Theory of Politics (114) – Comprehensive Reading List

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Authority

Reading


The selections by Wolff and Dworkin also can be found in Joseph Raz, editor. *Authority*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

Essay

When does a state have political authority over its citizens? Are citizens obligated to obey the commands of a state that has political authority over them?
Liberty and Libertarianism

Reading


Essay

Is there more than one conception of liberty? Does liberty (each kind) have value? Is it intrinsic or instrumental value? If liberty does have value, is it a value that should be promoted by the state? Is there a relationship between liberty and Libertarianism?
Equality

Reading


Essay

Is there more than one conception of equality? Does equality (each kind) have value? Is it intrinsic or instrumental value? If equality does have value, is it a value that should be promoted by the state?
Democracy

Reading


Essay

What is democracy? Does it have any special value? Can a democratic majority ever be tyrannical?
Communitarianism

Reading


Essay

What is the communitarian objection to liberalism? Is it a good objection? Does communitarianism provide a satisfying alternative?
Liberal Neutrality

Reading


Essay

Can the state maintain a neutral posture with respect to what constitutes the good life? Should it?
Socialism

Reading


Essay

‘Socialism should be consigned to the dustbin of history.’ Discuss.
The Social Contract

Reading


* Any version/edition will do.

Essay

Does contractarianism give an adequate account of why we should feel obliged to obey the commands of the state?
Cosmopolitanism (and war)

Reading


Some of these are available online.

Essay

Does cosmopolitanism offer a more attractive account of the proper relationship between people around the globe than does internationalism? Does it offer a distinctive justification for war, or the use of force? If so, is it a persuasive justification?
Nationalism

Reading


Essay

Is there a right to national self-determinination?
Feminism and the Public/Private Distinction

Reading


* Any version/edition will do.

Essay

Of what importance in liberal theory is the distinction between the public and private. What are the feminist objections to the employment of distinction in political theory? Are they convincing?
Rights

Reading


Essay

What are rights and who has them? How central are they to our moral/political thought?
Bibliography

References


