

Boston College
Department of Economics

ECON 8884.01: Theories of Distributive Justice

Fall 2018

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Lectures Monday Wednesday 5-6:15, 330 Maloney Hall. There will be some changes because of the Jewish holidays of the fall, we'll discuss possibilities in the first meeting.

Office Hours Mon 2–3 or by appointment.

Readings Mostly articles. Every week you will be asked to read one or two papers, which will be discussed in class. A detailed list will be provided later on.

Problem Sets Occasional collection of questions, most of them will be reduced versions of published articles.

Your Obligations Your responsibilities are these:

1. Attend lectures. Please let me know in advance if you can't attend a lecture.
2. Read the papers.
3. Discuss them in class.
4. Solve the problem sets.
5. Write an exam.

Grades Will be based on your exam. It will be a take-home exam. By taking this class you agree to comply with the rules of the final exam, which are:

1. You may use your notes.
2. You may use any material sent by me during the term.
3. You may use any book or article you wish.
4. You are not permitted to contact anybody (except for me) regarding the exam during its period.
5. You have to submit it, as a pdf file, by the deadline. There is a penalty of one point for every three hours you are late (but not for a fraction of three hours).

Topics There are cases where markets cannot be used for the allocation of goods, for example, public goods. There are cases where we do not want to use markets, for example, for the allocation of rights. We will discuss these situations. Some of the topics will be:

- The bargaining problem:
 1. Nash.
 2. Kalai Smorodinsky.
 3. Preferences over solutions.
- Cardinal and ordinal preferences in individual and social choice.
- Interpersonal comparisons of utility: Relative utilitarianism.
- Preferences for randomizations.
- Dynamic consistency.
- Timing: Ex ante and ex post analysis of social situations.
- The meaning of equality.
- Transitivity: Lexicographic procedures.
- The trolley problem.
- Experimental evidence.
- Who is J ?