

Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Economics
ECON 5360
Ethics, Justice, and Economics
Winter 2023

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

We acknowledge the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

Instructor: Daniel Rosenblum

Email: Daniel.Rosenblum@dal.ca

Office: C22, 6220 University Ave (Economics Department)

Course Delivery: *In-person*

Class Location: *McCain 2162*

Lectures: *Tuesday/Thursday 2:35-3:55PM*

Office Hours: *TBA*

TA: *Rodolfo del Aguila Andrade*

E-mail: *Rodolfo.del.Aguila@dal.ca*

TA Office Hours: *Virtual, Tuesdays from 12-1PM. E-mail Rodolfo to schedule a time, and he will send a link for the virtual meeting.*

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, Rawlsian egalitarianism, Nozickian libertarianism, Sen's capabilities approach, and equality of opportunity.

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 4360, ECON 3360, PHIL 3361

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the ethical/moral philosophical assumptions in economics through written assignments.
- Analyze, evaluate, and compare conceptions of economic justice through written assignments.

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

Course Materials

Required 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 online at the library, however it does not have all the content of the 3rd edition.) In addition, there are several assigned journal articles and book chapters (see below).

Other *required* assigned readings will be posted to Brightspace.

Additional *optional* readings will be posted to Brightspace. These are for students interested in going beyond the normal required readings and students will not be expected to have read them.

Course Website (Brightspace)

The course will use Brightspace (accessible through my.dal.ca) to post lecture videos, lecture slides, 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 contact the professor to discuss it before any assignments are due. When connecting to online resources from outside of Canada, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and observing any applicable laws of the country they are connecting from. Students are responsible to establish whether they have access to all course material as soon as the term begins and before the ADD/DROP date. *If you do not have access to certain material, inform the instructor as soon as possible. Alternative access methods are not guaranteed.*

Course Requirements

This is a reading and writing intensive course. Students will be graded on their writing (five short writing assignments and one long final paper) and one presentation of their final paper.

Course Assessment:

Component

Weight (% of final grade)

Date

5 Short Writing Assignments	50%, lowest grade dropped	Jan 27; Feb 10; March 3, 17, and 24
Final Paper Presentation	10%	March 38, 30; April 4 and 6
Final Paper	40%	April 17

Short Writing Assignments: The short writing assignments (3-4 pages) are your critical responses to the course readings. They will be due approximately every two weeks. The topic of the paper must be on that week and/or the previous one week's readings. For example, Short Paper 3, due

March 3rd, must be on Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* and/or Rawls' *Theory of Justice*. The papers can refer to other course readings if relevant, but the main argument for the paper should be around those two weeks of readings. Lowest assignment grade will be dropped.

Students are free to write about whatever aspect of the readings they find most compelling/challenging/confusing/exciting. However, I will post one paper topic, which you can use instead of your own idea. In constructing your short papers, *it is important that your ideas draw on and refer to the various assigned chapters/papers*. 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? The papers should be well-written, have a clear, logical argument, and engage with the course readings. **It should be clear in your papers that you have carefully read the assigned readings that you are writing about.**

The point of the short assignments is to help you think critically about the readings and organize your thoughts in a logical way. **To get a good grade, you need to show me in your paper that you have read and thought critically about the readings. 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.

Final Paper: Graduate students are expected to write a more substantial final paper (18-20 pages) due at the end 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 relevant topic, they must be approved by the professor ahead of time. **E-mail the professor your topic by March 4th at the latest.** If you are struggling with a final paper topic, please see the professor for assistance. In addition, students of the graduate course are expected to read and incorporate what they have learned from one relevant book on economics and/or philosophy *in addition to the normal course readings* into their final paper. **This book should be identified by the 3rd week of the semester** and must be approved by the professor. Any of the books from which chapters are included in the course reading list are appropriate. Other **examples** of appropriate books are:

Alexander, Sadie TM (2021). *Democracy, Race, and Justice: The Speeches and Writings of Sadie T.M. Alexander*. Yale University Press.

Banerjee and Duflo. (2019). *Good Economics for Hard Times*. Public Affairs.

Carter, Z.D. (2020). *The Price of Peace: Money, Democracy, and the Life of John Maynard Keynes*. Random House.

Cohen, G.A. (1995). *Self-ownership, freedom, and equality*. Cambridge University Press.

Dworkin, R. (2002). *Sovereign virtue: The theory and practice of equality*. Harvard University Press.

Hayek, F. A. (1991). *The fatal conceit*. University of Chicago Press.

Piketty, T. (2017). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press.

Saez and Zucman (2019). *The Triumph of Injustice*. WW Norton

Sen, A. (2011). *The idea of justice*. Harvard University Press.

Sen, A., Williams, B., & Williams, B. A. O. (Eds.). (1982). *Utilitarianism and beyond*. Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. (2010). *The theory of moral sentiments*. Penguin.

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. All papers must be submitted online via Brightspace.

Final Paper Presentations: Students will present their draft papers in class in the last one or two weeks of the semester. The presentations are meant to help you to organize your thoughts for your final paper and receive feedback from your peers and professor, so it can be appropriately revised before they are due. You do not need to have a complete paper before your presentation. **You should be able to explain your topic/hypothesis, why you think it’s an important/relevant topic, and a logical argument in support of and/or against your hypothesis that draws from the course readings.** You can use outside evidence, but it is not required, and the focus of your paper should be related to the course content. You should be able to show that you have thought critically about the course readings and/or that you can apply the concepts from the course to relevant topics. If for whatever reason in-person classes are not possible in the last weeks of classes, the presentations will instead be submitted as short uploaded video recordings that the entire class will be able to view and comment on (via FlipGrid).

Grading: Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	F
90-100	85-89.9	80-84.9	77-79.9	73-76.9	70-72.9	<70

Policy on Missed or Late Academic Requirements:

Doctor’s notes and Student Declaration of Absence forms are never required for this course.

If you anticipate delays in submitting your short writing assignments or the final paper for whatever reason, let your professor know as soon as possible, so that accommodations can be made. Unless an extension is approved **before the assignment due date** or there is an emergency, late work will be given a grade of zero.

Academic Integrity:

Dalhousie University defines plagiarism as “the submission or presentation of the work of another as if it were one’s own.” All of your papers should be done individually and the content of your papers is expected to be your own thoughts and words unless they are cited appropriately. The course will use Urkund plagiarism detection software on Brightspace. **You are expected to have completed the Writing Centre Academic Integrity Module (link on Brightspace) before writing any papers to ensure you understand what is expected of you.** If you have any questions about whether you may or may not be violating the university’s academic integrity policy, contact your professor before submitting the paper for assistance.

Class Participation:

There is no class participation grade. **You are not required to attend any of the classes.**

However, if you do attend in-person classes, you are expected to pay attention. In particular,

students are not allowed to use phones, tablets, or computers during class without the permission of the professor. Use of such devices may reduce your course grade.

IF YOU FEEL SICK, PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND CLASS. GO GET A COVID TEST. There is no grade penalty for missing classes due to illness.

Course Adjustments Due to COVID:

If your professor must cancel class or make other course adjustments for any reason, he will notify you via e-mail as soon as possible. At the professor's discretion, course delivery may be changed to online delivery. Scheduled office hours may change.

All students are required to comply with health and safety requirements on campus and should be considerate of others' health concerns. Non-compliance may be reported under the Code of Student Conduct.

Students are expected to wear masks (at least 3 layers, e.g. blue medical masks or better) in the classroom. If you have not already done so, I encourage all students to get their booster dose of vaccine if they are eligible as well as your flu vaccine. *Food and drink are not allowed in class and masks should always remain on and never lowered.*

Course Content and Outline (subject to change by the professor)

Week 1 (Jan 10 and 12): Introduction

Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 1-2

Required: Complete Writing Centre Academic Integrity Module (link on Brightspace) if you have not already done so.

Week 2 (Jan 17 and 19): Writing Centre Workshop and Rationality and Morality

Jan 17: Writing Centre Workshop on Academic Integrity

Jan 19: Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 3-4

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.

Week 3 (Jan 24 and 26): The Role of Morality in Markets

(Short Paper 1 Due Jan 27**)**

Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 5-6

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 (Jan 31 and Feb 2): Utilitarianism, Welfare, and Efficiency

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*
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 (Feb 7 and 9): Liberty, Rights, Equality, and Justice

(*Short Paper 2 Due Feb 10***)**

Hausman, McPherson, and Satz Chapters 10-12

Week 6 (Feb 14 and 16): Rawls' Theory of Justice

Selected sections from Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*

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

Winter Study Break Feb 21-25: NO CLASSES

Week 7 (Feb 28 and March 2): Nozick's Anarchy, State, and Utopia (Topic for Final Paper must be e-mailed to the Professor by 11:59PM on March 4)

(*Short Paper 3 Due March 3***)**

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

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 8 (March 7 and 9): Human Capabilities

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

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 9 (March 14 and 16): Equality of Opportunity

(*Short Paper 4 Due March 17***)**

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

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

Week 10 (March 21 and 23): How can economists tackle injustice?

(*Short Paper 5 Due March 24 ***)**

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.

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

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

Weeks 11 and 12 (March 28, 30; April 4, 6): Presentation of final papers.

Final Papers due by 11:59PM April 17.

See Brightspace for Faculty of Science Course Syllabus Sections B (University Policies and Statements) and C (Student Resources and Support).

Paper Grading Rubric for ECON 5360: Ethics, Justice, and Economics

Grade	Logic/Organization	Analysis	Strength of Argument	Writing Style
A	<p>Logical flow Clear progression of ideas building on a central theme Clear transitions between paragraphs and ideas Effective use of transition statements and linking sentences . Intro states purpose, is explicit and grabs attention Intro clearly states what the essay is about Conclusion summarizes/ integrates/discusses implications</p>	<p>Original interpretation or application of readings bordering on ground-breaking (A+) Critically analyzed readings Integrated analysis into argument Original ideas</p>	<p>Makes the point Relevant to stated purpose Delivered on thesis statement Backed up with powerful evidence</p>	<p>Few spelling/grammar mistakes Consistent in tense and person Typed, professional appearance Acknowledged all sources, including consistent citation style.</p>
B	<p>Logical flow General progression that builds on a central theme Some transitions between paragraphs and ideas Under- use of transition statements and linking sentences . Intro states purpose and grabs attention Intro states what the essay is about Conclusion summarizes/ integrates/discusses implications but lack clarity</p>	<p>Some analysis of readings Presented analysis, but did not integrate it fully into argument Thesis is not entirely clear, but argument can be followed Opened the door, but failed to drive the point home</p>	<p>Good evidence Evidence relevant to purpose Shows thought and analysis, but lacks clear focus</p>	<p>Spelling/grammar mistakes begin to interfere with reading flow Minor changes in tense and person Some inconsistency in the typed format Acknowledged all sources, citation style inconsistent.</p>
C	<p>Logical flow is not always evident Lacks progression but expresses ideas that support and argument 1 or 2 tangents (i.e. not stated in the intro) Under- use of transition statements and linking sentences . Intro states a purpose, but it is not clear Conclusion summarizes or repeats intro, but fails to integrates/discusses implications</p>	<p>Analysis lacking or off track Overlooked critical information in analysis Have to work to follow argument Generally lacked original thinking</p>	<p>Purpose generally addressed, but with weak evidence and argumentation Weak evidence of thorough analysis and thought</p>	<p>Many spelling/grammar mistakes Inconsistent tense and person Typed, but not professional in appearance Acknowledged all sources, citation style inconsistent, incorrectly cites some sources .</p>
D	<p>Lacks logical flow Lacks progression of ideas Frequent tangents that distract from main ideas Generally lacks transition statements and linking sentences. Intro does not indicate a purpose, seems irrelevant Conclusion does not reflect the paper, is too brief</p>	<p>Overlooked critical information Faulty analysis Can't follow argument No original use of information</p>	<p>Point not explicitly made, have to work to see it Marked lack of evidence Unconvincing argument</p>	<p>Frequent spelling/grammar mistakes Inconsistent tense and person Handwritten Acknowledged all sources, incorrectly cites most sources .</p>
F	<p>Ideas are scattered, disjointed Lacks logical flow No obvious progression of ideas Lacks clear transitions Lacks a clear introduction Conclusion is very brief or missing</p>	<p>No critical analysis Lacks thesis statement Not apparent line of argument</p>	<p>Point not made or irrelevant to purpose Little evidence for argument Failure to make an argument</p>	<p>Spelling/grammar mistakes throughout Inconsistent tense and person Handwritten Plagiarism, does not acknowledge one or more sources.</p>