



## **PHIL 475: Topics in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics**

**Units: 4**

**Fall 2024—Mondays and Wednesdays—8:30-9:50** ☞

**Location:** Room 101, Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Center for International and Public Affairs

**Instructor: Dmitri Gallow**

**Office:** MHP 205B

**Office Hours:** 11:30—12:30 Mondays and Wednesdays

**Contact Info:** dmitriga@usc.edu

### **Course texts**

- Hausman, Daniel M. 2012. *Preference, Value, Choice, and Welfare*. Cambridge University Press, New York. 2012.
- Hausman, Daniel M., Michael S. McPherson, & Debra Satz. 2016. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge University Press, New York, third edition.
- Feldman, Allan M. and Serrano, Roberto. 2006. *Welfare Economics and Social Choice Theory*. Springer, second edition.
- Broome, John. 1995. *Weighing Goods: Equality, Uncertainty, and Time*. Basil Blackwell. Oxford.
- Adler, Matthew D. 2012. *Well-Being and Fair Distribution: Beyond Cost-Benefit Analysis*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Sen, Amartya K. 1979. *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*. Elsevier, Amsterdam.
- Arrow, Kenneth J. 1951. *Social Choice and Individual Values*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, second edition.
- Resnik, Michael D. 1987. *Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory*. 1987. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

All readings will be made available on Brightspace.

### **Course Description**

The primary goal of this course is for you to come to a deeper understanding of the philosophical and ethical assumptions implicit in welfare economics, as well as the various reasons to accept or reject those assumptions.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to: 1) clearly identify philosophical and ethical assumptions in economic arguments; 2) describe prominent reasons for and against those assumptions; and 3) critically evaluate those reasons.

### **Evaluation**

Final grades will be determined by four components:

Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Problem Set	25%
Paper	25%

For each of these five components, you'll be assigned a letter grade. Each letter grade corresponds to a number between 0 and 10:

Letter	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
Number	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Using these numbers, your grade for the course will be determined by the calculation:

$$[\text{Course}] = 25\%[\text{Midterm}] + 25\%[\text{Final}] + 25\%[\text{Problem Set}] + 25\%[\text{Paper}]$$

I will round to the nearest whole number.

### Midterm and Final

There will be an in-class midterm on October 21st, and a (non-cumulative) final on December 11th (in our usual classroom, from 8:00–10:00). At the start of each lecture, I will provide an essay prompt on the material to be covered in that lecture. (That way, you know in advance what you really need to understand.) The essays on the midterm and final will be drawn (randomly—as in, using a random number generator) from these prompts. The expectation is that you will prepare by writing out essays for each prompt and come to class prepared to reproduce any of those essays.

### Problem Sets

At the beginning of the semester, there will be a problem set due. The point of the problem set is just to help you get a handle on some of the formal tools which will be used throughout the course. You should come talk to me in office hours if you're having issues with the problem set.

### Paper

You will write a single paper (in the neighborhood of 7,000 words) on one of the topics we discuss over the course of the semester. You are free to write on any topic, but if you want more direction, I will distribute a list of potential paper topics.

### Course Schedule (Tentative)

Note: Reading is to be completed *after* we cover a topic in class. Readings marked with '\*' are optional.

Aug 26    Course Intro  
                  Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, chapter 1

Aug 28    Preference and Utility  
                  Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, chapter 4 (stopping after §4.2)

Sept 4    Preference and Utility  
                  Reznik, *Choices*, chapter 4

Sept 9    What are preferences?  
                  Hausman, chapter 3: Revealed Preference Theory

Sen, *Behaviour and the Concept of Preference*\*

- Sept 11 Expected Utility Theory  
Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, §4.3
- Sept 16 Expected Utility Theory  
Nozick, *Newcomb's Paradox and Two Principles of Choice*
- Sept 18 Preference and Welfare  
Heathwood, *Welfare*  
Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, chapters 7-8\*  
Sen, *Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory*\*
- Sept 23 Welfare and Preference Change  
Nussbaum, *Adaptive Preference and Women's Options*
- Sept 25 Welfare and Preference Change  
Pettigrew, *Choosing for Changing Selves*, chapter 1  
Pettigrew, *Choosing for Changing Selves*, chapter 7\*  
**Problem Set Due**
- Sept 30 Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility  
Adler, *Well-being and Fair Distribution*, chapter 3.II  
Hausman, *The Impossibility of Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility*\*  
Weintraub, *The Impossibility of Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility – a reply*\*
- Oct 2 Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility  
Greaves & Lederman, *Extended Preferences* (selections)
- Oct 7 The Pareto Principle  
Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, chapter 9 (up to section 9.5)  
Broome, *Weighing Goods*, chapter 7\*  
Mongin, *Spurious Unanimity and the Pareto Principle*\*
- Oct 9 The Pareto Principle  
Cain, *Infinite Utility*  
Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, chapter 2\*
- Oct 14 The Fundamental Theorems of Welfare Economics  
Stiglitz, *A Critique of the First Fundamental Theorem of Welfare Economics*  
Stiglitz, *A Critique of the Second Fundamental Theorem of Welfare Economics*  
Feldman & Serrano, chapters 3 and 6\*
- Oct 16 Cost-Benefit Analysis  
Adler, *Well-Being and Fair Distribution*, chapter 2.II.A—B, pp. 88—104.  
Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, chapter 4\*  
Feldman and Serrano, chapter 9\*
- Oct 21 What will be on the midterm?  
*Midterm Review Sheet*
- Oct 23 **MIDTERM**

Oct 28	Social Welfare Functions Adler, <i>Measuring Social Welfare</i> , chapter 1 Sen, <i>Collective Choice and Social Welfare</i> , chapter 3* Adler, <i>Measuring Social Welfare</i> , chapter 3*
Oct 30	Impossibility Arrow, <i>Social Choice and Individual Values</i> , chapter III Sen, <i>Collective Choice and Social Welfare</i> , chapter 7 and 7** Resnik, <i>Choices</i> , chapter 6*
Nov 4	Impossibility Sen, <i>Impossibility of a Paretian Liberal</i> Hausman, McPherson, & Satz, chapter 13, section 5
Nov 6	The Longterm Hajek, <i>Consequentialism, Cluelessness, Clumsiness, and Counterfactuals</i> Greaves, <i>The Problem of Cluelessness</i> * Parfit, <i>the Social Discount Rate</i> (appendix from <i>Reasons and Persons</i> )*
Nov 13	The Non-Identity Problem Parfit, <i>Reasons and Persons</i> , chapter 16 Feldman & Serrano, chapter 12*
Nov 18	The Asymmetry Hare, <i>Voices from Another World: Must We Respect the Interests of People Who Do Not, and Will Never, Exist?</i> <b>Paper Topics Distributed</b>
Nov 20	The Repugnant Conclusion Parfit, <i>Overpopulation and the Quality of Life</i> Broome, <i>The value of living</i> *
Nov 25	Population Axiology Greaves, <i>Population Axiology</i>
Dec 2	Catch-up day
Dec 4	What will be on the final? <i>Final Review Sheet</i> <b>Papers Due</b>
Dec 11	<b>FINAL</b> in our usual classroom, <b>from 8:00–10:00</b>

### Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies**

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Integrity:**

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### **Support Systems:**

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.