

**Sociology 915 & Philosophy 955**  
***Equality:***  
***Sociological & Philosophical Perspectives***

**Professors Harry Brighouse & Erik Olin Wright**

**Thursday, 1:00-3:30**

**5181 H.C. White**

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The problem of equality and inequality is central to both sociology and political philosophy. In sociology, the study of the causes and consequences of inequality in its various forms – class, race, gender, power, status, knowledge, wealth, income – is one of the most pervasive themes of the discipline. In philosophy, theories of justice and rights are centrally concerned with the problem of justifying and criticizing different kinds of inequality. In this seminar we want to bring these two kinds of discussions together: the analysis of the causes and consequences of inequality and the normative discussion of the justice and injustice of different forms of inequality. We want to try to understand how the empirical specificities of different kinds of inequality might bear on the philosophical understanding of normative issues connected to that inequality, and we want to see how the philosophical problems might be relevant to the agenda of sociological research on inequality. The strategy of the seminar is to bring these two contexts of analysis together within each topic of the course, rather than have some sessions that are mainly philosophical and others that are mainly sociological.

The course presupposes some rudimentary familiarity with the basic ideas of contemporary theories of justice in political philosophy. Students who do not have this background should read Adam Swift's book, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians*.

The seminar is meeting in conjunction with the Havens Center's public lecture series. Three times during the semester, the Havens Center will be hosting visiting scholars who will be lecturing on topic connected to the course: Charles Mills, on Racial inequality (September 9-10); Stuart White on wealth redistribution (September 29-October 1); Ingrid Robeyns (December 1-3). On these weeks students in the seminar will be expected to attend the public lectures presented by the visiting scholars (Tuesday and Wednesday 4:00-5:30) or listen to those lectures on-line the evening after they are given. The visitors will be come to our seminar for a slightly longer seminar session, 12:30-3:30, meeting in room 8108 Social Science.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Weekly reading interrogations

We believe strongly that it is important for students to engage each week's readings in written form prior to the seminar sessions. Our experience is that this improves the quality of the discussion since students come to the sessions with an already thought out agenda.

We refer to these short written comments as "reading interrogations". They are not meant to be mini-papers on the topics of the readings. Rather, they are meant to be think pieces, reflecting your own intellectual engagement with the material: specifying what is obscure or confusing in the reading; taking issue with some core idea or argument; exploring some interesting ramification of an idea in the reading. These memos do not have to deal with the most profound, abstract or grandiose arguments in the readings; the point is that they should reflect what you find most engaging, exciting or puzzling, and above all: *what you would most like to talk about in the seminar discussion*. A good interrogation is one that poses a clear and discussable question. There is no set length specification for these interrogations. It is fine for them to be quite short – say 200 words or so – but longer memos (within reason – remember: everyone in the class will read them) are also OK. The interrogations should be written *single-spaced* in MS-Word or Wordperfect.

For eight of our sessions, these interrogations will form the basis for the introductory presentation by groups of students (see below) and the seminar's agenda. It is therefore essential that they be done in a timely fashion. All interrogations should be emailed as attachment to Erik Wright at [wright@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:wright@ssc.wisc.edu) no later than 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning. He will then assemble all of the interrogations into a single file and send them to the entire class. The students working on the presentation will then have Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning to prepare their introductory comments.

This is a real requirement, and failing to hand in memos will affect your grade. We will read through the memos to see if they are "serious", but will not grade them for "quality". Since the point of this exercise is to enhance discussions, late memos will not be accepted. If you have to miss a seminar session for some reason, you are still expected to prepare an interrogation for that session.

### 2. Student group presentations

There are three kinds of sessions we will be having:

1. One session with a video-conference discussion with an author of a reading
2. Three sessions with a Havens Center visiting scholars.
3. Eight sessions with student-organized presentations.

Each student is required to participate in the group presentations for two of these sessions. The list of sessions for group presentations is given below. The expectation is that each student will give part of the verbal presentation in one of these sessions but participate actively in formulating the issues for the presentation in both sessions. The total time for the introductory presentations should be no more than 20 minutes.

These presentations should draw heavily on the interrogations provided by participants in the class, but the group organizing the presentation is free to give priority to whatever issues in these

interrogations they feel are most interesting. The critical thing to remember is that the purpose of the introduction is to launch a discussion, so the presentations should revolve around sharpening issues and laying out key questions.

### **3. Term papers**

All students taking the course for credit are required to write a term paper. Students are free to focus more on the philosophical issues or the sociological issues in the topic of their choosing, but we would encourage students to try to integrate these as much as possible. We are putting no constraints on specific topics since we feel it is important for term papers to contribute whenever possible to pushing forward the academic agenda of each student, so long as the topics are in some way connected to the problem of equality/inequality. There is also no specific requirement on length. Our general expectation is that papers will be

In order to insure that term papers are completed by the end of the semester it is important that students begin thinking about their topics fairly early. We would like a preliminary statement of the topic of the paper and a paragraph or two about its thematic thrust by the sixth session of the seminar, October 8, and a core bibliography by the 10<sup>th</sup> session, November 5. Papers are due December 15. We will allow students *who let us know in advance* to get an incomplete in the course *as long as they agree to hand in the paper by January 15*.

### **4. End of Semester weekend workshop**

All students in the seminar are strongly encouraged to participate in a weekend workshop on “Socialism and real utopias” which will meet jointly with students in Erik Wright’s other class, “Class, State, and Ideology”. The workshop will be held at Upham Woods, a beautiful University of Wisconsin facility on the Wisconsin River about an hour north of Madison. The agenda of the workshop will be to discuss institutional models of alternatives to capitalism as the centerpiece for realizing democratic egalitarian normative ideals. The event will include a gourmet potluck and party Saturday evening – with music, dancing, singing, general carousing.

Spouses/partners and children are also welcome to come for the weekend – there are nice activities in the area for children while the workshop is in session (including indoor water parks). We will cover about half of the costs of the event so the costs for the weekend, including lodging, will be about \$30/person.

We will not be having a regular seminar session the last week of class (December 10) in order to facilitate students participating in the workshop. While it is not an absolute requirement for students to participate in this event, we feel it will be a valuable and enjoyable way to wrap up the semester so we strongly urge everyone in the class to come.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Date	Topic	Special notes
September 3	1. Introduction	
September 10	2. Racial Inequality	Charles Mills visit Havens Center Lectures: Tuesday, 4:00-5:30, 8147 Social Science Wednesday, 4:00-5:30, 206 Ingraham Seminar: 12:30-3:30, room 8108 Social Science
September 17	3. Class and Economic Inequality	Skype videoconference discussion with Daryl Glaser
September 24	4. Income (re)distribution: basic income	<i>Student group presentation</i>
October 1	5. Wealth (re)distribution: basic capital	Stuart White visit Havens Center Lectures: Tuesday, 4:00-5:30, 8147 Social Science Wednesday, 4:00-5:30, 206 Ingraham Seminar: 12:30-3:30, room 8108 Social Science
October 8	6. Education	<i>Student group presentation</i>
October 15	7. Childhood	<i>Student group presentation</i>
October 22	8. Quality of work	<i>Student group presentation</i>
October 29	9. Quality of Work	<i>Student group presentation</i>
November 5	10. Health	<i>Student group presentation</i>
November 12	11. disability	<i>Student group presentation</i>
November 19	12. Gender equality	<i>Student group presentation</i>
December 3	13. Social Justice and the family	Ingrid Robeyns visit Havens Center Lectures: Tuesday, 4:00-5:30, 8147 Social Science Wednesday, 4:00-5:30, 206 Ingraham Seminar: 12:30-3:30, room 8108 Social Science
December 10	No seminar	
December 12-13	Weekend workshop on Socialism and Real Utopias	This workshop will be a weekend retreat at Upham Woods on the Wisconsin River, Saturday morning to Sunday morning.

## PRINCIPLES FOR SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS

The following guidelines are intended to facilitate seminar discussions. Some of them may sound obvious, but from past experience it is still important to make them explicit. These principles are not entirely consistent – the principle of equity of participation (#5), for example, is not entirely harmonious with the principle of free-flowing spontaneity (#6) – but in spite of this loosely following them can help create a supportive setting for interesting discussion.

**1. READINGS.** There is a strong tendency in seminars, particularly among articulate graduate students, to turn every seminar into a general “bull session” in which participation need not be deeply informed by the specific reading material in the course. The injunction to discuss the readings does not mean, of course, that other material is excluded from the discussion, but it does mean that the issues raised and problems analyzed should focus on the actual texts assigned for the week.

**2. LISTEN.** In a good seminar, interventions by different participants are linked one to another. A given point is followed up and the discussion therefore has some continuity. In many seminar discussions, however, each intervention is unconnected to what has been said before. Participants are more concerned with figuring out what brilliant comment they can make rather than listening to each other and reflecting on what is actually being said. In general, therefore, participants should add to what has just been said rather than launch a new train of thought, unless a particular line of discussion has reached some sort of closure.

**3. TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS.** Not every seminar intervention has to be an earth-shattering comment or brilliant insight. One of the reasons why some students feel intimidated in seminars is that it seems that the stakes are so high, that the only legitimate comment is one that reveals complete mastery of the material. There are several general rules about comments that should facilitate broader participation:

- a. No intervention should be regarded as “naïve” or “stupid” as long as it reflects an attempt at seriously engaging the material. It is often the case that what seems at first glance to be a simple or superficial question turns out to be among the most intractable.
- b. It is as appropriate to ask for clarification of readings or previous comments as it is to make a substantive point on the subject matter.
- c. If the pace of the seminar discussion seems too fast to get a word in edgewise it is legitimate to ask for a brief pause to slow things down. It is fine for there actually to be moments of silence in a discussion!

**4. BREVITY.** Everyone has been in seminars in which someone consistently gives long, overblown speeches. Sometimes these speeches may make some substantively interesting points, but frequently they meander without focus or direction. It is important to keep interventions reasonably short and to the point. One can always add elaborations if they are needed. This is not an absolute prohibition on long statements, but it does suggest that longer statements are generally too long.

**5. EQUITY.** While acknowledging that different personalities and different prior exposures to the material will necessarily lead to different levels of active participation in the seminar discussion, it should be our collective self-conscious goal to have as equitable participation as possible. This means that the chair of the discussion has the right to curtail the speeches by people who have dominated the discussion, if this seems necessary. As a general rule of thumb, it is reasonable that no one speaks four times before everyone has spoken at least once.

**6. FREEWHEELING SPONTANEITY vs. ORDER.** One of the traps of trying to have guidelines, rules, etc. in a discussion is that it can squelch the spontaneous flow of debate and interchange in a seminar. Sustained debate, sharpening of differences, etc., is desirable and it is important that the chair not prevent such debate from developing.

**7. ARGUMENTS, COMPETITIVENESS, CONSENSUS.** A perennial problem in seminars revolves around styles of discussion. Feminists have often criticized discussions dominated by men as being aggressive, argumentative, competitive (although there are always plenty of men who find such styles of interaction intimidating). Some people, on the other hand, have at times been critical of what they see as the “feminist” model of discussion: searching for consensus and common positions rather highlighting differences, too much emphasis on process and not enough on content, and so on. Whether or not one regards such differences in approaches to discussion as gender-based, the differences are real and they cause problems in seminars. Our view is the following: We think that it is important in seminar discussions to try to sharpen differences, to understand where the real disagreements lie, and to accomplish this it is generally necessary that participants “argue” with each other, in the sense of voicing disagreements and not always seeking consensus. On the other hand, there is no reason why argument, even heated argument, need be marked by aggressiveness, competitiveness, put-downs and the other tricks in the repertoire of male verbal domination. What we hope we can pursue is “cooperative conflict”: theoretical advance comes out of conflict, but hopefully our conflicts can avoid being antagonistic.

**8. CHAIRING DISCUSSIONS.** In order for the discussions to have the kind of continuity, equity and dynamics mentioned above, it is necessary that the discussion be led by a “strong chair.” That is, the chair has to have the capacity to tell someone to hold off on a point if it seems unrelated to what is being discussed, to tell someone to cut a comment short if an intervention is rambling on and on, and so on. The difficulty, of course, is that such a chair may become heavy-handed and authoritarian, and therefore it is important that seminar participants take responsibility of letting the chair know when too much monitoring is going on.

**9. PREPARATION FOR SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS.** Good seminars depend to a great extent on the seriousness of preparation by students. The following generally helps:

- a. Above all, do the readings carefully. This need not mean reading every word, of course, but *give yourself time to study the readings, not just skim them.*
- b. Read the interrogations of other students. It is also a good idea to write down reactions to any that you find especially interesting. The more written “virtual dialogue” that occurs before the seminar session the more lively the sessions are likely to be.
- c. Try to meet with at least one other student to discuss the weeks reading prior to the seminar session.

**10. CRITICISM OF CLASSROOM PROCESS.** The success of a seminar is a collective responsibility of all participants. Professors cannot waive magic wands to promote intellectually productive settings. It is essential, therefore, that we treat the process of the seminar itself as something under our collective control, as something which can be challenged and transformed. Issues of competitiveness, bullshit, male domination, elitism, diffuseness, and other problems should be dealt with through open discussion. We realize that it can be awkward to have a public discussion of problems around process, so we encourage any student that are feeling any kind of issue in the character of the seminar to email the professors, and then we will raise the issue in the class.

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## READINGS FOR SEMINAR SESSIONS

In many of the sessions we will indicate some readings as *Background readings*. Given the very different academic backgrounds of the students in the class, these readings are designed to provide some essential common understandings of sociological and philosophical issues. We strongly encourage all students read these selections (although those with strong backgrounds in a given topic can skim them), but they will not be the central focus of the discussions in the seminar. The readings which constitute the basis for discussions will be identified as *focal readings*. All books are available at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative. Other readings are available on the social science library website for course readings for Sociology 915.

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### Session 1. Introduction

Background reading

Adam Swift, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians*. (Cambridge: Polity Press)

Marc Stears, "Equality of What?", contribution on the OpenLeft website:  
<http://www.openleft.co.uk/2009/08/04/equality-of-what/>

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### Session 2. Racial Inequality

This session will revolve around the public lectures of Charles Mills and the readings which he provides in advance. Students must either attend the two lectures or listen to them on line at: [www.havenscenter.org](http://www.havenscenter.org). They should be posted by early evening after the lecture.

Background reading

"Racial Inequality", chapter 14 in Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, *American Society: how it really works* (New York: W.W. Norton, forthcoming 2010)

Focal reading:

Charles W. Mills "Ideal Theory" as Ideology *Hypatia* vol. 20, no. 3 (Summer 2005) ©

Charles W. Mills, "Rawls on Race/Race in Rawls," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (2009) Vol. XLVII

Charles Mills, "Racial Liberalism," *PMLA* (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America), Vol. 123, No. 5 (October 2008): 1380-97.

Charles Mills, "Schwartzman vs. Okin: Some Comments on Challenging Liberalism," forthcoming in *Hypatia*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Fall 2009): 204-18.)

Tommie Shelby, "Justice, Deviance and the Dark Ghetto", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2007.

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### Session 3. Class and Inequality

Background reading:

Erik Olin Wright, "From Paradigm Battles to Pragmatist Realism: towards an integrated class analysis", *New Left Review* (forthcoming)

Focal readings:

Daryl Glaser, "Class as a Normative Category: Egalitarian Reasons to Take It Seriously (With a South African Case Study)

Daryl Glaser, 'Should An Egalitarian Support Black Economic Empowerment?', *Politikon*, vol. 34, no. 2, 105-123, 2007.

John Roemer paper: "Should Marxist's care about exploitation" in *Analytical Marxism and Philosophy & public affairs 1985*

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### Session 4. Income (re)distribution: basic income

Background reading:

Harry Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal" *Ethics* 1987

Focal Readings:

Selections from Bruce Ackerman, Ann Alstott and Philippe van Parijs, *Redesigning Distribution, volume V in the Real Utopias Project* (New York and London: Verso, 2008):

Philippe van Parijs, chapter 1. Basic Income: a simple and powerful idea for the twenty-first century"

Erik Olin Wright, chapter 4, "Basic Income, Stake Holder Grants, and Class Analysis"

Barbara Bergman, chapter 7, "A Swedish-style Welfare State or Basic Income"

Carole Pateman, Chapter 5, "Democratizing citizenship."

Paula Casal, "Why sufficiency is not enough?" *Ethics* (2007)

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**Session 5. Wealth (re)distribution: basic capital**

This session will revolve around the public lectures of Stuart White and the readings which he provides in advance. Students must either attend the two lectures or listen to them on line at: [www.havenscenter.org](http://www.havenscenter.org). They should be posted by early evening after the lecture.

## Background Readings:

Bruce Ackerman and Ann Alstott, chapter 2, “Why Stakeholding?” in *Redesigning Distribution*

Stuart White, chapter 3, “The Citizen’s Stake and Paternalism” in *Redesigning Distribution*

## Focal Readings:

Readings assigned by Stuart White: tba

Harry Brighouse, “Paying for higher-education: Are top-up fees fair?” *Ethics and Economics* 2 (1) 2004, pp. 1-11

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**Session 6. Education**

## Background readings:

Helen F. Ladd, “Reflections on Equity, Adequacy, and Weighted Student Funding”, *Education and Finance Policy*, 2008, pp. 402-423

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, “Putting Educational Equality in its Place,” *Education and Finance Policy*, 2008, pp. 444-466

## Focal Readings:

Christopher Jencks, “Whom Must We Treat Equally for Educational Opportunity to be Equal?” *Ethics*, Vol. 98, No. 3. (Apr., 1988), pp. 518-533.

Debra Satz “Equality, Adequacy, and Education for Citizenship”, *Ethics*, 117 ( July 2007): 623–648

Elizabeth Anderson, “Fair Opportunity in Education: A Democratic Equality Perspective,” *Ethics*, 117 ( July 2007): 595-622

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, “Educational Adequacy versus Educational Equality”, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (2009) Vol. 26, No. 2: 117-128.

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, “Putting Educational Equality in its Place”, *Education Finance and Policy* (2008) Vol. 3, No. 4: 444–466.

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**Session 7. Inequality in Childhood**

## Background Reading:

Annette Lareau, "Invisible Inequality", *American Sociological Review*, (2002), 747-776.

Annette Lareau, "Social Class in the Daily Lives of Children, *Childhood* 2000; 7; 155-171

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, "Children's Interests and the Family" in *Family Values* (Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

## Focal Readings:

Samantha Brennan "The intrinsic goods of childhood" (unpublished)

Colin MacLeod, "Primary Goods, Capabilities, and Childhood", *Measuring Justice*, Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns (eds), CUP, forthcoming.

Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, (Vintage, 1986) (excerpts)

Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, Legitimate Parental Partiality, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2009

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**Session 8. Quality of work and equal opportunity**

## Collateral reading (not exactly "background"):

Michael Marmot, Richard Wilkinson, *Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts*

Mel Kohn, *Class and Conformity*, excerpts

Mel Kohn and Carmi Schooler, *Work and Personality*, excerpts

## Focal Reading:

Gomberg, *How to make opportunity equal* (Blackwell, 2007)[

Richard J. Arneson, "Meaningful Work and Market Socialism" *Ethics*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Apr., 1987), pp. 517-545

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**Session 9. Equality of Work: a model institutional realization**

## Focal Reading:

Michael Albert, *Parecon*, excerpts.

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning real Utopias*, section on Albert

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## Session 10. Health

### Focal Readings:

Sarah Marchand; Daniel Wikler, Bruce Landesman “Class, Health, and Justice,” *The Milbank Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 3, Socioeconomic Differences in Health. (1998), pp.449-467.

Norman Daniels, “Justice, Health, and Healthcare” ,  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american\\_journal\\_of\\_bioethics/toc/ajbl.2.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_journal_of_bioethics/toc/ajbl.2.html)

### *Open Peer Commentary on Norman Daniels essay*

Frances M. Kamm, p. 17

Leonard Fleck, p. 20

Ronald M. Green, p. 22

Laurie Zoloth, p. 24

Mary B. Mahowald, p. 25

Kenneth F. Schaffner, p. 26

Mark H. Waymack, p. 28

Samuel Gorovitz, p. 29

Rahul Kumar, p. 30

Rosamond Rhodes, p. 32

Carolyn Ells, p. 34

Anita Silvers, p. 35

Erich H. Loewy, p. 37

Chris Hackler, p. 38

Read at least two of these commentaries: we assume that people will read different commentaries and learn different things. Philosophy students should read at least one not by a philosopher, Sociology students should read at least one by a philosopher (Kamm, Gorovitz, Silvers)

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## Session 11. Disability

### Focal Readings:

Jonathan Wolf, “Disability among equals”, *Disability and Disadvantage*, OUP, 2009, ed by Kimberley Brownlee and Adam Cureton (available here:  
<http://www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~uctyjow/DAE.doc>)

Elizabeth Anderson, sections in “What is the point of equality” *Ethics*, 1999 (pp. 302-308, 312 to end)

Anita Silvers, “What is Disability” (excerpt), in Silvers et.al. *Disability, Difference, Discrimination*, Rowman and Littlefield (1998)

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## Session 12. Gender Equality vs Genderlessness

Background reading:

Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, "Gender Inequality," Chapter 15 in Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, *American Society: how it really works* (New York: W.W. Norton, forthcoming 2010)

Focal Readings:

Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers, *Gender Equality* volume VI in the Real Utopias project (Verso, 2009):

Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers, chapter 1, "An Institutional Proposal"

Harry Brighouse and Erik Olin Wright, chapter 3, "Strong Gender Egalitarianism" (and unpublished coda: Justifying liberal meddling in personal affairs)

Barbara Bergman, chapter 2, "Long Leaves, Child Well-Being, and Gender Equality"

Nancy Folbre, Chapter 5, "Reforming Care"

Ann Shola Orloff, Chapter 6, "Should feminists aim for gender symmetry?"

Susan Okin, *Justice, Gender and the Family*, chapter 7, "Vulnerability by Marriage", Basic Books 1989

Mary Lyndon Shanley, "No more relevance that one's eye color: justice and society without gender." *Towards a Humanist Justice* by Debra Satz and Rob Reich (Oxford, 2009)

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## Session 13. Social Justice and the Family

This session will revolve around the public lectures of Stuart White and the readings which he provides in advance. Students must either attend the two lectures or listen to them on line at:

Focal Readings:

Readings assigned by Ingrid Robeyns: tba

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## Weekend workshop on Socialism and Real Utopias

See readings for Sociology 621