

# 444 Lecture 1 - Course Overview

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Brian Weatherson

## Plan

- To introduce the outlines of the course, and to say a little bit about games.

# Course Overview

## Three Parts of Course

1. Game Theory
2. Origins of Unfairness
3. Group attitudes

# *Game Theory*



Giacomo Bonanno

Giacomo Bonanno, Game Theory

## Aims

- Familiarity with the basic math of game theory.
- Introduce some famous examples of simple game theoretic models that get used throughout academic work.
- Look at some attempted explanation of real world phenomena using game theoretic tools, and go over the strengths and weaknesses of these explanations.



Cailin O'Connor, *The Origins of Unfairness*

## Aims

- Look at game theoretic models of the origin of unequal gender distributions.
- Ask whether these models are plausible in light of the facts about how this kind of inequality manifests in the real world.
- And in particular, look at the different kinds of gender inequality in different parts of life (in particular in workforces vs in households) and look at whether the models are as plausible in each case.

Latest news

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Post 2020-10-10 by David Bourget  
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Post 2018-01-30 by David Bourget

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# PhilPapers

## Aims

- Ask whether groups can have attitudes like beliefs, desires, goals, intentions, plans and so on.
- Along the way, ask what it means to answer this question positively or negatively.
- And, if we have the time, ask what a positive answer would mean for our theories of knowledge, responsibility, and so on.

## Schedule

- Seven weeks on game theory
- Three weeks on unfairness
- Three weeks on group attitudes

## Schedule Quirk

- I'm away on January 27, and working around this led to some complications with the schedule.
- You'll see things described as 'units' not weeks for a little bit on the syllabus, because sometimes the material on a Thursday goes best with the following Tuesday.
- And for a couple of weeks, the assignments are a little 'behind' the lectures.
- But we catch up around February 15.

## Schedule Luck

- The Spring Break falls precisely at the right time for this course; just as we switch from the more mathematical part to the more discursive part.
- I'd like to claim this was great course design, but it was actually a bit of luck.

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- Each of these will be half of the grade.

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- Once we get to Part II, I'll still record lecture videos like this ahead of time, but they won't go into as much detail.
- There will be discussion sections each week, and they are really important.

## For Next Time

- We will start on Bonanno, starting with section 2.1.
- You should also read 2.2 for next Tuesday's class.
- There is no assignment this week, but there will be assignments most of the following weeks.

# Games

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- If this seems really general, it is!

## Formal games

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- How many players there are.
- How many moves they each have.
- What order those moves get made in.
- How many options they have at each move.
- What the payoff is for each player for each possible combination of moves by the players and 'moves' by nature.

## Two Main Types

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- Each player makes 1 move, and these are made simultaneously.
- Players take turns making moves, and every move is revealed to all players when they are made.



An example of a turn taking game



An example of a one move game



A more familiar one move game

## Other Types

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- Nature gets involved and their move is only revealed to one of the players.
- A move made by a player is not revealed to the other player(s) straight away.
- Multiple sequential moves.



How nature can get involved in a public way.



How nature can get involved in a private way.



Moves that are not revealed



Multiple simultaneous moves

## Positive Sum Game

- These instances are a bit non-representative in one crucial respect.
- They are all **zero-sum**.
- That is, someone doing well means someone else must be doing worse.
- This is not the general case.

## Positive Sum Game

Most of the games we're going to look at have the following characteristic.

- There is a pair of possible outcomes such that every player is better off in the first outcome than the second.

## For Next Time

We're going to get a bit clearer on what this last claim means, and how it affects how we write up games.