

Central Problems B | PIU11022

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Year | Junior Freshman |
| ECTS Credits | 5 |
| Contact Hours | 22 lectures; 4 tutorials |
| Pre-requisite | None |
| Semester | 2 |
| Module Leader & Lecturer | Dr. Samantha Fazekas |
| Contact Email | sfazekas@tcd.ie |

Module Outline:

Component 1 (Social Contract Theory):

This component will begin by exploring the concepts of natural right and natural law, namely, inalienable rights and systems of laws that emerge from human nature (as opposed to societal norms or positive laws). Since natural rights and natural laws are established by examining the state of nature, we will begin by analysing human nature before the construction of societies and governments. This will lead us to question what motivates human beings to erect states, what states owe to citizens, and what citizens owe to states in return. We will end by questioning the legitimacy of the political authority of the state.

Recommended Reading List:

The complete reading list, including primary and secondary literature, will be finalized at the beginning of the term. Our central texts will be **excerpts** from the following:

- Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. William Ellis (Project Gutenberg E-Book: 2013).
- Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (Project Gutenberg E-Book: 2021).
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Project Gutenberg E-Book, 2021).
- David Hume, "Of the Original Contract," *Hume's Political Discourses*, ed. William Bell Robertson (Project Gutenberg E-Book: 2019).

Component 2 (Revolution):

This component will analyse the causes, objectives, and features of revolutions. We will begin by defining revolutions and distinguishing them from other forms of resistance, e.g., protests and civil disobedience. We will cover philosophical thinkers with radically opposing views on revolution. Some believe that citizens have the right to rebel against the state when it no longer serves the interest of the political community (e.g., John Locke and Hannah Arendt). In contrast, others believe that revolutions contradict the sovereignty citizens transfer to the state (e.g., Thomas Hobbes and Immanuel Kant). This will lead us to question the conditions under which revolutions are or are not justified.



Recommended Reading List:

The complete reading list, including primary and secondary literature, will be finalized at the beginning of the term. Our central texts will be **excerpts** from the following:

- R.P. Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).
- Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* trans. and ed. Mary McGregor, with an introduction by Roger J. Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Project Gutenberg E-Book, 2022).
- Hannah Arendt, "The Freedom to Be Free," *New England Review* Vol. 28, No. 2 (2017): 56-69.

Assessments:

1 Exam (mid-term) 50% **AND** 1 Essay (end of module) 50%