

## Part II Paper 10 “Political Philosophy”

### *Subtopics I teach*

#### A. Global Political Issues

- i. Migration
- ii. International Distributive Justice
- iii. Colonialism, Historic Injustice, and Reparations
- iv. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism

#### B. Topics in Feminism

- i. Pornography
- ii. Sexual violence
- iii. Sex Work
- iv. Misogyny

#### C. Embodiment and Identity

- i. Sex and gender
- ii. Race and racism
- iii. Intersectionality
- iv. Disability and impairment
- v. Religion and culture
- vi. Beauty and appearance

#### D. Radical Political Theory

- i. Marxism: Ideology
- ii. Marxism: Alienation
- iii. Power
- iv. Ideal Theory and its Critics
- v. Resisting injustice

## Notes

Your essays should be between 2'000 and 3'000 words in length. It must be on one question in one of the subtopics marked **in green** above. I have chosen *four* of the topics marked in green for our regular supervisions. You can choose an additional *two* for our revision supervisions. This will give you an essay in *six* topics overall, which should cover sufficient ground to write on at least three questions out of the ten given at the exam. The secondary literature is my recommendation of a selection of the literature on the faculty reading-list ([here](#)). Of course, there's more there and you're free to use other sources too. Yet, keep in mind that I'm most familiar with the literature on this syllabus.

More rules and advice adapted from Dr Krishnan (probably you know this already):

Essays need to be typeset in a serif font (e.g. Garamond, Baskerville, Book Antiqua; not Calibri, Arial, Helvetica) – unless you have a particular disability that requires the latter sort of font. See guidance [here](#). The text should be justified (as should the arguments); ideally, you should use wide side margins, left and right, of 3.5 cm or more (in Word, click on Format, then Document). For more advice on attractive presentation, see [here](#) and [here](#). Add your name and the date to the header. The footer should have page numbers. I'd suggest making a template so that you don't have to do all this every week.

I strongly encourage you to reference fully (with any consistent citation system) and add a bibliography at the end. If you don't know what these things mean, look them up, or ask me. Give the full name of any author on first mention ('John Rawls'); on subsequent mentions, surname only ('Rawls').

Do not use the word 'therefore' unless you mean to say there's a logical connection between what comes before the therefore and what comes after. Distinguish, consciously, between an argument that proves a thesis and one that merely supports it; similarly, distinguish between an argument that refutes a thesis and one that merely calls it into question. 'Knockdown' arguments for and against any interesting thesis are exceedingly rare in philosophy and if you think you have one, you're likelier than not

to be wrong. You don't have to overstate what you've achieved in an essay; being honest about what you have and haven't shown is a sign of strength, not of weakness. Don't be afraid of pointing out the flaws in your own argument; if you don't, I probably will.

It's often a good idea to state your argument in a premise-premise-conclusion form. But if you do this, think carefully about whether the argument is actually valid.

There are many good ways of structuring an essay. But there are three things that are essential: begin your essay with analysis of the question, *i.e.*, a very brief summary of any basic background necessary to understand the question and a restatement of what the question is asking you to do. It's often good to address the question of what's at stake in the question: why does it matter how one answers it? Then very briefly give some indication of where the essay is going (don't overdo this – ask yourself what information the reader actually needs to help him understand the direction of your essay). In your conclusion, go briefly over your argument, but also add a line or two explaining the significance of your answer. The only person who reads your essay may well be me, but you shouldn't write with me in mind. Instead, imagine a clever reader who knows a little bit about philosophy and has read the relevant set text a long time ago, but needs to be reminded about what the text says. That's a good way to test how much basic exposition you need to do before you dive into the substance of the essay. It's also a good test of whether you can take knowledge of some technical term for granted or whether you need to say how you're defining it. But don't worry too much about all this – you'll get better at it as you go along.

If you haven't done so already, I also strongly encourage you to have a look at [this](#) essay writing guide and [those](#) guidelines from Dr Borchering.

## *Essay Questions*

### **C.i. Sex and Gender**

*Question:* Is feminism about women’s shared experiences?

*Reading:*

- Beauvoir 2011: ‘Introduction’ & ‘Childhood’
- Butler 1999: Ch. 1
- Stoltenberg 2000: Chs. 1-3
- Stoljar 1995
- Haslanger 2000

### **B.i. Pornography**

*Question:* **EITHER** Can pornography be feminist? **OR** Should we think that pornography silences women?

*Reading:*

- Mikkola 2019: Ch. 1 [alternative Saul 2003: Ch. 3] and Mikkola Chs. 2, 3, 7
- Langton 1993
- Langton 1998
- Eaton 2017
- MacKinnon 2017

Generally, Saul 2003 is a very good and basic introduction to feminism and feminist philosophy.

### **B.vi. Misogyny:**

*Question:* Is misogyny hatred of women?

- Frye 1983: Chs. 1–3
- Manne 2018: Chs. 1, 2, 3, 5

- Haslanger 2020 (Symposium on Manne 2018)
- Watson 2020 (Symposium on Manne 2018)
- If more time and interest: Greer 1970: “Loathing and Disgust” and/or Greer 2000: “Loathing”, but be warned there are **very** graphic, explicit descriptions of sexual violence in these chapters. It is not an easy read.

#### D.iv. Ideal Theory and Its Critics

*Question:* What is the difference between ideal and non-ideal theory?

*Reading:*

- Mills 2005 [reprinted in Mills 2017: Ch. 5]
- Shklar, 1998
- Williams 2005: Ch. 1. [if time and interest, check also out Chs. 2, 3]
- Freyenhagen 2011
- Rossi and Sleat 2014
- If time and interest: Mouffe 2000 *The Democratic Paradox*: Chs. 2, 3.
- If even more time and interest: Walters “Non-ideal Theory as Ideology”: <https://philpapers.org/archive/WALNTA-57.pdf>

*Note:* This topic deals primarily with critics of the Rawlsian outlook on political philosophy. Accordingly, basic knowledge of what Rawls was about is necessary. If a short Rawls refresher is needed check out <https://iep.utm.edu/rawls/>. I do not recommend getting bogged down in the technicalities of Rawls’ writing, but if you want an in-depth engagement with it see:

- Rawls 1971 *A Theory of Justice*: Chs. 1, 2, 3, 5
- Rawls 1993 *Political Liberalism*: Chs. 1, 4, 5, 6
- Freeman 2007: Chs. 8, 9.

## REVISION QUESTIONS

**C.iv Disability and Impairment**

*Question:* Should we think of disability as objective?

Reading:

- Barnes, E. 2016: Chs. 1, 2, 3.
- Michael 1978
- Terzi 2004
- Barnes, C. 2022
- If time and interest: see Garson 2019 *What Biological Functions Are and Why They Matter*.

**C.iii. Intersectionality:**

*Question:* ‘The only plausible feminisms are intersectional feminisms.’  
Discuss.

- Crenshaw 1991
- Nash 2008
- Spelman 1990
- Lugones 1987
- Hill Collins 2009: Chs. 1, 3, 6.

**A.i. Migration**

*Question:* Is there a good argument for the right to exclude would-be immigrants?

- Carens 2013: Chs. 1, 11, 12
- Fine 2013
- Ypi 2018
- If time and interest see: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/migration-and-trillion-dollar-bills-sidewalk-michael-clemens>