

# PH2542 Philosophy and Society

Team-Taught Course  
Sample (Partial) Syllabus for Spring 2024

Department of Philosophy  
University of Aberdeen

Lecturer (2/10 weeks): Dr Eilidh Beaton

## Course Description

This team-taught course will explore relevant questions of social importance using the tool of philosophical thinking. Students will engage with philosophical arguments and concepts central to various domains, including technology, health care, digital knowledge, migration, and sport.

## Partial Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Required Reading
Week 9	The Philosophy of Punishment	David Wood, 'Punishment: Consequentialism', <i>Philosophy Compass</i> 5:6 (2010), 455-469. Antony Duff, 'Punishment, Communication, and Community', in <i>Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy</i> ed. by Derek Matravers & Jon Pike (London: Routledge, 2005).
Week 10	The Idea of Prison Abolition	Tommie Shelby, <i>The Idea of Prison Abolition</i> (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022). Chapter 2: The Uses and Abuses of Incarceration.

## Further Reading

### Week 9 – Punishment

#### *Utilitarianism*

- Hugo Adam Bedau and Erin Kelly, 'Punishment'. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Chapter 1: Of the Principle of Utility; Chapter 13: Cases Unmeet for Punishment; Chapter 14: Of the Proportion between Punishments and Offences.
- Igor Primoratz, *Justifying Legal Punishment* (Humanities Press, 1989). Chapter 3: Arguments Against the Utilitarian Theory.

#### *Retributivism*

- Guus Duindam, 'How Can Punishment be Justified? On Kant's Retributivism'. Available [here](#).

- James Rachels, 'Punishment and Desert', in *Ethics in Practice* ed. by Hugh LaFollette (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997), 470-479.
- David Wood, 'Punishment: Nonconsequentialism', *Philosophy Compass* 5:6 (2010), 470-482.

### ***Mixed Theories/Other***

- John Rawls, 'Two Concepts of Rules', *The Philosophical Review* 64:1 (1955), 3-32.
- Zachary Hoskins, 'Punishment', *Analysis Reviews* 77:3 (2017), 619-632.

### **Week 10 – Prison Abolition**

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).
- Tommie Shelby, *The Idea of Prison Abolition* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022). Full book.
- Prisoner Solidarity Network. 'Prison Abolition in the UK: The Failure of Reform'. Youtube video, available [here](#).