

PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS CAPSTONE

PHIL/POLI/ECON 698.001

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Jennifer M. Morton [REDACTED]
DATE/TIME: TH 4.45-7.15pm (4.45-5.30pm Groups, 5.30-7.15pm Whole Class)
LOCATION: [REDACTED]
SEMESTER: Fall 2020
CREDIT HOURS: 3
STUDENT 'DROP IN' ZOOM HOURS: W 7.00pm-8.00pm, F 12-1pm [REDACTED],
phone call or zoom by sign-up

COURSE OBJECTIVES (What will you be able to do when you complete this course):

1. Write an in-depth, polished interdisciplinary paper that digs deep into a question at the heart of PPE. The research for your paper will draw from at least two of the fields that make up PPE. It will present a clear and compelling argument. It will consider objections and address them.
2. You will be able to critically analyze and discuss poverty by drawing from concepts and research from all three PPE fields. You will be able to distinguish between normative and empirical research on poverty. You will be able to knowledgeably discuss questions such as: What is poverty? What makes poverty unjust (if anything)? What are poverty traps? What role do the poor play in their own poverty? How do gender and race relate to poverty? Are policies that aim to help people escape poverty paternalistic? Who is obligated to help the poor?

All coursework for this class has been designed to help you meet these two course objectives.

COVID NOTICE: Due to the COVID pandemic, this course will be held online to allow us to maintain social distancing and minimize the possibility that any of us (or our loved ones) will get sick or that we will inadvertently get other members of our community sick. For this class to work well, it will require a lot of flexibility, patience, and empathy from all of us. This class will be taught **synchronously** meaning that I expect that you will attend the class if you **can**. (See the section entitled Zoom expectations below for more information.) The vibrancy of the class discussion is paramount for you to get the most out of this class. However, these are challenging circumstances for everyone, so I will work with you on a case-by-case basis if you are unable to attend class for whatever reason. But please do keep me informed of any challenges you will have in attending class (slow internet connection, time zone issues, etc.) as soon as possible, so that we can settle on a plan together early in the term. At minimum, if you miss a class, you will be responsible for a phone or zoom conversation with me to discuss the course material. If you do fall ill or face another unexpected challenge, e-mail, call, or text me. The sooner I know, the easier it will be for us to work on a plan to deal with it together.

COURSE REQUISITES (This is what I will be evaluating when I come up with the final grade):

5 Written Assignments (Length Varies)	25%
Midterm Paper (4-5 pages)	10%
Individual Presentation	5%
Final Paper Plan & Bibliography	5%
Draft & Final Paper Peer Review	5%
Final Paper (15-20 pages)	30%
Participation (Including Group Work, Quizzes, Forum Participation)	20%

ASSIGNMENTS: Throughout the term I will ask you to complete 5 assignments that will help you practice the skills that you will need to meet the course objectives. These might include in-class written assignments, a written outline of a reading, a critique of an argument, etc. You will receive clear instructions for each of these assignments before it is due. I will provide feedback in a timely manner. If you want more feedback than what you receive, make an appointment to have a phone or zoom conversation with me. I welcome and appreciate such conversations.

PAPERS: You will write a 4-5 page (1200-1500 word) polished, well-argued midterm paper and a 15-20 page (5,000-7,000 word) polished, well-argued **research** final paper. For the final paper, you must turn in a precis (a 300-word plan for the paper) and bibliography, a draft, and conduct a review of a peer's draft. You will also present your research to your working group in a short 10-minute presentation. Your final paper can build and incorporate on your midterm paper. If the final paper substantially improves on your midterm paper, you will receive the highest grade for both papers.

LATE POLICY: If an emergency requires that you turn in a paper late, the best approach is to contact me well in advance and settle on a new due date. If you do this, you will not be penalized for turning in a paper late. If you turn in a paper late without clearing it with me first, then I will be unable to offer you feedback on your paper. You only get 1 chance to turn in an assignment in late without penalties.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Students who are persistently absent are more likely to do poorly in class. I strongly recommend that you make attending class a priority. If you cannot attend class, then I will ask that you meet with me over Zoom to discuss the class readings. Participation can include coming to office hours, being an active participant in group discussions (see below), participating in class discussion, participating in the online forum, and attending virtual **PPE events** throughout the term.

ZOOM EXPECTATIONS: The success of our Zoom classes depends on all of us being **active participants** in the class. To facilitate this, please try to abide by the following norms:

1. Make sure that you display your preferred name and pronouns.
2. Be engaged; ask questions via chat (private or public), raise your hand, use the clap button when you like a point, participate in polls, etc.
3. If your circumstances allow, keep video on.
4. If you are not talking, mute your audio.
5. Be on time and be ready to participate.
6. Keep in mind that I will be recording the sessions so you and other students can access them later.
7. Avoid disruptions during Zoom sessions if possible. But if your roommate, pet, or sibling walk into your room while you are Zooming, do not sweat it. Life happens! Deal with the disruption and turn your focus back to the class as soon as possible.

GROUP WORK: A significant portion of your participation grade will come from your work with your group. Each of you will have two groups— a number group (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and a letter group (A, B, C, D, E). The grouping will alternate from week to week—some weeks you will meet with your number group and others with your letter group. This will give you an opportunity to interact with many members of the class in a small group setting.

Each group will have a **note taker** (someone who writes down notes from the discussion), 1 or 2 **presenters** (someone who presents the findings of the group to the broader class), a **coordinator** (someone who sets up the zoom meeting, keeps a queue of hands, and helps facilitate the discussion), a **questioner** (someone whose job is to push back and offer a critical voice), and an **encourager** (someone who encourages the team to explore new ideas and to stay on task). Everyone should get to play each of these roles, so you should rotate from meeting to meeting. The notetaker will share notes from the meeting with me on a weekly basis.

Each group will be assigned a different task each week: this might be an additional reading, a set of questions, etc. Your group should meet for, at least, **45 minutes** in order to complete the task and present it to the rest of the class before we meet. You can do this on your own time or in the first 45 minutes of the officially scheduled class time. **These group meetings will count towards your 'in class' time, so our general group discussion will run for 1.45 hours instead of the fully allotted time and will start at 5.30pm.** I will participate in a different group meeting every week. This will give me an opportunity to talk to you in a smaller group setting.

The questions are a **starting point** for your group discussion. You should talk about what you find interesting and compelling. Each group will present their work to the rest of the class for 5-8 minutes during our general class meeting. I encourage you to **be creative** in how you present your work—videos, powerpoint, charts, etc. You should design your presentation to engage the class in active discussion. The best grade will go to those groups that engage the class.

PROFESSOR AVAILABILITY AND COMMUNICATION: I will be conducting office hours via Zoom. Please feel free to 'drop by' during my set office hours or to schedule a time to meet through the online link on Sakai. I also like talking on the phone while I am out for my daily walk, so please do not be shy about scheduling a phone call with me. I welcome and encourage you to attend my Zoom 'drop in' hours with a classmate (or with your group). Some of the more fruitful conversations happen when we have multiple perspectives on an issue.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITE: All seats reserved for declared PPE minors who have completed the gateway.

READING: All readings will be available on Sakai.

GRADING: I favor grading that encourages engagement with the class material and not one that causes you to focus on your grades. If you put an honest effort and do all of the work for this class, you will get a **good** grade. However, I reserve As for **exceptional** work. This approach allows me to balance rewarding excellence while assuaging the worry that you might get a low grade despite doing the work. Grading will be anonymous whenever possible. However, because of the nature of scaffolded assignments and the nature of the feedback I will provide, this might not always be feasible.

95 or above: A
90 to 94.9: A-
87 to 89.9: B+
83 to 86.9: B
80 to 82.9: B-
77 to 79.9: C+

73 to 76.9: C
70 to 72.9: C-
67 to 69.9: D+
60 to 67.9: D
Below 60: F

HONOR CODE: All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from "lying, cheating, or stealing" in an academic context (but it's also probably good to avoid doing these things in general). If you are unsure about which actions violate that honor code, please consult <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system>. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Always cite any resource that you use (including friends with whom you have worked if cooperation is permitted on an assignment). Do not reuse papers written for other classes. The internet has made it easier than ever before to catch this sort of thing, so (moral reasons aside) it is not a particularly wise idea.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES & SERVICE: UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short- or long-term needs. Go to their website: www.caps.unc.edu or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Service building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

MODIFICATIONS TO SYLLABUS: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedules

When		Who	What	Assignment
Aug	13	Introduction	Get to know you, divide up into teams, brainstorm paper ideas (!?)	
Aug	20	Everyone Reads	Sen, Amartya, "Poor Relatively Speaking" Townsend, Peter, "The Meaning of Poverty"	Assignment #1
Poverty: What is it?	Group Assignments	Group 1*	Does Townsend offer a clear definition of poverty? What is it? Is the definition adequate (does it pick out most intuitive cases of poverty)? Are there cases it does not pick out?	
		Group 2	Does Sen offer a clear definition of poverty? What is it? Is the definition adequate (does it pick out most intuitive cases of poverty)? Are there cases it does not pick out?	
		Group 3	What is Sen's critique of Townsend? Does it succeed?	
		Group 4	How might Townsend defend his view from Sen's critique? What are some critiques that might be leveled against Sen's view?	
		Group 5	Read https://theconversation.com/global-poverty-coronavirus-could-drive-it-up-for-the-first-time-since-the-1990s-140662 . What connections did you draw between the article and the reading for today? Did one of the definitions of poverty (Sen or Townsend) do a better job of capturing the situation described in this article?	
Aug	27	Everyone Reads	Ci, Jiwei, "Agency and Other Stakes of Poverty" Walker, Robert "Poverty, Shame, and Stigma?"	
Shame and Stigma	Group Assignments	Group A	According to Ci, what is the difference between agency and status poverty? Which is worse? Why? What is the role of a society's culture in poverty?	
		Group B*	According to Walker, what is the difference between stigma and shame? How are they related? Does poverty make one susceptible to either or both? How so?	
		Group C	Evaluate Ci's argument. What are the strengths and weaknesses? How could the argument be improved?	
		Group D	Is the state ever justified in using stigma and shame to encourage certain behavior? Come up with a justification on behalf of the state for the uses of shame and stigma described by Walker.	
		Group E	Conduct some research to come up with two examples of government programs that could be characterized as relying on or creating 'stigma' or 'low status' among the poor.	
Sep	3	Everyone Reads	Banerjee Abhijit & Esther Duflo, <u>Poor Economics</u> , Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2	Assignment #2
Poverty Traps	Group Assignments	Group 1	Apply some of the ideas from Townsend's article to the cases described in these chapters. How might we think of these cases bearing in mind the idea of poverty Townsend develops?	
		Group 2	Apply some of the ideas from Sen's article to the cases described in these chapters. How might we think of these cases bearing in mind the idea of poverty Sen develops?	
		Group 3*	Based on the discussion of Chapter 1, what is a nutrition-based poverty trap? Why do they happen?	
		Group 4	Based on the discussion of Chapter 2, what is a health-based poverty trap? Why do they happen?	
		Group 5	Do stigma or shame play a role in the cases described in these two chapters? Why or why not?	
Sep	10	Everyone Reads	Elster, Jon, "Sour grapes: Utilitarianism and the genesis of wants" Appadurai, Arjun, "The Capacity to Aspire?"	Assignment #3
Adaptive Preferences	Group Assignments	Group A	Is the phenomenon described by Appadurai a case of adaptive preferences? Make the case for an affirmative and the case for a negative answer to this question.	
		Group B	Look through the reading for last week (Banerjee & Duflo), can you find examples of adaptive preferences there? Make the case for your analysis.	
		Group C	Are the poor more subject to adaptive preferences? Why or why not? Make the argument for your answer and make sure to consider objections to your position.	
		Group D*	According to Elster, what are adaptive preferences? How does he distinguish them from other kinds of transformations that our preferences might undergo? Is the argument persuasive?	
		Group E	According to Appadurai, the poor suffer from a deficit of ambition. What does this mean? How does he think this happens?	
Sep	17	Everyone Reads	Nussbaum, Martha, "Adaptive Preferences and Women's Options" Khader, Serene, "Empowerment through self-subordination?"	Midterm Paper

Gender	Group Assignments	Group 1	What do you think of the list of capabilities Nussbaum presents at the end of the paper? Do they capture what you think matters? Can you think of examples that elucidate the importance (or the lack of importance, if you disagree) with some of those capacities?	
		Group 2	According to Nussbaum, what are the two unsatisfactory extremes? How does she think her view avoid them? Do you agree that it does? Why or why not?	
		Group 3	According to Khader, why do anti-poverty programs often fail to empower women? What is the self-subordination social recognition paradox? Develop a critique of Khader.	
		Group 4	How do Khader and Nussbaum's views compare? Can you think of any key differences?	
		Group 5*	Research anti-poverty programs that target women. Share some examples with the class. Do you think they address the concerns raised by Nussbaum and/or Khader?	
Sep	24	Everyone Reads	Lewis, Oscar, "The Culture of Poverty" Shelby, Tommie, "Justice, deviance, and the dark ghetto" On the Media Podcast (Scarlet E episode 1 & 3)	
Race	Group Assignments	Group A*	The podcast episode tackles the question of eviction as part of the experience of poverty. What are the more surprising findings described in the episode? Why is housing such a critical part of the experience of poverty?	
		Group B	Oscar Lewis's article was quite controversial when it emerged. Why do you think that is? What conclusions does it put forward? Put this paper into conversation with what we have read so far, what is the role that culture plays in how we conceptualize poverty?	
		Group C	Research the current income and wealth gaps between different racial groups in the United States. Share your findings with the class. Did anything surprise you?	
		Group D	Apply Shelby's argument to the recent protests around Black Lives Matter. What is the central argument? Do the conditions specified by Shelby apply to the current situation? Why or why not?	
		Group E	What is the connection between race and poverty that emerges from the readings we have done so far? Is it similar (or different) to the connection between poverty and gender we discussed last week? How?	
Oct	1	Everyone Reads	Ladson-Billings, Gloria, "It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture" Hannah-Jones Nikole, "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City" Jack, Anthony "What the Privileged Poor Can Teach us"	Assignment #4
Education	Group Assignments	Group 1	Why is the connection between education and poverty important? What role do you think education ought to play in mitigating poverty? What role do you think it does play?	
		Group 2*	Look through the National Center for Children in Poverty website http://www.nccp.org/topics/childpoverty.html . What do you find most striking or surprising about the research presented there? What does it tell you about poverty in the United States?	
		Group 3	Who are the privileged poor according to Jack? What can we learn from their experiences of higher education?	
		Group 4	What does Ladson-Billings mean by a "poverty of culture"? How is this different than a culture of poverty? How are these failures of teacher education?	
		Group 5	What is the dilemma that Hannah-Jones faces? What is the role that poverty plays in the situation she confronts? What is the role of race? Are these two issues separable?	
Oct	8	Everyone Reads	Brock, Gillian, "Global Poverty, Decent Work, and Remedial Responsibilities" Singer, Peter, "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?"	Assignment #5
Who Owes What to the Poor?	Group Assignments	Group A	Do our obligations to aid the poor depend on our causal role in contributing to unjust systems that give rise to poverty? Why or Why not?	
		Group B	Compare Brock's and Singer's arguments. How are they different? How are they similar?	
		Group C*	Research 'effective altruism'. What are the central claims of this movement? What should you do according to effective altruists?	
		Group D	According to Brock, what are the obligations of those in the developed world to those who are living in poverty in the developing world? What argument does she offer in favor of her view?	

			Does her argument depend on empirical evidence? How so?
		Group E	According to Singer, how do our obligations to aid the poor depend on our economic position? What are the underlying assumptions about moral obligation underlying Singer's view?
Oct	15	Everyone Reads	Morton, Jennifer "Reasoning Under Scarcity" Walton, Alice, "How poverty changes your mind-set"
			Precis and Bibliography
Rationality and Poverty	Group Assignments	Group 1	Raise questions/counter-arguments to Morton's claims. [Pretend I'm one of the authors and not one of your teachers. I will be offended (kidding) if you do not raise hard questions!]
		Group 2	If the research detailed by Walton is correct, how should this change how we think about what poverty is and what we should do about it?
		Group 3	Find news articles or other media examples that appear to rely on the assumption that the poor do not make decisions rationally. What strikes you about these articles/media?
		Group 4*	Why is the assumption of rationality important in thinking about policies aimed at alleviating poverty? How are assumptions about how the mind works critical in addressing poverty?
		Group 5	Draw connections between the articles for today and some past themes/articles.
Oct	22	Everyone Reads	Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Paternalism" Duflo, Esther, Tanner Lectures
Paternalism and Poverty	Group Assignments	Group A	How are 'nudges' different than other forms of paternalism detailed in the SEP entry? Does this make nudges easier or harder to justify morally? Why?
		Group B	According to Duflo, why is it important that we consider the environment in evaluating choices? Why does Duflo think that worries about paternalism are misplaced when we are discussing the world's poor?
		Group C	According to Duflo, hope is a capability. Go back to Sen/Nussbaum on capabilities. How does Duflo's understanding of hope fit with those views?
		Group D	Read this article: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/24/business/economy/nudges-arent-enough-to-solve-societys-problems.html Evaluate its cogency based on what you have learned in this class so far.
		Group E*	Develop a sharp, focused, and persuasive critique of one of Duflo's points.
Oct	29	Everyone Reads	Topic to be determined by the class
			Draft
TBD	Group Assignments	Group 1	TBD
		Group 2	TBD
		Group 3	TBD
		Group 4	TBD
		Group 5	TBD
Nov	5		How to Give a Killer Presentation How to Win Academic Presentations
			Peer Review Due
Presentations	Group Assignments	Group A	Presenting your paper to your group
		Group B	Presenting your paper to your group
		Group C	Presenting your paper to your group
		Group D	Presenting your paper to your group
		Group E	Presenting your paper to your group
Nov	12	Writing Workshop	Polishing a Final Paper
TBA			Final Paper Due will be due on the Final Exam Day. We will have a class meeting on this day.

*Group I will be visiting that week.