PPE Fall Courses 2011

110 Introduction to Decision Theory (Sen) LPS Course
Fulfils the Formal Reasoning General Requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences and Science and Tech (2) Social Structures Requirement for Wharton.

LEC: T 6-9 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. No mathematical prerequisites are necessary beyond high school algebra and arithmetic. This is an evening course offered through

140 (CIS 140) Introduction to Cognitive Science (Ungar/Brainard)
Fulfils the Formal Reasoning General Requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences.
Prerequisite(s): An introductory course in Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Philosophy or Psychology.

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 253) Judgments and Decisions College Quantitative Data Analysis Req. (Baron)

LEC: MW 2-3:30 PM

Judgments, decisions under certainty and uncertainty, problem solving, logic, rationality, and moral thinking.
202 (PSCI 236) Public Policy Process (Lapinski)

LEC: M 2-4 PM  
REC: R 12-1, 2-3 or 3-4 PM  
REC: F 11-12, 12-1 or 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.

204 (Phil 228) (formerly PPE 228) Philosophy of Social Science (Bicchieri)  
Prerequisite(s): Econ 1, Econ 2 and Phil 8

LEC: W 6:30-8:30 PM  
REC: F 10-11, 11-12 or 12-1 PM

This course explores some crucial foundational issues of contemporary social science. It focuses on various types of explanation, the construction of social models, and their validation. Specific topics will include: 1. Rational choice models (including game-theoretic ones) and alternative models of bounded rationality; 2. Experimental models in economics and psychology and whether they present a radical departure from traditional economic models; 3. Evolutionary models of the emergence of institutions, and agent-based simulations of such dynamics. In particular, we will explore theoretical and empirical models of trust, reciprocity, cooperation and fairness, asking what motivates individuals to engage in pro-social behavior and how such behavior can emerge and persist. This course will cover some of the material presented in other Core courses, with particular attention to foundational and explanatory issues that are not usually discussed in a typical social science course.

225 (Phil 226) Philosophy of Biology (Weisberg)

LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

Is there a science of psychology distinct from physiology? If there is, what is its subject matter? What is the relationship between scientific psychology and traditional philosophical investigation of the mental? Examination of these questions is followed by analysis of some concepts employed in cognitive psychology and cognitive science, particularly in the fields of perception and cognition.
244 (Phil 244) Introduction to Philosophy of Mind (Camp)

LEC: MW 10-11 AM  
REC: F 10-11 or 11 – 12 NOON

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

270 (PSCI 271) Constitutional Law (Smith)

LEC: MW 11-12NOON  
REC: W 3-4, 4-5 or 5-6 PM  
REC: R 9-10 or 11-12 NOON

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.

277 (PHIL 277) Justice, Law, and Morality (Freeman)

LEC: TR 12-1 PM  
REC: F 11-12 or 1-2 PM

In this course we will focus on the philosophical background to questions regarding the exercise of legitimate political power and individuals’ rights under the U.S. Constitution, including 1st Amendment freedoms of religion, expression, and association, the 14th Amendment guarantee of due process and the right of privacy and abortion, the Equal Protection clause and its bearing on affirmative action and equal political rights, and the Takings and Contract clauses and their bearing on rights of private property and economic freedom. We will also discuss competing conceptions of democracy and their implications for the purported authority of courts to reverse democratically enacted decisions by a majority. In addition to Supreme Court decisions concerning these and other issues, we will read works by J.S. Mill, John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, T.M. Scanlon, Martha Nussbaum, Cass Sunstein, and other contemporary theorists.
299 Independent Study  Permission needed from Department.

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.

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

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 Topics in Economics and Psychology: Fairness  (Dana/Dillenberger)

SEM: R 1:30-4:30 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 some goods are "incommensurable," repugnant markets, and fairness as a constraint on profits.

475 Freedom: What is it, how to measure it, how it affects policy making  (Bavetta/Navarra)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 001 and PHIL 008. Some notions of statistics and/or econometrics preferred.

SEM: W 2-5 PM

This course is about freedom, its measurement and its policy and political implications. There are four main objectives of the course. First, offering a systematic and coherent view of the competing theoretical and empirical measures of freedom existing in the literature. Second, tracking back the conceptual foundations of the above measures of freedom and making
judgments about their relative solidity and the analytic connection that links each empirical measure to its theoretical presuppositions. Third, constructing a theoretical and empirical measure of freedom based upon personal autonomy and defending it by describing its analytically reliable foundations. Fourth, examining the effects that the alternative measures of freedom have on the functioning of the economy and the working of political systems.

475 Globalization and Corruption (Nichols)

SEM: W 2-5 PM

The word "globalization" is perhaps one of the most used and yet least well defined terms used in describing the state of the world today. The word "corruption," on the other hand, has only recently become acceptable in discussions about the world's circumstances. This seminar reviews the usage of each of these terms and attempts to gain an understanding of the phenomenon underlying each term. Students will read primary literature and empirical research; among other things students will design and explain a research project aimed at finding (or not finding) linkages between globalization and corruption. The goal of this seminar is to give each student a foundational understanding of "globalization" and "corruption" and to prepare students to more sharply analyze the phenomena encompassed by these terms.

475 The problem of collective action and the supply of public goods (Baumard)

SEM: W 2-5 PM

In this class, we will study the way people manage to cooperate together despite their incentive to reap the benefit of cooperation without contributing. We will study a range of collective action problems such fisheries, credit associations, political participation or climate change. We will study classic rational choice analysis (Olson, Ostrom, Buchanan, Hechter) and examine their limits (the rationality of agents, the absence of altruism, etc.). Finally, we will see how the study of collective actions problem helps to explain such phenomenon as industrial revolution and the rise of democracy (North, Olson, Acemoglu).

475 Foundations of International Law (Lister)

SEM: R 4:30-7:30 PM

This course aims to investigate international law’s foundations and underlying philosophical structure. We will consider such topics as whether groups such as human rights organizations ought to have standing under international law; whether international law ought to apply to sub and super-national bodies such as militia groups, internal regions, and multi-national corporations; whether international law provides a legitimate constraint on the self-interested behavior of states or is just “politics by other means”; the role of human rights in the justification of international law; the conditions under which the international use of force may be justified; and other related issues. While many law students are exposed to questions from “general”
jurisprudence (the basic “what is law?” question), and many will be exposed to “special”
jurisprudential issues in specific areas such as tort theory or criminal law theory, there has
traditionally been much less focus on philosophical issues relating specifically to international
law. This course seeks to remedy this deficiency. To this end we will consider both
contemporary and classic sources dealing with these issues. There are no formal prerequisites
for this course but some background in reading philosophical texts or international law will be
useful. The course requires participation, especially being ready to discuss the assigned readings,
a short presentation, and a seminar paper of roughly 25 pages.

PSCI 398-301 Political Economy of Modern India (Kapur) Course counts as a PPE capstone
SEM: T 3-6 PM

This course attempts to examine the experience of representative democracy in India and the
country’s development record in a historical framework. It will ask questions such as: How did
representative democracy emerge in India and what explains its persistence? What are the
sources of its vulnerability? What kind of a sense of nationhood does this democratic experience
rest upon? What are the exclusions built into this conception of nationhood? What is the
relationship between India’s development experience and its democratic experiment? How have
India’s “traditional” institutions adapted or failed to adapt to modern circumstances? Why has
India performed well in certain economic sectors such as IT even while its record in providing
basic social services has been dismal? How has India’s self-perception about its place in the
world changed in recent years and what are its implications?

476 (PSCI 395) Power Sharing in Deeply Divided Places (O’Leary)
SEM: W 2-5 PM

This course will examine the circumstances in which federal and consociational institutions are
proposed and implemented to regulate deep national, ethnic, religious or linguistic divisions.
This year the case studies will focus on Iraq, Switzerland, Canada, India and Belgium as
federations and on Northern Ireland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Lebanon and Macedonia as
consociational systems.