

PO2E2-15 Topics in Political Theory

26/27

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Katy Wells

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Politics considers both how the political world operates and how it ought to operate. In this module, we focus on the “oughts” of politics. The module introduces students to key thinkers and topics in normative political theory. We ask questions like: what is a just society? What is a gender just society? What does a fair education system look like? What are citizens permitted to do in the face of unjust laws and policies?

The module is divided into two parts. The first part introduces students to key thinkers in normative political theory, such as Rawls, Nozick and Okin. The second part addresses key topics in contemporary normative political theory, such as justice in education, disobedience in an unjust society, and climate change justice.

Module aims

To foster a detailed critical understanding of a diverse range of arguments central to contemporary analytical political theory.

To foster the ability to analyse and assess opposing arguments in political theory.

To foster appreciation of the relevance of arguments in political theory to contemporary political and social issues and the ability to apply arguments in political philosophy to a range of such

issues.

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.

INDICATIVE SYLLABUS

Week One: Introduction

Week Two: John Rawls's Justice as Fairness

Week Three: Robert Nozick's Entitlement Theory

Week Four: Gender and Justice

Week Five: Education and Upbringing

Week Six: Reading Week

Week Seven: Age Group Justice

Week Eight: Injustice, Violence and the Law

Week Nine: Democracy and Representation

Week Ten: Climate Change

Learning outcomes

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

- Comprehend and critically analyse complex arguments from a diverse literature in contemporary political theory.
- Provide an account of your considered judgements about the issues discussed, taking account of a variety of opposing arguments and perspectives.
- Construct your own sustained argument about major political values, and defend it against sceptics, using arguments from other disciplines where appropriate.

Indicative reading list

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

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Subject specific skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following subject-specific skills:

The ability to comprehend and critically analyse arguments from a diverse literature in contemporary political theory.

The ability to provide an account of their considered judgements about the issues discussed, taking account of opposing arguments and perspectives.

The ability to construct an argument about major political values and defend it against sceptics,

drawing on other disciplines where appropriate.

Transferable skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following key transferable skills:

The ability to apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects.

The transferable/key/generic skills necessary for employment related to Politics and International Studies, e.g. lateral thinking and problem solving; detailed critical analysis and interpretation of a variety of primary and secondary sources; the ability to digest, retain and apply complex information and ideas; skills in research, independent study, and group discussion; and the ability to consider unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking.

The skills necessary for the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility: e.g. the ability to assess their own capacity for and progress in learning; the ability to organize work and manage their time successfully; the ability to meet deadlines; and the ability to reflect critically on the extent and limitations of how and what they have learned, discovered and understood.

Skills in the communication of information, ideas, problems and solutions.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Students will prepare for seminars by reading the core reading and reflecting on the debate questions for the week's topic. They will complete the module assessment.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group B1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Take Home Examination	100%		No
Students will answer two questions out of a total of (depending on the number of topics) eight or nine questions. The total word count for both questions will be 2500 words with a 1250 limit for each answer. The questions will be released a week in advance of the deadline.			
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback will be provided for this assessment.

[Past exam papers for PO2E2](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UPHA-V5L2 Undergraduate Philosophy and Politics
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
- Year 2 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 2 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
- Year 2 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 2 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
- UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
 - Year 2 of M100 Politics
 - Year 2 of M164 Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 2 of UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UIPA-L2L8 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Global Sustainable Development

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 2 of UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Core option list B for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Core option list C for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics