

PPE Fall Courses 2009

008 (PHIL008) The Social Contract (B) *Gen Req I: May be counted towards the General Requirement in Society* (Freeman)

SEM: TR 10:30-12 NOON

This course examines the history and significance of social contract doctrine for modern social and political thought. In particular, the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, and John Rawls will be studied. We also study the utilitarian critique of social contract doctrine and the utilitarian views of David Hume, Adam Smith and J.S. Mill.

110 Introduction to Decision Theory *Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes, Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning & Analysis* (Sen)

LEC: TR 6-7:30 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.

140 (CIS 140) Introduction to Cognitive Science *Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes. Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning and Analysis. Prerequisite(s): An introductory course in Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Philosophy or Psychology.* (Ungar/Brainard)

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.

153 (PSYC 153) Judgments and Decisions *College Quantitative Data Analysis Req. Gen Req IV: Formal Reasoning – Cl of 09 & Prior (Baron)*

LEC: MWF 11-12 NOON

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

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

LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

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

201 (ECON 013) Strategic Reasoning (Dillenberger)

LEC: TR 10:30-12 NOON

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-requisite is some high-school algebra and having taken Econ 1. However, general numeracy (facility interpreting and doing numerical graphs, tables, and arithmetic calculations) is very important. 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).

202 The Public Political Process *Prerequisite(s): Econ 1 (Gasper)*

LEC: MW 2-3 PM

REC: W 3-4 PM

R 12-1 PM

R 3-4 PM

F 11-12 NOON

F 2-3 PM

This course integrates economic, ethical and political perspectives. It examines competing theories, models, and analytical frameworks for understanding policymaking. The course will focus on: 1. How public problems are framed and described; 2. What criteria are useful in developing and assessing policy choices; and 3. How policy choices and outcomes are mediated and influenced by individuals, organizations and political institutions.

244 (PHIL 244) Philosophy of Mind *Dist Crs Hist/Trad – Cl of 09 and Prior (Camp)*

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

This course deals with several problems that lie at the interface among philosophy, logic, linguistics, psychology, and computer science.

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

LEC: MW 11-12 NOON
REC: W 3-4 PM
R 11-12 NOON
R 4:30-5:30 PM
F 11-12 NOON
F 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.

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.

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

Student arranges with a faculty member to do an honors thesis on a suitable topic.

475 Natural Justice (Sillari)

SEM: M 2-5 PM

Why are norms of fairness and justice present in society? In this seminar we shall investigate and discuss answers to such questions, focusing on the view according to which norms of justice are a specific kind of human social behavior that has evolved over time. The analytic tools of evolutionary game theory will be used to support and substantiate such claims, in an interdisciplinary spirit aiming at bringing together topics and explanations from philosophy and economics. The structure of the seminar will follow Kenneth Binmore's book "Natural Justice", combining in each session readings from the book and readings from both philosophers and economists.

475 Topics in Economics and Psychology: Fairness (Dillenberger)

SEM: M 3:30-6:30 PM

Do people exhibit true concern for the welfare of others, without the promise of personal gain? Is economics lacking because it treats people as purely self-motivated? Can insight from psychology help to fill the void? This seminar discusses whether fairness perceptions clash with economic principles. The discussion relies heavily on experimental and empirical evidence. Based on the interests of participants, topics may include attitudes about wealth redistribution, the tradeoff between equality and efficiency claims that goods such as the environment are "incommensurable," repugnance in markets, fairness as a constraint on profits, and antimarket bias.

475 Social Judgments (Mercier)

SEM: M 3:30-6:30 PM

Since its beginnings, social psychology has investigated interpersonal judgment, uncovering many biases in the way we evaluate other people or ourselves. More recently, cognitive psychologists as well have started to develop theories of how we understand and judge other people. This class will be at the crossroad of these two traditions, looking

into cognitive models of how we judge other people, and how we use similar mechanisms to judge ourselves

475 (PSYC475) Special Topics in Behavioral Law and Economics (Baron)

SEM: MW 2-3:30P M

Offered annually and counts as a Capstone seminar. Economic theory has invaded legal scholarship and law schools, in the form of "Law and Economics". But the psychology of judgments and decisions has invaded economic theory, showing that people do not follow the classic model of economic rationality. Many legal scholars, such as Cass Sunstein, claim to have started a new field called "Behavioral Law and Economics", which explores the implications of psychology for legal theory. This seminar will review basic readings in law and economics and then the recent literature on the relevance of psychology. Topics include risk regulation, liability, and regulation of political behavior.

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

SEM: W 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 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.