

Political philosophy: tax, distributive justice and the State

Date	15 July 2020	Time	16:00 – 19:30
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Alex Carter	Course code	1920NDX318

Director of Academic Centres Dr Corinne Boz

For further information on this course, please contact The Arts and Sciences Team on artscience@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 761322

Tutor biography

Dr Alex Carter is Academic Director for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies at the Institute of Continuing Education. He is a Bye-Fellow at Fitzwilliam College. Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015; his thesis explores some of the surprising aspects of Wittgenstein's views concerning freedom and fatalism. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea and the University of Bristol.

Alex's approach to teaching is to encourage students to feel the "pain of the problem" - to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex's ongoing research interests include Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the theology of Simone Weil and the philosophy of humour. He is currently researching the relationship between humour and creative practice via the concept of 'serious play'.

Course programme

16:00	Historical Justifications for the State
17:30	Sandwich tea
18:00	Rational Justifications for the State
19:30	Finish

Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To explore historical approaches to the question of whether or not the State is justified;
2. To understand, assess and compare rational justifications for the State;
3. To gain insight into contemporary problems concerning the State and its authority.

Content:

'We live in interesting times' wherein political decisions appear chaotic and yet have a direct impact on how we live. This will come as no surprise as we explore the theories and concepts underpinning the modern capitalist state. In particular, we will consider traditional answers to the perennial questions of "If?", "What?" and "How much?" we owe one another.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be delivered through seminars comprised of lectures and short activities.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Relate contemporary political issues to existing historical and philosophical perspectives;
2. Criticise and defend different approaches to justifying the State;
3. Make use of different thought experiments, analogies and arguments in order to articulate different approaches to justifying the State.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Nozick, R.	<i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i>	Basic Books, 2013
Rawls, J	<i>A Theory of Justice</i>	Harvard University Press, 2009
Wolff, J.	<i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i>	OUP, 2016

Website addresses

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

A sandwich tea will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 04 March 2020