PPE Spring Courses 2016

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

LEC: TR 9-10 AM
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.

072 (PHIL 072, HSOC 101) Biomedical Ethics Society Sector (Gibbons)

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

Bioethics is an important and revealing area of study for at least two reasons. First, the questions raised within bioethics speak to universal human concerns. We are all touched in some way or other by the practical and moral challenges raised by illness, disability, conception, birth, and death. But, second, although the issues raised within bioethics are intensely personal and practical, they also reflect philosophical concerns taken up within ethical theory, such as questions about moral status, autonomy, truth-telling and justice.

A central theme running throughout this course is the relationship between ethical theory, on the one hand, and the actual practices and experiences of facing choices about health and mortality, on the other. We will discuss a number of particular bioethical challenges faced by ordinary people, including abortion, treatment for severely disabled newborns, reproductive technology, confidentiality, informed consent, advance directives, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and distributive justice within the health care system. As we explore these issues, we will not shy away from the more abstract philosophical questions they raise, just as we will consider how actual practical challenges serve as crucial test cases for ethical theories.

Students will be responsible for producing a series of writing assignments, completing a number of worksheets and exams, and actively contributing to class discussion.

073 (PHIL 073) Being Human (Gibbons)

SEM: MW 2-3:30 PM

This course examines some of the central theoretical and applied questions of ethics. For example, what is the good life? By what measure or principles do we evaluate the rightness and wrongness of actions? How does ethical reasoning help us understand and address real world
problems such as world hunger, social injustice, sex and race discrimination, allocation of scarce resources and the like. The course can be organized around an applied topic or practical issue such as global ethics, just war, biomedical ethics or environmental ethics.

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

Prerequisite(s): One semester of statistics OR microeconomics

LEC: R 5:30-8:30 PM (SAS) or T 6-9 PM (LPS)

Thinking, judgment, and personal and societal decision making, with emphasis on fallacies and biases.

202 (PSCI 236) The Public Policy Process (Levendusky)

LEC: MW 11-12 NOON
REC: W 2-3 PM, W 3-4 PM, R 9-10 AM, R 3-4 PM, R 4:30-5:30 PM, OR F 11-12 NOON

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 265) Behavioral Economics and Psychology (Bhatia)

Prerequisite(s): ECON 1

LEC: TR 12-1:30 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.

204 (Phil 228) Philosophy of Social Science (Krut-Landau)

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

LEC: MW 1-2 PM
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.

225 (PHIL 226, PHIL 521) Philosophy of Biology *Natural Science & Math Sector* (Weisberg)

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

This course consists of a detailed examination of evolutionary theory and its philosophical foundations. The course begins with a consideration of Darwin's formulation of evolutionary theory and the main influences on Darwin. We will then consider two contemporary presentations of the theory Richard Dawkins' and Richard Lewontin's. The remainder of the course will deal with a number of foundational issues and may include discussions of adaptation, what constitutes a species, whether there is evolutionary progress, and the concept of fitness. We will also discuss the units of selection, the alleged reduction of classical genetics to molecular genetics, and the possibility of grounding ethics in evolutionary theory.

PHIL 273 Ethics in the Professions: Business Ethics (Sinderbrand)

SEM: MW 3:30-5 PM

Is abortion wrong? Or euthanasia? Are we justified in eating animals? Why, or why not? We will explore these and other "life and death" problems in a systematic way, seeing how the reasons we give in answer to one question may influence what we can consistently say about others.

275 (PSYC 275) Political Psychology (Tetlock)

LEC: R 1:30-4:30 PM

This course will explore psychological approaches to understanding political beliefs, attitudes, and actions at the levels of both individual citizens and national leaders. It will also explore the possibility that psychological science itself is not immune to the political debates swirling around it. Specific topics will include: the workings of belief systems (and their power to shape what we "see"), cognitive biases (and their power to cause miscalculations), sacred values and their role in stabilizing belief systems and social interaction, personality and ideology (the linkages between the personal and the political), and clashing conceptions of morality and distributive and corrective justice (striking variations among people in what they consider to be fair). We shall also explore some topics that have sparked controversy in the psychological research literature and that tend to polarize opinion along political lines, including work on intelligence and unconscious bias.
277 (PHIL 277) Justice, Law and Morality (Freeman)

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

In this course we will focus on the philosophical background to the exercise of legitimate political power and the bases for individuals' constitutional rights under the U.S. Constitution. The course will concentrate on 1st Amendment freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression, and freedom association; the 14th Amendment guarantee of liberty and due process, including the right of privacy, abortion, and the right to die; the equal protection clause and its bearing on affirmative action and equal political rights; and the Takings and Contract clauses and their relationship to rights of private property and economic freedom. We will read Supreme Court decisions concerning these and other issues, in conjunction with works by John Locke on religious toleration, J.S. Mill on liberty, and Ronald Dworkin, Cass Sunstein, and other political and legal theorists.

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 Competitions and Competitive Behavior (Hart)

SEM: T 3-6 PM

Competitions constitute an important part of social and economic interactions, such as those between athletes, lawyers or developers. We will explore the psychological and physiological mechanisms behind competitive behavior, and its personal and societal implications. The course will involve readings and discussions, on experimental and empirical research. We will explore the following topics, among others: How our brains and our society norms affect the intensity of competition; how the social context affects our willingness to compete and exert costly effort; the consequences of competitions for contestants’ profit, and for their subsequent behavior – even beyond the competition itself (for example, how rivalry affects subsequent behavior). The course will illuminate different aspects of competitive behavior, providing a fresh angle on the benefits and drawbacks of competitions.

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 drawn from formal disciplines.)

475 Resource Allocation and American Political Institutions (Miller)

SEM: TR 10:30-12 NOON

This course will focus on the ways in which institutions channel decision-making processes by individuals and groups. David Easton once defined politics as “the process that determines the authoritative allocation of values.” Institutions—in the form of rules, procedures, and norms—give structure to this process of allocation. We'll explore the main theories used to explain the emergence and evolution of political institutions, and how they are used to resolve problems of collective action and resource allocation. With this foundation in place, the latter part of the course will examine the purpose and performance of a particular institution: redistricting commissions. We'll consider the context in which these commissions operate and how these commissions compare to alternative redistricting authorities. The final portion of the class will involve a simulation in which groups of students will construct a district map and advocate for its adoption.

475 Fairness and Altruism (Dillenberger)

SEM: R 3-6 PM

The course is designed to be an integrative experience, drawing on knowledge from economics and psychology to understand the role of fairness in behavior.

475 Economics of Corruption: An Interdisciplinary Perspective (Dimant)

SEM: TR 3-4:30 PM

This is an undergraduate research seminar tackling the topic of corruption from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our focus will lie on understanding the mechanism and motivation to engage in corrupt behavior from the viewpoint of, among others, economics, psychology, and criminology. Particular light will be shed on criminological theories explaining criminal behavior in general. Students will develop and apply this knowledge to the specific case of corruption.

Understanding the underlying mechanism of such illicit behavior will facilitate our understanding of both the antecedents and effects of corruption. Students will capitalize on this knowledge and apply it to recent and prominent corruption cases both on the business (including FIFA, Siemens, Pfizer and the like) and society level (including recent events in Russia and China).
476 Thinking with Models (Funcke)

SEM: MW 3:30-5 PM

The primary focus of the course is on understanding, designing, and analyzing simulation models. Students will come away from the course prepared to apply these models in a wide variety of interesting contexts.

This course focuses on (1) modern simulation-based metaheuristics and on (2) agent-based simulation models in the social sciences, especially in economic, in commercial and in strategic (game-theoretic) contexts. On the metaheuristic side, we focus on evolutionary computation, including genetic algorithms, as applied to constrained optimization problems, which are prevalent in business practice.

Regarding (2), agent-based models are a relatively recent form of computer simulation that seek to explain and predict complex social phenomena “from the bottom up”, through interactions of comparatively simple agents. The course reviews experimental and theoretical results, and exposes the students to modern development environments for, as well as successful applications of, this form of simulation.

A modest amount of programming will be expected of students. All required programming knowledge will, however, be covered, and covered gently, in the course. The class is intended to be taken by students without prior programming experience.

Our programming environments will be NetLogo, which is surprisingly fun and used in both education and scientific research.

NURS 830: Conducting Research in Global Women's Health (Teitelman)

SEM: R 9-12 AM

The course focuses on critical examination of theoretical and methodological issues pertaining to research on women and girls conducted around the world across disciplines. A focused and intensive exploration of place as it pertains to women and girls in formal and informal structures of health care delivery as those needing and/or seeking health care, and as those providing health care to others. We will examine multiple dimensions and qualities of these endeavors (e.g. activity, power, control, visibility, value, and remuneration) and the intersection of gender and health - locally, globally and across borders. We will focus our examination on the implications of seeking and providing health care for women’s and girls’ health and well-being. By examining issues in local and global contexts and across geographical boundaries, we will have the opportunity to challenge gendered, class, political, and cultural assumptions related to women’s health. Invited guest speakers will highlight examples of research in global women’s health representing multiple disciplinary perspectives.