

On Liberty and Equality

This course offers an introduction to two of the central values within contemporary political philosophy, of liberty and equality. These values are sometimes thought to be in tension, such as in debates over hate speech or pornography. Yet many contemporary political philosophers are liberal egalitarians, valuing both liberty and equality. This course will examine different understandings and justifications of these two central values, and explore whether and how the two values come into conflict.

Week 1: Equality I - Why Equality?

Lecture: Introduction to Political Philosophy and the Value of Equality

Seminar: Justifications of Equality

Week 2: Equality II - The Difference Principle

Lecture: Rawls' Difference Principle

Seminar: Rawls and his Critics

Week 3: Equality III - Cohen to the Rescue?

Lecture: Cohen's Incentives Argument

Seminar: Debating Rawls and Cohen on Equality

Week 4: A Challenge from Liberty - Nozick and Hayek

Lecture: Nozick's Challenge to Rawls

Seminar: Libertarians and Conceptions of Rights

Week 5: Liberty I - Negative Liberty and Types of Libertarians

Lecture: Negative Liberty and Libertarians

Seminar: Left-Libertarians and Self-Ownership

Course Outline: Philosophy, Morals and Politics, Michaelmas Term 2012

Week 6: Liberty II - Positive Liberty

Lecture: Positive Liberty - an Alternative?

Seminar: Positive Liberty in Practice: Homelessness and Money

Week 7: A Change of Paradigm I - Republicanism

Lecture: Republicanism

Seminar: Republicans and Distributive Justice

Week 8: A Change of Paradigm II - the Feminist Critique

Lecture: Feminism and Political Theory

Seminar: Feminism and Ideas of Oppression

Week 9: A Change of Paradigm III - Relational Egalitarianism

Lecture: Social Egalitarianism

Seminar: Hierarchy and Equality

Week 10: Do Liberty and Equality Conflict?

Lecture: Where Liberty and Equality Conflict

Seminar: Case Studies - Hate Speech and Pornography