PPE Fall Courses 2014

PPE 008 (PHIL 008) The Social Contract (B) Society Sector (Freeman)

LEC: MW 2-3 PM  
REC: F 10-11 AM or 11 AM – 12 NOON

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 036 (ECON 36) Law and Economics Formal Reasoning (Garcia Jimeno)

Prerequisite(s): ECON 001 and 002. Credit cannot be received for both ECON 036 and 234.

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.

PPE 062 (RUSS 189) Soviet and Post-Soviet Economy (Vekker)

All readings and lectures in English

LEC: TR 12-1:30 PM

The course will cover the development and operation of the Soviet centrally planned economy--one of the grandest social experiments of the 20th century. We will review the mechanisms of plan creation, the push for the collectivization and further development of Soviet agriculture, the role of the Soviet educational system and the performance of labor markets (including forced labor camps--GULags). We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system and the causes of its collapse. Privatization, called by some "piratization," will be one of the central issues in our consideration of the transition from central planning to a market economy in the early 1990s. Even though our main focus will be on the Soviet economy and post-Soviet transition, we will occasionally look back in time to the tsarist era and even further back to find evidence to help explain Soviet/Russian economic development.

PPE 072 (PHIL 72, HSOC 101) Biomedical Ethics (Mcaninch)

LEC: MW 10-11 AM  
REC: F 10-11 AM, 11-12 NOON, 12-1 PM or 1-2 PM
A survey of moral problems in medicine and biomedical research. Problems discussed include: genetic manipulation, informed consent, infanticide, abortion, euthanasia, and the allocation of medical resources. Moral theory is presented with the aim of enabling students to think critically and analytically about moral issues. The need for setting biomedical issues in broader humanistic perspective is stressed.

**PPE 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 6:30-9:30 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 140 (CIS 140) Introduction to Cognitive Science** (Ungar/Brainard)

*Fulfils the Formal Reasoning General Requirement for the College of Arts and Sciences.*

Prerequisite(s): An introductory course in Computer Science, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Philosophy or Psychology.

**LEC: TR 1:30-3 PM**

**REC: R 3-4 PM, R 4-5 PM, R 5-6 PM, R 6-7 PM, F 3-4 PM, F 4-5 PM, or F 5-6 PM**

How do minds work? This course surveys a wide range of answers to this question from the disciplines ranging from philosophy to neuroscience. The course devotes special attention to the use of simple computational and mathematical models. Topics include perception, action, thought, learning, memory and social interaction.

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

(Staff)

**LEC: T 5-8 PM**
Judgments, decisions under certainty and uncertainty, problem solving, logic, rationality, and moral thinking.

**PPE 202 (PSCI 236) Public Policy Process** (Levendusky)

**LEC:** MW 11-12 NOON  
**REC:** W 2-3 PM, R 11-12 NOON, R 12-1 PM, F 11-12 NOON, F 12-1 PM, or F 1-2 PM

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.

**PPE 233 Philosophy of Economics** (Lindemans)

**LEC:** TR 3-4:30 PM

In this course, general philosophy of science issues are applied to economics, and some problems specific to economics are tackled. While analytical questions like “What is economics?” or “What is an economic explanation” must be pursued, the ultimate goal is practical: What is good economics? How can economists contribute to a better understanding of society, and a better society? How can we make economics better? Topics to be discussed include the following: specific object and method of economics as a social science; its relation with other disciplines (physics, psychology and evolutionary theory); values in economics (welfare, freedom, equality and neutrality); the role of understanding and possible limits of a quantitative approach to human behavior (purposefulness, freedom, creativity, innovation); prediction, unpredictability and the pretension of prediction; causation in econometrics and in economic theory (equilibrium); selfishness and utility maximization (cognitive and behaviorist interpretations); economic models and unrealistic assumptions (realism and instrumentalism); empirical basis of economics (observation and experiment); microeconomics and macroeconomics (reductionism and autonomy); pluralism in economics (mainstream economics and heterodox schools).

**PPE 277 (PHIL 277) Justice, Law, and Morality** (Freeman)

**LEC:** MW 11-12 NOON  
**REC:** F 11-12 NOON, F 12-1 PM

In this course we will focus on the philosophical background to questions regarding the exercise of legitimate political power and individuals’ rights under the U.S. Constitution, including 1st Amendment freedoms of religion, expression, and association, the 14th Amendment guarantee of due process and the right of privacy and abortion, the Equal Protection clause and its bearing on affirmative action and equal political rights, and the Takings and Contract clauses and their bearing on rights of private property and economic freedom. We will also discuss competing conceptions of democracy and their implications for the purported authority of courts to reverse democratically enacted decisions by a majority. In addition to Supreme Court decisions
concerning these and other issues, we will read works by J.S. Mill, John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, T.M. Scanlon, Martha Nussbaum, Cass Sunstein, and other contemporary theorists.

**PPE 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.

**PPE 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.

**PPE 475 Institutional Corruption and Unethical Behavior** (Jiang)

**SEM: R 1:30-4:30 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 Public Choice and Public Policy** (Sontuoso)

**SEM: W 2-5 PM**

This course applies Public Choice theory to the analysis of contemporary policy issues. The course will address both domestic and international political decision-making elements: while maintaining an interdisciplinary nature, it aims at providing an accessible introduction to the analytical tools of economics as applied to the study of current issues in political science. Each class will begin with a survey of some positive theoretical framework(s), including the foundations of the rational choice theory, approaches to the aggregation of preferences, strategic behavior, voting methods, accounts of cooperation, collective action, public goods, and institutions. The second part of each class will then critically apply theoretical knowledge to relevant contemporary policy issues, including current debates on governmental decision-making.
processes in the US and EU, lobbying in democracies, international security, state capacity and implementation, greenhouse gas reduction, democracy and civil society, etc..

**PPE 475 Voting Behavior and Elections in America** (Miller)

**SEM: W 5-8 PM**

Voting is the cornerstone of American political life. As such, the act of voting has attracted considerable attention from scholars and policymakers. This course addresses the field of voting behavior in the United States in roughly four parts. First, we'll discuss general questions in the field and introduce the Michigan model and the rational choice interpretation of voting. Second, we'll look at common heuristics used to simplify the vote decision and ways in which campaigns mobilize voters. After the midterm we will turn our attention toward voting in congressional and presidential contexts. The last portion of the course addresses special electoral conditions: local elections, direct democracy, and the effects of certain electoral reforms.

**PPE 475 Mathematical Modeling of Social Phenomena** (Funcke)

**SEM: T 1:30-4:30 PM**

During the 20th century social science, and in particular economics, went through a process of increased formalization. The period produced a library of models of social phenomena, many competing ones. In this course we will briefly browse the library, with the intention to explore classical theoretical perspectives of what is a better model and ponder how increased normalization affects the social sciences. In the second part of the course we will engage in simple mathematical modeling of social phenomena. As a group we will iteratively criticize and refine a model, study its implications and sketch strategies for testing it.

**PPE 475 Moral Foundations of Globalization** (Muldoon)

**SEM: TR 3 – 4:30 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.