

Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Economics
ECON 4360
Ethics, Justice, and Economics
Winter 2019

Instructor(s): Prof. Daniel Rosenblum, Daniel.Rosenblum@dal.ca

Office: C22, 6220 University Ave (Economics Department)

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-3:30, or by appointment.

Lectures: *M/W, 13:05-14:25, McCain 2170*

Laboratories: *none*

Tutorials: *none*

TA: Rodolfo del Aguila, rodolfo.del.aguila@dal.ca

TA Office Hours: TBA

Course Prerequisites

Intermediate Micro (ECON 2200 or ECON 2201) and Intermediate Macro (ECON 2201 or ECON 2220). All Economics courses, unless stated otherwise, have a minimum grade requirement of C for their prerequisite courses.

Crosslisted: PHIL 4361

Exclusions: ECON 5360, ECON 3360, PHIL 3361

Course Description

In this course, we will critically examine the assumptions of Neoclassical economic theory and its application with a focus on the ethical and distributional consequences of using markets as an allocation mechanism. The first half of the course adds a moral philosophical perspective to standard economic theory. The second half exposes students to the major conceptions of economic justice, including utilitarianism and social choice theory, Rawlsian egalitarianism, Nozickian libertarianism, Sen's capabilities approach, and equality of opportunity.

Learning Objectives

Demonstrate the ethical/moral philosophical assumptions in economics through class discussion and written assignments.

Analyze, evaluate, and compare conceptions of economic justice through class discussion and written assignments.

Synthesize knowledge from the course by writing a final paper that evaluates an economic problem through a philosophical lens.

Learning Management System

The course will use Brightspace (accessible through my.dal.ca) to post grades, readings, links to readings, and links to topics of interest that may arise over the semester. The course will use Urkund plagiarism detection software on Brightspace. If you have any concerns or objections to using Urkund, please see the professor to discuss it before any paper parts are due.

Course Requirements

This is a reading and writing intensive course. Although there will be lecture components, class time will also entail group discussion and individual presentations. Students will be graded on classroom participation, presentations, and writing (4 short writing assignments and 1 long final paper).

Class participation will be graded based on the Class Participation rubric. Students are expected to attend class and thoughtfully participate in class discussion. Students will also be asked to bring their own discussion questions to some of the classes. Class participation grades will be reduced if students are absent, do not actively and thoughtfully participate in class, or spend class time sleeping or playing with their phones/tablets.

The short writing assignments (3-4 pages) will be critical responses to the course readings. Students are free to write about whatever aspect of the readings they find most compelling/challenging/confusing/exciting. The point of the short assignments is to help you think critically about the readings and organize your thoughts in a logical way. In constructing your paper it is important that your ideas draw on the various assigned chapters/papers to flesh out your writing. In considering the various articles you should be mulling some basic questions: Is the topic of the paper(s)/chapter(s) something you deem important? Why? Is the approach they follow convincing? Are the conclusions they draw compelling? Has something critical been left out? You must keep track of how many short papers you have written. You must submit your papers at the latest as given by the course schedule (for example, you must have written your 3rd response paper by March 6 although you can write them for earlier classes. They are due at the beginning of class. **The topic for your short papers must be on the readings for the week in which you hand it in.** For example, if you hand in a paper during Week 9, it must be related to the readings on Human Capabilities. You can hand in **no more than one paper per week**. Late papers will not be accepted. Papers whose main topic is not the readings for that week (e.g. about material for earlier or later classes or about unrelated topics) will be given a grade of 0.

Students may be asked to summarize their papers in class to their fellow classmates.

Students are also required to write a final term paper (10-12 pages) due at the end of classes. Students will present their papers in the last two weeks of classes. These longer papers are an opportunity to more deeply explore your thinking about a particular topic/question that relates to the readings. Although you are free to choose any topic, they must be approved by the professor ahead of time. E-mail the professor your topic by the end of the 8th week of the course at the latest. If you are struggling with a final paper topic, please see the professor for assistance.

All papers must be written in 12-point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, no title page. Do not forget to put your name, date, and ID number on your papers. And staple it!

Note: you will be asked to submit your papers to online plagiarism detection software (e.g. Urkund).

Grade Components: Classroom Participation (10%), Presentations (10%), Short Writing Assignments (40%), Final Paper (40%)

Grading: Grades will be determined according to the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale:

| A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D | F |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|
| 90-100 | 85-89.9 | 80-84.9 | 77-79.9 | 73-76.9 | 70-72.9 | 65-69.9 | 60-64.9 | 55-59.9 | 50-54.9 | <50 |

See Paper Grading Rubric to see how the papers will be assessed. If you think your grade on a short paper is unfairly low, first contact your TA. If you still think your grade is unfairly low after discussing the paper with your TA, then feel free to discuss it with me during my office hours. I will not discuss short paper grades after the last day of classes.

Policy on Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence:

Medical notes are **NOT** required for absences and will not be accepted. You also do not need to submit a Student Declaration of Absence form. If the professor is e-mailed before a class in which you will be absent with a valid reason, class participation grades will not be negatively affected by the absence. However, given the flexibility of the due dates for written assignments, students are responsible for turning in their Short Writing Assignments by the due dates below. **No extensions will be given** for the Short Writing Assignments, Final Paper, or Presentation.

If a class is cancelled due to weather or other reasons, depending on how quickly we have covered the course content, we may shift the course content to re-adjust for the missing class. If you write a paper for a class that is then cancelled, the paper must be handed in to the professor (either in his office or mailbox) the next day the university is open.

Textbook: Hausman, D., McPherson, M., & Satz, D. (2016). *Economic analysis, moral philosophy, and public policy*. Cambridge University Press. 3rd edition. (2nd edition is currently available at the library. The professor will provide a copy of the 3rd edition of the textbook to be placed on reserve if the library does not have a copy.) In addition, there are several assigned journal articles and book chapters (see below).

Schedule and Reading List

Week 1: Introduction

Jan 7: Overview (no readings for first class)

Jan 9: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 1-2

Week 2: Writing Workshop and Rationality and Morality

Jan 14: (Writing Centre Workshop) Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapter 3,
(optional) Samuelson, P. A. (1958). "An exact consumption-loan model of interest with or without the social contrivance of money." *The Journal of Political Economy*, 66(6), 467-482.

Jan 16: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapter 4,

Week 3: The Role of Morality in Markets (1st Short Paper Due January 23)

Jan 21: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 5-6

Jan 23: Sandel, M. J. (2013). "Market Reasoning as Moral Reasoning: Why Economists Should Re-engage with Political Philosophy." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(4): 121-140.

Roth, Alvin E. (2007). "Repugnance as a constraint on markets." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(3): 37-58.

(optional) Healy, K., & Krawiec, K. D. (2017). "Repugnance Management and Transactions in the Body." *American Economic Review*, 107(5), 86-90.

Week 4: Utilitarianism, Welfare, and Efficiency

Jan 28: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapter 7

Bentham (1781/2000) Chapter 1 in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*,
Mill (1863/2001) Chapter 2 in *Utilitarianism*

Jan 30: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 8-9

(optional) Hahn, F. (1982) Chapter 9 "On Some Difficulties of the Utilitarian Economist" in *Utilitarianism and Beyond* ed. Sen and Williams.

Week 5: Liberty, Rights, Equality, and Justice (2nd Short Paper Due February 6)

Feb 4: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 10-11

Feb 6: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 12

Week 6: Social Choice and Game Theory

February 11: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 13

February 13: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 14

Winter Study Break: February 18-22

Week 7: Rawls' Theory of Justice

February 25: Selected sections from Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*

February 27: Cohen, G.A. (1991) "Incentives, Inequality, and Community," The Tanner Lectures on Human Values

Week 8: Nozick's Anarchy, State, and Utopia (Topic for Final Paper must be e-mailed to Professor by midnight on March 8) (3rd Short Paper Due March 6)

March 4: Chapter 7 "Distributive Justice" from Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (handout)

March 6: Cohen, G.A. (1977) "Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty" *Erkenntnis* 11(1): 5-23

Mankiw, N. G. (2013). "Defending the one percent." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3), 21-34.

Week 9: Human Capabilities

March 11: Sen, Amartya, (1979) "Equality of What?," The Tanner Lecture on Human Values.

March 13: Nussbaum, M. (1995) "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings." Chapter 2 in *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities* eds. Nussbaum and Glover.

Week 10: Equality of Opportunity

March 18: Arneson, R. (1989) "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare", *Philosophical Studies*, 56(1): 77-93.

March 20: Roemer, J. (2002) "Equality of Opportunity: A Progress Report", *Social Choice and Welfare*, 19: 455-471.

Week 11: How can economists tackle injustice? (4th Short Paper Due on March 27)

March 25: Bertrand, M. and S. Mullainathan (2004). "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review*. 94(4): 991-1013.

Doyle O., C.P. Harmon, J.J. Heckman, and R.E. Tremblay (2009) "Investing in early human development: Timing and economic efficiency." *Economics and Human Biology*. 7(1): 1-6.

(optional) Almond, D., J. Currie, and V. Duque (2018). "Childhood Circumstances and Adult Outcomes: Act II" *Journal of Economic Literature*. 56(4): 1360-1446.

March 27:

Deaton, A. (2014). "American hubris, African nemesis." *The Lancet*. 383: 297-298.

McMurtrie, B. (2014). "Poverty under the microscope." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. June 9, 2014.

(optional) Duflo, E. (2017). "The Economist as Plumber" (No. w23213). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Week 12: (April 1 and 3) Presentation of final papers.

Final Papers due on the last day of classes, Monday, April 8, by 4:30PM.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate. University policies as well as links to academic support services are posted to Brightspace.