

Political Theory at the Margins

Fourth Oxford Graduate Political Theory Conference

University of Oxford | 8th May 2015

www.oxfordpoliticaltheory.wordpress.com

Keynote speakers: Humeira Iqtidar (*King's College London*) and Nathaniel Adam Tobias Coleman (*University College London*).

What lies at the margins of political theory? Which histories, experiences, and perspectives have been excluded or been absent from mainstream political theory, and why? How, if at all, should political theorists respond to such exclusions and revise the way in which they conduct theoretical work? These are some of the questions we aim to address at the Fourth Oxford Graduate Political Theory Conference.

A growing chorus of scholars have criticized contemporary political theory for its marginalisation of subaltern issues and perspectives. A common theme in these criticisms has been that the dominant perspective in political theory has been (and still is) largely white, male and western. This has contributed to the neglect and under-theorisation of the injustices and oppression faced by people of colour, women, and queer people. This substantive criticism has also often been linked to methodological concerns, particularly the (potential) problems associated with idealisation and ahistoricism. These contemporary concerns are also reflected in efforts to reshape the predominantly western and male focus in the study of the history of political thought.

In the light of this, the conference aims to accept papers that explore constructive ways forward for contemporary political theory in incorporating these concerns and perspectives. Additionally, the value of political theory, in its current form, for investigating these marginalizations will also be explored. It therefore aims to look at how political theory at the margins can be brought into the mainstream. Of course, defining what is and is not at the 'margins' of political theory is in danger of perpetuating exclusions of its own. While it is expected that the more familiar – but by no means insignificant – marginalizations of race, gender, sexuality, ability and class will be addressed by this conference, we also hope to unearth and investigate more silent or unnoticed forms of political exclusion.

Papers may, without being limited to these subjects, address the following:

- Investigations of 'mainstream' and 'marginal' political theory
- The 'ideological' nature as well as value of ideal theory
- Critiques of the western canon of the history of political thought, and inclusion of texts from neglected cultures and languages
- The history of white supremacy and patriarchy in political theory
- Integrating the insights from critical race, queer, and post-colonial theory into contemporary political theory
- The role of class in intersectionality and position of the poor in political theory
- Incorporating non-human animals into the boundaries of political theorising
- De-centring western perspectives in democracy and global justice, defining what is and is not 'western'
- The potential contributions from and comparisons with related disciplines in addressing marginalization (e.g. sociology, history, political economy, international relations)

Each panel will be chaired by a member of the Oxford faculty, and followed by a response from a graduate student. The conference will also include a roundtable discussion on the conference theme with the keynote speakers and faculty. Participants are requested to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

Please send an abstract, formatted for anonymous review, of up to 500 words to oxfordpoliticaltheory@gmail.com by **6th March 2015**. Complete papers should then follow by **17th April 2015** for pre-circulation.

Organisers: Udit Bhatia and Bruno Leipold.