

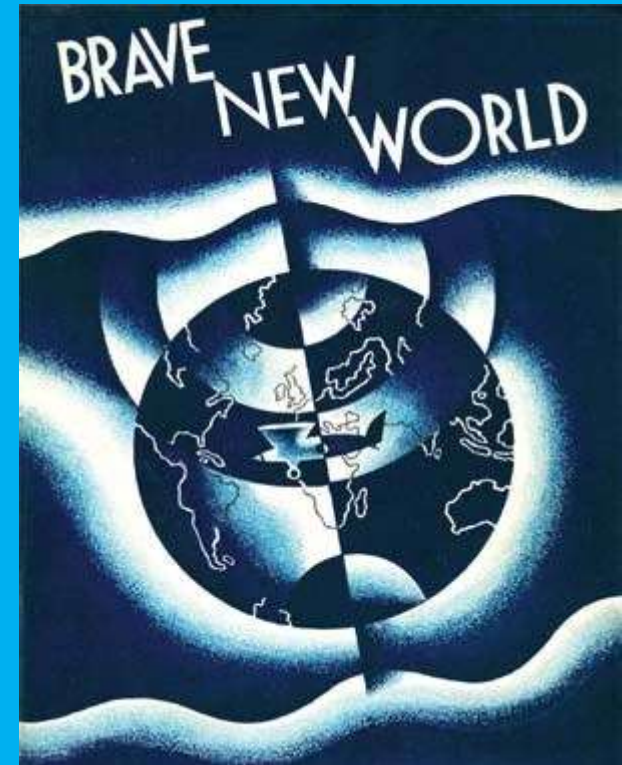
# PHILOSOPHY FOR BEGINNERS

**MORAL AND POLITICAL  
PHILOSOPHY**

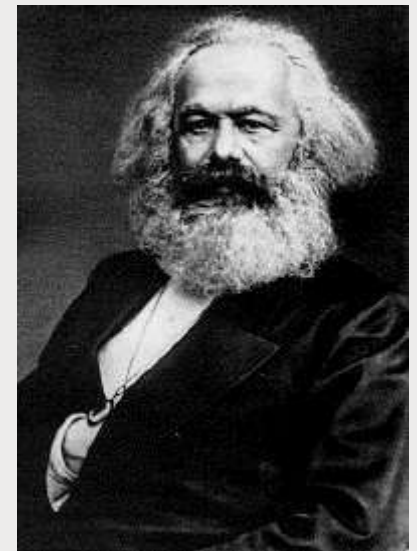
**Week 12.**

**Can Ideas Change the World?**

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019**



‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.’



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**CAPITALISM**

**WE RULE YOU**

**WE FOOL YOU**

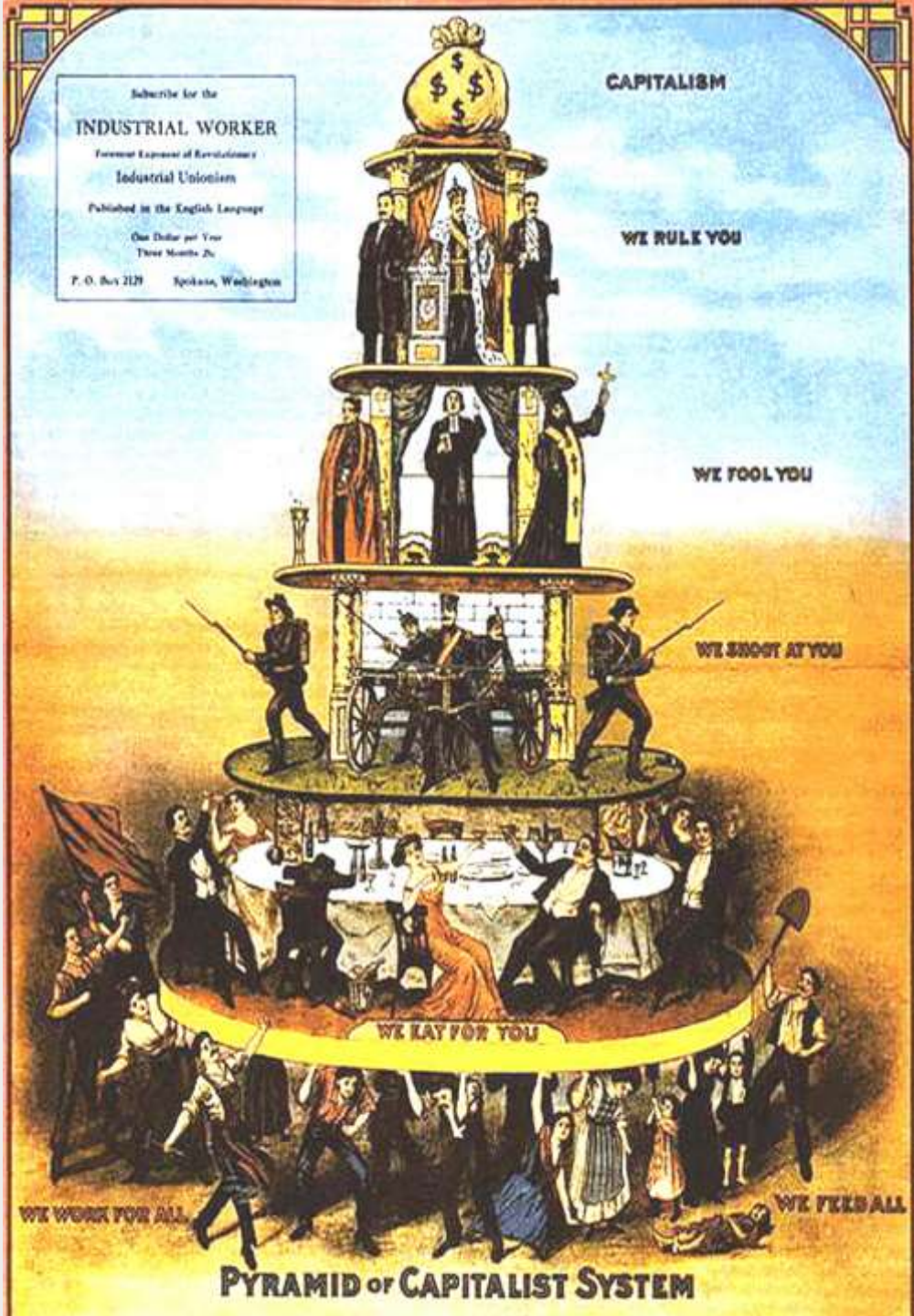
**WE SHOOT AT YOU**

**WE LAY FOR YOU**

**WE WORK FOR ALL**

**WE FEED ALL**

**PYRAMID OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM**





### Stress and Illness

# What philosopher stood out for you?

- Think about a particular philosopher or approach which has struck you this term
- Think about who and why, and discuss





# Themes in political philosophy

- Is morality the result of living in a good society?
- Are we truly free in societies?
- Are we naturally ‘political animals’?
- Can politics be virtuous?
- How much obedience do we owe to our governments?
- What is the best form of political rule?
- Is private property just or unjust?

[HOME](#) » [FINANCE](#) » [COMMENT](#) » [JEFF RANDALL](#)

## No respect, no morals, no trust - welcome to modern Britain

Our political leaders are falling short as we sink under a tide of vulgarity and sleaze, says Jeff Randall.



Litter on our streets points to a deeper corrosion of respect in our society Photo: Paul Grover

---

**Jeff Randall**

[Comment »](#)

[Personal View »](#)

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[In Finance»](#)



**Autumn Statement:  
family tax bombshell  
over new black hole**







# Politics in Plato

- Plato's *Republic* leads him to a very rigid hierarchy, led by philosopher-kings
- The only way to establish true justice, right...?
- This leads back to our problem in the first part of the course:

*Is morality the result of the kind of society we live in?*

*What should be the aims of living in a good society?*

# Conflicts of Interest: Are Humans Inherently Selfish?

By Stephanie Pappas, Live Science Contributor | February 23, 2017 12:08pm ET



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President Donald Trump signed an executive order withdrawing the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership on Jan. 23, 2017.



**Philosophy**  
Opinion

# We're not as selfish as we think we are. Here's the proof

*George Monbiot*



@GeorgeMonbiot  
Wed 14 Oct 2015 07:00 BST



< 8,143 | 872

Stories of greed and ego bombard us. But a new study shows that humans are inherently good



▲ 'The foundation's survey and interviews reveal those who have the bleakest view of humanity are the least likely to vote.' Photograph: Guy Corbishley/Demotix/Corbis

Should politics reflect our nature?



# Political animals

- Aristotle founds politics on human nature:
- We are social and political animals (*politikon zoon*), with a capacity for reason and speech
- We naturally form relations that begin with families, households, communities.
- The best of these is the city-state.
- Its goal is the 'highest good' of all its members
- Politics should reflect our nature (**Descriptive**),
- ... Not prescribe how we ought to live (**Normative**)





## Cambridge Analytica

The Cambridge Analytica Files

Emma Graham-Harrison ,  
Carole Cadwalladr *and*  
Hilary Osborne

Mon 19 Mar 2018 19.00 GMT



<  
18,101

# Cambridge Analytica boasts of dirty tricks to swing elections

Bosses tell undercover reporters how honey traps, spies and fake news can be used to help clients

● [UK officials seek warrant to enter Cambridge Analytica HQ](#)



This video has been removed. This could be because it launched early, our rights have expired, there was a legal issue, or for another reason.



Send some girls around to the candidate's house

▲ [Cambridge Analytica caught in undercover sting boasting about entrapping politicians - video](#)



# Can politics be virtuous?

‘There is a true law, a right reason, conformable to nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal, whose commands urge us to duty, and whose prohibitions restrain us from evil. Whether it enjoins or forbids, the good respect its injunctions, and the wicked treat them with indifference. This law cannot be contradicted by any other law, and is not liable either to derogation or abrogation. Neither the senate nor the people can give us any dispensation for not obeying this universal law of justice. It needs no other expositor and interpreter than our own conscience.’ – Cicero, *Of The Republic*





Cesare Borgia, and Pope Alexander VI (his father!)

***Just as the newly confident Tories inch ahead in the polls, 11 self-consumed malcontents pull the rug from under our EU negotiators, betray their leader, party and 17.4m Brexit voters and – most damning of all – increase the possibility of a Marxist in No. 10***

## Daily Mail COMMENT



Dominic Grieve



Anna Soubry



Ken Clarke



Nicky Morgan



Antoinette Sandbach



Stephen Hammond



Heidi Allen



Bob Neill



Sarah Wollaston



Jonathan Djanogly



Sir Oliver Heald

# PROUD OF YOURSELVES?

**DIEHARD** Tory Remainers were accused of treachery last night after siding with Labour to defeat Theresa May over Brexit.

Amid angry scenes in the Commons, MPs

By **Jason Groves** Political Editor

voted by 309 votes to 305 to force through a change in the law that will give them a veto on the final deal negotiated by the Prime Minister. Labour MPs punched the air and cheered as the

result was read out, while the smirking Tory rebels looked on. Eleven Conservative MPs, led by former Attorney General Dominic Grieve, voted with Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the SNP in favour of a rebel amendment designed to ensure a

**Turn to Page 2**

# Do we have a right to rebel?

Compare the following:

- A law declared in North Korea, banning people for having access to the internet and expressing their opinions through social media
- A law in China, limiting the size of the family to one child (now repealed)
- A law passed by Elizabeth I, banning the Catholic mass and instituting fines against people who did not attend Protestant Church



# What makes a state legitimate?

- Decision taken by Royal Prerogative in 1914 to declare war on Germany – taken by the Privy council and George the 5<sup>th</sup> with no vote in parliament, except a later vote to pay for the War
- Decision taken by Theresa May to trigger Article 50 and ‘Hard Brexit’ in line with the will of the people...
- 51.9% voted a very generic form of ‘Leave’ – 17.4 million, or 27% population
- *For those opposed to government decisions, how legitimate is it to disobey?*
- *How far should one’s disobedience go?*

# THE DERBY TRAGEDY: AT TATTENHAM CORNER

## A SUFFRAGETTE'S MAD RUSH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES







# SPANISH EMBASSY MACHINE- GUNNED NEWS CUT

OPEN THE POD

## BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We expect the news of the machine-gunning of the Spanish Embassy in London on Thursday night to be suppressed by the bourgeois Press . . . It's the third time over the last month that the system has dropped the mask of the so-called "freedom of information" and tried to hide the fact of its vulnerability.

"They" know the truth behind the BBC van the day before the Miss World farce. "They" know the truth behind the destruction of property of High Court judges. "They" know the truth behind the four Barclays Banks which were either burned or badly destroyed. "They" also know that active opposition to their system is spreading.

The Angry Brigade doesn't claim responsibility for everything. We can make ourselves heard in one way or the other. We machine-gunned the Spanish Embassy last night in solidarity with our Basque sisters and brothers. We were careful not to hit the pigs guarding the building as representatives of British capital in fascist Spain. If Britain co-operates with France over this "legal" lynching by shutting the truth away, we will take more careful aim the next time.

SOLIDARITY AND REVOLUTION  
LOVE

Communique, THE ANGRY BRIGADE.  
Friday 4 December 1970



DRAMATIC  
HALF-FACE  
TESTS  
SHOW  
PROOF



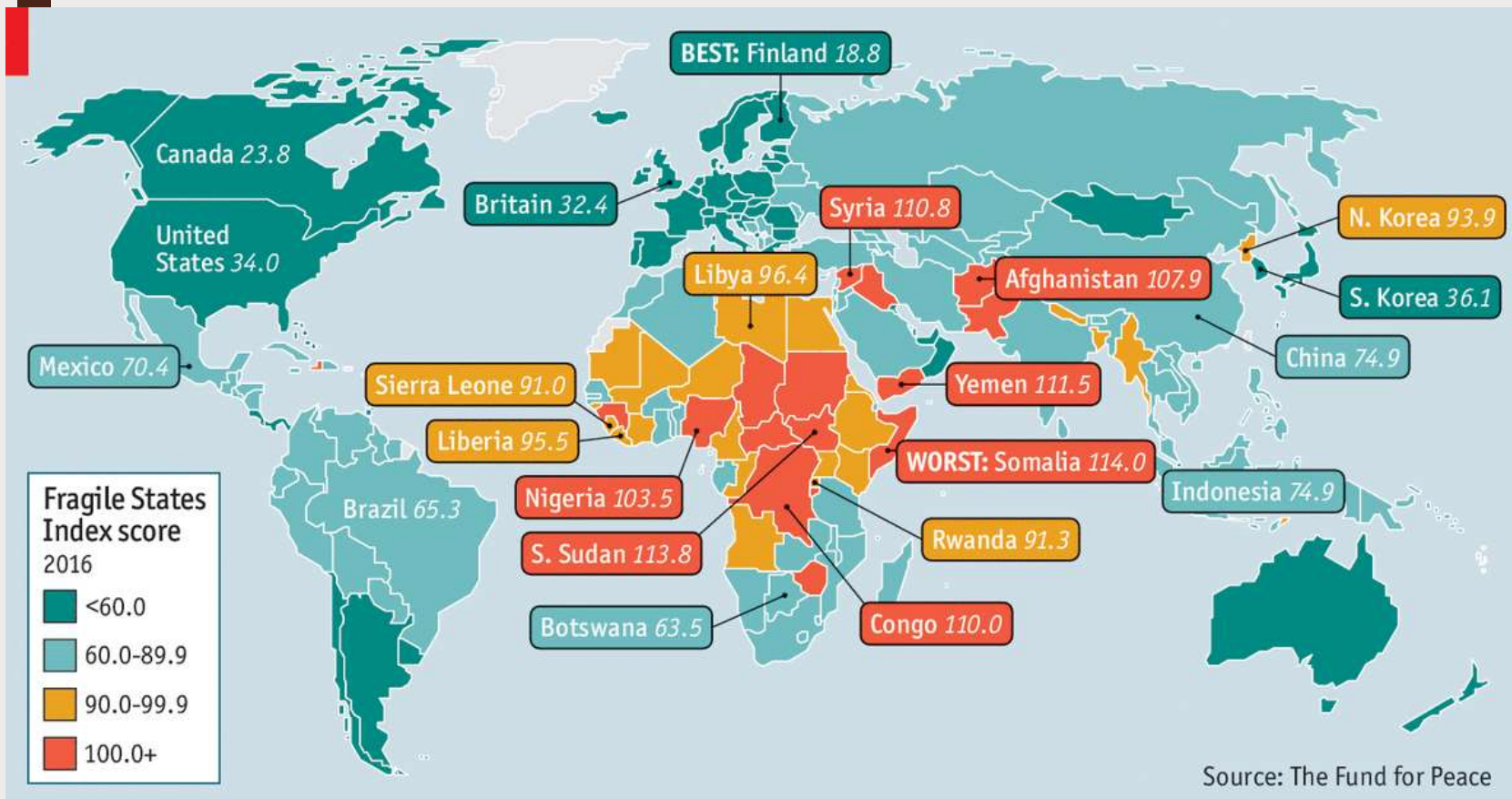
Conquering chaos

# Why states fail and how to rebuild them

*Fixing fragile nations: lessons from Afghanistan and South Sudan*





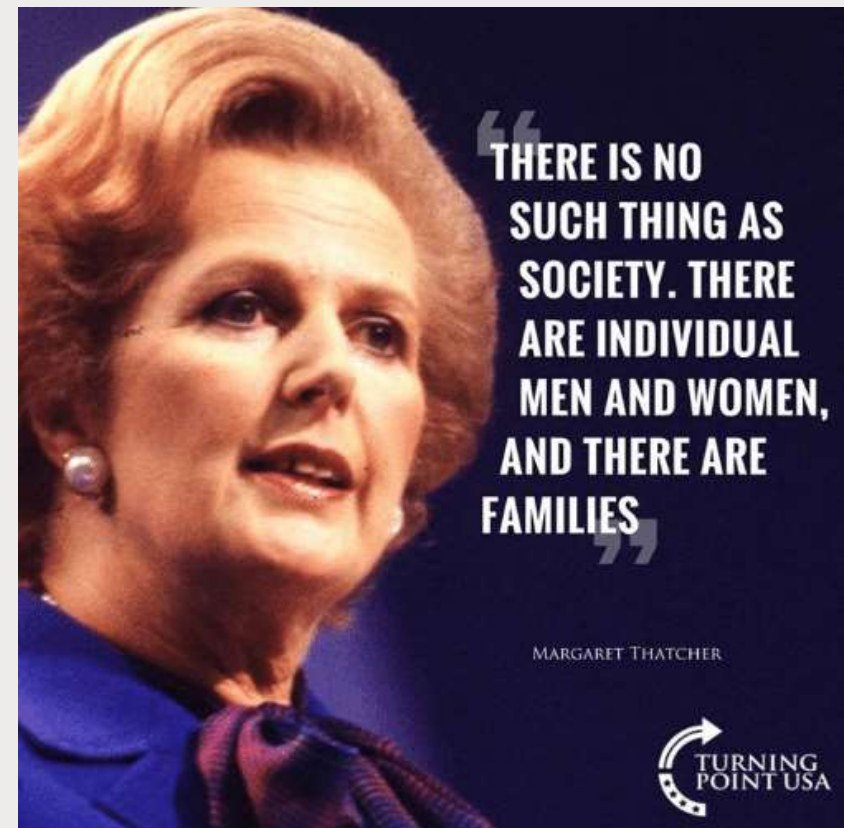












Conservatives Want To  
Empower The Individual!  
#BigGovSucks

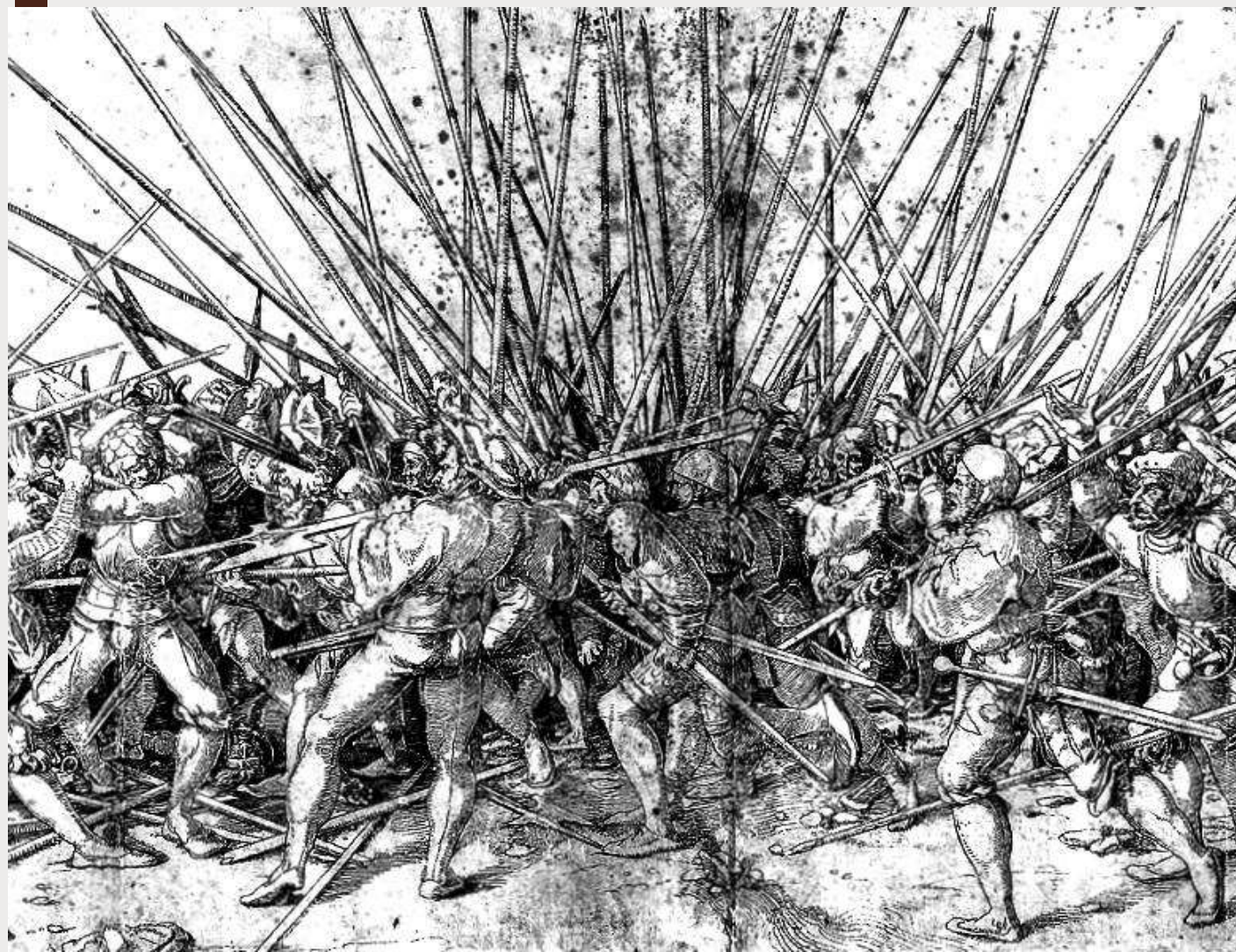


# Social Contract Theories

- Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)
- Benedict de Spinoza (1632 – 1677)
- John Locke (1632 – 1704)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788)

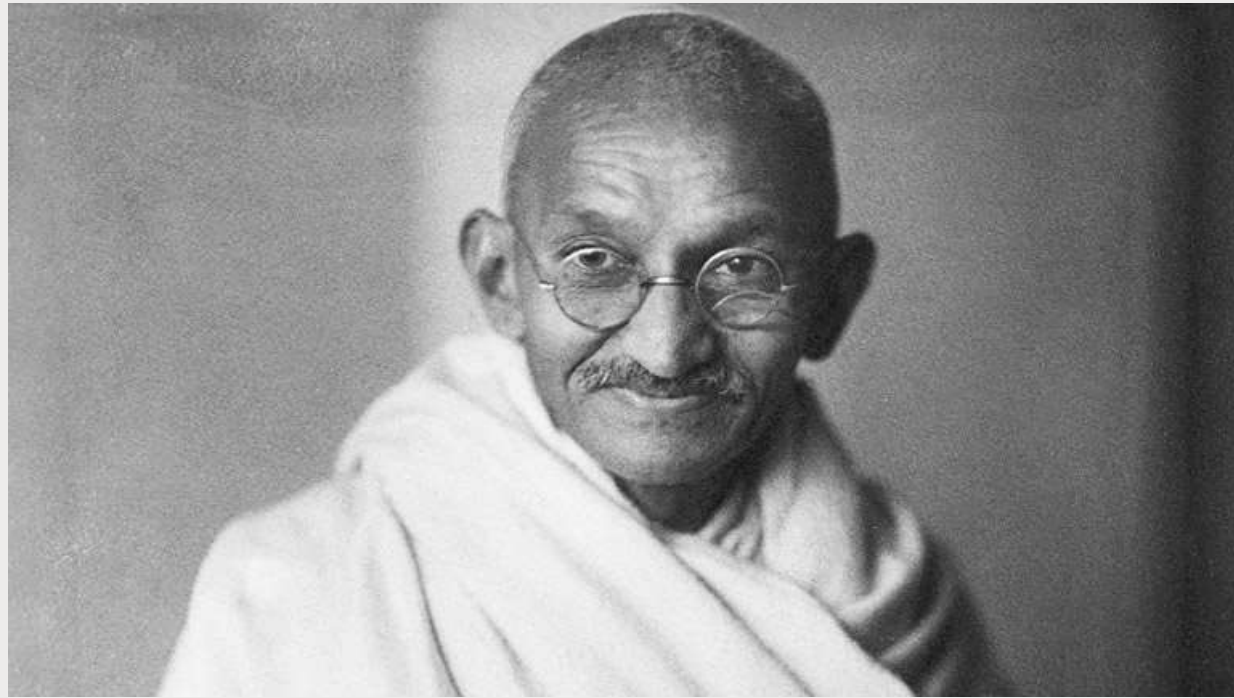
# Social Contract Theories

- Why do we need rulers?
- Are we by nature equal?
- Can government reflect the general will?









- ‘Be the change you wish to see in the world’  
(Not Gandhi)
- ‘If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ... We need not wait to see what others do.’ (Actual Gandhi)



# International relations

- Kant approaches international relations from the same premises as his moral and philosophical beliefs
- In *Perpetual Peace* he also offers six articles aimed at reducing the likelihood of war, without themselves ensuring peace
- How would you go about reducing war among countries?  
Discuss!





# International relations

- Forbids making temporary peace treaties when preparing for war;
- Abolishes standing armies;
- Forbids the interference of one state into the internal affairs of another;
- Bans annexation of one state by another;
- Forbids taking on national debt for external affairs;
- Limits conduct of war to disallow acts that make peace impossible
- He also gives three definitive articles for this international order:
  - 1) Every state shall have a republican civil constitution
  - 2) Each state shall participate in a union of states
  - 3) Cosmopolitan (individual) right is one of universal hospitality

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**Office for National Statistics**

# Britain's richest 1% own as much as poorest 55% of population

**ONS figures reveal growing wealth disparity and north-south divide, with nation's top 10% owning 44% of household wealth**

**Phillip Inman**, *economics correspondent*

Thu 15 May 2014 19.22 BST



🕒 This article is over 3 years old

🔗 4,982 | 💬 1,312







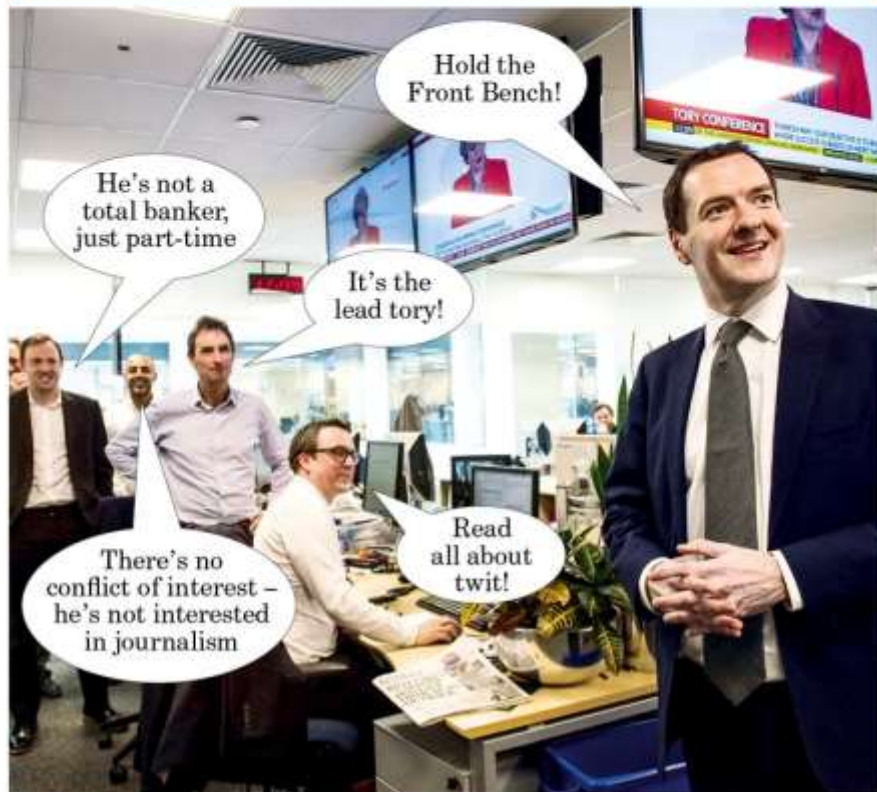




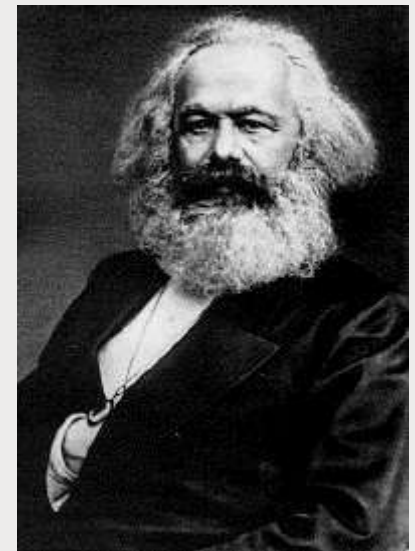
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# PRIVATE EYE

## OSBORNE COMEBACK AS NEWSPAPER EDITOR



‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.’



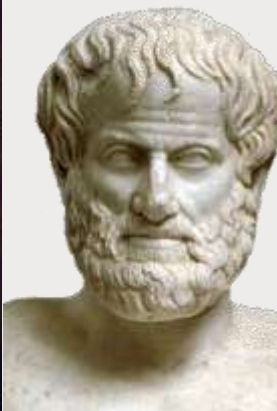
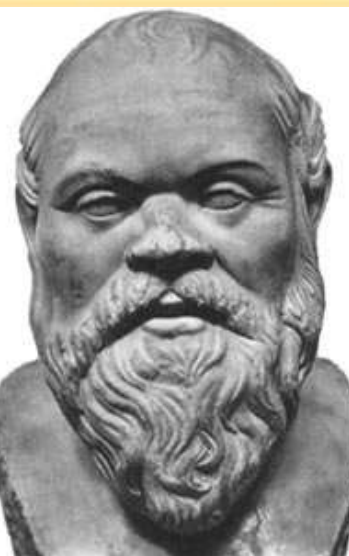






- Martha Nussbaum's approach focuses on developing capabilities for morality and politics
- Politics should be grounded on human emotions, in particular love
- Citizenship should cultivate a compassion for others, and a respect for their intrinsic worth
- *Political Emotions* (2013)







10 years of dying at Dignitas

COMMENTS (407)  
By Philippa Roxby  
Health reporter, BBC News



Obama admits CIA 'tortured some folks'



Vivisection: Scientists use 6% more animals for research



# Themes in Moral Philosophy

- Why do we make claims about how we should behave?
- What do we mean by morality and ethics?
- Can the 'good life' be lived according to unchanging, eternal rules, or by measuring up the greatest advantage in each situation?

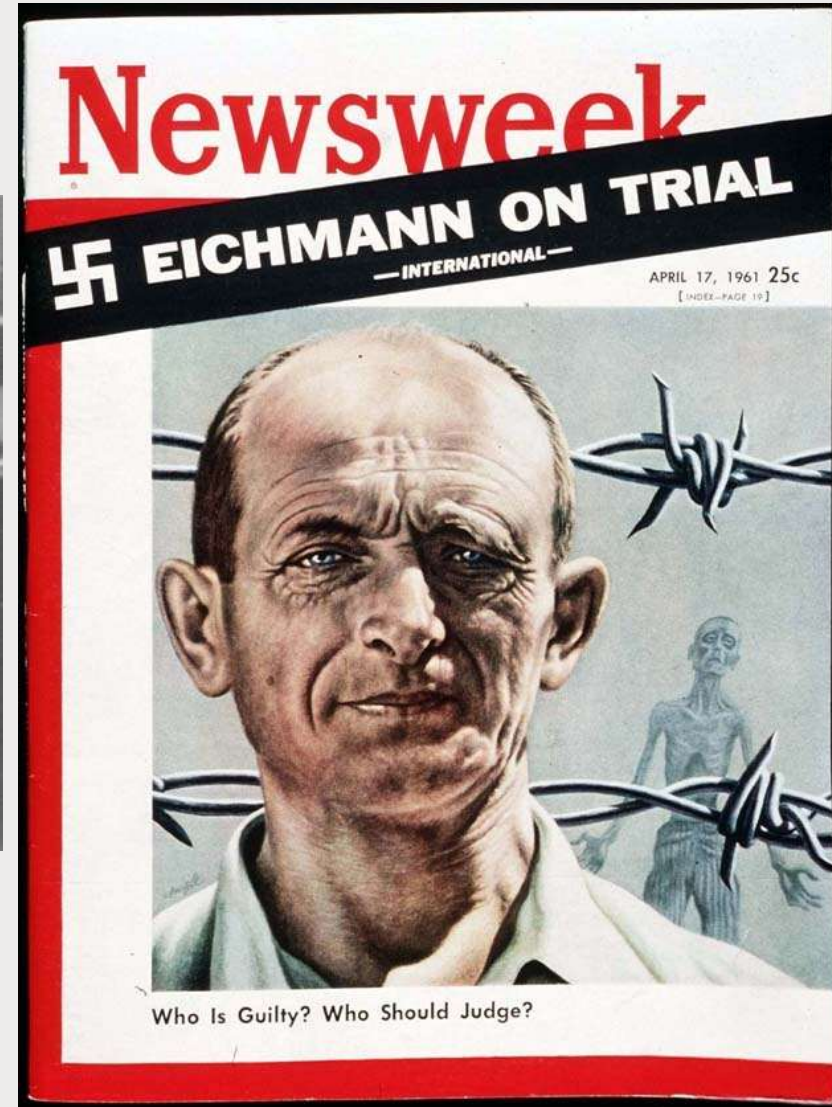


# Themes in Moral Philosophy

- Consequentialism and Utilitarian thought
- Deontology and the importance of duty
- Virtue ethics
- Akrasia
- Custom, desire, capability, and human nature
- Obedience to divine authority and faith...
- Or choosing the authenticity of accepting our freedom, however limited



But to what extent are we free?



# Albert Camus

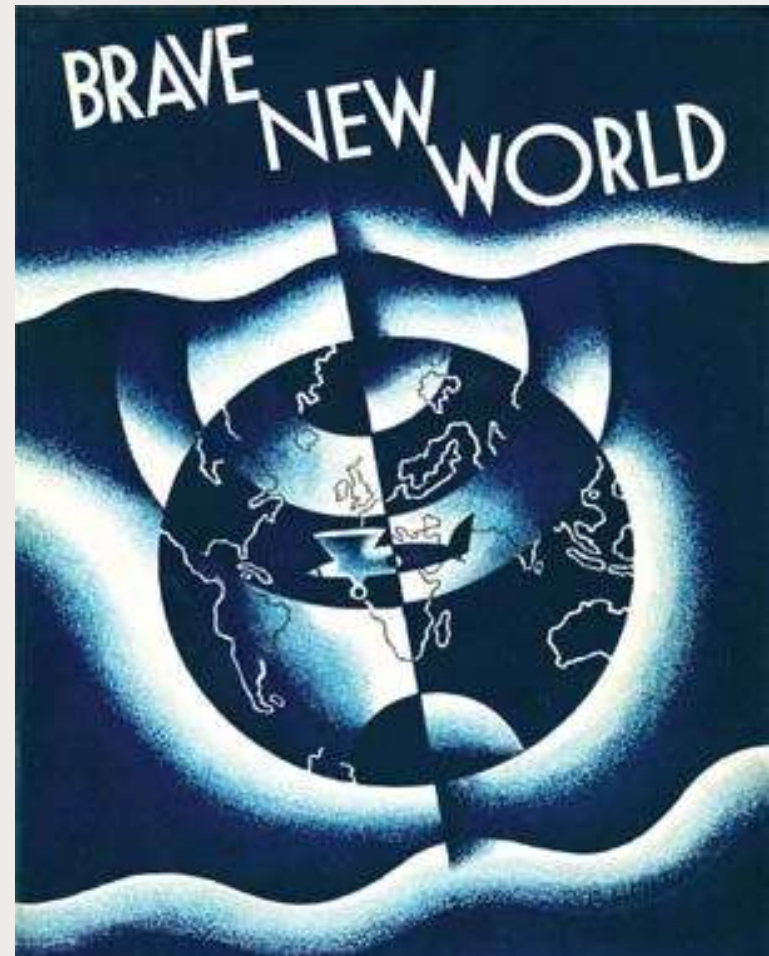


‘At this point of his effort man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. This must not be forgotten. This must be clung to because the whole consequence of a life can depend on it. The irrational, the human nostalgia, and the absurd that is born of their encounter — these are the three characters in the drama that must necessarily end with all the logic of which an existence is capable.’

- *The Myth of Sisyphus*

‘A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias’

- Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*





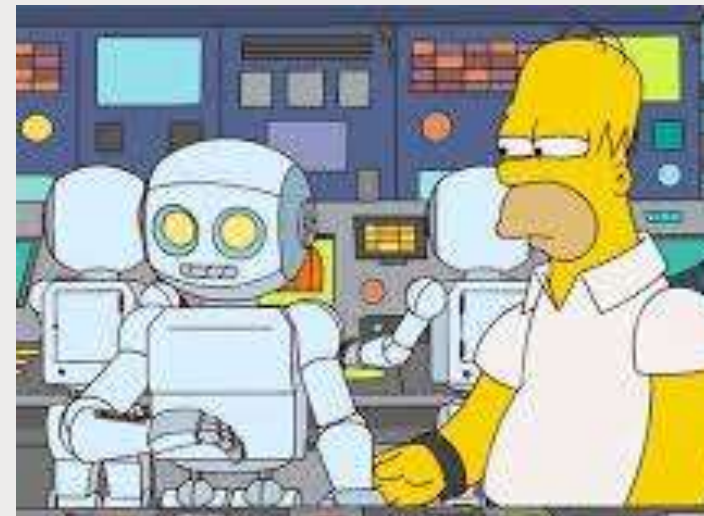
- But can we transform society without causing significant harm to others?
- Is one person's utopia another's totalitarian state?
- Is a harmony of democratic interests even viable?
- Or is it better to accept multiple viewpoints and the impossibility of consensus?



# Three big ideas of the future

- Automation and a world without work
- Drones and driverless cars (and the trolley problem updated...)
- A universal basic income...

*But can technology protect us from the ethical and political problems we've discussed on this course?*



# End of course paperwork

- Please fill out the course evaluation forms *and* the RARPA form
- If there's any particular suggestions about the course content, teaching style or any other particular courses you'd like to cover at Mary Ward Centre, do write them down!



# Next term: the Meanings of Life

- Have we moved from a religious to a secular age?
- What is the source of our values?
- What gives meaning (if anything) to our lives?
- We will cover a variety of religious and modern existential thinkers, including Aquinas, Montaigne, Spinoza, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, De Beauvoir, Arendt and more
- Wednesdays from 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2pm
- Any questions: [dan.taylor@marywardcentre.ac.uk](mailto:dan.taylor@marywardcentre.ac.uk)