



# Natural Law in Moral and Political Thought (7,5 ECTS credits)

Level: 1st cycle

Discipline: PHILOSOPHY

Course ID: 0231

## Admission requirements

General admission requirements for university studies. Students taking part in the course as a part of their Bachelor's degree program must have completed Course A, Introduction in Philosophy and Theology (30 ECTS credits). Students taking part in the course as a freestanding course are expected to have corresponding prior knowledge.

## Educational goals

After having completed the course the student is expected to be able to:

- °Account for central concepts within the natural law tradition;
- °Understand and with her/his own words provide examples of natural law theories;
- °Apply natural law concepts to ethical problems in moral and political philosophy;
- °Compare and confront natural law theory with competing ethical traditions;
- °Author an essay on an independently formulated question, related to natural law ethics.

## Course contents

Natural law ethics is introduced as a current within moral and political philosophy, in a historical, comparative and applied perspective. Initially, the origins of the natural law tradition are studied in the ethics of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. The emphasis is on recent natural law theory and its areas of application in contemporary moral and political thought. The student is given the opportunity to apply theory independently, and discuss ethical problems within areas such as bioethics, social justice and the ethics of war and peace. The course also brings up alternative ethical traditions that question the idea of a natural law. Contradictions within and between ethical systems are discussed in order to enhance the student's own capacity to evaluate and analyse moral and political arguments.

## Teaching and examination

### *Local course*

The course is taught in English. Teaching is given by means of lectures and discussion seminars in Uppsala. The examination consists in seminar participation and a written essay at the end of the course (8-10 pages). The course grade is based on the quality of the essay.

*Partial distance with local instruction*

Instruction consists in self-study, study questions and discussions through an online platform. Two days of local teaching are also included. The examination consists in participation in online discussions and seminars, as well as a written essay at the end of the course (8-10 pages). The course grade is based on the quality of the essay.

The final paper may be written in English or Swedish.

## **Bibliography**

Main course book:

Finnis, John, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2011)

Other literature:

MacIntyre, Alasdair, "Intractable Moral Disagreements" in *Intractable Disputes About the Natural Law: MacIntyre and his Critics*, Lawrence S. Cunningham (red.) (University of Notre Dame Press, 2009)

Nussbaum, Martha, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)

A compendium of approx. 100-150 pages, consisting in articles and excerpts, will be added to the literature and available for purchase. Complete information is provided at the start of each course.

See also "Kursplaner: allmänna bestämmelser" (Course plans: General rules)

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Valid as of 2017-07-01