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

LEC: MW 12-1 PM
REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 NOON, 12-1 PM, 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 (Garcia Jimeno)

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.

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

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. No mathematical prerequisites are necessary beyond high school algebra and arithmetic. This is an evening course offered through LPS.
203 (PSYC 265) (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)

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

Prerequisite(s): Econ 1, Econ 2 and Phil 8

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 (Merlo)

LEC: TR 9-10:30AM

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

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.
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 draw 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 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 The Moral Foundations of Globalization (Muldoon)

SEM: TR 1:30-3 PM

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 Equality and Distributive Justice (Perry)

SEM: TR 3-4:30 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 Conceptions of Equality (Muldoon)

SEM: TR 10:30-12 NOON

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: M 2-4 PM

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 How to study humans (Lindemans)

SEM: TR 3-4:30 PM

How do people think about people, and what is the best way of doing so? Many scientific disciplines are concerned with human behavior, but different disciplines have different conceptions of what it means to be an individual. For instance, an individual is the conscious tip of an unconscious iceberg in psychology, a survival vehicle of selfish genes in biology, an interchangeable node in a preexisting network in sociology, the guardian of Truth, Beauty and the Good in philosophy and, finally, an elegant utility function in economics. On the other hand, when scholars go home in the evening, they think of an individual as a mind intentionally instructing the movements of its body. Different scholars also have different ideas on how to acquire knowledge about people: read your Aristotle, reflect upon your own experience as a human being, draw a few diagrams on the back of an envelope, ask people, put them in the lab, manipulate this or that, see how they react to monetary incentives, observe people ‘in the field’, go back to history, look at aggregate data, look at individual differences, etc. In this seminar, we will read and discuss research on human behavior from different disciplines. To focus a bit, we look at the literature on cooperation. Simultaneously, we will read and discuss texts in philosophy of (social) science that help us evaluate this diverse research.

475 Economic Experiments on Unethical Behavior (Jiang)

SEM: R 1:30-4:30 PM

Corruption is an age-old problem. Even though we have gained much theoretical insight about the causes and the dynamics of the problem, there is still a long journey to go for fighting corruption in practice. One of the difficulties rests on collecting data for testing these theories. More empirical insights are needed for understanding the relevant factors that contribute to an individual’s unethical behaviour. Focused on the perspective of individual decision-making, this course will expose students to the literature on unethical behaviour and experimental methodology before students make their own attempt to design an experiment on the designated topic. The goal of the class is to empower students with the necessary knowledge and skills in order to design and implement an economic experiment as well as analyze the data. By having hands-on experience on a real experiment, students shall master to a great extent the economic-experimental method for understanding other problems in which they wish to gain insights in the future.
475 (PSYC 453) Judgment and Decisions (Baron)

SEM: TR 1:30-3:30 PM

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 http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~jbaron/p453.html.

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.