PPE Fall Courses 2015

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

SEM: TR 10:30-12 NOON

This course explores a history of modern Western political philosophy by tracing the arc of the social contract tradition. We will start with Hobbes before turning to Locke and Rousseau. Drawing from Hume, Bentham, and Mill, we will examine utilitarian and proto-utilitarian critiques of the social contract tradition. Then we will turn to the rebirth of the social contract tradition inaugurated by Rawls. We will finish with a brief look at recent developments, including the public reason liberalism of Gauss. Along the way, we will supplement primary texts with contemporary or near-contemporary work by Jean Hampton, Gregory Kavka, A. John Simmons, Joshua Cohen, and Samuel Freeman.

036 (ECON 36) Law and Economics (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.

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.

073 (PHIL 073) Topics in Ethics: Environmental Ethics (Santana)

SEM: TR 12-1:30 PM

In this course, we examine the philosophical underpinnings of environmentalism by considering important cases such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and non-human animal welfare. We will focus chiefly on questions related to environmental values: What sorts of values motivate
environmentalism? Who or what is the source of those values? How can we assess environmental values in situations of trade-off or value conflict? We will look for answers to the questions in traditional ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics as well as from environment-specific theoretical frameworks, such as conservation biology, eco-feminism, eco-theology, and environmental economics. Students should leave the course prepared to engage in sophisticated and rigorous reasoning and discussion about environmental issues. No prior experience with philosophy is assumed.

110 Introduction to Decision Theory (Sen) (LPS Course)
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.

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 disciplines ranging from philosophy to neuroscience. The course devotes special attention to the use of simple computational and mathematical models. Topics include perception, learning, memory, decision making, emotion and consciousness.

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

LEC: F 2-5 PM (SAS Session)
or
LEC: R 6-9 PM (LPS Session)
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).

233 Philosophy of Economics (Lindemans)

This course has been CANCELED.

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

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

This course will survey several central topics in philosophy of mind, as well as investigating how philosophy of the mind interacts with scientific study of the mind. Among the questions we'll be asking are: What is it to have a mind? What is the relationship between the mind and the brain? Can there be a science of the mind? What can it tell us? What can philosophy contribute to a science of the mind? What is consciousness? What is it to think, to perceive, to act? How are perception, thought, and action related to one another?

271 (PHIL 271) Global Justice (Tan)

SEM: MW 2-3:30 PM

This course is an introduction to some of the central problems in global justice. Some of the topics that we will examine include realism, human rights, sovereignty and intervention economic justice, and war and morality. We will look at questions such as: Is it coherent to talk about global justice, or is the global arena essentially a Hobbesian state of nature? In what sense are human rights universal? Is the idea of universal rights compatible with the political
sovereignty of states? What is the basis of this duty? What is a just war? What is terrorism, and what are the moral limits in combating terrorism? Can a state engage in military intervention to defend human rights in a foreign country? Readings will be drawn from contemporary authors such as Rawls, Walzer, and Sen, as well as historical figures like Kant and Hobbes. This course examines some of the common problems in global justice. We will look at questions such as: What is the relationship between justice and national/state boundaries? Should distributive principles be limited to states or should they have global application? What is a just war? What is the difference between war and terrorism? Do states have the right (or even duty) to intervene in another state to protect basic human rights? What are human rights? Are they universal, or should they be limited by cultural considerations?

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 Institutional Corruption and Unethical Behavior

This course has been CANCELED.

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: while maintaining an interdisciplinary nature, it aims at providing an 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 last 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, etc. Note: part of the program contains a theoretical (formal) component.

475 Electoral Systems and Decision Making (Miller)

SEM: W 5-8 PM

Electoral systems are processes by which votes cast in an election are translated into seats in a legislature. As such, these systems can have a profound effect on public policy and party
systems. This course examines majoritarian, proportional, and mixed electoral systems in terms of how these institutions translate votes into seats and can incentivize strategic or genuine choices by voters when casting a ballot. Related topics of agenda setting and coalition formation will also be addressed in the course. We'll start with an overview of the mechanics of these systems and then turn to classic political questions of party competition, resource allocation, and interest representation as they relate to how these systems operate in a comparative context.

475 Modeling of Social Phenomena (Funcke)

SEM: TR 3-4:30 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.

475 Trust, Lies & Videotape (Hart)

SEM: M 3:30-6:30 PM

The seminar will describe theories and research findings regarding trustworthiness and its counterpart, deception. We will discuss signals that may convey cooperative and deceptive intentions, and people's ability to detect them in different situations and paradigms. Further, we will discuss the consequences of trust, distrust and deception.

Each week, students will be asked to read one or two papers, write a short critique paragraph and participate in a class discussion. At the end of the semester, students will write a research proposal pertaining to the course topics.

475 Ethical Issues in Globalization (Lister)

SEM: W 2-5 PM

The process of globalization includes increased interaction among, and interdependence between, the states of the world and the people living in them. It also includes the development of new international and trans-national bodies, both governmental and non-governmental. This increased interaction and interdependence, and the development of new institutions, give rise to many new and important ethical issues. These will be among the most important issues for the 21st century. In this class we will consider such questions as fairness in the international economy (including trade and labor standards); international labor migration and “brain drain”; duties to promote development in less-developed countries; whether and when the debt burdens of less-developed or burdened countries should be forgiven; and how we might address shared
burdens relating to the environment. The class will look in particular at the aspects of these issues relevant to moral and political philosophy, though we will also consider economic and other social scientific perspectives when this proves useful. The seminar will be based on reading and discussion [not lecture!] of a number of recent important texts on these issues. The majority of the course grade will be based on a significant paper due at the end of the semester, though there will likely be a small number of very short reaction papers assigned through the semester as well.

475 (HIST 455) Risk and Society (Wiggins)

SEM: W 2-5 PM

Since at least Herodotus, historians have been writing about humanity’s attempts to predict dangers and control futures. But while a concern for the future and strategies to mitigate accidents have existed for much of recorded time, the concept of risk is a relatively young construction, emerging only in early modernity. In this course, we investigate the concept of the risk in order to understand how it became a central organizing force in the modern period—perhaps even the defining characteristic of modernity—and, importantly, how it came to be seen as manageable. In the course’s first unit, we read the foundational materials of the theory of the “risk society”—Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens’ early work. Then, in unit 2, move to selections from historians of knowledge who trace the epistemic shifts that developed modern concepts of risk and eventually opened the possibility for its management through the use of statistical probabilities. While the most critical developments in the conception of risk took place in Europe across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, unit 3 moves across the Atlantic to investigate the ways in which risk and, especially the desire to mitigate it, shaped the United States. In this unit (our largest of the course), we will see how risk assessment and management grew into the largest business in the world. Here, we will look at statistics, actuarial science, insurance, speculation, and financial capital. Along the way, we will see many instances in which categories of identity—race, class, gender, sexuality, ability—are tied deeply into the business of discriminating risk. Finally, the concluding unit reassesses the concept of the risk society through the recent past and possible futures as it considers catastrophic threats that remain pressing—nuclear war, chemical waste, genetic engineering, global climate change, and systemic financial collapse.