Georgia State University – Spring 2012  
ECON 4100 – Economics, Philosophy and Public Policy  
PHIL 4900—Special Topics  
Place: General Classroom Building 427  
Date and Time: MW, 1:30pm-2:45pm

Instructor: Dr. Yongsheng Xu

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:30am-12:00pm; other days, by appointment

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This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Course Objectives: This course shall explore the philosophical contents in the economic analysis and evaluation of public policy. Its goal is to show how economic analysis can be improved by an understanding of (moral) philosophy, and how economic analysis and philosophical reasoning can inform public policy. At the end of this course, students should have a thorough understanding and appreciation of various ethical concepts relevant for economic analysis and evaluating public policies, and be able to carry out economic policy analysis in a framework developed in the course.

Textbook: there is no required textbook for the course (but see below); instead, there is a set of “core” reading materials listed under each topic.

Methods of Instruction: Lecture, class discussion, group presentation, a midterm and a final examination.

Evaluation: Evaluation will be based on the following: class discussion (20%), group project and presentation (20%), the midterm exam (20%; tentatively scheduled on Wednesday, Feb 15, 1:30-2:45pm) and the final exam (40%; scheduled on Wednesday, April 25, 13:30-16:00).

A letter grade of the following: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D and F, will be assigned to you on the basis of your cumulative score:

A+: 98-100  A: 90-97  A-: 88-89
B+: 86-87  B: 80-85  B-: 78-79
C+: 76-77  C: 70-75  C-: 68-69
D: 60-67

Attendance: attendance is required.

Make-up Examination Policy: There will be NO make-up exams.

General Policies

- Students are expected to be familiar with Georgia State University’s Policy on Academic Honesty (Section 409). Here is a link to Section 409:
  http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/sec409.html
• The Course website (on uLearn) is an integral part of the class; please check it on a regular basis.

Important Dates
01/13/2012—last day to add/drop classes
01/16/2012—MLK holiday; no classes
02/15/2012—midterm exam
02/24/2012—last day withdraw (http://www.gsu.edu/registrar/withdrawals.html for details)
02/27/2012-03/4/2012—Spring break; no classes
04/23/2012—last day of Spring classes
04/25/2012—Final exam

Background Reading


Topics and Reading Materials (core readings are indicated by *)

Topic I: Value Judgments in Economics Analysis

Readings:


Hausman and McPherson, Chapters 1-3


Topic II: Rationality in Economics I—Individual Choice
Readings:


**Topic III: Rationality in Economics II—Collective Choice**

Readings:


**Topic IV: Rational Choice and Moral Evaluation**

Readings:


Hausman and McPherson, Chapter 7


**Topic V: Consequences, Utility and Welfare**

Readings:


Hausman and McPherson, Chapters 7-8

**Topic VI: Liberty and Rights**

Readings:


Hausman and McPherson, Chapter 10

**Topic VII: Markets, Freedom and Efficiency**

Readings:
*Xu, Yongsheng. Market equilibrium and efficiency.


**Topic VIII: Equality and Justice, Intergenerational and Global Justice**

Readings:


Hausman and McPherson, Chapters 11-12