PPE Fall Courses 2008

PPE 072 (PHIL 072, HSOC 101) Biomedical Ethics Society Sector - All Classes
(Martin)

LEC: MW 11-NOON
REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 PM, 12-1 PM, or 1-2 PM

A survey of moral problems in medicine and biomedical research. Problems discussed include: genetic manipulation, informed consent, infanticide, abortion, euthanasia, and the allocation of medical resources. Moral theory is presented with the aim of enabling students to think critically and analytically about moral issues. The need for setting biomedical issues in broader humanistic perspective is stressed.

PPE 101 Nature of Reasoning (Sillari)

LEC: MWF 3-4 PM

The Course explores inductive and deductive reasoning principles, as well as the common biases and mistakes that mar individual reasoning processes. The course will also explore practical reasoning -- i.e. decision-making -- both from normative and descriptive viewpoints.

PPE 110 Intro to Decision Theory Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes; Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning & Analysis (Sen)

LEC: TR 4:30-6 PM or 6:30-8 PM

The course will provide an introduction to models of human decision making. One of the primary purposes of the course is to provide a set of basic tools that will help the student translate qualitative uncertainty into numbers. A substantial amount of the course will deal with the theory of rational choice in the presence of objective and subjective uncertainty. Rational choice under uncertainty is by far the most used theory of decision making, and its applications are widespread in economics, finance, political science, law, managerial decision making, the economics of health care, and artificial intelligence. The course will use examples heavily from each of these fields (and also fun “paradoxes” such as the Monty Hall Puzzle) in providing an introduction to the basic foundations of decision making. We will also look at the shortcomings of the theory: both from intuitive and empirical perspectives. Two alternative theories – Prospect Theory and decision making using the Dempster-Shafer rule will be discussed which address some of these concerns. No mathematical prerequisites are necessary beyond high school algebra and arithmetic.
**PPE 113 Strategic Reasoning** (Dillenberger)

**LEC: TR 9:00-10:30**

This course is about strategically interdependent decisions. In such situations, the outcome of your actions depends also on the actions of others. When making your choice, you have to think what the others will choose, who in turn are thinking what you will be choosing, and so on. Game Theory offers several concepts and insights for understanding such situations, and for making better strategic choices. This course will introduce and develop some basic ideas from game theory, using illustrations, applications, and cases drawn from business, economics, politics, sports, and even fiction and movies. Some interactive games will be played in class. There will be little formal theory, and the only pre-requisites are some high-school algebra and having taken Econ 1. This course will also be accepted by the Economics department as an Econ course, to be counted toward the Minor in Economics (or as an Econ elective).

**PPE 140 (CIS 140) Intro to Cognitive Science Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes**

**Prerequisite(s):** An introductory course in Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Philosophy or Psychology (Ungar/Richards)

**LEC TR 1:30-3 PM**

How do minds work? This course surveys a wide range of answers to this question from the disciplines ranging from philosophy to neuroscience. The course devotes special attention to the use of simple computational and mathematical models. Topics include perception, action, thought, learning, memory and social interaction.

**PPE 153 (PSYC 153) Judgments and Decisions Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning – Class of 09 & Prior** (Baron)

**LEC MW 2-3:30 PM**

Judgments, decisions under certainty and uncertainty, problem solving, logic, rationality, and moral thinking.

**PPE 160 (PSYCH 165) Behavioral Econ & Psych Prerequisite(s): Microeconomics** (Dana)

**LEC TR 3- 4:30 PM**

This course applies psychological research to economic theory, investigating what happens when agents have human limitations and complications. The effects of limited
cognitive capacities, willpower, and self-interest will be considered. Particular emphasis will be given to strategic interaction.

**PPE 180 (MATH 180) Analytical Methods in Economics, Law, and Medicine** *Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes; Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning & Analysis* (Gerstenhaber)

**TR 10:30-NOON**

Elementary applications of decision analysis, game theory, probability and statistics to issues in accounting, contracting, finance, law, and medicine, amongst others.

**PPE 210 (LGST 210) Corporate Responsibility and Ethics** (Hussain/Radin/Sarachan)

**LEC: MW 12-1:30 PM, 1:30-3 PM, or 3-4:30 PM or**

**LEC: TR 10:30-NOON, 1:30-3 PM, or 3-4:30**

This course explores business responsibility from rival theoretical and managerial perspectives. Its focus includes theories of ethics and their application to case studies in business. Topics include moral issues in advertising and sales; hiring and promotion; financial management; corporate pollution; product safety; and decision-making across borders and cultures.

**PPE 270 (PSCI 271) Constitutional Law** *Dist Crs Society – Class of 09 and Prior* (Smith)

**LEC: MW 11-NOON**

**REC: W 4-5 PM,**

**R 11-NOON, 4:30-5:30 PM,**

**F 11-NOON or 2-3 PM**

This course explores the role of the U.S. Supreme Court in political struggles over the distribution and uses of power in the US constitutional system. Issues include the division of powers between the state and national governments, and the branches of the federal government; economic powers of private actors and governmental regulators; the authority of government to enforce or transform racial and gender hierarchies; and the powers of individuals to make basic choices, such as a woman's power to have an abortion. We will pay special attention to how the tasks of justifying the Supreme Court's own power, and constitutionalism more broadly, contribute to logically debatable but politically powerful constitutional arguments. Readings include Supreme Court decisions and background materials on their historical and political context.
**PPE 299 Independent Study** *Permission needed from department* (Staff)

Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a program of reading and writing on a suitable topic.

**PPE 301 Directed Honors Research** *Open only to senior majors in PPE. Permission needed from department* (Staff)

Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a program of reading and writing on a suitable topic.

**PPE 320 Agent-Based Modeling for the Social Sciences** (Gasper)

**LEC: MW 2-3:30 PM**

This is a discussion and project-based course that will provide you with a hands-on introduction to the field of agent-based modeling. An agent-based model is a tool used by social scientists to study how large-scale social dynamics result from micro-level individual behavior. In its basic form, a collection of individuals, or agents, are programmed into a computer, along with a simple behavioral algorithm describing how they act. The computer then allows the agents to interact (possibly in both space and time), and ultimately generates a social dynamic that can then be analyzed in terms of the behavioral rules.

In the social sciences many problems we are interested in involve group phenomena that may seem perplexing when viewed in the aggregate. Examples include fads, norms, segregation, stereotyping, and network formation. The goal of an agent-based model is to look at the micro-level decisions that people make – the decision to live close to a friend, slow down to take a look at an accident, arrive early to the theater to get a good seat, or return a phone call – and to study how these "small" decisions may have large and unintended consequences for society as a whole.

**PPE 475 Continental Political Philosophy** (Maffettone)

**SEM T 1:30-4:30**

The opposition between analytical and continental philosophy can be considered together spurious and useful. It’s spurious for several reasons, including the one that “continental” is a geographical” term and “analytical” refers to a style of thinking. It’s useful because in the English speaking world analytical philosophy is the rule and continental philosophy the exception, whereas often the opposite is true in continental Europe. The same can be said for what concerns “continental political philosophy”. Within continental
political philosophy, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud are—as we shall see—more popular than Rawls and John Stuart Mill, and of course vice-versa can be said for analytical political philosophy. This course aims to give a panorama of contemporary continental political philosophy, emphasizing some connections with analytical political philosophy. Some historical background is anyway given, and some authors (in particular Habermas) and ideas are discussed more than others.

**PPE 475 (PSCI 475) Social Choice and Democratic Theory (Nagel)**

**SEM F 2-5 PM**

The purpose of the seminar will be to explore two radically different images of democratic politics that have emerged from social choice theory, the formal study of how individual preferences aggregate to make collective decisions. If political choice occurs across one dimension (such as the traditional left-right ideological spectrum), the theory yields a majority choice at the position favored by the median voter, which, under certain circumstances, will also be a winning, equilibrium strategy in elections and other decisions made by voting. This result has powerful practical, normative, and scientific implications.

This course is intended primarily as a capstone senior seminar for majors in either Political Science or Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. It will also be suitable for senior majors in related programs, such as Economics or Philosophy. In addition, graduate students in Political Science are welcome. Other interested students should confer with the instructor before enrolling. Although there is a huge formal literature on social choice theory, the seminar is about its political and philosophical implications and applications, rather than the formal analysis per se. Willingness to work through occasional moderately technical expositions will be necessary, but there are no mathematical prerequisites.