

Theory of Politics

Preliminaries

1. Logistics I'd like you to write six essays (1,600-2,000 words each) across the term. It's up to you in which weeks you write these essays. For each topic I've suggested an essay question. It's up to you whether you answer this question or come up with your own. In the two weeks in which you don't write an essay, you should still aim to do the reading for that week's topic. If for any reason (illness, a pileup of other commitments, etc.) writing an essay proves to be difficult in a week when an essay is due, please don't worry: just email me and we can sort something out (e.g. writing the essay in Week 9, or whatever works best). I'm conscious that Oxford terms can be very demanding at the best of times, and your well-being is much more important than any given week's work.

2. Topics Listed below are the topics from the Theory of Politics paper I am happy to teach. We'll begin with Justice, after which you can choose each week what to look at next.

3. Reading For each topic I've listed between four and six texts to read. Most are taken from the faculty reading list, links to which can thus be found on ORLO. Prioritise reading texts marked with an asterisk; don't worry if you don't have time to get through the others.

4. Writing Rachel Fraser maintains three excellent short guides to different aspects of essay writing on her website: "How to Write a Philosophy Essay", "What Not to Do" and "A Taxonomy of Finals Questions": <http://www.rachelelizabethfraser.com/teaching.html>. I strongly recommend reading these before writing your first essay.

Justice

QUESTION: "Theories of justice concern the public rules of political institutions rather than the personal choices of individuals." Discuss.

*G.A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (London: Harvard University Press, 2008), Ch.1 "The Incentives Argument";

S. Freeman, "Introduction: John Rawls – An Overview" in S. Freeman ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. sections I&II;

*J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* 2nd ed. (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), Chs.1&2;

*A. Williams, "Incentives, Inequality and Publicity" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol.27 no.3 (1998), pp.225-247;

I.M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), Ch.1 "Displacing the Distributive Paradigm".

Injustice

QUESTION: Who bears responsibility for structural injustice?

C. Lu, "Colonialism as Structural Injustice: Historical Responsibility and Contemporary Redress" in *Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol.19 no.3 (2011), pp.261-281;

*M. Nussbaum, "Forward" in I.M. Young's *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011);

O.O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), Chs.2-4;

*I.M. Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Equality

QUESTION: "The important thing is not whether I have as much of some good as you but whether I have enough of it. Hence, equality is not itself important." Discuss.

*Casal, P., "Why Sufficiency is Not Enough" in *Ethics* Vol.117 no.2 (2007), pp.296-326;

*H. Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal" in *Ethics* Vol.98 no.1 (1987), pp.21-43;

D. Parfit, "Equality and Priority" in *Ratio* Vol.10 no.3 (1997), pp.202-221;

L. Temkin, "Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection" in M. Clayton & A. Williams eds., *The Ideal of Equality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), available at: https://archive.law.upenn.edu/institutes/cerl/conferences/prioritarianism_papers/Session2_Temkin2.pdf;

B. Williams, "The Idea of Equality" in *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers, 1956-1972* (Cambridge: CUP, 1973);

*J. Wolff, "Equality: The recent history of an idea" in *Journal of Moral Philosophy* Vol.4 no.1 (2007), pp.125-136.

Democracy

QUESTION: In what sense, if any, ought democracy to be "deliberative"?

D. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown vs. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), esp. Part II;

*J. Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy" in his *Philosophy, Politics, Democracy: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp.16-37;

C. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), Chs.1&4;

L.M. Sanders, "Against Deliberation" in *Political Theory* Vol.25 no.3 (1997), pp.347-376;

*I.M. Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy" in S. Benhabib ed., *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp.120-135.

Liberty I: Three Concepts of Liberty

QUESTION: Does freedom as non-interference adequately capture the concept of freedom?

*I. Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" in his *Liberty* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), or as abridged in D. Miller, *The Liberty Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.33-57;

*J. Filling, "Liberty" in M.T. Gibbons ed., *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), pp.2156-66, available at: <http://cambridge.academia.edu/JohnFilling>;

M. Fricker, "Epistemic justice as a condition of political freedom?" in *Synthese* Vol.190 no.7 (2013), pp.1317-1332;

B. Hesse, "Escaping Liberty: Western Hegemony, Black Fugitivity" in *Political Theory* Vol.42 no.3 (2014), pp.288-313;

P. Pettit, "The Republican Ideal of Freedom" in D. Miller, *The Liberty Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.223-242;

*C. Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty" in D. Miller, *The Liberty Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.141-162.

Liberty II/Feminism I: Freedom and Social Construction

QUESTIONS: What weight should feminists give to the value of individual liberty? OR Assess the claim that many theories of freedom fail to appreciate the sense in which the self is socially constructed.

S.L. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination* (London: Routledge, 1990), Ch.5 "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power";

*J. Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), Introduction and Ch.1;

*C. Chambers, *Sex, Culture, and Justice* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), Ch.5 "Two Orders of Autonomy and Political Liberalism: Breast Implants versus Female Genital Mutilation";

M.L. Ferguson, "Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics" in *Perspectives on Politics* Vol.8 no.1 (2010), pp.247-253;

*N.J. Hirschmann, "Towards a Feminist Theory of Freedom" in D. Miller, *The Liberty Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.183-199;

M. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Ch.2 "The Feminist Critique of Liberalism".

Feminism II: Intersectionality

QUESTION: 'Perhaps, paradoxically, "representation" will be shown to make sense for feminism only when the subject of "women" is nowhere presumed.' (BUTLER) Discuss.

*J. Butler, *Gender Trouble* (2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1999), Ch.1 "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire", esp. sections I-IV;

Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977), available at: <http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>;

*K. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour" in *Stanford Law Review* Vol.43 no.6 (1991), pp.1241-1299;

*S. Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" in *Noûs* Vol.34 no.1 (2000), pp.31-55;

K. Jenkins, "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of *Woman*" in *Ethics* Vol.126 (2016), pp.394-421;

E. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (London: Beacon Press, 1990), Ch.5 "Gender and Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought".

Civil Disobedience

QUESTION: To what extent is violence consistent with justified civil disobedience?

*R. Celikates, "Rethinking Civil Disobedience as a Practice of Contestation – Beyond the Liberal Paradigm" in *Constellations* Vol.23 no.1 (2016), pp.37-45;

*F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (various eds., 1965), Ch.1 "Concerning Violence";

M.L. King Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail" (1963), reprinted in *The Atlantic* (2006);

A. Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* (London: Verso, 2021), Chs.1-2;

*J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (2nd ed., London: Harvard University Press, 2009), Ch.6 "Duty and Obligation".

Libertarianism

QUESTION: "Securing and maintaining equality requires violating rights of self-ownership."
Discuss.

B. Fried, "Left-Libertarianism: A Review Essay" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol.32 no.1 (2004), pp.66-92;

*T. Nagel, "Libertarianism without Foundations" in *The Yale Law Journal* Vol.85 no.1 (1975), pp.136-149;

*R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), Ch.7 "Distributive Justice";

*S.M. Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), Ch.4 "Libertarianism: Matriarchy, Slavery, and Dystopia";

M. Otsuka, "Self-Ownership and Equality: A Lockean Reconciliation" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol.27 no.1 (1998), pp.65-92;

C.C. Ryan, "Yours, Mine, and Ours: Property Rights and Individual Liberty" in *Ethics* Vol.87 no.2 (1977), pp.126-144.

Multiculturalism

QUESTION: Does multiculturalism pose a challenge for liberalism? Is this a challenge liberalism can meet?

N. Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age" in *New Left Review* Vol.212 (1995), pp.68-93;

*C. Kukathas, "Are There Any Cultural Rights?" in *Political Theory* Vol.20 no.1 (1992), pp.105-139;

*W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Chs.3,5&8;

C. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" in A. Gutmann ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.25-73;

I.M. Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship" in *Ethics* Vol.99 no.2 (1989), pp.250-274.

Ideal Theory and Realism

QUESTION: Is it time to stop doing ideal theory?

*G.A. Cohen, "Facts and Principles" in *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol.31 no.3 (2003), pp.211-245;

R. Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008);

C.W. Mills, "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology" in *Hypatia* Vol.20 no.3 (2005), pp.165-184;

*A. Sen, "What do we Want from a Theory of Justice?" in *Journal of Philosophy* Vol.103 no.5 (2006), pp.215-238;

*L. Valentini, "Ideal vs. Non-ideal Theory: A Conceptual Map" in *Philosophy Compass* Vol.7 no.9 (2012), pp.654-664.