Philosophy Faculty Reading List and Course Outline 2018-2019

PART II PAPER 10:
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

SYLLABUS

- Global political issues: immigration; international justice, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, global environment.
- Community and culture: political liberalism; communitarianism; multiculturalism.
- Feminism: economic justice and gender; the ethics of care; gender and difference/intersectionality; pornography; rape; masculinity and femininity.
- Radical Political Theory: Marxism, power, realism vs. moralism/ideal and non-ideal theory; the limits of markets.

COURSE OUTLINE

Many debates in contemporary political philosophy focus on the question of how social, economic and political institutions should be set up in order to be just. This course examines this question via four broad topics.

The first topic, global political issues, considers what duties we have towards those who live in countries other than our own. Do we have the right to restrict immigration? Do we have duties to redistribute wealth from the richest to the poorest countries? Is the nation a community with normative significance, or should questions of justice apply to humanity as a whole? What political arrangements are normatively required to protect the global environment?

The second topic, community and culture, examines controversies that arise when thinking about justice in the context of either a community with shared values, or diverse multicultural societies. Should the state be neutral between conceptions of the good, or should it reflect shared values of the community? What does justice require if a political community lacks shared values? Can a liberal state legitimately influence or prohibit cultural practices? What if those practices are illiberal?

The third topic, feminism, encompasses a diverse set of theories, all united by the claim that our current society is unjust since there are profound inequalities between women and men. Why are women poorer than men, despite equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation? Are women worse off because they take more responsibility for domestic and caring work? Does the significance of care require us to change the way we think about justice or even the way we do political philosophy? What is the political and philosophical significance of pornography and rape? How can they best be conceptualised, and what is the correct normative response to them? What it means to say that women and men are different from each other? How do these differences arise, and what is their political and philosophical significance? How does gender intersect with other social cleavages such as race, class and disability? Does feminism require a unified category of woman, and is such a category possible?

The fourth broad topic of the course is radical political theory. What is Marx’s concept of alienation, and what is the normative significance of alienated labour? What is the Marxist concept of ideology, and what does it mean to say that ideas are connected with the ruling class? How should we best understand the related concept of power – is it a matter of who is able to win in overt competition, or of subtle, ever-present influence, or something in between? Next, debates over the method of political philosophy, including the debates between realists and moralists, and between proponents of ideal and non-ideal theory. Finally, what are the limits of markets? Are there things that should not be bought and sold?

Prerequisites

None

Objectives

Students taking this paper will be expected to:

1. Acquire a detailed knowledge of some of the concepts, positions and arguments in the central literature on the topics of the course.
2. Acquire a sense of how the positions on different topics relate to each other.
3. Engage closely and critically with some of the ideas studied.
4. Develop their ability to think independently about some of the ideas studied.
5. Construct their own arguments, responding to but not merely reproducing the arguments of others.

Preliminary Reading

The following text books are listed in order from most to least introductory.


READING LIST

Items marked with an asterisk* are important

GLOBAL POLITICAL ISSUES

Immigration

Do states have the right to control immigration, or do they have a duty to open their borders?


International justice

This section considers the tragedy and injustice of global poverty. Do rich countries and their citizens have a duty to help the global poor? If so, is this a duty of charity or of justice? And how extensive is that duty? Should we be aiming for an equal distribution of the world’s resources, or just to alleviate poverty and protect human rights?


*POGGE, Thomas, World Poverty and Human Rights (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002). [Especially chs. 4, 5, 7 & 8]


Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

This section considers whether the nation is an ethical community. Is partiality towards co-nationals permitted or even required by justice? Alternatively, cosmopolitanism is the view that justice requires that people are treated equally regardless of their nationality and citizenship.


*O'NEILL, Onora, *Borders of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ch. 9 'Identities, Boundaries and States'. Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511605734


Global Environment

Climate change is a global problem requiring a global solution. This section considers who has the duty to do what to alleviate the effects of climate change and prevent environmental catastrophe.


*O'NEILL, Onora, *Borders of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ch. 9 'Identities, Boundaries and States'. Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511605734


COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Political Liberalism

This section considers John Rawls's theory of political liberalism, according to which the state should be neutral between conceptions of the good. On this approach, liberalism applies to political questions only and can be accepted by people with a wide variety of views of the good life. Students should start by reading Rawls, using Freeman or a textbook listed above if necessary, before moving on to the other philosophers in this section.

*MACKINNON, Catharine, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), ch. 8 'The liberal state'.


FRIEDMAN, Marilyn, Autonomy, Gender, Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 8 'John Rawls and the political coercion of unreasonable people'. Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1093/0195138503.003.0008


**COMMUNITARIANISM**

This section considers those thinkers who criticised Rawls and other liberals for focusing too heavily on the isolated individual, ignoring the political significance of community. Students should start by reading Avineri, Shlomo, and Avner De-Shalit, eds., Communitarianism and Individualism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1093/0195138503.003.0008


*SANDEL, Michael, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), ch. 1. Also available on Moodle


*WALDRON, Jeremy, Liberal Rights (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ch. 15 'When Justice Replaces Affection: The Need for Rights'. Also available on Moodle

*WALZER, Michael, Spheres of Justice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Multiculturalism

Can liberalism deal with cultural diversity? Does justice require special measures to protect minority cultures, such as legal exemptions or financial subsidy?

Also see section: FEMINISM: Intersectionality, below.


*MILLS, Charles, 'Multiculturalism as/and/or Anti-Racism', in A.S. Laden and D. Owen, eds., *Multiculturalism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 89-114. Also available on Moodle.

*NUSSBAUM, Martha, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), chs. 1, 3 & 4. Also available online at: http://lib.mlibrarry.com/?id=45331


CHAMBERS, Clare, *Sex, Culture, and Justice: The Limits of Choice* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), chs. 4 & 5. Also available online at: https://muse.jhu.edu/book/7456


SAUL, Jennifer, *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 9 "Feminism and 'respect for cultures".


SONG, Sarah, *Justice, Gender and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Also available online at: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511490354

FEMINISM

Economic Justice and Gender

This section considers how gender inequality interacts with economic inequality, including through gendered practices of care, work, and family.


*NUSSBAUM, Martha, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 2 'The feminist critique of liberalism'. Also available online at: http://lib.mlibrarry.com/?id=45331


Some feminists advocate the ethics of care, an approach that they contrast with justice-based thinking. This section considers their work and its critics.

*GILLIGAN, Carol, In a Different Voice (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1982; repr. with new introduction, 1993).

*HELD, Virginia, The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, Global (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007). Also available online at: http://doi.org/10.1093/0195180992.001.0001

*SUNSTEIN, Cass R., ed., Feminism and Political Theory (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1982). [Chapters by Okin, Flanagan & Jackson and Hardwig]


HELD, Virginia, Feminist Morality (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993). [Especially ch. 10]


Gender and Difference/Intersectionality

This section considers two related issues. First, it considers whether there are differences between women, such as differences of race and class, that undermine theories of ‘women’ taken as a whole. Intersectional feminism centres this idea. Theorists to start with on this question are Hooks, Crenshaw, Spelman, Haslanger. Second, the section considers whether cultural differences and cultural practices undermine feminism, or vice versa. On this question, start with Okin, Nussbaum, Young, Fraser.
Pornography

This section considers pornography as a feminist issue. Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon are the leading radical feminist critics of pornography. Rae Langton offers a critique based on speech act theory and silencing. Ronald Dworkin is sceptical.


KENNEDY, Helena, Eve Was Framed (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), ch. 5 'Asking for it'.


MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

This section considers whether masculinity and femininity should be considered as natural or constructed, and why that matters to feminism. It also considers the political significance of embodiment and appearance.

SEX AND GENDER CATEGORIES

*Butler, Judith, Gender Trouble (London: Routledge, 1999), ch. 1 'Subjects of sex/gender/sexuality'. Also available online at: http://lib.myilibrary.com/?ID=31683
Marxism: Alienation

This section considers the Marxist concept of alienation. What is the relationship between the worker and her work under capitalism? Start with the primary texts.

*MARX, Karl, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts; on James Mill; the Holy Family; the German Ideology; and the Following Sections from Capital, Volume 1: The Sale of Labour Power, the Working Day, the Division of Labour, the General Law of Capitalist Accumulation', in D. McClellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; 2nd ed. 2000).

*LUKES, Steven, 'Alienation and Anomie', in Essays in Social Theory (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1994), pp. 74-95. Also available on Moodle


ELSTER, John, Making Sense of Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 2 'Philosophical anthropology'.


Power

This section considers the various ways of understanding the essentially political concept of power, ranging from simple measures of political influence and control in the work of Robert Dahl, to the pervasive and ubiquitous power theorised by Michel Foucault. It includes feminist and radical conceptions of power.


*FOUCAULT, Michel, Power/Knowledge (Brighton: Harvester, 1980). [Especially 'Two lectures' and 'The eye of power']


MORRIS, Peter, Power: A Philosophical Analysis. 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).


Realism vs. Moralism

Should political philosophy be a theory of ideal worlds and abstract, universal concepts of justice? Or should it take into account real-world problems of non-compliance, power, and conflict? Should political philosophy focus on the philosophy or the politics?


The Limits of Markets

This section considers whether there are some things that should not be bought and sold, and whether markets corrupt or liberate.


We welcome your suggestions for further readings that will improve and diversify our reading lists, to reflect the best recent research, and important work by members of under-represented groups. Please email your suggestions to phillib@hermes.cam.ac.uk including the relevant part and paper number. For information on how we handle your personal data when you submit a suggestion please see https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/general-data.