

EC311 Experimental Ethics

Seminar Leader: Marcus Giamattei

Course Times: Mon 5.15-7pm, Tue 10.45-12.15am

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Course Description

This course aims at highlighting how economics and ethics intersect in various ways: Is it legitimate to dump our trash in lesser-developed countries because it is, economically speaking, “efficient”? Should a company be allowed to bribe officials in foreign countries in order to do business there? Should we encourage markets for organs or blood if they are efficiently allocating “resources”? The course will discuss experimental studies from psychology and economics on the importance of morality for human behavior. These include intuition in moral judgments, diffusion of responsibility, self-serving bias, crowding-out, diffusion of responsibility, self-serving bias, crowding-out, replacement logic, pivotality, and others. Students learn how to deal with terminology and literature relevant to ethics and economics, as well as how to engage in independent, argumentation-based discussion. They reproduce experimental findings in class to allow for an experience-based, in-depth discussion of the results.

Learning Outcomes

- Ability to analyze ethical questions and argumentations
- Ability to understand experiments as a tool to analyze normative economic questions
- Capacity to understand and predict the behaviour of humans in moral (dilemma) situations

Requirements

Readings

At the beginning of the semester students have to read Collin Camerer (2003) Chapter 3 and Mazar et al. (2009). Both papers are provided upfront via email. During the course, readings are assigned according to each topic.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. Absences due to illness or compelling circumstances outside of the student's control are excused if notification is given via email before the course. The instructor may require additional documentation in case of absences or frequent exams/quizzes on the day of absence. Optional non-academic travel, hosting visiting family and friends, or work schedules are not reasons for excused absences. Readings will be assigned in the beginning of the semester.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that instances in which students fail to meet

the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Grading

Assessment

Assessment will be based on attendance, preparation for classes, regular and active participation, professionalism (see below), an interactive paper presentation, being a discussant of another student's presentation and final examination (60 minutes).

Policy on Late Submission of Exercises

Exercises up to 24 hours late will be downgraded by one entire grade (from B+ to C+, for example). After that, we will accept late submissions only until the end of the week they were due (Sun, 23:59), but these cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

Seminar preparation, professionalism, and participation 20%
Presentation of a paper 40%
Discussant of a paper 10%
Final examination 30%

Schedule

Spring classes start on Monday, January 30, and run until Friday, May 19, with spring break planned from April 3 – April 10. Completion week is from May 15 through May 19. Students are required to be on campus during completion week. The final exam will be scheduled for this week.

The schedule provided is provisional to allow for flexibility. It is the students' responsibility to keep themselves informed of any changes to the schedule provided here. The course management will maintain an up-to-date schedule on the internet in Google classroom. The password to join google classroom will be handed out in class.

	Topic
Week 1	Introduction. What is experimental ethics?
Week 2	Experimental standards and methods
Week 3	Showcase: Ultimatum game and discussion
Week 4	Topic 1: Presentation and Discussion Topic 2: Presentation
Week 5	Topic 2: Discussion Topic 3: Presentation and Discussion
Week 6	Topic 4: Presentation and Discussion Topic 5: Presentation
Week 7	Topic 5: Discussion Topic 6: Presentation and Discussion
Week 8	Topic 7: Presentation and Discussion
Week 9	Topic 8: Presentation and Discussion
	Spring break
Week 10	<i>April 10 no class due to federal holiday</i> Recap and summary discussion
Week 11	Topic 9: Presentation and Discussion Topic 10: Presentation
Week 12	Topic 10: Discussion Topic 11: Presentation and Discussion
Week 13	<i>May 1st no class due to federal holiday</i> Review session
Week 14	Topic 12: Presentation and Discussion
Week 15 Completion week	Final exam: to be scheduled

Classes missed due to federal holidays will not be rescheduled.

Professionalism

Being a student is your full-time job and with it come a set of responsibilities and expectations, as with any other job. Maintaining a professional attitude towards your course of study also prepares you for later work life. A professional attitude towards your studies is shown by coming to class on time, being

prepared, being courteous to your teachers and fellow students. It is exhibited by writing your essays with care, actively participating in class, avoiding distractions (excessive bathroom breaks, using smartphones to check on irrelevant issues during class etc.), not missing classes except for the most dire of circumstances and in general by adapting to the rules of the course without trying to bargain for personal exceptions.

Ethics/Academic honesty

A core value of the academy is truth and the pursuit thereof. Nothing can shake the foundations of this pursuit as much as academic dishonesty as it undermines the trust that is indispensable to it. We will not excuse any instance of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism, cheating during exams, copying homework assignments (or doing individual assignments with a classmate) all constitute violations of academic honesty and the clause on "academic integrity" that each student has signed in the student handbook. They can lead to failing the course and will be reflected in the student's record (having a record of academic dishonesty can make obtaining scholarships, achieving a study abroad place, or admission to another program difficult if not outright impossible). If students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity, this will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

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