

Lecture Notes 0 : Course Overview

Content

This upper-division undergraduate course studies fundamental philosophical problems at the intersection of ethics and economics. It provides students with the skills to critically evaluate economic arguments, to connect these arguments with contemporary moral theories, and to apply these theories to pervasive social problems.

Course objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to define and elaborate on core concepts in economics (hedonic vs. preferentialist utility, Pareto improvements, weak vs. strong sustainability, contested exchange) and ethics (side-constraints, moral incentives, rule vs. act utilitarianism, lax vs. strong difference principle, workplace democracy). They should also be able to critically assess economic phenomena such as property rights, market exchange, gender inequality, and environmental degradation in light of the main moral theories. Finally, students should be able to assess these theories themselves, in terms of their coherence, cogency, and relevance.

Proceedings

The course consists of two parts: 10 + 1 *plenary sessions* (7 lectures, 3 tutorials, plus one lecture on essay-writing) and 4 *one-on-one feedback sessions*, on the basis of pre-submitted written work. The general programme appears in Table 1.

Readings per session

1. Smart, "An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics," in Smart and Williams: 2-12; 42-62.
Rawls, "The Separateness of Persons," in Singer (1994), pp. 337-9.
Williams, "Jim and the Indians," in Singer (1994), pp. 339-45.
Kymlicka (2001), ch. 2.
2. Rawls (1955), "Two Concepts of Rules", *The Philosophical Review* 64: 3-32.
Tutorial question:
Is utilitarianism internally consistent? Outline an argument that offers a negative answer. Then offer a rebuttal of that argument.
3. Arneson, "Equality of Opportunity", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equal-opportunity/>
Roemer (1993).
Dworkin (2000), ch. 1-2.
Kymlicka (2001), ch. 3
4. Cohen (2008), ch. 1.
Okin (1989), ch. 2.

Session	Date	Topic	Location
1	Monday, 18 November, 17:00	Utilitarianism	GB-28
2	Wednesday, 20 November, 15:00	<i>Tutorial</i>	GB-28
3	Wednesday, 20 November, 18:00	Equality of Opportunity	Sanders 1-13
4	Monday, 25 November, 17:00	Incentives and the Pareto Principle	GB-28
5	Wednesday, 27 November, 15:00	<i>Tutorial</i>	GB-28
6	Wednesday, 27 November, 18:00	Intergenerational Justice	Sanders 1-13
7	Monday, 2 December, 17:00	<i>Essay-writing session</i>	GB-28
	Tuesday, 3 December, 23:59	Proposal 1 due	
8a	Wednesday, 4 December, 15:00	<i>Proposal 1 feedback</i>	GB-28
8b	Wednesday, 4 December, 18:00	<i>Proposal 1 feedback</i>	Sanders 1-13
	Monday, 9 December, 23:59	Essay 1 due	
9a	Wednesday, 11 December, 15:00	<i>Essay 1 feedback</i>	GB-28
9b	Wednesday, 11 December, 18:00	<i>Essay 1 feedback</i>	Sanders 1-13
10	Monday, 6 January, 17:00	Freedom and the Market	GB-28
11	Wednesday, 8 January, 15:00	<i>Tutorial</i>	GB-28
12	Wednesday, 8 January, 18:00	Exploitation and the Market	Sanders 1-13
13	Monday, 13 January, 17:00	Economic Democracy	GB-28
	Monday, 14 January, 23:59	Proposal 2 due	
14a	Wednesday, 15 January, 15:00	<i>Proposal 2 feedback</i>	GB-28
14b	Wednesday, 15 January, 18:00	<i>Proposal 2 feedback</i>	Sanders 1-13
	Monday, 20 January, 23:59	Essay 2 due	
15a	Wednesday, 22 January, 15:00	<i>Essay 2 feedback</i>	GB-28
15b	Wednesday, 22 January, 18:00	<i>Essay 2 feedback</i>	Sanders 1-13

Table 1: Course programme

5. Roemer (1993).

Tutorial question:

Contrast Rawls' and Roemer's theories of equal opportunity. Are they compatible?

6. Vrousalis (2016), "Intergenerational Justice: A Primer", on Canvas.
Gosseries (2008).

7. *Essay-writing session*

Orwell (1946), "Politics and the English Language" (any edition).
Cohen, "How to do political philosophy", on Canvas.

8. *Proposal 1 feedback* [bring your proposal to the meeting]

9. *Essay 1 feedback* [bring your essay to the meeting]

10. Nozick (1974), part II.

Cohen (1977).

Carter, Steiner and Kramer (2006), part V

11. Cohen (1995), ch. 4.

Tutorial question:

Provide a libertarian argument for the view that freedom and equality are incompatible.
Then offer a libertarian rebuttal of that argument.

12. Vrousalis (2018), "Exploitation: A Primer", on Canvas.
Arneson (1981).

Zwolinski, M., "Exploitation" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016)
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/exploitation/>.

13. Dow (2003), ch. 2
 Schweickart (2011), ch. 3
 Bowles and Gintis (1993).
14. *Proposal 2 feedback* [bring your proposal to the meeting]
15. *Essay 2 feedback* [bring your essay to the meeting]

Assessment

- Tutorial assignments will be circulated in class, as will the dates and times of one-to-one feedback meetings.
- Submit a proposal (up to 500 words), including an outline of the argument and a list of proposed references to vrousalis@esphil.eur.nl, by the due date. Failure to submit a proposal by the due date entails forfeiture of the right to feedback.
- Grading consists of: **40% essay 1 (up to 1500 words), 60% essay 2 (up to 2000 words)**. Essays must critically address some debate touched upon in the lectures, juxtaposed with relevant secondary literature. Essays must be submitted online through the designated link on Canvas.

Office Hours

Wednesdays 4-6pm, room J5-63.

Academic Integrity

Please consult the rules and regulations pertaining to academic standards, including notes on plagiarism, on: <https://www.eur.nl/en/about-eur/vision/cheating-and-plagiarism>

References

- Arneson, R. (1981), "What is wrong with exploitation?" *Ethics* 91: 202-227.
- Berlin, I. (2002), *Liberty*. Oxford.
- Bowles, S. and H. Gintis (1993). "A Political and Economic Case for the Democratic Enterprise". *Economics and Philosophy* 9: 75-100.
- Carter, I., H. Steiner, and M. Kramer (2006) (eds), *Freedom: A Philosophical Anthology*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Cohen, G.A. (1977). Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty. *Erkenntnis* 11: 5-23.
- Cohen, G.A. (1995), *Self-Ownership, Freedom and Equality*. Cambridge.
- Cohen, G.A. (2008), *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. Harvard.
- Cohen, G.A. (2011), *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice*. M. Otsuka (ed.). Princeton.
- Dahl, R. (1985), *A Preface to Economic Democracy*. University of California Press.
- Dow, G. (2003), *Governing the Firm*. Cambridge.
- Dworkin, R. (2000), *Sovereign Virtue*. Harvard.
- Gosseries, A. and I. Gonzalez-Ricoy (2016) (eds), *Institutions for Future Generations*. Oxford.

- Gosseries, A. (2008), "On Future Generations' Future Rights", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16: 446-74.
- Hausman, D. and M. McPherson (2006), *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy and Public Policy*, Cambridge.
- Kymlicka, W. (2001), *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford.
- Miller, D. (2006), *The Liberty Reader*, Edinburgh.
- Nozick, R. (1974), *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Basic Books.
- Okin, S.M. (1989), *Justice, Gender and the Family*, Basic books.
- Pettit, P. (1999). *Republicanism*. Oxford.
- Piketty, T. (2014), *Capital in the 21st Century*. Harvard.
- Rawls, J. (1971), *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard.
- Rawls, J. (2001), *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Harvard University Press.
- Raz, J. (1986), *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford.
- Roemer, J. (1993), A Pragmatic Theory of Responsibility for the Egalitarian Planner. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 22: 146-166.
- Schweickart, D. (2011), *After Capitalism*, Rowman and Littlefield.
- Sen, A. (1979), *Inequality Reexamined*, Oxford.
- Singer, P. (1994) (ed.), *Practical Ethics*, Oxford.
- Smart, J.J.C. and Bernard Williams (1979), *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, Oxford.
- Schweickart, D. (2011), *After Capitalism* 2nd edition. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Swift, A. (2006), *Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide*, Polity.
- Temkin, L. (1993), *Inequality*, Oxford.
- Vrousalis, N. (2016). "Intergenerational Justice: A Primer". In Gosseries and Gonzalez-Ricoy.
- Vrousalis, N. (2018). "Exploitation: A Primer". *Philosophy Compass* 13.
- Young, Iris Marion (1990), *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton.