

PPR459 Ethics & Governance  
Lent 2012  
Dr Sam Clark

Overview & Aims

Governance, as practiced by states and by other institutions, raises many deep philosophical questions, and this module investigates some of those questions by close reading and discussion. We'll read two important books, covering topics including freedom, democracy, and progress, and discuss them in weekly seminars.

The module is not a quixotic attempt to survey the whole of the sub-discipline of political philosophy, nor even to cover all of the topics listed in the online module outline<sup>1</sup>. Instead, our aim is to develop the skills and virtues of the political philosopher at postgraduate level by close, guided focus on two high-quality, high-level texts about some significant ethical problems of governance.

Set Texts to Buy

Our texts are:

- F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (with a new introduction, Routledge 2006 [1960])
- Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (Verso 2010)

Your own individual reading of these texts is the central method by which this module pursues its aims, so you will need your own copies. If you can't find the texts in local bookshops, I recommend [www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk), [www.bookdepository.co.uk](http://www.bookdepository.co.uk), or [www.blackwell.co.uk](http://www.blackwell.co.uk).

Contacts

Convenor: Dr Sam Clark—[sam.clark@lancs.ac.uk](mailto:sam.clark@lancs.ac.uk)

Office hours, Lent term: Tuesdays, 2-4pm, County South B28

Director of MA Philosophy: Dr Nick Unwin—[n.unwin@lancs.ac.uk](mailto:n.unwin@lancs.ac.uk)

PPR Postgraduate Director: Dr Patrick Bishop—[p.bishop@lancs.ac.uk](mailto:p.bishop@lancs.ac.uk)

---

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ppr/postgraduate/modules/ppr459.htm>.

## Meetings & Reading Plan

We will meet for discussion every Wednesday, 11am-1pm, in Charles Carter A02. Our meetings aim at the Socratic ideal of imaginative, sceptical, truth-directed conversation between friends. Obviously, I'll often take a leading role in that conversation—because I've had more practice than you—but I expect you to work hard at it too. I will set about 60 pages of reading per week, and expect you to read it carefully, to pursue your own independent study of the topics it raises, and to attend every meeting well-prepared and ready to work. The plan for the term (subject to revision, and becoming looser later) is as follows:

1. Introductory meeting—no set reading
2. Hayek: Preface, Introduction (Hayek's not Stelzer's), & chapters 1-4
3. Hayek: chapters 5-8
4. Hayek: chapters 9-12
5. Hayek: chapters 13-16 & Postscript (i.e. miss out Part III)
6. Wright: set reading to be decided
7. Wright: set reading to be decided
8. Wright: set reading to be decided
9. Wright: set reading to be decided
10. Left open for catching up, further reading, discussion of essays, etc.

## Independent Study

The major part of this module—as of any university-level work, and especially postgraduate work, in the humanities—is independent study: reading and thinking about the set reading, and then going beyond it by finding, reading, and thinking about further scholarly work, and by pursuing your own thinking, on our topics. I will happily suggest further reading—just ask—but I also expect you to explore the literature for yourself.

## Assessment

One essay of 5,000 words on a question of your own invention, arising from our reading and discussion and agreed with me, is due by the Lent term essay deadline (for which see the MA *Handbook*). See the PPR *Postgraduate Handbook* for information about submission requirements, marking criteria, extensions, etc.