PPE Fall Courses 2017

CROSS-LISTED COMMON FOUNDATIONS

008 (PHIL 008) The Social Contract Society Sector (Tan)

LEC: MW 9-10 AM
REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 NOON, 12-1 PM, or 1-2 PM

This is a critical survey of the history of western modern political philosophy, beginning from the Early Modern period and concluding with the 19th or 20th Century. Our study typically begins with Hobbes and ends with Mill or Rawls. The organizing theme of our investigation will be the idea of the Social Contract. We will examine different contract theories as well as criticisms and proposed alternatives to the contract idea, such as utilitarianism. Besides the above, examples of authors we will read are Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Mill and Marx.

Philosophy Foundation

072 (PHIL 072) Biomedical Ethics (Staff)

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

This course is an introduction to bioethics, focusing on ethical questions arising at the beginning and end of life. Topics will include procreative responsibilities, the question of wrongful life, and prenatal moral status as well as questions of justice related to markets for sperm, eggs and gestation. We will also attend to dilemmas at the end of life, including the authority of advance directives, euthanasia and the allocation of life-saving therapies.

140 (CIS 140, COGS 001, LING 105, PHIL 044, PSYC 207) Introduction to Cognitive Science (Staff)
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
REC: R 3-4 PM, R 4-5 PM, R 5-6 PM, R 6-7 PM, F 3-4 PM, F 4-5 PM, or F 5-6 PM

How do minds work? This course surveys a wide range of answers to this question from disciplines ranging from philosophy to neuroscience. The course devotes special attention to the use of simple computational and mathematical models. Topics include perception, learning, memory, decision making, emotion and consciousness.
277 (PHIL 277) Justice, Law & Morality (Freeman)

LEC: MW 12-1 PM
REC: F 11-12 Noon or 12-1 PM

The course will focus on the philosophical background to the individual rights protected by the U.S. Constitution, including 1st Amendment freedoms of religion, expression, and association; the 14th amendment guarantee of Due Process and the rights of privacy, abortion, assisted suicide, and marriage; the Equal Protection clause and equal political rights and the legitimacy of affirmative action; and the Takings and Contract clauses and their bearing on rights of private property and economic freedoms. In addition to Supreme Court decisions on these issues, we will read works by political philosophers and constitutional theorists, including J.S. Mill, Ronald Dworkin, Cass Sunstein, Martha Nussbaum, Katherine MacKinnon and others.

Psychology Foundation

153 (PSYC 253) Judgments and Decisions (Royzman)
Fulfills the College Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement.
Prerequisite(s): One semester of statistics OR microeconomics

LEC: R 5:30-8:30 PM (SAS Session)
or
LEC: W 6-9 PM (LPS Session)

Thinking, judgment, and personal and societal decision making, with emphasis on fallacies and biases.

CROSS-LISTED POTENTIAL THEME COURSES

036 (ECON 036) Law and Economics (Jimeno)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 001 or ECON 010. Credit cannot be received for both ECON 036 and 234.

LEC: TR 10:30-12 NOON

The relationship of economic principles to law and the use of economic analysis to study legal problems. Topics will include: property rights and intellectual property; analysis of antitrust and economic analysis of legal decision making.

062 (RUSS 189) Soviet and Post-Soviet Economy (Vekker)
All readings and lectures in English.
LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

This course will cover the development and operation of the Soviet centrally planned economy—one of the grandest social experiments of the 20th century. We will review the mechanisms of plan creation, the push for the collectivization and further development of Soviet agriculture, the role of the Soviet educational system and the performance of labor markets (including forced labor camps—GULags). We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system and the causes of its collapse. Privatization, called by some "piratization," will be one of the central issues in our consideration of the transition from central planning to a market economy in the early 1990s. Even though our main focus will be on the Soviet economy and post-Soviet transition, we will occasionally look back in time to the tsarist era and even further back to find evidence to help explain Soviet/Russian economic development.

232 (ECON 232) Political Economy (Moshary)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 101; MATH 104 and MATH 114 or MATH 115. ECON 103 is recommended.

LEC: TR 1:30-3 PM

This course examines the political and economic determinants of government policies. The course presents economic arguments for government action in the private economy. How government decides policies via simple majority voting, representative legislatures, and executive veto and agenda-setting politics will be studied. Applications include government spending and redistributive policies.

333 (PHIL 233) Philosophy of Economics (Staff)

LEC: TR 3-4:30 PM

In this course, general philosophy of science issues are applied to economics, and some problems specific to economics are tackled. While analytical questions like "What is economics?" or "What is an economic explanation" must be pursued, the ultimate goal is practical: What is good economics? How can economists contribute to a better understanding of society, and a better society? How can we make economics better? Topics to be discussed include the following: specific object and method of economics as a social science; its relation with other disciplines (physics, psychology and evolutionary theory); values in economics (welfare, freedom, equality and neutrality); the role of understanding and possible limits of a quantitative approach to human behavior (purposefulness, freedom, creativity, innovation); prediction, unpredictability and the pretension of prediction; causation in econometrics and in economic theory (equilibrium); selfishness and utility maximization (cognitive and behaviorist interpretations); economic models and unrealistic assumptions (realism and instrumentalism); empirical basis of economics (observation and experiment); microeconomics and macroeconomics (reductionism and autonomy); pluralism in economics (mainstream economics and heterodox schools).
CORE COURSES

311 (ECON 13; formerly PPE 201) Strategic Reasoning (Dillenberger)
Prerequisite(s): Some high school algebra & Econ 1
This course may NOT be taken concurrently with or after Econ 212.

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-requisites are 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).

313 (PSYC 265; formerly PPE 203) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (Bhatia)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 1

LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

Our understanding of markets, governments, and societies rests on our understanding of choice behavior, and the psychological forces that govern it. This course will introduce you to the study of choice, and will examine in detail what we know about how people make choices, and how we can influence these choices. It will utilize insights from psychology and economics, and will apply these insights to domains including risky decision making, intertemporal decision making, and social decision making.

CAPSTONES
PPE Capstones are integrative senior seminars (open to PPE Juniors and others by departmental permission).

470 CAPSTONE: SOCIAL POLICY - Economics of Crime and Corruption: An Interdisciplinary Perspective (Dimant)

SEM: M 2-5 PM

This is an undergraduate research seminar tackling the topic of crime and corruption from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our focus will lie on understanding the mechanism and
motivation to engage in criminal and corrupt behavior from the viewpoint of, among others, economics, psychology, and criminology. Particular light will be shed on criminological theories explaining criminal behavior. Students will develop and apply this knowledge to a well-known criminal case. We will also feature external talks from practitioners. Past semesters’ talks were given by representatives of the FBI, SEC, World Bank, and KPMG, among others.

471 CAPSTONE: POLITICAL ECONOMY - Public Choice Theory (Sontuoso)

SEM: W 2-5 PM

This course provides an analytical introduction to economic models of political processes. To that end, each class will review some theoretical framework(s) from the political economy literature, including the foundations of rational choice theory, approaches to the aggregation of preferences, strategic behavior, voting methods, accounts of cooperation, collective action, public goods, and institutions. The last part of each class will then critically apply theoretical knowledge to relevant contemporary policy issues, including the current debates on governmental decision-making processes in the US and the EU, lobbying in democracies, international security, etc. Note: part of the program contains a theoretical (formal) component.

473 CAPSTONE: MODELING – Modeling Social Phenomena (Funcke)

SEM: T 1:30-4:30 PM

During the 20th century social science, and in particular economics, went through a process of increased formalization. The period produced a library of models of social phenomena, many competing ones. In this course we will briefly browse the library, with the intention to explore classical theoretical perspectives of what is a better model and ponder how increased normalization affects the social sciences. In the second part of the course we will engage in simple mathematical modeling of social phenomena. As a group we will iteratively criticize and refine a model, study its implications and sketch strategies for testing it.

474 CAPSTONE: JUDGMENT & DECISION MAKING – Trust & Deception (Hart)

SEM: M 2-5PM

Social interactions such as coalition formation, negotiation and bargaining, as well as day-to-day interactions between individuals, all involve the ability to mask, and uncover, non-cooperative intentions: Social norms, business etiquette, and common courtesy often compel people to mask selfish intentions. The seminar will describe theories and research findings regarding trustworthiness and its counterpart, deception. We will discuss the nature of trust and distrust; examine signals that may convey cooperative and deceptive intentions and people's ability to detect such signals; and explore the consequences of trust, distrust and deception in different contexts.
477 (PSYC 478) CAPSTONE: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY - Obedience (Royzman)

SEM: F 2-5 PM

Though almost half a century old, Milgram’s 1961-1962 studies of “destructive obedience” continue to puzzle, fascinate, and alarm. The main reason for their continued grip on the field’s attention (other than the boldness of the idea and elegance of execution) may be simply that they leave us with a portrait of human character that is radically different from the one that we personally wish to endorse or that the wider culture teaches us to accept.

In this seminar, we will take an in-depth look at these famous studies (along with the more recent replications) and explore their various psychological, political and philosophical ramifications.

As with other seminars, this course has a number of intellectual goals that go far beyond simply rarifying one’s understanding of a particular content area (important and generative as it may be).

One such a goal is to enable you to think critically (though not disparagingly) about other people’s research and theoretical claims that ensue from it, all with the hope that you can then apply the self-same critical acumen to your own future work.

Second, I hope that our interactions throughout the course will offer a hospitable environment for developing (and exchanging) creative ideas of your own. Your work on your individual reaction papers and on the term paper in particular will be a key element in achieving this goal.

Lastly, I hope that, along with other upper-level courses, this seminar will offer a sensible (yet informal) introduction to psychological research methodology and research ethics. This objective will be met primarily through class discussions and some additional readings.

483 CAPSTONE: ECONOMICS – Fairness & Altruism (Dillenberger)

SEM: R 1:30-4:30

The course is designed to be an integrative experience, drawing on knowledge from economics and psychology to understand the role of fairness in behavior. PPE 201/ECON 013 is a strict pre-requisite for this course.

Research

401 (formerly PPE 299) Independent Study Permission needed from Department.

Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a research project on a suitable topic. For more information about research and setting up independent studies, visit: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/ppe/Requirements/PPEmajor/research.html
498 (formerly PPE 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. For more information on honors visit: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/ppe/Requirements/honors.html