

RECENT GRADUATE SEMINARS

Political Legitimacy: The concept of political legitimacy is central to political philosophy. An entity has political legitimacy if, and only if, it is morally justified in exercising political power. Traditionally understood, only states have political legitimacy for only states exercise (specifically) political power. That is, only states claim a monopoly right to make, apply and enforce laws within a territorial jurisdiction and only states claim that those subject to their authority have a general obligation to obey their directives. Recently, the traditional understanding of political legitimacy has been challenged. It has been claimed that both substate entities and international organizations can and do exercise political power. Furthermore, it has been claimed that in order for an entity to be politically legitimate it need not claim a right to be obeyed. In this course, we will explore the challenge to the traditional understanding of political legitimacy. Along the way, we will consider two rival views of political legitimacy, one that views legitimacy in terms of the consent of those subject to political power and the other that views political legitimacy in terms of the justified exercise of political power. We will discuss the extent to which these views can be extended with profit to cover substate entities and international organizations. We will also consider the relationship between political legitimacy and other concepts central to political philosophy, such as justice, authority, power and obligation. Writers to be discussed include Locke, Weber, Rawls, Nagel, Raz, Simmons and Buchanan.

Democracy and Equality: In this seminar we will survey classic and contemporary writings in normative democratic theory. Among the questions we will address are: Is democratic government a requirement of political legitimacy? Do democratic political procedures have epistemic value? Is democratic government merely instrumentally justified, or are there plausible principled justifications for it? Does democratic government rest on the ideal of political equality? If so, what is the best understanding of this ideal? Is democracy compatible with constitutional limits on the rule of the majority? And, finally, what is the relationship between democracy and egalitarian justice more generally? Writers to be discussed include Plato, Rousseau, Mill, Rawls, Dworkin, Arneson, Waldron and Christiano.

Libertarianism: Libertarianism is a political philosophy that sets radical limits on the legitimate powers of states. The view is summarized as follows in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: "Libertarianism, as usually understood, is a theory about the permissible use of non-consensual force. It holds that agents, at least initially, fully own themselves and have moral powers to acquire property rights in external things under certain conditions. These property rights (in their own person and in other things) set the limits of permissible non-consensual force against a person: such force is permissible only when it is necessary to prevent that person from violating someone's rights or to impose rectification for such violation (e.g., compensation or punishment). The use of force against an innocent person is thus not permissible to benefit that person

(paternalism), to benefit others (e.g., compulsory military service), or even to prevent third parties from violating the rights of others (e.g., killing innocents when necessary to prevent a terrorist attack)." In recent years, there has been renewed interest in libertarianism among political philosophers. New "left-wing" versions of libertarianism have emerged to contest the more familiar "right-wing" versions. This course critically examines libertarian accounts of justice, freedom, self-ownership, and property rights. We will ask whether the renewed interest in libertarianism is well-founded; and, if so, what is the most defensible version of the view. Writers to be discussed include Locke, Nozick, A. J. Simmons, G. A. Cohen, Arneson, Otsuka, and Vallentyne.