UC Berkeley Logic Group
Philosophy Preliminary Syllabus 2013
Social Choice Theory: Social Welfare and Individual Preferences (Prof Lara Buchak)
Graduate Seminar, Fall 2012

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

Michael Resnik, (1987), *Choices: An Introduction to Decision Theory.* University of Minnesota Press., 81-119.

John Broome, "Utility." In *Ethics out of Economics.*

John Broome, "Incommensurable Values." In *Ethics out of Economics.*

Allan Gibbard, "Interpersonal comparisons: preference, good, and the intrinsic reward of a life." In *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, eds. Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland (Cambridge UP, 1986), pp. 165-194.

Donald Davidson, "Judging Interpersonal Interests." In *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, eds. Jon Elster and Aanund Hylland (Cambridge UP, 1986), pp. 195-213.

Arrow, Harsanyi, and Pareto Optimality

Michael Resnik, "Social Choices." Chapter 6 of *Choices*, pp. 177-215.

Amartya Sen, "The impossibility of a Paretian liberal." *Journal of Political Economy* 78 (1970), 152-7.

Amartya Sen, "Liberty and Social Choice." (1983). *Journal of Philosophy* 80:1 (1983), 5-28.

Inequality and Risk

Nagel, "Equality." In *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge UP, 1991), pp. 106-127.

Larry S. Temkin, "Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection." In The Ideal of Equality, eds. Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams. MacMillan Press LTD, 2000.

John Rawls, "Some Reasons for the Maximin Criterion." *American Economic Review* 64:2 (1974), 141-146.

John Broome, *Weighing Goods* (Basil Blackwell, 1991), Chapters 5 – 10.

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.