

Syllabus of the course:

Political Ethics and the Theory of Public Choice

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National Research University – Higher School of Economics
 Master’s program “Philosophy, Politics, Economics”.
Syllabus of the course: “Political Ethics and the Theory of Public Choice”

1 Course Plan

№	Topic	Total hours	Work in the class		Independent work
			Lectures	Seminars	
1.	Choice, political morality, justice and normativity	6	4		2
2.	Reason and Rationality. Racing and roulette. Gambling and Insurance	6	2	2	2
3.	Game theory. Conflict and cooperation	6	2	2	2
4.	Democracy and dictatorship	6	2	2	2
5.	Bargaining and justice	6	2	2	2
6.	Utilitarianism, social choice and justice	6	2	2	2
7.	Egalitarianism, social choice and justice	6	2	2	2
Total:		42	16	12	14

2 Requirements and Grading

Type of grading	Type of work	1 term	Parameters
Current	Homework	Weekly	Participation in the discussion.
Current	Research paper	19.10. 2018	Research paper on one of the topics. 20 thousand characters.
Final	Exam	22.10. 2018	Oral exam by the end of the semester.

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

The sources of normativity. Theoris of normativity. The structure of norm. Principles and Rules. The difference of ancient and contemporary approach to normativity. Rationality, Law, Custom and Morals. *Ethics.* The meaning of Ethics and Morality. Ethical Theory, General Ethics and Individual Ethics. The History of Morality. The Sociology of Morality. The Psychology of Morality. The stages of moral growth. Moralism, Immoralism, Amoralism. Morality and Human nature. Ethical skepticism. Teleological Ethics. Consequentialism. Utilitarianism. Hedonism. Deontology. Kant's categorical imperative. Virtue Ethics. Morality and Rationality. Rights and Duties. *Metaethics.* Theories of Metaethics. Naturalism. Emotivism. Universal Prescriptivism. Intuitivism. The nature of moral concepts. Good and Evil. Moral Relativism. Sentimentalism. *Political Ethics.* The problem of political justice. Violence. Political Duty. War, terrorism, revolution and genocide. *Applied Ethics.* Theories in Applied Ethics. Theory of Justice. Just War Theory. *Justice.* The Ethics of Justice and individual perfection. Mutual aid. Cooperation. Equality. Morals and Politics. Rules, Norms and Principles. Happiness. Self-realization.

Required readings:

Any of these textbooks should be studied thoroughly:

Simon Blackburn. *Being Good. A Short Introduction to Ethics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
William K. Frankena. *Ethics.* London, etc.: Prentice-Hall, INC, 1963
Jan Narveson. *This is Ethical Theory.* Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2009
Robert L. Holmes. *Basic Moral Philosophy.* Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993
Louis P. Pojman, James Fieser. *Ethics. Discovering Right and Wrong.* Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2006.

Optional readings:

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics.* Hackett, Indianapolis, 1985. (Translated by T. Irwin).
Richard M. Hare. *Sorting out Ethics.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997
Richard M. Hare. *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method and Point.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
Alasdair MacIntyre. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988
E. Ulmann-Margalit. *The Emergence of Norms.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
G. Wagstaff. *Making Sense of Justice: On the Psychology of Equity and Desert.* Liverpool: Meller, 1998.
M. Lerner. *The Belief in a Just World.* New York: Plenum, 1980.
N. Levy. *Moral Relativism: A Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002.
J. Mackie. *Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong.* London: Penguin, 1977.
J. Mackie. *Hume's Moral Theory.* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980.
B. de Mandeville. *The Fable of the Bees—or Private Vices, Publick Benefits.* Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. (Edited by F. Kaye. First published 1714).
Joe Oppenheimer. *Principles of Politics. A Rational Choice Theory Guide to Politics and Social Justice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

2. Reason and Rationality. Racing and Roulette. Gambling and Insurance.

Choice and desire. Reasonableness. Patterns of choices. Choice menu. Prizes. Joint choice.
Reasonable choices. Conditions of reasonableness. Pair wise choices. Contraction condition and expansion condition. Preference relation.

Rational choices. Revelation condition. Preference ordering. Transitivity.
Utility. Ordinal utility. Utility maximization. Framing paradox.
Game under uncertainty. Gambles. Degenerate gambles. Compound gamble.
Probability gambles. Jumps in preference. Continuity condition and substitution condition. The concept of expected utility. Cardinal utility. Allais paradox.
State gambles. Subjective expected utility. Full subjective expected utility. State dependent subjective utility. Ellsberg paradox. Nozick's paradox.
Attitudes to risk. Expected value and certainty equivalent. Fair gambles and favorable gambles. St. Petersburg example.

Required readings:

Michael Allingham. *Choice Theory: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2002.
Preface. Chapters 1 – 4.

Optional readings:

Michael Allingham. *Rational Choice*. New York: St.Martin's, 1999.
Andrew T. Guzman. *How International Law Works. A Rational Choice Theory*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2008.
Marl I. Lichbach. *Is Rational Choice Theory All of Social Science?* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006.

3. Game theory. Conflict and cooperation.

The general idea of the game. Common knowledge and mutual knowledge.
Plausible response. Chain of reasoning. Individual rationality versus collective rationality. The concept of domination. Undominated actions and dominated actions. Iterative deletion of dominated actions.
Sustainable action. Nash equilibrium.

Required readings:

Allingham, Michael. *Choice Theory: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2002.
Preface. Chapter 5.

Optional readings:

R. Axelrod. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. Basic Books, New York, 1984.
Michael Allingham. *Rational Choice*. New York: St.Martin's, 1999.
K. Binmore. *Fun and Games: A Text on Game Theory*. Lexington, MA: Heath, , 1992.
K. Binmore. *Playing Fair: Game Theory and the Social Contract*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.
K. Binmore. *Just Playing: Game Theory and the Social Contract*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.
J. Von Neumann and O. Morgenstern. *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.

4. Democracy and dictatorship

The settings of group choice.
Acceptable constitutions. Borda rule. Independence condition and neutrality condition. Unanimity condition. Responsiveness condition.
Reasonable constitutions. Anonymity condition. Majority rule.

Patriarchy.

Rationality and dictatorship. Independence and unanimity of the dictatorial constitution. Arrow theorem. Impossibility of rationality, independence, unanimity and non-dictatorship.

Required readings:

Michael Allingham. *Choice Theory: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2002. Preface. Chapter 6.

Optional readings:

K.J. Arrow. *Social Choice and Individual values*. Wiley, 1951.

Michael Allingham. *Rational Choice*. New York: St.Martin's, 1999.

Will Gaertner. *A Primer in Social Choice Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

5. Bargaining and justice

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

The foundations. The maximizing theory of rationality. Utility, value, preference satisfaction. The situation of choice. Rational choice theory and game theory. Rational bargaining theory. Parametric and strategic choice. Optimality of the bargain. Prisoner's dilemma. State of nature, market and cooperation as the stages of justice.

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 Gauthier.

Required readings:

David Gauthier. *Morals by agreement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Optional readings:

Francis Fukuyama. *The Origins of the Political Order. From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2011.

Rationality, Justice and the Social Contract. Themes from Morals by Agreement. Edited by David Gauthier and Robert Sugden. Ann. Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.

David Gauthier. *Moral Dealings. Contract, Ethics and Reason*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Ken Binmore. *Natural Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

6. Utilitarianism, social choice and justice

The conception of justice of the classical utilitarianism. Bentham on utility and hedonism. Welfairism and Consequentialism. The ideal of Equality. Psychological hedonism and the principal of the maximum happiness for the greatest number. Axiological hedonism. Mill on justice, utility and rights. Act utilitarianism and Rule utilitarianism. The role of distributive justice. Utilitarian nature of socialism. The utilitarian transformation of the liberal idea. The critique of the classical utilitarianism. The further transformation of utilitarianism in the works of Moore and Sidgwick.

The conception of justice of the utilitarianism of the rational preference satisfaction. Desire, preference, value and utility. Hare and the idea of the utility of preference satisfaction. Pareto optimality. Kaldor-Hicks efficiency. The utility of economical interaction. Harsanyi. Utility and rational choice theory.

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:

R. Goodin. *Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

Optional readings:

John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism*. Indianapolis. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1979.

John Harsanyi. *Rational Behavior and Bargaining Equilibrium in Games and Social Situations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Daniel M. Hausman. *Preference, Value, Choice and Welfare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

P.C. Fishburn. *Utility Theory for Decision Making*. Wiley, 1970.

Jan Narveson. *This is Ethical Theory*. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2009. PP. 175-185.

Robert L. Holmes. *Basic Moral Philosophy*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993. PP. 154-175.

William K. Frankena. *Ethics*. London, etc.: Prentice-Hall, INC, 1963. PP. 29-47.

W. Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy. An Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, or other edition. Chapter 1. Utilitarianism.

John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971 or other editions Chapter 1, paragraph 1 "Classical Utilitarianism".

Robert Nozick. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. New York. Basic Books, 1974.

G. Homans and C. Curtis. *An Introduction to Pareto: His Sociology*. New York: Knopf, 1934.

Amartya Sen. *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*. Penguin Books, 2017.

K.Suzumura. *Rational Choice, Collective Decisions and Social Welfare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

7. Egalitarianism, social choice and justice

Rawls and the revival of deontological liberalism.

Hypothetical choice and the curtain of ignorance. The basic social institutions as the subject of justice. The methodology of Rawls. The method of hypothetical contract. Reflective equilibrium. Rational choice theory. Rational autonomy of the parties. Maximin strategy.

The principles of justice. Equal liberty. Difference principle and fair equality of opportunity.

The institutes of the just society. Three stages of justice. Principles, constitution and legislation of justice. The problems of economical justice.

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:

John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

Optional readings:

I. Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, , 1964. (Translated and analyzed by H. Paton. First published 1785).

I. Kant. *Critique of Practical Reason*. New York: Macmillan, 1989. (Translated by L. Beck. First published 1788).

Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy. An Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, or other edition. Chapter 2.

Jan Narveson. *This is Ethical Theory*. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2009. PP. 185-195.

Percy B. Lehning. *John Rawls. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Paul Voice. *Rawls explained*. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 2011.

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

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

The formula for the final grade is the following

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

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