The course explores different theories of equality that have been proposed by political philosophers since the 1960s.

Questions to be considered include the following:

- Is equality a value? Or are the main reasons for caring about inequality non-egalitarian in character?
- Is equality really what we care about, or is it sufficient that people simply have “enough”?
- To the extent that equality is a value, along what dimension should people enjoy equality? Equality of what?
- What is the relationship between equality of opportunity and equality more generally? Does equality of opportunity have value in its own right that is independent of the contribution it makes to equality in general?
- What is the relationship between equality and luck? Should the egalitarian aim be to nullify the effects of luck on people’s life prospects?
- Should institutions be the main object of egalitarian concern or should egalitarians also be concerned about the presence or absence of an appropriate egalitarian “ethos”?
- To what extent, if at all, does legitimate partiality to one’s own projects and relationships place a limit on the redistributive requirements associated with equality?

Major authors to be read include: John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen, G.A. Cohen, Thomas Scanlon, Derek Parfit, Thomas Nagel, Samuel Scheffler, Richard Arneson, Elizabeth Anderson.

**Wk 1: Introduction – The Problem of Equality**

Students planning to take the seminar will be asked to read the following paper in advance of the first meeting:


*Note: If there are any students who have never carefully read Rawls’s A Theory of Justice (see wk 2 below) they should also review Chapter 1 as background to wk 2.*
**Wk 2: Rawls**

Main Readings:

Recommended Readings:
John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Brief Restatement*, Parts II-III.
Philippe Van Parijs, in *Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (recommended)
Josh Cohen, “Democratic Equality”, *Ethics* 1986 (recommended)

**Wk 3: Equality of Opportunity**

Main Readings:

Recommended Readings:
Andrew Mason, *Leveling the Playing Field*, chs. 1-3
Stuart White, *Equality*, ch. 3

**Wk 4: Rawls and Equality – Early Criticism**

Main Readings:
John C. Harsanyi, “Can the Maximin Principle Serve as the Basis for Morality?”, *APSR* (1975)

Recommended Readings:
Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice*
Norman Daniels, *Reading Rawls*
Jeffrey Paul, *Reading Nozick*
G.A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*
**Wk 5: Equality of Resources**

Main Readings:
Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, Chapters 1-2 (these chapters are reprints of “Equality of Welfare” and “Equality of Resources”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1981)).

Recommended Readings:
Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, Ch. 3.
Symposium in *Ethics* (October 2002): Symposium on Ronald Dworkin’s *Sovereign Virtue*, papers by Otsuka and Fleuerbay, with replies by Dworkin.
Justine Burley (ed.) *Dworkin and His Critics*
Colin Macleod, *Liberalism, Justice, and Markets*

**Wk 6: Equality of Welfare**

Main Readings:

Recommended Readings:
G.A. Cohen, “Expensive Taste Rides Again”, in J. Burley (ed.) *Dworkin and His Critics* (recommended)
Ronald Dworkin, “Reply to Cohen”, in Burley (ed.) (recommended)

**Wk 7: The Capability Approach**

Main Readings:
Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, ch 7 (pp. 299-303)

**Recommended Readings:**

**Wk 8: Equality or Priority?**

**Main Readings:**
Frankfurt, Harry, “Equality as a Moral Idea”, *Ethics* 1987 (reprinted in his *The Importance of What We Care About*)

**Recommended Readings:**
Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, ch. 9

**Wk 9: Equality and Partiality**

**Main Readings:**
Thomas Nagel, *Equality and Partiality* (excerpt)

**Recommended Readings:**
Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances*

**Wk 10: Incentives and Inequality**

**Main Readings:**
G.A. Cohen, “Incentives, Inequality and Community”, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Value* (reprinted in revised form as Chapter 1 of Cohen, *Rescuing Justice & Equality*)
Josh Cohen, “Taking People as they are”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 2001

**Recommended Readings:**

G.A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice & Equality*

Andrew Williams, “Incentives, Inequality, and Publicity”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1998


Liam Murphy, “Institutions and the Demands of Justice”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1998


**Wk 11: Luck Egalitarianism vs. Democratic Equality**

**Main Readings**

Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics* 1999


**Recommended Readings:**

David Miller, *Principles of Social Justice*, ch. 11.

**Wk 12: Recent Work on Equality**


Paula Casal, “Why Sufficiency is Not Enough”, *Ethics* 2007