

# PH149-15 Key Debates in Moral and Political Philosophy

**24/25**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

Nadine Elzein

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

20% coursework, 80% exam

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

PH149 - Key Debates in Moral and Political Philosophy

### Module aims

The aim of this module is to introduce you to fundamental concepts and theories in moral and political philosophy. The module will use classic texts as a launchpad to exploring debates in contemporary moral and political philosophy.

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. Moral Philosophy (weeks 1 – 5)

This part of the module will be based on Mill's Utilitarianism and explore questions such as the following, for example:

What is the highest good?

What is the right thing to do?  
The demandingness of morality  
Moral integrity  
Disagreeing about moral value

## 2. Political Philosophy (weeks 7 – 10)

This part of the module will be based on Hobbes' *Leviathan* and explore questions such as the following, for example:

What would the world be like without states?  
When is political authority legitimate?  
Should we always obey political authorities?  
Are states inherently unjust?

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- At the end of the module, you should have a good understanding of key debates in moral and political philosophy.
- At the end of the module, you should be able to use some of the main concepts that moral and political philosophers have used to analyse how we should live and how we should live together.

## Indicative reading list

Classic texts:

- Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Ed. Roger Crisp
  - Hobbes, Thomas. 2008. *Leviathan*. Oxford University Press. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by J. C. A. Gaskin.
- Contemporary literature for part 1:
- Chappell, Timothy / Sophie Grace (2009). *The Problem of Moral Demandingness: New Philosophical Essays*. Palgrave
  - Crisp, Roger (1997). *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Utilitarianism*. Routledge.
  - Donner, Wendy (2005). *Mill's Theory of Value*. In: H.R. West (ed.) *Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*, pp. 117 – 138. Blackwell.
  - Foot, Philippa (1985). *Utilitarianism and the Virtues*. *Mind* 94, pp. 196-209.
  - Koltonski, Daniel (2016). "A Good Friend Will Help You Move a Body: Friendship and the Problem of Moral Disagreement." *The Philosophical Review* 125 (4): 473-507.
  - Mackie, J.L. (1977). *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. Penguin.
  - Rawls, John (1999). "Classical Utilitarianism." In: *A Theory of Justice*, section 5. Harvard University Press.
  - Williams, Bernard (1993). *Utilitarianism*. In: *Morality*, ch. 9
- Contemporary literature for part 2:
- Brownlee, Kimberley (2013). *Civil Disobedience*. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
  - Hampton, Jean (1986). *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
  - Mills, Charles (1997). *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press.

- Nozick, Robert (1974). Moral Constraints and the State. In: Anarchy, State, and Utopia. Blackwell, ch. 3
- Pateman, Carol (1988). The Sexual Contract. Polity Press.
- Peter, Fabienne (2017). "Political Legitimacy." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Ryan, Alan (1996). Hobbes's Political Philosophy. In: T. Sorrell (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes. Cambridge University Press.
- Wolff, Jonathan. (2006). The State of Nature. In: An Introduction to Political Philosophy. Oxford University Press.

## Subject specific skills

TBC

## Transferable skills

TBC

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	123 hours (82%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group D2

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
Assessed Exercise 1 (500 words)	10%	
Assessed Exercise 2 (500 words)	10%	
Online Examination	80%	
~Platforms - AEP		

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- Online examination: No Answerbook required

## **Feedback on assessment**

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content. Feedback on exams will be available in the form of an examiners' report.

[Past exam papers for PH149](#)

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## **Availability**

### **Anti-requisite modules**

If you take this module, you cannot also take:

- PH133-30 Introduction to Philosophy
- PH134-30 Introduction to Philosophy Without Logic

## **Courses**

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V700 Philosophy

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

- Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

This module is Option list B for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list C for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 1 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy