PPE Spring Courses 2014

PPE 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 or 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.

PPE 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)

This is an LPS course.

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.

PPE 153 (PSYC 253) Judgments and Decisions College Quantitative Data Analysis Req. (Royzman)

LEC: R 5-8 PM

Judgments, decisions under certainty and uncertainty, problem solving, logic, rationality, and moral thinking.
PPE 203 (PSYC 265) (formerly PPE 160) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (DeWitt)

LEC: W 2-5 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.

PPE 204 (Phil 228) (formerly PPE 228) Philosophy of Social Science (Lindemans)

Prerequisite(s): Econ 1, Econ 2, Phil 8 & PPE 201

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

PPE 232 (ECON 232) Political Economy (B) (Merlo)

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

LEC: 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) Introduction to Philosophy of Mind (Armstrong)

LEC: MW 11-12 NOON
REC: F 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.**

Student arranges with a faculty member to pursue a program of reading and writing on a suitable topic.

**PPE 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.

**PPE 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.

**PPE 475 Economic Experiments on Unethical Behavior (Jiang)**

**SEM: R 1:30-4:30**

Experimental economics, which uses real monetary incentives, has proven by now its methodological merits in gaining reliable and new insights on economic behavior. By incorporating theories of games and economic behavior as well as psychological insights in its experimental designs, it has also provided new insights for various other disciplines. Due to the vast and rapidly growing body of work in this field, a choice on topics has to be made. Thus, the topical focus for this course will not be on pure “market interactions”, but rather on the social dimensions of behavior, to cater for a more multidisciplinary audience. Moreover, to better acquaint the students with the tool of controlled economic experiments, actual experiments will be run in class from time to time and students are expected to design and conduct an experiment themselves for the term paper.
PPE 475 Global Justice (Anthony)

SEM: T 3-6 PM

In this course, we will explore several of the following questions that relate to global justice: Are there universal human rights? If so, how are they enforceable? Is there a right to open borders in immigration? What principles of economic distribution apply globally? Do we incur obligations to other nations as a result of global warming? We will examine readings by John Rawls, Charles Beitz and Thomas Pogge, and evaluate these debates from both utilitarian and egalitarian perspectives.

PPE 475 Network Analysis (Sontuoso)

SEM: R 1:30 – 4:30

This course addresses elements of Network Science as relevant for analyzing the connectedness of economic or, more generally, social phenomena. Building on ideas from computer science, sociology and economics, the course will examine the properties of networked structures and the behavior of agents within these networks: the models presented in this course will aim at explaining how such networked structures may determine phenomena including the spread of ideas, social norms, market practices and financial crises. (The course is designed for an interdisciplinary audience, and requires no theoretical prerequisites, but it will often present material - at an elementary level - drawn from formal disciplines such as graph theory, game theory, matching theory, etc..)

PPE 475 Topics in Economics and Psychology: Fairness (Dillenberger)

SEM: R 3-6 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.