PPE Spring Courses 2018

CROSS-LISTED COMMON FOUNDATIONS

PPE 153 (PSYC 253) Judgments & Decisions College Quantitative Data Analysis (Royzman, Parthasarathi)
*Fulfills the College Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement.*
Prerequisite(s): One semester of statistics OR microeconomics

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

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

PPE 271 (PHIL 271) Global Justice (Tan)

SEM: TR 10:30 AM - NOON

This course is an introduction to some of the central problems in global justice. Samples of these topics include: What are our duties to respond to world poverty and what is the basis of this duty? Is global inequality in itself a matter of justice? How universal are human rights? Should human rights defer to cultural claims at all? Is there a right to intervene in another country to protect human rights there? Indeed can intervention to protect human rights ever be a duty? Who is responsible for the environment? We will read some influential contemporary essays by philosophers on these topics with the goal of using the ideas in these papers as a springboard for our own further discussion and analysis.

CORE COURSES

PPE 312 (PSCI 236) Public Policy Process (Levendusky)

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

This course introduces students to the theories and practice of the policy-making process. There are four primary learning objectives. First, understanding how the structure of political institutions matter for the policies that they produce. Second, recognizing the constraints that policy makers face when making decisions on behalf of the public. Third, identifying the strategies that can be used to overcome these constraints. Fourth, knowing the toolbox that available to participants in the policy-making process to help get their preferred strategies implemented. While our focus will primarily be on American political institutions, many of the ideas and topics discussed in the class apply broadly to other democratic systems of government.
PPE 314 (PHIL 228) Philosophy of Social Science (TBA)

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

This course is about the foundations of contemporary social science. It focuses on the nature of social systems, the similarities and differences between social and natural sciences, the construction, analysis, and confirmation of social theories, and the nature of social explanations. Specific topics may include: What are social norms and conventions? What does it mean to have one gender rather than another, or one sexual orientation rather than another? Should social systems be studied quantitatively or qualitatively?

RESEARCH

PPE 401 Independent Study Permission needed from Department.

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

PPE 402 Research in PPE (Sontuoso, Funcke)

SEM: F 2-5 PM

Led by postdoctoral fellows in the Philosophy, Politics and Economics program, this course teaches students how to conduct research in PPE with an emphasis on creating a well-formed research question, determining what kinds of data or scholarly research bears on that question, and how to carry out an interdisciplinary, research-driven project on that question.

PPE 498 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.

CAPSTONES

PPE 470 CAPSTONE: SOCIAL POLICY - Economics of Crime and Corruption: An Interdisciplinary Perspective (Dimant)

SEM: M 2-5 PM

This is an undergraduate research seminar tackling the topic of crime and corruption from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our focus will lie on understanding the mechanism and motivation to engage in criminal and corrupt behavior from the viewpoint of, among others, economics, psychology, and criminology. Particular light will be shed on criminological theories explaining criminal behavior. Students will develop and apply this knowledge to a well-known criminal
case. We will also feature external talks from practitioners. Past semesters’ talks were given by representatives of the FBI, SEC, World Bank, and KPMG, among others.

**PPE 471 CAPSTONE: POLITICAL ECONOMY - Global Prosperity: Determinants, Threats, Policies** (Bavetta)

**SEM: W 2-5 PM**

This course pursues three ambitious aims. First, it exploits findings from history, economics, political science, and philosophy to explore the unique phenomenon known to social scientists as the Great Divergence. The Great Divergence is the separation in income and prosperity between countries that the world experienced since the second half of the XVIII century. The exploration focuses on the causes that made the Great Divergence possible. In particular, the course identifies three determinants of prosperity — institutions, civic virtues and social norms, and culture — and illustrates the findings in the social sciences literature that support the role of each cause.

The second aim moves from the acknowledgement that prosperity is multidimensional and is connected with the understanding of self-realization. In particular, the course presents two views of self-realization — achievement and dynamism — and links them to Amartya Sen’s view of opportunity and to Edmund Phelps’s concept of dynamism, respectively. In addition, the course illustrates that these views carry different policy and political implications that bear profoundly different consequences for the kind of society that one wishes to promote.

The third aim is more general. The discussion about the causes and meanings of prosperity suggests that a particular ethos of freedom that combines the Smithian and the Schumpeterian man lies at the basis of prosperity. The course reconstructs this man, argues for his importance in the creation of prosperity, and suggests that the ethos of freedom that he or she embodies is fundamental to tackle the contemporary challenges that threaten the continuation of material and immaterial prosperity. In so doing, it delineates a form of *humane liberalism*.

**PPE 472 CAPSTONE: NETWORKS - Network Analysis** (Sontuoso)

**SEM: W 3:30-6:30**

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 to explain 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.)
PPE 473 CAPSTONE: MODELING - Thinking with Models (Funcke)

SEM: T 1:30-4:30

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 agent-based simulation models in the social sciences, especially in economic, in commercial and in strategic (game-theoretic) contexts. Agent-based models are a relatively recent form of computer simulation that seeks 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.

PPE 474 CAPSTONE: JUDGMENT AND DECISION MAKING - Competition and Negotiation (Hart)

SEM: T 3-6 PM

Many of our social interactions involve conflict, in personal relationships and in the workplace. We may find conflict energizing and positive in situations such as athletic and creative competitions. Yet, in situations such as legal battles and warfare, conflict may be demoralizing and harmful. In the course, we will discuss psychological and physiological mechanisms underlying negotiation and competition, and the personal and societal implications of conflict. We will explore the following topics, among others: How our brains and society norms affect the prevalence and intensity of conflict; how the social context affects our willingness to compete; rivalry and conflict over time. Students will read experimental and empirical research, and lead the class discussions. There are no formal requirements, but students should have some familiarity with experimental methodology and statistics.

PPE 482 CAPSTONE: PSYCHOLOGY – Modelling Choice Behavior (Bhatia)

SEM: R 1:30-4:30

This course will examine mathematical and computational models of individual choice behavior. It will cover modeling techniques from psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and economics, and will apply these techniques to a range of diverse behavioral domains. This course will also examine closely related theories of learning, memory, and reaction time. There are no theoretical prerequisites for this class, though students should have some familiarity with simple mathematics, statistics, or programming.
This is an interdisciplinary course on the empowerment of women and girls. We will read widely from philosophy to social science to public policy, law, and intervention strategies. We aim to know how best to understand, measure, and successfully intervene on our phenomena of interest. And we will integrate relevant ethical, social, political, economic, and technological considerations into our investigations.