PPE Spring Courses 2011

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

LEC: MW 1-2 PM  
REC: F 10-11AM  
F 11-12 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, J.S. Mill, and Karl Marx's criticism of liberal-democratic justice. This course is an introduction to many of the major figures in modern political philosophy.

036 (ECON 36) Law and Economics *Formal Reasoning* (Shachmurove)

LEC MWF 11-12 NOON

Prerequisite(s): ECON 001 and 002. Credit cannot be received for both ECON 036 and 234. 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.

110 Introduction to Decision Theory *Formal Reasoning Course, Formal Reasoning & Analysis* (Sen) This is an evening course offered through LPS.

LEC M 6:30-9:30 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.
202 (PSCI 138) Public Policy Process (Lapinski)

LEC: W 2-4 PM
REC: F 9-10 AM
   F 10-11 AM
   F 11-12 NOON
   F 12-1 PM
   F 1-2 PM
   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.

203 (PSYC 165) (formerly PPE 160) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (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. The only pre-requisite is having taken Econ 1.

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
REC: F 10-11 AM
   F 11-12 NOON
   F 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.
232 (ECON 232) Political Economy (B) (Merlo)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 101; MATH 104 and MATH 114 or MATH 115.
ECON 103 is recommended.

LEC: R 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.

271 (PHIL 271) Global Justice (Tan)

SEM: MW 3:30-5:00

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 combating 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?

299 Independent Study (C) 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 (C) 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 Equality and Distributive Justice (Perry)

SEM: TR 1:30-3 PM

Our central concern in this course will be with the concept of equality as it figures in modern theories of distributive justice. We will also be considering the question of whether or not there is, as has sometimes been claimed, an unavoidable tension between the ideals of equality and liberty. We will begin with an overview of John Rawls’ landmark theory of justice. We will then consider the various normative and conceptual forms that egalitarianism can assume, taking as our point of departure work by Derek Parfit, Amartya Sen, and Ronald Dworkin. Next we will read an excerpt from Robert Nozick's Anarchy State and Utopia, which sets out the libertarian challenge to equality: Egalitarian and other patterned theories of distributive justice are, according to Nozick, incompatible with individual liberty. We will examine the so-called “luck-egalitarian” response to Nozick, focusing in particular on work by Dworkin and G.A. Cohen, and we will also consider critiques of luck-egalitarianism that have been advanced by Elizabeth Anderson and Samuel Scheffler. Finally, we will read excerpts from Cohen's book Self-Ownership, Freedom and Equality, in which Cohen offers an internal critique of Nozick's libertarian challenge.

475 Economic Liberalism and Its Critics (Weintraub)

SEM: MW 2-3:30 PM

This seminar will explore the development of economic thought, its controversies, its implications, and its consequences from the theoretical "discovery" of the market economy (and its distinctive "laws") in the 18th century through the present. In the process, we will read and engage such thinkers as Adam Smith, David Hume, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall, John Maynard Keynes, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Karl Polanyi, Albert Hirschman, and others. A major organizing theme will be the conflicts and controversies between economic liberalism (i.e., the orientation focused analytically and normatively on the self-regulating market and, at the level of individual action and motivation, on the so-called "rational" pursuit of individual self-interest) and various critiques of economic liberalism--with an emphasis on the fact that these critiques and alternatives come from a range of different directions, both analytically and ideologically. Such controversies have never been purely or strictly "economic"; they have had, and continue to have, profound theoretical and practical implications for a wide range of important social, political, moral, and philosophical issues. As we consider these issues, we will also pay attention to the historically shifting, and still contested, meanings of "economic" and the "economy" themselves.
475 **Topics in Economics and Psychology: Fairness** (Dillenberger)

**SEM: W 5-8 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 the role of fairness, generosity, trust and reciprocity in economic transactions. 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, fairness as a constraint on profits, and writing trust-based contracts between parties.

475 **Reasoning and Decision Making as Social Activities** (Mercier)

**SEM: M 3:30-6:30**

We can’t deny that the social context has an influence on our behavior. The seminar will explore the idea that it has a larger impact that we usually care to admit. More specifically, we will see that abilities that are generally thought of as being very personal, such as reasoning and decision making, are in fact heavily influenced by the social context. To that end, this seminar will review some research in the fields of reasoning and decision making, as well as social psychology. This seminar should give students a broad understanding of the function of our reasoning and decision making abilities, of their strengths and weaknesses, and of their social nature.

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

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

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.
It is widely acknowledged that, in the realm of factual judgments, people often rely on heuristics (quick, intuitive rules of thumb) that, though fast, frugal, and frequently accurate, may lead to systematic errors. Taking the traditional heuristics and biases approach as its point of departure, this seminar will explore the nature and the putatively corrupting influence of "moral heuristics" on everyday moral judgment as well as their implications for decision-making in the areas of public policy, medicine, and law. The topics will include (among others) the "doing/allowing effect" (a.k.a., the "omission bias"), the "moral luck" effect (a.k.a., the "outcome bias"), the preference for indirect harm effect (a.k.a., the "point of intervention bias"), the "natural is good" ("don't temper with nature") bias, and the affect-as-information bias. The class format will vary to encompass lectures, student-led discussions, video screenings, and in-class exercises. Student evaluations will be based on class participation, exercises, on-line "reaction blogs", and a final paper.

This advanced seminar will cover at least three major debates in the interdisciplinary field of political psychology. Key topics will include the controversy: (a) over unconscious biases (how potent are they? what does it take to check them?); (b) over the limits of expert judgment (how far into the future can experts see? what distinguishes more from less accurate expert judgment?); (c) over the alleged politicization of empirical and theoretical work in this discipline (how undisciplined has it become? what role do political assumptions play in key lines of ostensibly value-neutral psychological work, and what role do psychological assumptions play in various forms of political advocacy?).