PPE Spring Courses 2012

008 (PHIL 008) The Social Contract (B) Society Sector (Freeman)

LEC: MW 1-2 PM
REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 NOON, 12 NOON-1 PM or F 1-2 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, 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 (Jimeno)
Prerequisite(s): ECON 001 and 002. Credit cannot be received for both ECON 036 and 234.

LEC: TR 1:30-3PM

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 (Sen)
Fulfils the Formal Reasoning General Requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences and Science and Tech (2) Social Structures Requirement for Wharton.

LEC: M 6:30-9:30PM

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 LPS.
201 (ECON 13) (formerly PPE 113): Strategic Reasoning (Dillenberger)
Prerequisite(s): Econ 1

LEC: TR 12-1:30PM

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).

203 (PSYC 165) (formerly PPE 160) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (Dana)

LEC: TR 3-4:30PM

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.

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

LEC: TR 9-10:30AM

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.

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 The Moral Foundations of Globalization (Muldoon)

**SEM: TR 1:30-3PM**

Globalization is a cultural, political and economic phenomenon that many believe will dominate the next century. It has already transformed many aspects of our lives, and has the potential to radically change not only our relations with other countries, but also the internal order of our own country. These current and future changes have caused a worldwide debate on globalization that takes place not just in classrooms, but also in protests and riots on the street. In this course we will develop philosophical methods to analyze the moral implications of globalization. The aim of this course is to equip you with the skills needed to reach a deep understanding of these pressing and critical issues. The course is divided into three units.

In the first unit, “Ethics Among Strangers” we will try and determine whether there are moral reasons for limiting who we care about. Should we only worry about our families? Our neighbors? Our country? Should we only concern ourselves with people of similar ancestry? Or is it our moral responsibility to care about all of humanity? This is the first crucial question to ask, but then we must begin to ask ourselves what our moral responsibilities entail. What, then, are our duties to each other?

In the second unit, “Economic Globalization and Development,” we will consider the ramifications of an increasingly globalized system of market capitalism. We will briefly examine early moral justifications of market capitalism, and then turn to contemporary arguments linking economic development to human moral and political development. We will end the unit with a Marxist critique of market capitalism as being antithetical to moral development.

In the third and final unit, “Political Globalization,” we will examine questions regarding the responsibility of our political institutions. Do we have obligations to take military action in countries that are mistreating their own citizens? Do we owe more development aid to third-world countries? Can political institutions prevent future wars? Should the concept of “country” cede to a system of global governance? Answers to these questions will shape not only our relation to our own government, but what we ought to require from the government when it acts on our behalf.
475 Making Sense of Modernity (Weintraub)

SEM: MW 2-3:30PM

This seminar examines some fundamental approaches to understanding modern society and politics (and the interplay between them) that emerged from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries and that continue to shape central debates in social and political theory, comparative politics, sociology, political economy, and cultural inquiry--as well as everyday moral and political controversies. This will involve careful, systematic, and critical examination of the work of such thinkers as Hobbes, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Edmund Burke, Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, along with larger currents of thought such as liberalism, conservatism, and the republican virtue tradition. In the process, we will explore contrasting approaches to issues including capitalism, socialism, bureaucracy, citizenship, sovereignty, domination, authority, freedom, community, democracy, revolution, the logic of history, the ethical dilemmas of political action--and the nature and dynamics of “modern society” itself. This is a synthesizing interdisciplinary course that brings together thinkers, arguments, and problems often treated in separate compartments of "social," "political," and "economic" theory, integrating questions addressed by modern political theory and those arising from the theoretical "discovery" of society and of the market economy in 18th- and 19th-century thought.

475 Conceptions of Equality (Muldoon)

SEM: TR 10:30-12NOON

Amartya Sen, in his “The Equality of What?,” pointed out that every major theory of ethics or political philosophy has a conception of equality. Each theory, as a basic element, has some measuring stick that determines whether we are being treated equally or not. In doing so, each ethical theory, by developing its own account of equality, makes a claim about what in our moral lives is most important. These theories come into conflict with each other, not because they do or do not respect an idea of equality, but because they differ on how we should measure equality. This course will explore different accounts of equality and ask a few questions: are some accounts more able to capture what we are interested in? Is there a way for satisfying more than one account at a time? What are we to do when we have a dispute that comes down to different conception of equality? Are there other values we can draw on to help adjudicate these disputes? To explore these questions, we will look at the works of Sen, Nozick, Rawls, Bentham and Kant.

475 The Role of Cognitive Frames in Societal Rigidity and Change: An Economist’s Perspective (Hoff)

SEM: R 1:30-3:30PM

Traditional economic theory has been confronted with evidence from psychology and experimental economics that challenges its core assumptions. Individuals have systematic biases in perception and interpretation and may behave inconsistently (contra the rationality
assumption). Individuals care about social identity (contra assumptions about individualism) and display spite and altruism (contra assumptions about selfishness). Experiments within and across countries, as well as large-scale observational studies linking history to present-day outcomes, are a point of entry to investigate the logic of a society’s order and the way individuals think. In this seminar, we will undertake units on several phenomena that have only recently attracted attention from economists but are central concerns of non-economic social sciences: endogenous preferences, cognitive frames, norms of cooperation, and social capital. In the process, we will study many experiments in experimental economics and psychology. We will also study particular examples of societal rigidity and change, including the transition from communism to capitalism in Russia, the demise of footbinding in China, and caste and gender roles.

Readings will include economics, psychology, sociology, and history, with primary emphasis on economics and experimental studies. There will also be a few short selections from fictional works.

Requirements are 2 courses in economics, 1 course in statistics, and 1 course in psychology. Recommended are additional courses in statistics and at least one course in sociology or anthropology or history.

**475 Psychological aspects of public policies** (Baumard)

**SEM: W 2-5PM**

In this class, we will see that many societal problems – from violence to poor performance in school – have their root in the mechanisms of human psychology, but that these very mechanisms can also provide us with ways to solve these problems. While very different themes will be covered, all will follow the same underlying approach: we evolved to be social creatures, this can help us understand how our psychology works, which in turn explains why most problems arise and where the solutions are to be found.

**475 (PSYC 453) Judgment and Decisions** (Baron/Mellers)

**SEM: TR 1:30-3PM**

This is a seminar course in which students will read articles and lead group discussions about paper topics, including empirical tests, policy implications and theoretical frameworks. The course will count as a capstone for PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) students, and it is open to graduate students as well as undergrads. Some of the topics are flexible, but general themes will be the psychology of judgments and decisions, behavioral law and economics, and experimental philosophy.

Some classes will be devoted to the supposed conflict between intuitive and deliberative judgment, and the related theory that emotions affect intuitive judgment primarily. We will discuss chapters from Kahneman's new book, "Thinking, Fast and Slow." Other classes will
discuss issues of wealth redistribution, charitable donations, and the fairness and framing of
taxation. Finally, we will cover topics of political judgment, overconfidence, predictions of
political and economic events, legal judgments such as criminal sentencing and tort penalties,
and moral judgment. In the case of moral judgment, we shall focus on the dual-system theory of
Joshua Greene and related literature.

A detailed but tentative reading list will be available before the semester begins in

There are no fixed prerequisites, but students should be able to understand the statistical meaning
of inferences commonly found in psychology journal articles, without regarding expressions
such as "t(59)=2.96, p=.02" as spots on the page.