



## Capstone for Politics, Philosophy, & Economics

- Instructors:** Professors Geoffrey Brennan and Barry Maguire
- Class:** Wednesdays 6:15 – 8:45 in Caldwell Hall 213
- Office Hours:** Tuesdays 3:30 to 4:30 and Wednesdays 5:15 until 6:15 at UNC in Caldwell Hall 215C
- Course Description:** This class will be run like a graduate seminar. It will consolidate your understanding of Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. Discussions will deliberately range across disciplines. You will develop your expertise in an extended essay. Classes meet once a week to discuss one or two papers. You will be required to write a short response in advance of each class.
- Prerequisites:** All other requisite PPE courses
- Evaluation:** Your overall grade will be determined as follows:  
10% for participation  
This will be most for your contributions to discussion, but also partly based on your attendance at the seminar. You will lose points if you are absent from class more than once without a sufficient excuse.  
20% for short responses  
Each week you are required to write a 200-300 word response to the reading in advance of class, and to post this to the course website.  
20% for first assignment  
50% for research paper
- Texts:** Available online or on course website
- Electronics Policy:** Phones and Laptops are not allowed in class without explicit permission
- Email:** Please keep questions brief and accept our apologies in advance for terse replies. Feel free to send a short follow-up email if you do not receive a reply within two business days.
- Honor Code:** All students are expected to abide by their respective honor code.  
- <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/students/rights-responsibilities>  
- <http://integrity.duke.edu/index.html>

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. It is in your interest to keep a careful record of any resources you use in research and writing. Always cite any resource that you use, including friends with whom you have worked in cooperation is permitted on an assignment. Do not re-use papers written for past classes.

**Reading:** Everything on this syllabus has been carefully chosen. We expect you to read everything carefully. Read each piece a few times. Read once, quickly, to get the structure of the argument, the main claims, and the conclusion(s). Read a second time to study the argument more carefully, to formulate the argument in your own words, to think up your own examples to illustrate the main claims, and to think of counterexamples to these claims. Read a third time to soak up any remaining details. Some excellent reading advice can be found online here: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

You are welcome to read anything else that interests you. Feel free to ask me for further reading suggestions. In general, the more you read, the better a sense you will have of the strengths and weaknesses of prominent views in any given topic, and of typical forms of argument in the area.

**Writing:** An important goal of this course is for you to further develop your skills in philosophical writing. There will be occasion to practice every week with the short writing assignments. I will distribute a guide to writing philosophical essays in the first class. Please also read Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, and Jim Pryor's *Guide to writing philosophy papers*.

Proposed Topics and Texts (subject to change):

**Wednesday January 7                      Utilitarianism**

Bernard Williams, *A Critique of Utilitarianism*

Julia Driver, 'Normative Ethical Theory in the Twentieth Century'

**Wednesday January 14                      Economics of Politics**

Julia Ott, 'The Politics of Debt: How Labor Should Think About the Debt Question'

Joseph Carens, 'Empirically Necessary Prerequisites' in his *Equality, Moral Incentives, and the Market*

**Wednesday January 21                      Diachronic rationality**

Warren Quinn, 1993. 'The Puzzle of the Self-Torturer' (in *Morality and Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Tom Dougherty – 'On Whether to Prefer Pain to Pass.'

*Tom Dougherty will join us via skype*

**Wednesday January 28**            **PPE Talk – Bas Van Der Vossen will speak. Meet at 6pm.**

Reading: Bas Van Der Vossen, manuscript. Details tbc.

**Wednesday 4 February**            **Cooperation and Individual Ethics**

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, 'Its not my fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations'

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong will join us

**Wednesday 11 February**            **Social Norms**

Christina Bicchieri, *The Grammar of Society*, excerpts

**Wednesday 18 February (GB)**    **Politics, Philosophy, & Economics**

Geoffrey Brennan, 'PPE, An Institutional View'

**Wednesday 25 February (GB)**    **Voting and Causal Efficacy**

Geoffrey Brennan & Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, 'Voting and Causal Responsibility'

**Wednesday 4 March (GB)**            **Climate Change / Moral Progress**

John Broome, *Climate Matters*, chs 1-3

**Wednesday 11 March**            **SPRING BREAK**

**Wednesday 18 March (GB)      Institutions and Cooperation**

Barry Maguire, 'The Traffic Cop's Lament: Deontic Structures and Value-First Ethical Theory'

**Wednesday 25 March              Conventionalism as a Moral Theory**

Jack Woods, 'The Normativity of Promising'

*Jack Woods will join us via skype*

**Thereafter:                          Review and Papers**