

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

The Philosophy Behind the Proposal

Course Syllabus

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Course description

The past three decades have seen the elaboration of a vast body of literature on unconditional basic income a radical policy proposal Philippe Van Parijs referred to as a disarmingly simple idea. It consists of a monthly cash allowance given to all citizens, regardless of personal desert and without means test to provide them with a standard of living above the poverty line. The seminar will seek to engage students in normative debates in political theory (feminism, liberalism, republicanism, communism, libertarianism, etc.) by appealing to the concrete example of basic income. It will allow students to learn a great deal about a policy that is gaining tremendous currency in academic and public debates, while discussing and learning about prominent political theorists - many of whom have written against or for basic income at one point in their career.

We will ask questions such as: is giving people cash no strings attached desirable and just? Would basic income promote a more gender equal society through the remuneration of care - work, or would it risks further entrenching the position of women as care-givers? Would alternative policies be more successful (such as the job guarantees, stakeholder grants or a negative income tax)? How can we test out basic income? What makes for a reliable and ethical basic income pilot? Students in Politics, Philosophy, Public Policy, Social Work, and Sociology should find most of those questions relevant to their interests. Some discussions on how to fund basic income, on the macro economic implications of basic income and on the existing pilots projects (in Finland, Namibia, India, Canada and the US) may be of interest to Economists; while our readings on the impact of new technologies and artificial intelligence on the future of work and whether a basic income could be a solution, are likely to be on interest to computer scientists and engineers. By the end of the class, students will have an in-depth knowledge of the policy and will have developed skills in the normative analysis of public policy. They will be able to deploy those critical and analytical skills to assess a broad range of other policies.

Week 1 – The Philosophy of Basic Income: An Introduction

- Philippe Van Parijs (2000) A Basic Income for All
- Responses by Anderson, Barry, Galston, Alstott, and Edelman

Week 2 – An Instrument of Freedom?

- Philippe Van Parijs (1991) Why Surfers Should be Fed: The Liberal Case for an Unconditional Basic Income?
- Philip Pettit (2007) A Republican Right to Basic Income?
- Video: Interview of Milton Friedman on The Negative Income Tax
- Isaiah Berlin (1969) Two Concepts of Liberty
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Entries on Libertarianism & Republicanism
- Joshua Preiss (2015) Milton Friedman on Freedom and The Negative Income Tax
- Will Kymlicka (2002) Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction 2nd edition: Chapters 3 & 4

Week 3 – An Egalitarian Proposal?

- John Baker (1992) An Egalitarian Case for Basic Income
- Alex Gourevitch (2016) The limits of a Basic income: Means and Ends of Workplace Democracy
- Brishen Roggers (2017) Basic Income in a Just Society
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Entries on Egalitarianism & Equality
- TM Scanlon (unpublished) "When does Equality Matter?"

Week 4 – Basic income and Racial Justice.

- Martin Luther King (1967) Jr Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? - Chapter V
- Dorian Warren (2016) "Universal Basic Income and Black Communities in the United States."
- Black Lives Matter Manifesto - Part on UBI
- Black Panthers 10 points Manifesto
- Ta-Nehesi Coates (2014) The Case for Reparations
- Bernard Boxill (1972) "The Morality of Reparation"

Week 5 – Basic income and Gender Justice

- Alma Zelleke (2008) Institutionalizing the Universal Caretaker Through a Basic Income?
- Barbara Bergmann (2008) Basic Income Grants or the Welfare State: Which Better promotes Gender Equality?
- Anca Gheaus (2008) Basic Income, Gender Justice and the Costs of Gender-Symmetrical Lifestyles
- John Baker (2008) All Things Considered, Should Feminists Embrace Basic Income?
- Will Kymlicka (2002) Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction: Chapter 9

Week 6 - Basic Income, Development and Global Justice

- James Ferguson (2015) Give the man a fish: Introduction
- Pogge, T. (2001) "Eradicating Systemic Poverty: Brief for a Global Resources Dividend"
- Juliana Bidadanure (2016) Basic Income Across National Borders?

Week 7 - Automation, Artificial Intelligence, and Basic Income

- Mark Walker (2016) Free Money for all: Passages including Chapter 5
- Marin Ford (2016) The Rise of Robots: Introduction and Chapter 1 + Chapter 10

Week 8 – The Politics, Science and Ethics of Basic Income Experiments

- Evelyn L. Forget (2013) New questions, new data, old interventions: The health effects of guaranteed annual income
- David Calnitsky (2016) "More Normal than Welfare": The Mincome Experiment, Stigma, and Community Experience
- *Video on basic Income experiment in India:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvErJvuWrWc>
- Pertti Koistinen and Johanna Perkio (2014) Good and Bad Times of Social innovations: The Case of Universal Basic Income in Finland
- Rigmar Osterkamp (2013) The Basic income Grant Pilot Project in Namibia: A Critical Assessment

Week 9 - Two alternatives to Basic Income: Basic Capital and the Job Guarantee

Part 1: Basic Income versus Basic Capital

- Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott (2006) Why Stake-holding?
- Juliana Bidadanure (forthcoming 2017) Basic Income versus basic Capital: A temporal Perspective

Part 2: Basic Income versus Basic Jobs

- Philip Harvey (2013) More for Less: The Job Guarantee Strategy
- Anca Gheaus and Lisa Herzog (2016) The goods of work (other than money!)
- Pavlina Tcherneva (2013) The Job Guarantee: Delivering the Benefits That Basic Income Only Promise
- Richard Layard (2004) Good Jobs and Bad Jobs

Week 10 – Is basic income politically feasible and economically sustainable?

- Van Parijs and Vanderborght (2016) Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy: "Chapter 6 Economically Sustainable?"
- David Purdy (1988) Political Strategies for Basic Income
- De Wispelaere and Noguera (2012) On the Political Feasibility of Universal Basic Income