

PPE Spring Courses 2008

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

LEC: MW 10-11 AM

REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 PM, or 12-1 PM

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. (Sen) *Fulfills Formal Reasoning Requirement for the College (all classes)*

TR 6:30-8

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. The course may also be used for any Economics, Philosophy or Political Science requirement in the PPE major. No mathematical prerequisites are necessary beyond high school algebra and arithmetic.

PPE 111 Introduction to Game Theory (Sen)

TR 4:30-6 PM

This course will provide an example driven first course in Game Theory, with an emphasis on applications. We will look at game in strategic forms, games in extensive forms, static games, dynamic games, games of complete and incomplete information, Nash equilibrium, the plausibility of Nash equilibrium as a prediction of outcomes, and alternative equilibrium concepts such as rationalizability. We will also look at new areas of game theory such as evolutionary game theory and behavioral game theory. Concepts will be taught at an intuitive level, accompanied by lots of class discussion and examples.

The examples will be drawn from Economics, Political Science, Philosophy and Computer Science. Prerequisites: prior exposure to elementary (high school level) probability theory.

PPE 153 (PSYCH 153) Judgements and Decisions *Fulfills College Quant. Data Analysis Req., Gen Req IV: Frml Reas – Cl of 09 & Prior* (Baron)

MW 2-3:30 PM

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

PPE 180 (MATH 180) Analytical Methods in Economics, Law, and Medicine *Formal Reasoning Course – All Classes* (Staff)

TR 1:30-3 PM

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, Robertson, Sandbu)

MW 10:30-12 PM, 1:30-3 PM, or 3-4:30 PM

TR 10:30-12 PM, 1:30-3 PM, or 3-4:30 PM

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 212 (LGST 212, PBUB 212) Economic Analysis of Law (Asher)

TR 10:30-12 PM

The course is designed to teach students how to think as an economist about legal rules; to evaluate alternative legal rules against standards of economic efficiency and distributive justice; and to understand the nature of the legal process and several specific areas of the law. With the use of alternative texts, both deductive and inductive reasoning will be employed to study the formation and interpretation of legal rules

PPE 226 (LGST 226) Markets, Morality and Capitalism (Hussain)

TR 1:30-3 PM

Markets, Morality and the Future of Capitalism is an undergraduate seminar designed to introduce students to the contemporary ethical debate surrounding the role that markets play in our lives. The guiding idea behind the class is that business leaders need to understand something about the rationale for the basic institutions of economic life if they are going to address ethical issues that arise within these institutions in an intelligent way and if they are going to play a leadership role in shaping these institutions for generations to come.

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

TR 9-10:30 AM

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.

PPE 244 (Phil 244) Philosophy of Mind *Dist. Crs. Hist/Trad – Cl of 09 & Prior (Camp)*

LEC: MW 12-1 PM

REC: F 11-12 PM, 12-1 PM, or 1-2 PM

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

PPE 299 Independent Study (C) *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 (C) *Open only to senior majors in PPE. Permission needed from department (Staff)*

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

PPE 475 Punishment and Cooperation (C) (Xiao)

T 3-6 PM

Punishment is an important tool for promoting cooperation in social environments including families, companies, markets and courts. This seminar uses experimental research in economics, law and psychology to explore critical issues in punishment and cooperation. Why do people sometimes incur costs to themselves in order to punish others? How do people behave under punishment threats? Why do punishment threats sometimes have detrimental effects on cooperation? How are emotions and punishment connected? Students will investigate these and related research questions.

PPE 475 Conventions, Norms and Social Institutions (Sillari)

R 3-6 PM

Interactive, strategic behavior is the subject matter of game theory. As such, game theory is vital for modeling and understanding social behavior. The origin and maintenance of social conventions, their transformation into social norms (or lack thereof) and the role of these elements play in the larger scheme of social interaction will be the main subject of this seminar. The conceptual core of the seminar consists of the now classic reformulation of the Humean account of social convention offered in game-theoretic terms by David Lewis. Throughout the term, we shall consider recent accounts of social norms that are, to different degrees, related with the Lewisian approach. Other scholars, while recognizing the primacy and prominence of Lewis' notion of convention, differentiate their approach from Lewis. They value an evolutionary approach to modeling social interactions and the emergence of conventions of justice and reciprocity. I expect a good amount of the discussion in class to be devoted to the assessment of merits and shortcomings of these conflicting views. In contrasting the two stances, we shall consider topics as the notions of individual and social rationality, the relation between knowledge and social institutions and, time permitting, broader topics as, for instance, the relation between sociality and cognition.

PPE 475 (PSYC 475) Fairness and Altruism (C) (Dana)

T 1:30-4:30 PM

Do people exhibit true concern for the welfare of others, without the promise of personal gain? This seminar draws on empirical research from economics and psychology on the nature of fairness and altruism. The impact of fairness concerns on microeconomic behavior will be examined, including individual choice behavior, possible market anomalies, and public policy.

PPE 475 (PHIL 475) Behavioral Ethics and Public Policy (C) (Bicchieri)

M 2-5 PM

This is a Capstone advanced research seminar directed at PPE students interested in interdisciplinary research in psychology, philosophy, social and cognitive science. Our focus will be on identifying and discussing issues of philosophical significance raised by recent work in moral psychology, experimental economics and behavioral decision making.

PPE 475 (PHIL 475) Global Justice (Tan)

T 3-6 PM

This course is an introduction to some of the central problems in global justice. Some of the topics that we will examine include realism, human rights, sovereignty and intervention economic justice, and war and morality. We will look at questions such as: Is it coherent to talk about global justice, or is the global arena essentially a Hobbesian state of nature? In what sense are human rights universal? Is the idea of universal rights compatible with the political sovereignty of states? What is the basis of this duty? What is a just war? What is terrorism, and what are the moral limits in combatting terrorism? Can a state engage in military intervention to defend human rights in a foreign country? Readings will be drawn from contemporary authors such as Rawls, Walzer, and Sen, as well as historical figures like Kant and Hobbes. This course examines some of the common problems in global justice. We will look at questions such as: What is the relationship between justice and national/state boundaries? Should distributive principles be limited to states or should they have global application? What is a just war? What is the difference between war and terrorism? Do states have the right (or even duty) to intervene in another state to protect basic human rights? What are human rights? Are they universal, or should they be limited by cultural considerations?

PPE 476 (PSCI 418) Evolution, Politics and Computer Simulation (C) (Lustick)

R 3-6 PM

In this course we shall explore how recent developments in evolutionary theory relate to larger questions raised by students of complexity and complex adaptive systems. We shall study how they together provide a basis for important critiques of standard approaches in political science and enable fascinating and powerful understandings of politics and political phenomena--including national identity and identity change, state formation, revolution, globalization, and leadership. An important vehicle for the application of these insights for understanding politics is computer simulations featuring agent-based modeling. Students will use "PS-I," an agent based computer simulation platform, to develop their own models, conduct experiments, test hypotheses, or produce existence proofs in relation to popular theoretical positions in contemporary political science. No knowledge of computer programming is required.

