

Introduction to Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Econ 384/PHIL 384/POLI 384
Fall, 2018

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 2pm; Wednesdays, 1 to 3pm and by appointment

Course description

This interdisciplinary course provides an overview of some core conceptual tools used to analyze issues at the intersection of philosophy, politics, and economics (PPE). It serves as the Gateway course for the PPE minor at UNC. A range of topics are covered, including game theory, property, markets, distributive justice, and public choice theory.

Grading criteria

There will be three quizzes, which generally will be non-cumulative along with a final exam. The game theory quiz is worth 10%. The other two quizzes are worth 15% each; the final exam is worth 20%. The paper is worth 30%, with participation worth the remaining 10% of the grade. Attendance is expected. Poor attendance will be reflected in a lower participation grade.

I will give more details about the paper later in the semester, but it will be a ten page paper. You will need to hand in at least four pages on Halloween, with the full paper due a few weeks later. You will look at a policy issue from both game theoretic and normative frameworks. At the end of the semester, you will present some of your arguments to the entire class, possibly through a debate format.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to analyze social and political issues and policies from both a game theoretic and normative lens.

Electronics Policy

Phones and Laptops are not allowed in class without my explicit permission.

Plagiarism policy

All students must abide by the UNC honor code, <http://honor.unc.edu>

Required books

Most readings will be in the book listed below. A few other readings will be posted on Sakai. They will be marked with an asterisk.

Philosophy, Politics, & Economics, by Jonathan Anomaly *et al* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

The Evolution of Cooperation, by Robert Axelrod (Basic Books, 2006)

Highly Recommended

Game Theory 101: The Complete Textbook, William Spaniel (electronic edition)

Reading Schedule

While I expect to keep closely to the schedule, I will make some changes as the semester progresses. I will email any schedule changes, and post a revised syllabus on sakai as needed. I do expect you to check your email regularly.

Aug 22 Introduction: Collective Action

Game Theory

Aug 27 Hobbes from PPE; <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-theory/#Util>, 2.1 and 2.2
Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, chapter 1
Spaniel,* *Game Theory*, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4

Aug 29 Axelrod, chapters 1-4

Sep 3 Labor Day

Sep 5 Axelrod, chapter 6-9

Sep 10 No class

Sep 12 Gardiner*, "A Perfect Moral Storm"

Sep 17 **Quiz** (game theory)

Incentives and Economic Behavior

Sep 19 Cohen,* *Why not Socialism? Ch. 1; Inventing our Life* (film)

Sep 24 Locke, *Second Treatise of Government** (be sure to read the entire chapter, on sakai), chapter 5; Hume, *Of Justice and Property* (133-141)

Sep 26 Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (164-172); Hayek, *The Use of Knowledge in Society* (172-178)

Oct 1 Schmidtz, *The Institution of Property* (147-158), Ravallion*, *A Comparative Perspective on Poverty*

Oct 3 Friedman, *Market Failures* (214-232)
Arrow,* *Uncertainty and the Welfare Economics of Medical Care*, pp., 948-954, and 961-2

Oct 8 Ciepley,* *Beyond Public and Private: Toward a Political Theory of the Corporation*

Friedman,* *The Social Responsibility of Business*

Oct 10 **Quiz**

Distributive Justice

Oct 15 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (294-317)

Oct 17 Meetings about Papers (optional)

Oct 22 Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, (317-344)

Oct 24 Arneson, *Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare*, (368-377)

Oct 29 Anderson*, *The Problem of Equality From a Political Economy Perspective*.

Oct 31 First draft of paper due (at least four pages)

Public Choice

Nov 5 Becker,* *The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior*

Buchanan, *Politics Without Romance* (431-435)

Nov 7 **Quiz**

Nov 12 Michael Huemer, *Why People are Irrational about Politics* (456-467)

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy Quiz* (436-449)

Nov 14 Geoff Brennan and Loren Lomasky, *Is There a Duty to Vote?*

Jason Brennan, *Polluting the Polls: When Citizens Should Not Vote*

Public Choice, Wikipedia (Arrow's Theorem) (Y)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arrow%27s_impossibility_theorem

Conclusion

Nov 19 Dworkin, *Paternalism*, (526-537); Thaler and Sunstein, *Libertarian Paternalism*, (537-550)

Nov 21 Thanksgiving

Nov 26 Drugs, Huemer, *De Marneffe*, and Miron (583-610) (J)

Nov 28 Papers Due

Dec 3 Class debate

Dec 5 Class Debate and Conclusion

Dec 8 **Final Exam**, 4pm (note that this is a Saturday)