branches of political science. Morrow begins with classical utility and game theory and ends with current research on repeated games and games of incomplete information. The book focuses on noncooperative game theory and its application to international relations, political economy, and American and comparative politics. Special attention is given to modeling problems in four areas: bargaining, legislative voting rules, voting in mass elections, and deterrence. An appendix reviews relevant mathematical techniques and brief bibliographic essays at the end of each chapter suggest further readings, graded according to difficulty. This rigorous but accessible introduction to game theory will be of use not only to political scientists but also to psychologists, sociologists, and others in the social sciences.

The book is good. Nevertheless, the cover was damaged and disconnected from the book when I opened the package. The ad does not show the actual cover of the book, but a fragile piece of paper that comes (or should have come) attached to it.

It's a great book. I'm a university professor teaching business modeling and I find this book as a really great asset to my class. The book has some clear and easy to get ideas, students catch up with stuff on the pages quite fast. Plus, as my student's aren't really good in math, the Appendix with math formulas helps them a lot.

There are apparently two versions floating around (from the same edition and same printing) with different answer keys in the back for some of the more difficult problems. Otherwise, this is the standard textbook for game theory for political science. I'm inspired to read Schelling!

One of the nice things about this book is it can be as technical or mathematical as you want. If you

just want the concepts, you won't be jarred by lots of equations. But if you like the technical aspects, they're all there, especially in the appendix. Great simple treatment of everything from basic Nash Equilibrium to more sophisticated concepts such as Bayesian information analysis. The only potential disappointment of this book is if you know game theory well and are looking for something very sophisticated, this is not the book for you -- not because there's anything wrong with this book, but because it wasn't designed for that level.

This book is an excellent introduction to game theory for the political science graduate student. Although some prior knowledge of economics and game theory would certainly help, the early chapters in the book are excellent in familiarizing the reader with basic formal concepts. A few comments by the previous reviewer may be misunderstood by some readers. This is NOT a "general concepts" book - in other words this is NOT game theory for poets - not that I hold anything against poets. This book does require some undergraduate level mathematics, mainly differential and integral calculus. Those looking for rigorous formal proofs of all theorems will be disappointed, but this is a technical book with an emphasis on demonstrating the application of formal tools to common problems in political science. Some of the material such as the chapter on perfect and sequential equilibria can be quite challenging. If you merely wish to get a sense of what formal political science is all about and do not intend to actually fire up the old calculator, I suggest Robert Axelrod's excellent book "The Evolution of Cooperation".

I am currently using this book as a text for a graduate level game theory course for political scientists. Although Morrow does a good job covering the important concepts, the writing is wordy, awkward, and confusing. It makes it difficult to follow some of the more complicated problems, especially when learning the ideas for the first time. I would only recommend this book for people who already have a grasp of the ideas and want to learn more and see examples -- not so useful for first-time game theorists.

If you have never heard of Game Theory before and want to know how it can be applied to many real life situations in easy non-technical vernacular, this book is for you. It recognizes that highly technical definitions are only important for the high theorist and instead relates information on Game Theory almost as a story that can be understood by anyone interested in the topic. It's a great read and has definitely sparked my interest in the field.

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