This syllabus explores connection between social welfare and individual preferences. What bearing does preference satisfaction have on well-being? Which normative principles are important to respect in social distributions, and how are these principles represented in formal theories about determining social welfare? In particular, it considers how equality matters to the value of a social distribution; and whether a social distribution should respect Pareto optimality, the idea that if everyone prefers $x$ to $y$ then $x$ is socially preferred to $y$. It also considers the question of how interpersonal considerations in picking a social distribution relate to individual considerations in picking a gamble, and the question of what individual preferences in decision-making under risk reveal about social preferences. Finally, it considers the distribution of value over time.

**Utility, Commensurability, and Interpersonal Comparability**

- John Broome, “Incommensurable Values.” In *Ethics out of Economics*.

**Arrow, Harsanyi, and Pareto Optimality**


**Inequality and Risk**

- Otsuka & Voorhoeve, "Why it matters that some are worse off than others: An Argument Against the Priority View.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 37:2 (2009), pp. 171-199.