

SPRING 2022

Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

PHIL/PPEL 2240

Monday and Wednesday 4:30-5:45pm

Olscamp Hall 223

Instructor: Jeff Carroll

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Office: Shatzel 308

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 pm, and by appointment

Course Description: Many of today's most pressing issues—from immigration, to environmental pollution, to global poverty—have moral, political, economic, and legal dimensions. The discipline of PPEL helps to approach such problems and their solutions from different perspectives. This course serves as a gateway to seeing how these disciplines can help one another in solving complex and difficult problems in society and with its institutions. In the first third of the course, we will familiarize ourselves with basic economic concepts. In the second third of the course, we will begin asking some ethical questions about wealth creation and economic systems. We will lay out the basics of capitalism and socialism and some arguments that have been given for and against them. Next, we will address some concrete moral issues related to markets, economics, politics and law.

Course Outcomes:

1. Students will acquire proficiency with basic economic and moral concepts.
2. Students will learn new ways of approaching and answering difficult ethical questions through course readings, and class lectures and discussions.
3. Students will sharpen their critical thinking skills and improve their prose through class participation and course exams.

Required Texts:

All readings provided online.

Grading:

Here is how your grade in the course will be determined:

First Exam: 25%

Second Exam: 25%

Third Exam: 25%

Participation: 25%

Here is how letter grades will be assigned:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
-59	E

Course Schedule (readings are to be done in preparation for the day noted on the left):

UNIT I: Basic Concepts

1/10 Introduction & Syllabus Day

1/12 Why private property at all? Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”

1/17 NO CLASS – MLK, JR DAY

1/19 Locke on appropriation of property: Locke, Selections from *Two Treatises*

1/24 The Lockean Proviso, Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property”

1/26 Division of Labor: Smith, Selections from *The Wealth of Nations*

1/31 Trade and Efficiency: Krugman, “What Do Undergrads Need to Know About Trade?”

2/02 **NO CLASS**

2/07 Opportunity Cost: Bastiat, “What is Seen and What is Unseen,” Steven Rhoads, “Opportunity Cost”

2/09 *PPEL Lecture – Alex Tabarrok (Olscamp Hall 111 at 5pm)*

2/14 **EXAM 1**

UNIT II: Capitalism and Socialism

2/16 Introduction: Halliday & Thrasher, *The Ethics of Capitalism*, Chapter 1 “Introduction”

- 2/21 Marx's Critique of Capitalism: Marx, "Alienation: Estranged Labor"
- 2/23 Marx's Solution: Marx, Sections 1 and 2 of *Communist Manifesto*
- 2/28 Why Not Socialism: Cohen, Chapters 1 and 2 of *Why Not Socialism?*
- 3/02 Feasibility and socialism, Chapters 3 and 4 of *Why Not Socialism?*
- 3/07 **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- 3/09 **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- 3/14 Cohen's Socialist Ideal: Jason Brennan, "Equality, Community, and Diversity in Cohen's Socialist Ideal"
- 3/16 Capitalism and Freedom: Friedman, Introduction and "The Relation between Economic and Political Freedom"
- 3/21 Central Planning and Knowledge: Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society"
- 3/23 **EXAM 2**

UNIT 3: Political and Moral Issues

- 3/28 Inequality: Begin watching *Snowpiercer*
- 3/30 Inequality: Finish watching *Snowpiercer*
- 4/4 Sex: Lori Watson, "Why Sex Work Isn't Work"
- 4/6 Sex: David Friedman, "Marriage, Sex, and Babies"
- 4/11 Drugs: Michael Huemer, "America's Unjust Drug War"
- 4/13 Religion: Colin Bird, "Does Religion Deserve Our Respect?"
- 4/18 Prisons: Michael Huemer, "Unjust Punishments"
- 4/20 Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM (EXAM 3): Tuesday, April 26th, 3:00-5:30 pm

Codes of Conduct and Academic Honesty Policy: The instructor and students in this course will adhere to the University's general Codes of Conduct defined in the *BGSU Student Handbook*. The Code of Academic Conduct (Academic Honesty Policy) requires that students do not engage in academic dishonesty. For details, refer to:

- *BGSU Student Handbook* (<http://bgsu.edu/downloads/sa/file15768.pdf>)
- *The Academic Charter, B.II.H*
(<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/facsenate/page471.html>)
- Student Discipline Programs
(<http://bgsu.edu/offices/sa/studentdiscipline/index.html>)

Disability Policy: In accordance with the University policy, if the student has a documented disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, he or she should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester and make this need known. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Disability Services for Students, 413 South Hall, 419-372-8495.
(<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/disability/>)