

Engaged and Applied Philosophy: The Social Role of Contemporary Theory

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade
Kraljice Natalije 45, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

30th September –1st October 2021

Organized by:

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade
Center for Advanced Studies, University of Rijeka

Our contemporary world is plagued by complex social, political, and economic problems. Although philosophers once directly addressed the major issues of their day, philosophy nowadays is often perceived as an exercise in abstract reflection that abstains from the complexities of the real world. In stark contrast to this received idea, this conference aims to reinvigorate the notion of philosophy as an engaged endeavor to tackle the problems of our time and culture. This suggestion opens up several crucial lines of inquiry.

To begin with, what do we mean when we say that philosophy should engage with the problems of the broader society in which it is embedded, rather than merely extend or apply ideal theories to tangible issues? That is, how can we best understand, explain, and critique the norms and policies of existing societies? Should philosophy start with conceiving ideal theories, or should it begin its inquiry by analyzing the problems which we face in social reality?

Second, are there some significant epistemic goods philosophers are uniquely positioned to provide to policymakers and the general public? Is there some professional ethic that requires us to provide these goods, or is there something that our field can gain by engaging with the real world? Could this be a false antithesis, in the sense that philosophy's engagement with real-world problems might be a two-way street?

Finally, should philosophers shift their attention to topics that stand out as especially relevant to society at large, and spend less energy on subjects that, from an outsider's perspective, appear parochial and abstruse? Should philosophers engage in a more effective "outreach" so that "the average citizen" is better prepared to follow, and benefit from, the discussions of academic philosophy?

In short, this conference aims to explore the conceptual difference between applied and engaged philosophy. Our final goal is to reflect upon the role of philosophers in modern society, and about the place philosophy should assume in contemporary scientific discourse.

The conference will be held **online via the Zoom Platform**. To register, please go to the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vf-itqT4sHtCqabKu4DVIISC2oZgTsvMQP>

Conference Program¹

30th September

09.00–09.05

Welcome Address

Petar Bojanić

09.05–10.20

Jonathan Wolff (Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford)
What is Engaged Political Philosophy?

Chair: Marko Konjović

10.20–10.30

Coffee Break

10.30–12.30

Session I (Chair: Marko Konjović)

Hana Samaržija (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Applied and Engaged Epistemology: Exploring the Epistemology of Democracy

Elvio Baccarini (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka)

The Role of Science and Values in Public Deliberations

Aleksandra Knežević (Faculty of Philosophy/Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade)

The Deliberative Division of Labor in Policy-Making

12.30–13.30

Lunch Break

13.30–15.30

Session II (Chair: Hana Samaržija)

Christof Royer (Central European University)

Ideological Struggle as Agonistic Conflict: A 'Practical Political Theory' Approach to (Anti)Hypocrisy, Free Speech and Critical Social Justice

Jana Bacevic (Durham University)

What Can(t) Critique Do? From the Performativity of Critique to the Critique of Performativity

Igor Cvejić, Marjan Ivković, Srđan Prodanović (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade)

Engaged Philosophy and Social Change: Beyond Normative Recommendations

15.30–15.45

Coffee Break

15.45–17.00

Annabelle Lever (Sciences Po, Paris)

Philosophy Engaging Politics

Chair: Hana Samaržija

¹ The time zone is CET (Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna time).

1st October
10.30–12.30

Session III (Chair: Marko Konjović)

Bojana Radovanović (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory,
University of Belgrade)
Effective Philanthropy: A Case for Engaged Philosophy

Abigail Moses (Durham University)
Mundane Movements: Philosophy of Action and Lived Experiences of Disability

M. Teresa La Valle (The National University Tres de Febrero/La Punta
University)
Environmental Matters, Do Matter

12.30–13.30 Lunch Break

13.30–15.00 **Panel Discussion (Chair: Marko Konjović, Hana Samaržija)**
Is Engaged Philosophy “Real” Philosophy?
Snježana Prijic Samaržija (Rector’s Office/Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences, University of Rijeka), Nebojša Zelić (Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka), Ivan Cerovac
(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka)

15.00–15.05 **Closing Remarks**