

Ethical Foundations of Socialism  
Fall Quarter  
Stanford Philosophy

**Contact:**

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Office hours: Wednesdays 3pm – 4pm and by appointment

**Class Details:** Tuesdays from 3pm until 5.50pm

**Class Location:** 70-72A1

**Class Description:** A number of important issues in the ethical foundations of socialism have been overlooked by mainstream ethical theory. This is doubly regrettable, since both socialist theory and mainstream ethical theory might be improved by their integration. In this seminar, we will attempt to pair works in contemporary ethical theory with works in post-Marxian theory in an attempt to make some substantive progress. Possible topics include: alienation, reification, and objectification for consequentialists, feminists, and market ethicists; social ontology and the values of community and solidarity; ideology and the individuation of options and reasons; exclusionary reasons, the right/wrong reasons distinction, 'role ethics,' and actions in market contexts; exchange, reciprocity, and the obligations of friendship.

**Assignments:**

Please submit a 1,000-word abstract for the following paper by midnight on Tuesday 5 November. Please submit a 6,000-word paper on a topic related to one of the readings by midnight on Tuesday 17 December.

**Submission:** Submit your assignments in .docx (preferred) or .pdf to [stanfordphilosophyessay@gmail.com](mailto:stanfordphilosophyessay@gmail.com) by 11.59pm on the due date.

**Email Policy:** Please be professional, and avoid asking anything you can find out without asking. Please keep your questions brief and accept my apologies in advance for terse replies. I will reply as soon as possible. If you don't receive a reply within two days please send a short follow-up email.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability should initiate the request with the Student Disability Resources Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information, please see <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae>. Please also feel free to contact me at any time if there is anything I can do to make the course more accessible for you.

**Topics and Readings (subject to change)**

**25 Sep, Week One: Socialism, Intro**

G.A. Cohen, Why Not Socialism

Thakkar, Neo-Socialism, A Sketch

**2 Oct, Week Two: Exchange and Commodification**

A.J. Julius 'on Exchange'

Geoff Brennan, 'On Exchange and its Gains'

Background:

Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*, chapters 7

**9 Oct, Week Three: Knowledge and Invisible Hands**

Hayek, 'On the Use of Knowledge in Society'

John O'Neill, *The Market: Ethics, Knowledge, and Politics*, chapter 10, 'Epistemological Arguments for the Market'

Edna Ullman-Margalit, 'Invisible Hand Explanations'

**16 Oct, Week Four: Community**

Andrew Mason, *Community, Solidarity, and Belonging*, chapters 1 and 2

Background:

Thaddeus Metz (on ubuntu) and Daniel Brudney (selections from *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy*) details tbd

**23 Oct, Week Five: Roles and Domains**

Arthur Applbaum, *Ethics for Adversaries*, chapters 3, 4, 5

Robin Zheng, 'What is My Role in Changing the System? A New Model of Responsibility for Structural Injustice'

Background:

Kirk Ludwig, *From Plural to Institutional Agency*, chapter 10, 'Kinds of Status Functions'

**30 Oct, Week Six: Market Ethics, Exclusionary Reasons, and Right versus Wrong Reasons**

Joseph Heath, *An Adversarial Ethic for Business: or, when Sun Tzu met the Stakeholder*

Mark Schroeder, 'Value and the Right Kind of Reasons'

Raz, *Practical Reason and Norms*, pages 15 - 49

**6 Nov, Week Seven: Alienation, Old School**

Karl Marx:

- *Notes on James Mill*,
- 1844 Manuscripts
- 'The Secret of Commodity Fetishism' (chapter in *Capital*)

**13 Nov, Week Eight: Alienation, New Style**

Barry Maguire, 'Market Exchange and Alienation'

Background tbd

**27 Nov: Week Nine: Productive Justice**

Lucas Stanczyk, two chapters from his manuscript on productive justice

(Stanczyk gives a colloquium talk this week. We will arrange to chat with him beforehand.)

**4 Dec: Week Ten: Incentives and Justice**

Cohen, *Rescuing Justice, Rescuing Equality*, chapter 3

Seana Shiffrin, 'Incentives, Motives, and Talents'