PPE Spring Courses 2015

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

LEC: TR 9:30-10:30AM
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.

073 (PHIL 073) Sex and Love (Monk)

LEC: MW 2-3:30 PM

What is love? Are there different kinds of love? Why does society prize romantic love so much? What counts as a sexual act? Is all consensual sex permissible? What information do you need to consent to a sexual act? Is consent to sexual acts constrained by different considerations than consent of other kinds (eg to a medical procedure)? What is the difference between coercion and convincing someone into a sexual act? What is gender? Does gender affect consent? In this course we will be attempting to answer questions like these, looking at authors from Plato to Nussbaum to Archard.

110 Introduction to Decision Theory (Sen) Offered through LPS

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.

153 (PSYC 253) Judgments and Decisions College Quantitative Data Analysis Req.  
(Royzman) Offered through SAS and LPS

LEC: T 6-9 PM or R 5:30-8:30 PM

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

201 (ECON 13) (formerly PPE 113): Strategic Reasoning (Dillenberger)

Prerequisite(s): Econ 1

LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

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 265) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (DeWitt)

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 (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.

244 (Phil 244) Introduction to Philosophy of Mind (Monk)

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.

272 (PHIL 272) Ethics and the Professions (Gibbons)

SEM: TR 10:30-12 NOON

In this course, we examine the ethical issues and dilemmas that commonly arise in the professions, such as the law, medicine and healthcare, journalism, business, and public and civil service. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the moral issues and challenges that practitioners in different professions encounter and to examine how moral reasoning can help us understand and confront these challenges. The following philosophical themes will organize our discussion: collective responsibility, role and special obligations, institutions and personal responsibility, and the problem of moral conflict. Readings will be from philosophical texts and source, and also newspapers and popular periodicals and literary excerpts.

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 Conceptions of Equality (Muldoon)

SEM: TR 1:30-3 PM
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.

PPE 475 Economic Experiments on Unethical Behavior (Jiang)

SEM: TR 1:30-3 PM

Corruption is an age-old problem. Though we have gained much theoretical insight about the causes and consequences of corruption, many attempts to curb it have failed and it remains a highlight for policy making. One of main obstacles is the lack of data to test theories or potential remedies since it is difficult to collect data on illegal behavior. And the limited data we do have tend to be correlational rather than causal. With the recent advancement in experimental economics, new possibilities for investigating corruption using experimental methods have emerged followed by new empirical insights of unethical behavior at the individual level. This course will first expose you to the cutting-edge empirical findings on unethical behavior and deepen your understanding on how to use experiments to study corruption. With the new lenses of behavioral testing and a deeper understanding on individual decision-making, you will be guided through the classic literature on corruption from different disciplines including economics, psychology and sociology. By the end of the course, you will hopefully be able to rethink the problems of corruption with inspiring new ideas of how to cope corruption for a better world.

PPE 475 Agent-based modeling: An introduction to simulation and experimental methods (Funcke)

SEM: T 3-6 PM

Agent-based modeling and behavioral experimental methods have seen a big boom in the social sciences over the last couple of decades. The usage of the two techniques is starting to stretch outside of academia as well, gaining importance in a number of fields, e.g. market research and online marketing. In this course we will explore the power of the two methods in gaining understanding and generating predictions. The course consists of three parts. First, we will take a theoretical overview of modeling. We will address questions such as "When is modeling useful?" and "What is a good model?". Next, we will become acquainted with tools that allow us to implement simulations and experiments. Wrapping the course up, we will use the theoretical and practical knowledge gained in individual projects exploring some social phenomena.
475 Network Analysis (Sontuoso)

SEM: W 2-5 PM
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.)

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.

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

SEM: M 2-5 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.