

Department of Economics
Western University

Introduction to Politics, Philosophy, and Economics
PPE 2200F
September-December 2023
UCC 37

Instructors: Dennis Klimchuk (Philosophy),
Bruno Salcedo (Economics), and
Charles Jones (Political Science)

Office Hours:

Klimchuk: Wed - 11-12 or by appointment: StvH 4150, klimchuk@uwo.ca
Jones: Tues - 2-3, Wed - 1:30 – 2:30 or by appointment: SSC 7213 cwjones@uwo.ca
Salcedo: Tues - 10:00 – 12:00 or by appointment: SSC 4058, bsalcedo@uwo.ca

Class Meetings: Monday 11:30 – 1:30 & Wednesday 12:30 – 1:30
Classroom: UCC 37

Description of the course: This course is designed to get you thinking and writing carefully about a number of social issues, while also introducing you to the ways in which the three disciplines approach them. In the Philosophy sections our topics are scarcity and property; in the Economics section, our topics are rational choice, information, inequality, and marginal markets; and in the Politics sections, our topics are distributive justice, the free market, economic growth, and the welfare state. There is one common topic considered in each section: poverty. For each topic you will be expected to read the assigned readings, to come to class prepared to discuss those readings, and then to write essays in which you put the ideas discussed to use.

Texts: All readings will be available on the course OWL site, with one exception: Samuel Fleischacker, *A Short History of Distributive Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). It is available for purchase at the Western Bookstore.

Course requirements and evaluation

1. Three 1500 word essays, each counting for 20% of your course mark. Instructions for each paper will be given to you by each of the three instructors during their section of the course, and posted on OWL. They are due the last class of each section of the course: Oct 2 for Philosophy, Nov 8 for Economics, and Dec 6 for Political Science.

You must upload an e-copy of your essay into OWL by the start of class that day. Papers handed in late are penalized at the rate of 2%/day late, calculated from this time. We will use *turnitin.com* in this course.

2. A final exam consisting of three essay questions, to be scheduled by the Registrar, will make up the other 40% of your final mark.

Participation

While there is no formal participation grade in the mark, please understand that you are expected to participate in discussions of the readings and topics. While a second-year course, the format and size of this class allow us to run it more like an upper-year seminar. There will be a forum open on the course OWL page to discuss the material, and we encourage you to do so ahead of class meetings. This will, among other things, give us some notice on what you find interesting, wrong, perplexing, and so on, which will be helpful in preparing our classes.

A note on readings

We'd like to strongly encourage you to do the readings before class, even if in some particular cases they seem challenging. This is especially (but not only) true for material you've not come across before. If you wait until class, you will lose an opportunity you will never be able to regain, namely reading the texts without a particular interpretation in mind. After class you won't be able to do that. It will be like reading the novel after seeing the movie: you can't help but picture the screenwriter's and director's interpretations. Furthermore, in our experience, students who come to the material without preconceptions often have novel insights into it. So by reading first you may be bringing something extra to the class's collective understanding of the text.

Schedule of topics and readings

Philosophy (Klimchuk: Sept 11- Oct 2)

Scarcity

1. Mon Sept 11

Nicholas Xenos, *Scarcity and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1-5.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk I, chs. 8-10.

2. Wed Sept 13

Lionel Robbins, "The Subject Matter of Economics," *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (New York: NYU Press, 1984), 1-23. [1932]

Shah et al., "Scarcity Frames Value," *Psychological Science* 26:4 (2015), 402-12.

3. Mon Sept 1

David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3.1. [1751]

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* re. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 109-10.

Greg Bognar, "Scarcity," *International Journal of Ethics* (John Wiley and Sons, 2018).

Property

4. Wed Sept 20

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* Bk II, ch 5. [1689], especially paras 25-28, 31-34, 37, 40, 45-51.

Pierson v Post, 3 Cains 75 (1805).

5. Mon Sept 25

David Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property,” Schmidtz and Willot (eds.), *Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 361-66.

Plouff v Putnam, 81 Vt. 471, 71 A. 188 (1908).

Vincent v Lake Erie, 109 Minn. 456, 124 N.W. 221 (1910).

Scarcity and Property

6. Wed Sept 27

David Faraci, “Do Property Rights Presuppose Scarcity?” *Journal of Business Ethics* 125 (2014), 531-37.

Common topic: Poverty

7. Mon Oct 2

Locke, *Two Treatise of Government*, Bk. I, ch. 4, para 42. [1689]

Thomas Paine, “Agrarian Justice,” *The Writings of Thomas Paine* Vol. 3 (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1895), 328-44. [1797]

Jeremy Waldron, “Community and Property — For Those Who Have Neither,” *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 10 (2009), 161-92.

Economics (Salcedo: Oct 5 – Nov 8)

Evidence and models

8. Wed Oct 5

Krugman (2008) *The Increasing Returns Revolution in Trade and Geography*. Nobel Lecture.

Bickell, Hammel, O’Connell (1975) *Sex Bias in Graduate Admissions: Data from Berkeley*. Science.

Angrist & Krueger (2001) *Instrumental Variables and the Search for Identification: From Supply and Demand to Natural Experiments*. Journal of Economic Perspectives.

Lucas (1976) *Economic Policy Evaluation: A Critique*, pp. 19 to 20.

Thanksgiving (Mon Oct 9)

Rational, behavioural, and moral agents

9. Wed Oct 11

Salcedo (2023) *Rational, Behavioural, and Moral Agents in Economics*.

Correspondence of Nicholas Bernoulli Concerning the St. Petersburg Paradox (1713-1732)

10. Mon Oct 16

Thaler (2016) *Behavioural Economics: Past, Present, Future*. American Economic Review.

DellaVigna & Malmendier (2004) *Overestimating Self-Control: Evidence from the Health Club Industry*. NBER Working paper

Halevy & Peters (2013) *Other-regarding preferences, outcomes, intentions, or independence?* Mimeo.

Frank & Reagan (1993) *Does Studying Economics Inhibit Cooperation?* Journal of Economic Perspectives

11. Wed Oct 18

Hayek (1945) *The Use of Knowledge in Society*. The American Economic Review.

Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, & Welch (1992) *A Theory of Fads, Fashion, Custom, and Cultural Change as Informational Cascades*. The Journal of Political Economy.

Mayzlin, Dover, & Chevalier (2014) *Promotional Reviews: An Empirical Investigation of Online Review Manipulation*. The American Economic Review

Aumann (1974) *Agreeing to Disagree*. The Annals of Statistics.

Pew Research Center (2017) *Political Polarization in the American Public*.

Welfare and Interventions: Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'n' Roll

12. Mon Oct 23

Samuelson (1947) *Foundations of Economic Analysis*. Chapter 3.

Arrow (1950) *A difficulty in the concept of social welfare*. JPE

Gul & Persendorfer (2008) *The Case for Mindless Economics*. In: The Foundations of Positive and Normative Economics: A Handbook. Oxford University Press.

Camera (2008) *The Case for Mindful Economics*. In: The Foundations of Positive and Normative Economics: A Handbook. Oxford University Press.

Frey (2002) *What Can Economists Learn from Happiness Research?* Journal of Economic Literature

Bond and Lang (2019) *The Sad Truth about Happiness Scales*. The Journal of Political Economy.

13. Wed Oct 25

Bakos, Marotta-Wurgler & Trossen (2014) *Does Anyone Read the Fine Print? Consumer Attention to Standard-Form Contracts*. The Journal of Legal Studies

Banerjee & Mullainathan (2008) *Limited Attention and Income Distribution*. The American Economic Review.

Balboni, Bandiera, Burgess, Ghatak, & Heil (2021) *Why Do People Stay Poor?* The Quarterly Journal of Economics

Duflo, Kremer, Robinson (2011) *Nudging Farmers to Use Fertilizer: Theory and Experimental Evidence from Kenya*. The American Economic Review.

Datta & Mullainathan (2014) *Behavioral Design: A New Approach to Development Policy*. The Review of Income and Wealth.

Reading week (Oct 30 – Nov 2)

14. Mon Nov 6

Cunningham & Manisha (2018) *Decriminalizing Indoor Prostitution: Implications for Sexual Violence and Public Health*. Review of Economic Studies.

Miron & Zwiebel (1995) *The Economic Case Against Drug Prohibition*. Journal of Economic Perspectives.

Ladegaard (2018) *We Know Where You Are, What You Are Doing and We Will Catch You: Testing Deterrence Theory in Digital Drug Markets*. The British Journal of Criminology

Courty (2003) *Some Economics of Ticket Resale*. Journal of Economic Perspectives

Towse (2017) *Economics of music publishing: copyright and the market*. Journal of Cultural Economics

Common Topic: Poverty

15. Wed Nov 8

Chancel & Piketty (2021) *Global Income Inequality, 1820-2020: The Persistence and Mutation of Extreme Inequality*. Mimeo

Davies & Di Matteo (2020) *Long Run Canadian Wealth Inequality in International Context*. The Review of Income and Wealth.

Tiezzi (2005) *The Welfare Effects and the Distributive Impact of Carbon Taxation on Italian Households*. Energy Policy.

Autor (2014) *Skills, education, and the rise of earnings inequality among the "other 99 percent"*. Science

Political Science (Jones: Nov. 13 – Dec 6)

Common Topic: Poverty

16. Mon Nov 13

Jonathan Wolff, 'Poverty', *Philosophy Compass*, December 2019.

The Welfare State

17. Wed Nov 15

J. Donald Moon, 'The Idea of the Welfare State', in George Klosko (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 660-672.

18. Mon Nov 20

Matt Zwolinski, 'The Welfare State', in Matt Zwolinski and Benjamin Ferguson (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Libertarianism*, London: Routledge, 2022, 311-324.

Economic Growth

19. Wed Nov 22

Robert J. Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, Introduction: The Ascent and Descent of Growth, 1-23.

20. Mon Nov 27

Gregory Mankiw, 'The GDP and its discontents', *Science* 353 (2016), 356.

Julie L. Rose, 'On the Value of Economic Growth', *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 19 (2), May 2020, 128-153.

Distributive Justice

21. Wed Nov 29

Samuel Fleischacker, *A Short History of Distributive Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, Introduction & Chapter 1: From Aristotle to Adam Smith, 1-52.

22. Mon Dec 4

Samuel Fleischacker, *A Short History of Distributive Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, Chapter 2: The Eighteenth Century, 53-79.

23. Wed Dec 6

Samuel Fleischacker, *A Short History of Distributive Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, Chapter 3: From Babeuf to Rawls & Epilogue, 80-133.

Please Note
Department & University Policies for Fall 2023

The University expects all students to take responsibility for their own Academic Programs. Students should also check their registration to ensure they are enrolled in the correct courses.

1. **Guidelines, policies, and your academic rights and responsibilities** are posted online in the current Western Academic Calendar at: <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca>. Claiming that “you didn’t know what to do” is not an acceptable excuse for not following the stated policies and procedures.
2. Students must familiarize themselves with the **“Rules of Conduct for Examinations”** http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/administration.pdf.
3. **Cheating as an academic offence:** Students are responsible for understanding what it means to “cheat.” The Department of Economics treats cheating incidents very seriously and will investigate any suspect behavior. Students found guilty will incur penalties that could include a failing grade or being barred from future registration in other Economics courses or programs. The University may impose further penalties such as suspension or expulsion.
4. **Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. When taking an idea/passage from another author, it must be acknowledged with quotation marks where appropriate and referenced with footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is an academic offence (see Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Western Calendar at http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20).

Western University uses software to check for plagiarism and students may be required to electronically submit their work. Those found guilty will be penalized as noted in point 3.

5. It is a Department of Economics policy that **NO** assignments be dated, stamped or accepted by staff. Students must submit assignments to the instructor.
6. **Appeals:** University policies and procedures for appealing a mark can be found in the Student Academic Appeals section in the current Western Academic Calendar at: http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14. **Please note the relevant deadlines.**

Department of Economics procedures for appealing a mark can be found here: https://economics.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_counselling/responsibilities_policies.html#appeals. The Department will not consider an appeal unless an attempt has been made to settle the matter with the instructor first. Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome may proceed to submit an appeal to econugrd@uwo.ca. Please follow the instructions and use the appeal form shown in the above link.

7. **Systematic adjustments of a class grade distribution** (either up or down) can occur in Economics courses. The fact that grades have been adjusted is **not** grounds for an appeal.

8. Note the following **add and drop deadlines**:

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| - Deadline to <u>ADD OR DROP</u> a first term full or half course: | Fri, Sept 15, 2023 |
| - Deadline to <u>WITHDRAW</u> from a first term full or half course: | Mon, Nov 13, 2023 |

Policy Regarding Makeup Tests and Final Examinations

Faculty of Social Science policy states that oversleeping or misreading an exam schedule is NOT grounds for a makeup. This rule applies to midterm and final exams in the Department of Economics.

Policies Regarding Academic Accommodation

- Academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request. Students must demonstrate by documentation that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds before academic accommodation will be considered. The Faculty of Social Science's policies on academic accommodation are found at https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html
- **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD, see http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).
- **Rewriting Exams and Retroactive Reweighting are NOT Permitted:** Students who proceed to write a test or examination must be prepared to accept the mark. Rewriting tests or examinations, or retroactive reweighting of marks, is **not** permitted. Students must also book travel arrangements AFTER final exam dates have been posted as they must not conflict with test or final exams.
- Unless medically incapable of doing so, students must notify their instructor prior to the test date or at least within **24 hours** when requesting a makeup exam. Failure to follow this procedure may result in denial of academic accommodation and a grade of zero. Students should also set up an appointment as soon as possible to meet with their instructor. If the instructor is not available, send an email message to the instructor, copying the Undergraduate Coordinator at econugrd@uwo.ca. **Notifying instructors of a missed exam does not automatically entitle students to a makeup.**
- For medical illnesses, students may consult Student Health Services and request a Student Medical Certificate from the physician. If assessed by an off-campus doctor, students must obtain a certificate from his/her office at the time of the visit/assessment. Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is available here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf
- **Documentation for Accommodation:** Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

- **Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence** is available here: https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/probation_rtw/appeals.html
- **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Policy Regarding Class Attendance and Engagement: If the instructor deems a student's attendance or engagement in the class to be unsatisfactory, that student may be prohibited from writing the final examination. Examples of unsatisfactory class engagement include frequent absences from an in-person or synchronous online class, lack of assignment submissions, and inadequate use of online course materials. Instructors who intend to make use of this policy will notify the student in advance.

Statement on Mental Health and Support Services: Students under emotional/mental distress should visit http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for more information and a complete list of resources on how to obtain help.

Statement on Remote Proctoring: While Western intends to hold most classes, mid-terms and finals in-person, the London-Middlesex Health unit may require western to teach in a remote format. If this occurs, all assessments will be done remotely and may involve the use of remote proctoring software (i.e., Proctorio, ProctorTrack). Instructors will provide information on the details should the need arise.