

**Applied Political Theory: Political Theory and Public Policy**  
**CEU, Department of Political Science, Winter term 2009/2010, PhD level, 2 credits**

**Instructor: Zoltan Miklosi**

The course is organized to discuss selected issues in public policy from the perspective of normative considerations of justice. More specifically, it will explore the implications of liberal egalitarianism, now the dominant outlook within academic political theory, for a number of policy problems that have attracted significant public attention in recent decades. The choice of policy problems will be guided either by their centrality from the point of view of the overall justness of society, such as healthcare or education, or by the special nature of the theoretical challenges they represent, such as genetic testing and intervention, etc. Liberal egalitarianism has been developed into a number of distinct and well-specified rival versions over the last three decades, and its internal controversies may occasionally have important consequences for the policies different versions recommend, but all versions share a couple of central commitments that significantly constrain the range of policies that they may regard as acceptable from the point of view of justice. All of them are committed to some variation of the following ideas: that 1) every individual should have the opportunity to develop and realize her own conception of the good life, that 2) the state should be neutral regarding these conceptions, that 3) from the point of view of the government the success of each individual life is equally important, and 4) that as far as the distribution of the resources necessary for the realization of different life plans are concerned, no one should be disadvantaged by such unchosen circumstances that are beyond their control. The course will mainly be occupied with the policy implications of these general commitments. The range of questions to be discussed will include the following: Does health have special moral significance? When are health inequalities unjust? How healthcare resources ought to be allocated under circumstances of resource constraint? Is it permissible to take into consideration the age or quality of life of the potential recipients of such resources, and if so, why? Under what circumstances is it permissible for wealthy individuals to purchase special medical services? What does educational equality mean? Is it compatible with school choice? To what extent and for what purposes is it permissible to take differential native talent into consideration in distributing educational resources? Is civic education permissible? Under what conditions and for what reasons is genetic selection and genetic enhancement morally permissible? Who should have access to genetic data about individuals?

Learning outcomes:

Familiarize students with some of the central concepts and argumentative strategies of the dominant liberal conceptions of justice; enhance the ability of students to evaluate specific policy problems in the light of abstract principles of political morality, and of using normative arguments in policy debates; improving analytical skills.

Among others, the readings will include:

- Harry Brighouse: *School Choice and Social Justice*
- Brighouse: "Liberal Egalitarianism and Justice in Education" in *Political Quarterly* (2002)
- Debra Satz: "Equity and Adequacy, and Education for Citizenship," *Ethics* (2007)

- John Roemer: "Providing Equal Educational Opportunity: Public vs. Voucher Schools" *Social Philosophy and Policy* (1992) (equal edu. input vs. equal edu. attainment)
- Amy Gutman: *Democratic Education*
- Norman Daniels: *Just Health* (2008)
- Ronald Dworkin: "Justice and the High Cost of Health" in *Sovereign Virtue*
- Dworkin: "Justice in the Distribution of Health Care" in Mathew Clayton and Andrew Williams (eds.) *The Ideal of Equality* (2000)
- Buchanan: "The Right to a 'Decent Minimum' of Health Care" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1983)
- F.M. Kamm: "Aggregation, Allocating Scarce Resources, and the Disabled" *Social Philosophy and Policy* (2009)
- Dan. W. Brock, "Justice and the ADA: Does Prioritizing and Rationing Health Care Discriminate against the Disabled?"
- Brock, et. al.: *From Chance to Choice* (2000)
- Buchanan: "Equal Opportunity and Genetic Intervention" *Social Philosophy and Policy* (1995)
- F.M. Kamm: "Genes, Justice, and Obligations to Future People," *Social Philosophy and Policy* (2002)