



## **WORKSHOPS IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY**

*Co-organized by [Herman Cappelen](#) and [David Plunkett](#) (Dartmouth).*

**Format.** In order to maximise participation, the workshop will run a mixed format. Presenters will either (a) pre-record a talk (which would allow more people in the group to see it from across different time zones, and would only be circulated to members of this group, with strict instruction to not share any further), or (b) do a live talk, or (c) pre-circulate a paper/outline (roughly 5k words or less). If you would like to register to attend, and thus to receive any pre-recorded or pre-circulated material, please email [mipmckeeper@gmail.com](mailto:mipmckeeper@gmail.com) for information.

---

### **Workshop 1: Monday April 19 and Tuesday April 20**

Timing: **evening USA** (starting at **7:30pm EST** those nights), which is **morning in Hong Kong** (starting at **7:30am** of the following day), going for about 2.5 hours total each day. Note: we hope this timing could work for people in Australia to participate.

#### **Monday April 19**

**Session 1.** Herman Cappelen, Hong Kong Philosophy, 7:30pm-8:20pm USA EST.  
**Prerecorded talk, live q&a.**

**Title:** Conceptual Engineering as lexical and conceptual abandonment: “Democracy” as a case study

**Abstract.** Some of our terminology shouldn’t be improved, but instead abandoned. Abandonment Theory is the study of the conditions under which lexical and conceptual abandonment is appropriate. The first part of this talk is an introduction to abandonment theory and its relationship to amelioration, replacement and elimination. The second part applies abandonment theory to a core concept in political philosophy: ‘democracy’. I argue that ‘democracy’ is an ideal candidate for abandonment.

*20 minute break*

**Session 2.** [Russ Muirhead](#), Dartmouth Government, 8:40pm-9:30pm USA EST. **Live talk with q&a.**

**Title/topic.** Conspiracy Theories and Democracy.

---

## **Tuesday April 20**

**Session 3.** [Dave Estlund](#), Brown Philosophy, 7:30pm-8:20pm USA EST. **Preread, live q&a.**

**Title/Topic.** (Deep) Democracy, (Pure) Proceduralism, and (Basic) Structural Injustice.

.

*20 minute break*

**Session 4.** David Plunkett and [Tristram McPherson](#), Dartmouth Philosophy/Ohio State Philosophy, 8:40pm-9:30pm USA EST. **Preread, live q&a.**

**Title/topic.** Conceptual Ethics and The Categories of “Ideal Theory” and “Non-Ideal Theory” in Political Philosophy: A Proposal for Abandonment

---

## **Workshop 2: Monday April 26 and Tuesday April 27**

Timing: **morning in UK** (starting at **9am**), which is **late afternoon in Hong Kong (4pm)**, going for about 2.5 hours total each day. We are hoping for either 2 or 3 sessions per day (roughly 45-50 min per session, with short breaks between each one). (Note: we are hoping this timing could work for people in Israel to participate).

## Monday April 26

**Session 1.** David Enoch, Hebrew U. Law/Philosophy, 9am-9:50am UK. **Prerecorded talk, live q&a** .

**Topic/Title.** Politics and Suffering.

**Abstract.** Political philosophy should focus not on uplifting ideals, but rather, so I argue, on minimizing of serious suffering. This is so not because other things do not ultimately matter (they do), but rather because in the political context the stakes in terms of suffering are usually extremely high, so that any other considerations are almost always outweighed. Put in moderately deontological terms: the high stakes carry most political decisions across the thresholds of the relevant deontological constraints.

While the argument is substantive rather than exegetical, I engage in detail Judith Shklar's *Liberalism of Fear*. I share with Shklar her pessimistic starting point, but I also show how a focus on suffering (rather than cruelty and fear) is what plausibly follows from such a starting point. I then pursue the implications of this difference – they are theoretically profound, but perhaps less significant practically.

*20 minute break*

**Session 2.** Mona Simion, Glasgow Philosophy, 10:10am-11am UK. **Pre-record, live q&a.**

**Topic/Title.** Engineering Voting.

---

## Tuesday April 27

**Session 3.** Joseph Chan, University of Hong Kong 9am-9:50am UK. **Pre-read, live q&a.**

**Topic/Title.** Is Popular Sovereignty A Useful Myth?

*20 minute break*

**Session 4.** [Matthieu Queloz](#), Oxford Philosophy, 10:10am-11am UK. **Pre-read, live q&a .**

**Title/Topic.** Dworkin, Williams, and the Conceptual Integrity Debate.