

# PH382-15 Democracy: Authority and Resistance

**26/27**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Sameer Bajaj

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

Multiple

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

Governments rule over us. They command our obedience and enforce their commands with enormous coercive power. To take just one example: governments order us to pay taxes and lock us up if we don't. What, if anything, could make it legitimate for governments to wield this awesome power? And when, if ever, is it permissible for citizens to resist the state's commands?

It is widely assumed that political authority is legitimate when but only when it is democratic. In the first part of the module, we will put this assumption to the test by examining two influential challenges to the authority of democracy: the anarchist challenge and the epistocratic challenge. In the second part of the module, we will examine several important defences of the authority of democracy based on the values of equality, freedom, and truth. In the final part of the module, we will turn our attention to the issue of resistance to democratic authority. We will focus on three methods of resistance that have often been thought to be at the heart of the democratic ideal: civil disobedience of the law, uncivil disobedience of the law, and voting.

### Module aims

The aim of this module is to introduce students to fundamental questions and theories about the

nature of political authority and the authority of democratic institutions, as well as questions and theories concerning duties to resist political injustice in democracies.

## 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.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: The Anarchist Challenge

Week 3: The Epistocratic Challenge

Week 4: Democracy as Equality

Week 5: Democracy as Freedom

Week 7: Democracy as Truth

Week 8: Resistance through Civil Disobedience

Week 9: Resistance through Uncivil Disobedience

Week 10: Resistance through Voting

## Learning outcomes

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

- (i) demonstrate understanding of the central questions and theories concerning the nature of political authority
- (ii) demonstrate understanding of central questions and theories concerning duties to resist injustice in democracies
- (iii) demonstrate understanding of the central theories defending and opposing the authority of democratic institutions
- (iv) demonstrate the ability to relate key questions and concepts in the philosophy of political authority to broader philosophical questions and concepts concerning morality, epistemology, and metaphysics.

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

## Subject specific skills

-By the end of the module students should have an understanding of the central questions, concepts, and debates concerning the general nature of political authority, the authority of democratic institutions, and obligations to resist injustice.

## Transferable skills

-By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the main literature in these debates. -By the end of the module students should be able to critically analyse the arguments for and against the key positions defended in the literature. -By the end of the

module students should be able to demonstrate their understanding of the central questions, concepts, and debates discussed in the module in speech and writing. -By the end of the module students should be able to draw connections between the key ideas and arguments discussed in the module to other problems and debates in philosophy.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	124 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

Private study, seminar preparation and assessment preparation

### 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 D

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Seminar participation	10%		No
1000 word essay	20%		Yes (extension)
2 hour exam	70%		No

- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

### Assessment group R1

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>	<b>Eligible for self-certification</b>
2 hour exam	100%		No

- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

## Feedback on assessment

Essays will be returned with written feedback, in line with the Philosophy department's policies and guidance on giving feedback to students.

[Past exam papers for PH382](#)

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 2 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 3 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL79 BA in Philosophy with Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
- UIPA-V5L8 Undergraduate Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
- Year 4 of UIPA-V5L9 Undergraduate Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development (with Intercalated Year)
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ74 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature (with Work Placement)
- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ73 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature with Intercalated Year
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL80 Undergraduate Philosophy with Psychology (with Work Placement)
- UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics
  - Year 2 of VQ52 Philosophy, Literature and Classics



- Year 4 of V7MH Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Philosophy Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MF Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Economics/Politics Bipartite (Economics Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MI Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Economics Bipartite (Philosophy Major) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MJ Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Philosophy/Politics Bipartite (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of V7MG Philosophy, Politics and Economics - Politics/Economics Bipartite (Politics Major) (with Intercalated year)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law