



## PPE Capstone Seminar



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### Course Description

The capstone seminar is a chance to take some of the core concepts you've learned in previous PPE courses and apply them to specific topics. It is also an opportunity for you to write a concise research paper on a PPE-related topic of your choice. In the first part of the semester, we'll discuss the readings below. In the second part, you will present work in progress and get feedback from your peers. Each student will be assigned a time slot to present a chunk of their research paper, or talk about a book chapter or article that is central to their paper.

### Grading and Attendance

- 10% Participation
- 45% Midterm exam (~5 pages)
- 45% Final paper (~15-18 pages)

Attendance is mandatory

All students must abide by the honor code at UNC or Duke

### Required Books

- *Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

All other required readings are available on Sakai.

Highly recommended for writing research papers:

- Deirdre McCloskey, *Economical Writing*

### **Week 1 (1/12): COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS and PUBLIC POLICY**

\*Steven Kelman, "An Ethical Critique of Cost-Benefit Analysis"

\*Elizabeth Anderson, "Cost-Benefit Analysis, Safety, and Environmental Quality"

\*David Schmitz, "A Place for Cost-Benefit Analysis"

## **Week 2 (1/19): REGULATION and RENT-SEEKING**

Bruce Yandle, "Bootleggers and Baptists"

\*Mike Munger, "Rent-Seek and You Will Find"

\*James Buchanan, "How can Constitutions Be Designed...?"

Eban Goodstein, "The Political Economy of Environmental Regulation"

Planet Money podcast: Why Taxpayers Pay for Farmer's Insurance ([click here](#))

## **Week 3 (1/26): LIBERTARIAN PATERNALISM**

\*Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, "Libertarian Paternalism is not an Oxymoron"

Mark White, *The Manipulation of Choice* (excerpts)

## **Week 4 (2/2): EQUALITY**

\*Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"

\*Harry Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal"

\*Amartya Sen, "Equality of What?"

## **Week 5 (2/9): MONEY and HAPPINESS**

Ricard Easterlin, "Will Raising the Incomes of All Increase the Happiness of All?"

Kahneman against Easterlin ([click here](#))

Stevenson and Wolfers against Easterlin ([click here](#))

Will Wilkinson, "In Pursuit of Happiness Research"

Podcasts: Aristotle on Happiness ([click here](#)); Diane Coyl on GDP ([click here](#))

## **Week 6 (2/16): COLLECTIVE ACTION**

\*Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action"

\*Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms"

\*Herbert Gintis and Samuel Bowles, "The Evolutionary Basis of Collective Action"

## **Week 7 (2/23): MORAL LIMITS OF MARKETS**

Michael Sandel, "How Markets Crowd Out Morals" (with replies by Gintis and Bowles)

Debra Satz, "The Moral Limits of Markets: The Case of Human Kidneys"

## **Week 8 (3/1): MARKETS WITHOUT LIMITS**

Brennan and Jaworski, "Markets without Symbolic Limits"

\*David Friedman, "Sex, Marriage, and Babies"

## **Week 9 (3/8): SWEATSHOP LABOR**

\*Powell and Zwolinski on permitting Sweatshop Labor

\*Coakley and Cates against Powell and Zwolinski

*Take-home essay exam sent out 3/4, due 3/14*

**Week 10 (3/15): SPRING BREAK**

**Week 11 (3/22):** *Meet to discuss paper ideas.*

**Weeks 12-14: Paper presentations**

*Give a 15-minute presentation on your final paper topic, and give comments on one another's work*

**Week 15 (4/26): Paper exchange**

**Paper due: 4/28**