

**Course Syllabus**  
**Morality, Markets, and Government**  
**PPE 101, Fall, 2019**

**Instructor:** Dr. Matt Zwolinski

**Office Hours:** MW: 9:30 – 11:00; 2:00 – 3:00

**Office:** F167A

**Course Website:** <http://ole.sandiego.edu> [Blackboard]

**Phone:** 619-260-4094

**Email:** mzwolinski@sandiego.edu

**Required Books:**

Matt Zwolinski, *Arguing About Political Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Routledge)

Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves* (Harper Perennial)

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (Crown)

Jonathan Rauch, *Government's End: Why Washington Stopped Working* (PublicAffairs)

Other readings on Electronic Reserve at Copley Library

**Core Requirements:** This course fulfills the Core Curriculum requirement for Ethics.

**Content:**

We live in one of the wealthiest nations on the planet, during the wealthiest period of human history. For many of us, this wealth is so commonplace that we take it for granted and think of it almost as though it were an inevitable fact of nature.

But for most of human history, wealth was not the normal condition of mankind. Poverty was. And, even today, desperate, crushing poverty is still all that many individuals and communities will know over the course of their lives.

How did our world become so much wealthier today than it was 500 years ago? And what explains the fact that today some nations are so much wealthier than others?

This course provides a starting point to thinking about these questions through an introduction to the interdisciplinary cluster of *Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*. The goal of this course is to introduce you to some of the key intellectual tools from each of these disciplines, and to show you how they can be used together to shed light on important theoretical and practical debates in morality, economics, and politics. Topics to be discussed include the nature and justification of property rights, the uses and limits of market prices in coordinating economic activity, the role of government regulation in correcting market failure, and the moral dimensions of cost-benefit analysis, exploitation, and repugnant transactions.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course...

- Students should be able to describe, in essay form, the main tenets of major social/political theories such as utilitarianism, Rawlsian liberalism, and Nozickian libertarianism, as well as the economic theories of market prices, market failure, and Coasian bargaining.
- Students should be able to apply these ethical theories to various questions involving property and commerce.
- Finally, students should be able to critically evaluate these theories in in-class essays.

## **Course Requirements:**

Philosophical readings are dense and difficult. It will probably take longer than you expect to read them once, and it will probably be necessary to re-read most pieces at least once to come to an adequate understanding of the material. You should expect to spend at least **six hours per week outside of class** time reading and re-reading the material.

- **Daily Reflections** – By **9:00 am** before each class session for which there is a new reading assignment, you must post to Blackboard approximately **200 words** responding to the readings assigned for that day. You are not expected to write something that shows mastery of the reading. Rather, your purpose is to demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the readings. You must also **ask a question** about the readings. You should come to class prepared to be accountable for what you have written and to answer questions about it. All students are responsible for these posting regardless of whether they attend class that day.  
Forum postings will be graded 5 (excellent), 4 (solid), 3 (poor), or 0 (could have been written without doing the reading at all). One way to ensure achieving a 5 for any particular forum is (in addition to making an original post) to compose a thoughtful and respectful reply to another student's posting.
- **Exams** – You will have three in-class exams – two during the regular semester and one final exam. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and possibly a longer essay. The final exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize material covered in the last half of the course. **Both exams must be taken at the date and time at which they are scheduled on this syllabus.** No exceptions will be made except for cases of documented medical emergencies. Please **look at the dates now** and check for conflicts.
- **Participation** – Philosophy is best learned through active conversation with others. It is therefore important that you be a regular participant in classroom discussions. Showing up to class regularly is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a good participation grade. To earn full credit for participation you need to be part of the conversation – share your opinion, ask a question, respond to someone else's question. Active engagement is an essential part of the learning process.

There are also a number of ways to lose participation points. These include but are not limited to:

- Sleeping in class
- Showing up late to class
- Texting, emailing, Facebooking, or otherwise using technology for non-academic purposes in class
- Participating in class in a manner disrespectful to your professor or to your fellow students
- **Failure to bring a copy of the assigned readings to class**

## Your Grade

Daily Reflections:	20%
Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Final Exam:	30%
Participation:	10%

A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96.9
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	73 - 76.9
C-	70 - 72.9
D+	67 - 67.9
D	63 - 66.9
D-	60 - 62.9
F	59.9 or below

## Academic Integrity

You are expected to know and follow University Policies on cheating and plagiarism. See the Code of Academic Integrity. Outside research is *a good thing* in philosophy. Just cite it! If it is determined that you have cheated, you will fail the course and I may recommend that you be expelled from the University.

Also, you'll get a 2% bonus on your participation grade if you email me a picture of Eddie van Halen or a bowl of M&M's by the beginning of class, Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Schedule for PPE 101: Morality, Markets, and Government**  
**Fall, 2019**  
**Professor Zwolinski**

**KEY DATES AT A GLANCE**

Sept 19	-	Immigration Debate, 4-5:30 in IPJ Theater. Extra Credit!
Oct 16	-	First Exam
Oct 18	-	No class: Fall Holiday
Nov 25	-	Second Exam
Nov 27-29	-	No class: Thanksgiving
Dev 16	-	Final Exam, 11 a.m.

**Schedule of Readings**

**Note:**

[ER] = Electronic Reserves

[AAPP] = *Arguing About Political Philosophy*

[RO] = *The Rational Optimist*

[WNF] = *Why Nations Fail*

[GE] = *Government's End*

**Week 1 (Sept 4 - 6) – Introduction: From Anarchy to Affluence**

**Sept 4:**

- Introduction to course

**Sept 6:**

- Thomas Hobbes, “The State of Nature as a State of War”, [AAPP, **pp. 7-10 only**]
- Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist*, Chapter 1, “A Better Today, The Unprecedented Present,” pp. 11-28. [RO]

**Week 2 (Sept 9 - 13) – Why Nations Fail**

**Sept 9:**

- Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Preface and chapter 1 [WNF]

**Sept 11:**

- Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, chapter 2, 3 [WNF]

**Sept 13**

- Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, chapters 4, 7 [WNF]

**Week 3 (Sept 16 - 20) – Property Rights**

**Sept 16:**

- John Locke, “Property” [AAPP, pp. 357-364]

**Sept 18:**

- David Hume, “Justice as Convention” [AAPP, pp. 185-193]

**Sept 20:**

- David Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property” [AAPP, pp. 374-387]

**Week 4 (Sept 23 - 27) – The Division of Labor and Gains from Trade**

**Sept 23:**

- Adam Smith, “The Wealth of Nations” [AAPP, **pp. 318-325 only**]
- Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist*, Chapter 1, “A Better Today, The Unprecedented Present,” pp. 32-46. [RO]

**Sept 25:**

- Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist*, Chapter 2, “The Collective Brain: Exchange and Specialization After 200,000 Years Ago,” pp. 47-84. [RO]

**Sept 27**

- Smith and Ridley continued.

**Week 5 (Sept 30 – Oct 4) –The Emergence of Trust and Cooperation**

**Sept 30:**

- In-class experiment, no reading

**Oct 2:**

- Robert Axelrod, “The Evolution of Cooperation” [AAPP]

**Oct 4:**

- Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist*, Chapter 3, “The Manufacture of Virtue: Barter, Trust, and Rules after 50,000 Years Ago” [RO, **pp. 85-100 only.**]

**Week 6 (Oct 7 - 11) – Opportunity Cost and Market Prices**

**Oct 7:**

- Frédéric Bastiat, “What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen,” sections 1, 2, 5, and 7 only [ER]

**Oct 9:**

- Friedrich Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society” [ER]

**Oct 11:**

- Hayek, continued

**Week 7 (Oct 14 -16) – Market Failure**

*No class October 18<sup>th</sup> – Fall Holiday*

**Oct 14:**

- Charles Wolf, “Market Failure” [AAPP, pp. 330-338]

**Oct 16:**

- **First Exam**

**Week 8 (Oct 21 - 25) – Externalities: The Problem of Pollution**

**Oct 21:**

- Ronald Coase, “The Problem of Social Cost” [ER, **pp. 1-19 only**]

**Oct 23:**

- Coase, continued

**Oct 25**

- Edwin Dolan, “Controlling Acid Rain” [ER]

**Week 9 (Oct 28 – Nov 1) – Cost Benefit Analysis**

**Oct 28:**

- Steven Kelman, “An Ethical Critique of Cost-Benefit Analysis” [ER]

**Oct 30:**

- Elizabeth Anderson, “Cost-Benefit Analysis, Safety, and Environmental Quality” [ER]

**Nov 1:**

- David Schmitz, “A Place for Cost-Benefit Analysis” [ER]

**Week 10 (Nov 4 – Nov 8) – Exploitation, Prices, and Wages**

**Nov 4:**

- John Locke, “Venditio,” Michael Munger, “Guide to the Merchant of Venditio” [ER]

**Nov 6:**

- Karl Marx, excerpts from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* [ER]

**Nov 8:**

- Marx, continued

**Week 11 (Nov 11 - 15) – Entrepreneurship and Creative Destruction**

**Nov 11:**

- Joseph Schumpeter, “The Process of Creative Destruction” [ER]

**Nov 13:**

- Israel Kirzner, “The Entrepreneur” [ER]

**Nov 15:**

- Schumpeter and Kirzner, continued

**Week 12 (Nov 18 - 22) – Rent-Seeking and Public Choice**

**Nov 18:**

- Jonathan Rauch, *Government’s End*, Chapters 1-2 [GE]

**Nov 20:**

- Jonathan Rauch, *Government’s End*, Chapters 3-4 [GE]

**Nov 22:**

- Jonathan Rauch, *Government’s End*, Chapters 6 and 8 [GE]

**Week 13 (Nov 25) – Second Exam**

*No class November 27-29 (Thanksgiving)*

**Nov 25:**

- **Second Exam**

**Week 14 (Dec 2 - 6) – Immigration**

**Dec 2:**

- Michael Huemer, “Is There a Right to Immigrate?” [AAPP, pp. 625-649]

**Dec 4:**

- Hrishikesh Joshi, “For (some) Immigration Restrictions” [ER]

**Dec 6:**

- Garret Jones, “Do Immigrants Import Their Economic Destiny?” [ER]

**Week 15 (Dec 9 -13) – Kidneys Sales and Repugnant Markets**

**Dec 9:**

- Arthur Caplan, “Organ Transplantation” [ER]

**Dec 11:**

- Janet Radcliffe-Richards, “Nephrarious Goings-On: Kidney Sales and Moral Arguments” [ER]

**Dec 13:**

- Caplan and Radcliffe-Richards, continued

**Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m.**

-

**Final Exam**