

POLS 4045: Morality, Markets, and the State
University of Georgia, Department of Political Science
Fall 2020
T TR 11:10am-12:25pm (though see Section 3 below)
Baldwin 101D

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We live in a time of relative dissatisfaction with the liberal economic order. Following the 2008 financial crisis, many began wondering whether we should move away from private property and the market. Such anxieties have only been heightened during the current pandemic. This course critically investigates the fundamental institutions of the liberal economic order to see if such skepticism is warranted. The goal is not just to understand these institutions and how they operate, but also to evaluate them from a moral perspective. To that end, we will read from political scientists, economists, and philosophers on questions such as:

- What (if anything) justifies private property?
- Why organize the economy through a market?
- Are there some goods and services that should not be for sale?
- What are the social responsibilities of businesses?
- What place do corporations have in politics?

And so on. The hope is that, by integrating different approaches, you will be in a better position to develop critical, informed answers to questions such as these.

The syllabus describes (1) course objectives, (2) course materials, (3) how the course will be run in light of COVID-19 restrictions, (4) grades and assignments, (5) rules and requirements, and (6) a course schedule.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

1. Course Objectives

- Sharpen analytical thinking and debating skills.
- Understand the moral foundations of economic and political institutions.
- Practice engaging with viewpoints different than one's own.
- Confront difficult moral questions about the way we organize our social life.
- Come to understand one's personal values better.

2. Course Materials

I do not require you to purchase any books for this course. Readings will be available on eLC.

3. How Class Will Be Run in Light of COVID-19

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this class will be run a little differently than it would during a normal semester. Social distancing requirements limit the number of students allowed in a classroom. For our classroom, the limit is 18 students (the enrollment cap for the course is 45 students). To accommodate these restrictions, the course will combine in-person with online elements to engage all students in learning.

This means three things for you:

First: In the course schedule below, I have separated the course into week chunks. In a given week, I want you to do the reading *and* watch three 15-20 minute lectures I will post on eLC for that week on Sunday night before the date listed. This will constitute the online component of the course.

Second: I will split you into four groups to act as discussion sections where I can engage you and you can engage your peers with this material. These groups will meet in-person as follows:

- Group 1: Tuesdays 11:10-11:45am
- Group 2: Tuesdays 11:50am-12:25pm
- Group 3: Thursdays 11:10-11:45am
- Group 4: Thursdays 11:50am-12:25pm

I will run Group 4 concurrently through Zoom for students who wish to access the course off-campus.

Third: These are unusual and stressful times for all of us. I am keeping this in mind while trying my best to give you a quality education within the parameters given to me. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions you have.

4. Assignments and Grading

The following components will make up your grade in this course:

1. Two Take-Home Examinations (30% each)
2. A One-Page Final Paper Proposal (10%)
3. A Final Paper (30%)

Participation:

Participation does not appear as a formal portion of your total grade, nor do I require attendance to your discussion sections. That being said, participation is a key element of succeeding in the class. Exceptional participation can result in a boost of your final grade by a third of a letter grade.

Take-Home Examinations:

There will be two take-home, open-book examinations in this course. These examinations will involve short-answer questions that require you to (i) explain concepts and arguments presented in the texts using your own words, and (ii) compare and contrast claims advanced by the authors.

Final Paper and Final Paper Proposal

There will be one 1500-word final paper in the course. This paper can be on any topic so long as it is related to the course material. My only requirement is that the paper must advance and defend a thesis relate: it cannot be merely exploratory. Because this is relatively open-ended, you will write and complete a 1-page proposal that you will workshop in the final week of classes (which will be conducted online). I will provide more details later.

5. Rules and Requirements

Academic Freedom and Respect:

We will be talking about controversial issues in this course. I expect students to disagree with each other, as well as with me. To that end, it is important to have an open, civil environment to explore and express a variety of positions. The point is to learn something from one another, not to “win.” This requires each of us to engage respectfully with one another, especially when we disagree.

Electronic Devices:

There is good evidence that electronic devices significantly distract from learning. I do not ban laptops because I understand that some people might have very good reasons to use them. That being said, unless you have a very good reason, I recommend not using laptops. From my own experience, not having laptops makes time in classroom more engaging and valuable.

Academic Integrity:

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated on any assignment. You are responsible for knowing and following the honor code and all rules of academic integrity.

Late Work:

For the midterm and final, papers submitted past the deadline will incur a penalty of a third of a letter grade for each 24-hour period the paper is late.

Emergencies do happen. I will accommodate any that should come up. NB: Computer problems do not count as an emergency. Back up early and often. I recommend using a cloud service such as Dropbox or Google Drive.

Important Dates:

Fall Semester Begins – August 20

Add/Drop – August 20-26

First Take-Home Examination Due – October 9

Withdrawal Date – October 27

Fall Break – October 30

Second Take-Home Examination Due – November 24

Thanksgiving Break – November 25-27

Classes go Online After Thanksgiving

Final Paper Proposal Due – November 30

Classes End – December 9 (no class on us for December 8 due to Friday schedule)

Final Paper Due – December 15

5. Course Schedule

All readings available on eLC.

August 20 – Introduction

No in-person meeting. I will post an introductory lecture on eLC. During class-time, I will host a Zoom meeting (details sent over e-mail)

Part I: Property

Week Starting August 24 – Justifying Private Property

G. A. Cohen, "Freedom, Capitalism, and the Proletariat"

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Chapter 5

Week Starting August 31 – Equality and Property

Michael Otsuka, “Self-Ownership and Equality: A Lockean Reconciliation”

David Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property”

Week Starting September 7 – Real, Existing Communism

History and Bylaws of Twin Oaks

Ran Abramitzky, “Lessons from the Kibbutz on the Equality–Incentives Trade-off”

Week Starting September 14 – Homelessness

Jeremy Waldron, “Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom”

Christopher Essert, “Property and Homelessness”

Scott Beyer, “Pay Toilets and Unintended Consequences”

Part II: The Market

Week Starting September 21 – The Classic Defense and the Classic Criticism

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* [selections]

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* [selections]

Week Starting September 28 – Information and Prices

F. A. Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society”

F. A. Hayek, “The Moral Imperative of the Market”

Ronald Coase, “The Problem of Social Cost” (excerpts)

Week Starting October 5 – Markets without Property

Eric Posner and Glen Weyl, “Property is Monopoly”

<first take-home examination due Friday, October 9th at 5pm>

Week Starting October 12 – Moral Challenges to Markets

Jason Brennan and Peter Jaworski, “Markets without Symbolic Limits”

Elizabeth Anderson, “Is Women’s Labor a Commodity?”

Week Starting October 19 – A Case: Kidney Markets

Frank McCormick et al. “The Terrible Toll of the Kidney Shortage”

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

Week Starting October 26 – Price Gouging

“He Has 17,700 of Hand Sanitizer and Nowhere to Sell Them,” *New York Times*

Matt Zwolinski, “The Ethics of Price Gouging”

Jeremy Snyder, “What’s the Matter with Price Gouging?”

Part III: Business and Society

Week Starting November 2 – The Responsibility of Business

Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits”

William Evan and Edward Freeman, “A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation: Kantian Capitalism”

Joseph Heath, “An Adversarial Ethic for Business: Or, When Sun-Tzu Meets the Stakeholder”

Week Starting November 9 – Authority at Work

Joseph Heath, “The ‘Psychopathic’ Pursuit of Profit”

Elizabeth Anderson, “Private Government”

Week Starting November 16 – Business and Politics

Thomas Christiano, “The Uneasy Relationship between Democracy and Capital”

Ryan Pevnick, “Does the Egalitarian Rationale for Campaign Finance Reform Succeed?”

Week Starting November 23 – 2nd Examination

No meetings: 2nd Exam due November 24th by 5:00pm.

November 25-27 Thanksgiving

No class

Classes go Online After Thanksgiving

Week Starting November 30 – Discussing Paper Proposals

1-Page Proposal due (more details to follow)

December 9: Last Day of Classes

Final Paper Due December 15 5pm

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes,*

mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*