Syllabus of the course: Political Ethics and the Theory of Public Choice

Author of the syllabus: Boris Kashnikov, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor.

Moscow, 2018
1 Course Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Work in the class</th>
<th>Independent work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Choice, political morality, justice and normativity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reason and Rationality. Racing and roulette. Gambling and Insurance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Game theory. Conflict and cooperation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Democracy and dictatorship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bargaining and justice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, social choice and justice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Egalitarianism, social choice and justice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Requirements and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of grading</th>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>1 term</th>
<th>Parameters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Participation in the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>19.10.2018</td>
<td>Research paper on one of the topics. 20 thousand characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>22.10.2018</td>
<td>Oral exam by the end of the semester.</td>
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</tbody>
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Course Evaluation Criteria

Students are expected to do the required homework and prepare for presentation. On seminars students are expected to take part in the discussion and do presentations. The deadlines should be met. Research paper should contain the analyses of literature on the subject as well as personal attitude to the subject matter. The oral exam by the end of the course will be provided in the form of an oral presentation of the student on two topics of the syllabus.

3 Course Description. The content of the course.

1. Choice, Morality, Justice and Normativity

Required readings:
Any of these textbooks should be studied thoroughly:
Jan Narveson. This is Ethical Theory. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2009

Optional readings:

Attitudes to risk. Expected value and certainty equivalent. Fair gambles and favorable gambles. St. Petersburg example.

Required readings:

Optional readings:

3. Game theory. Conflict and cooperation.
The general idea of the game. Common knowledge and mutual knowledge.
Sustainable action. Nash equilibrium.

Required readings:
Preface. Chapter 5.

Optional readings:

4. Democracy and dictatorship
The settings of group choice.
Patriarchy.


Required readings:

Optional readings:

5. Bargaining and justice

The general ideal of rational normativity. The critique of moralism. The justice of amoralism


Market as morality-free zone. Free riders and parasites as the inevitable actors on the free market. The injustice of the free market. The injustice of the factor rent and the critique of Nozick.

Cooperation. The principle of maximinimal relative concession. The principle of constrained maximization.

The ban on improving your situation by worsening the situation of others. Freedom and equality as the fundamental prerequisite for cooperation.

The conceptions of Society and Individual. The theory of progress as the movement from natural individual to economical individual and the to liberal individual. The interiorization of the societal values by liberal individual.

Practical problems for the theory. It works only within the liberal culture. Any other society is risking to be plunged even deeper in anarchy by trying to apply the principles of Gauthie.

Required readings:

Optional readings:


6. Utilitarianism, social choice and justice


Liberal critique of the utilitarian justice. Utilitarianism does not take into consideration the mode of distribution of goods. It does not consider the differences of the individuals. It does not consider the nature of the satisfied desire. Intuitively unacceptable practical results of utilitarian recommendations.

The advantages and drawbacks of the utilitarian justice. Utilitarianism as a practical philosophy of radical reforms. The law of the reduction of the final value. Utilitarianism as a champion for social equality. Utilitarianism and game theory. Negative utilitarianism.

Required readings:

Optional readings:

7. Egalitarianism, social choice and justice
Rawls and the revival of deontological liberalism.


Two principles of justice and the problem of stability. The just society as a stable society. The right and the good and the principle of Aristotle in the implementation of social justice. Deontology of right and teleology of good in a unique balance of two principles of justice.

The criticism. The criticism of the method of the hypothetical contractualism. Utilitarianism of Rawls. The practical advantages of the theory and the possibility of its implementation.

Required readings:

Optional readings:

The tentative topics of the research papers

1. The problematic of social choice in “A Theory of Justice”.
2. Global justice as the problem of choice.
3. The reasons of war and social choice.
4. Environmental ethics and the problem of choice.
5. Social contract theory as the frame for social choice.
6. Just war theory and the problem of social choice.

4 The pattern of forming the final grade

O stands for “grade”. The final grade $O_{\text{final}}$ will be formed based on the results of the final oral exam ($O_{\text{exam}}$) and accumulated grade ($O_{\text{acc}}$). The accumulated grade ($O_{\text{acc}}$) is formed of two parts, namely (research paper ($O_{\text{paper}}$), and current class work work ($O_{\text{current}}$). The formula for the accumulated grade is the following

$$O_{\text{acc}} = 0,5 \cdot O_{\text{current}} + 0,5 \cdot O_{\text{paper}}$$

The formula for the final grade is the following

$$O_{\text{final}} = 0,5 \cdot O_{\text{acc}} + 0,5 \cdot O_{\text{exam}}$$