

ANARCHISM

University of Bayreuth	Dr Matthias Brinkmann
Summer Term 2019	University of Virginia
14-16 June	mb7tw@virginia.edu
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OVERVIEW

In this seminar, we will look at theories of anarchism—the claim that having no states, no government, and no political authority is morally, politically, and/or economically better. The course will fall into five parts:

1. The History of Anarchism (Anarchists in the history of political thought)
2. Anarchism in Political Philosophy (Arguments against the state; the philosophical foundations of anarchism)
3. Anarchism in Economics (The economics of privatised government, courts, and enforcement)
4. Anarchism in Practice (Real-world examples of societies or groups without centralised authority)
5. Criticism of Anarchism (Anarchism and war; the necessity of the state)

Please note that this will be a demanding seminar. Diligent and early preparation is key.

CREDIT POINTS

One ECTS credit point equals around 30 hours of student workload. Using this formula, here's a rough calculation how you will earn two credit points:

Attendance at seminar	20 hours
Required readings and literature review	20 hours
Become an expert on special topic	10 hours
Preparing an essay or presentation	10 hours
Total	60 hours = 2cp

If you wish to take this seminar for more than 2 credit points, you will need to write a Hausarbeit (see below). As a rule of thumb, I will expect a Hausarbeit to be 5,000-8,000 words, depending on the amount of credit points taken.

REQUIREMENTS

Literature Review

Before the seminar starts, you need to send me a *literature review* of required readings. In your literature review, you should briefly summarise the main claims of each of the papers. You should also add some comments about or critique of the paper in question.

From reading your reviews, I must get the impression that you have read the papers, grasped their central points, and given critical attention to them. There's no set word limit, but a good review of each paper is usually around 200 words.

Deadline: **the day before the seminar**, please send per email. If you send your review earlier, I also have a chance to take them into account when preparing for the seminar: for example, if you have questions or critical remarks. Literature reviews are graded on a pass/fail basis.

<i>Required Readings for Literature Review</i>			
(1)	Fiala (Introduction)	(5)	Huemer, ch. 10 (B.5)
(2)	Reader (in Dropbox)	(6)	Caplan/Stringham (C.9)
(3)	Simmons (B.4)	(7)	any text from part C
(4)	Huemer, ch. 2 (B.5)	(8)	any text from part E

Special Expertise

In addition to the general literature review, each student will be required to become an *expert on a special topic* in anarchism. You will pick one anarchist thinker, book, or historical movement. You will do a small amount of independent research (~10 hours of research in total) on this topic. In class, you will be expected to be an expert on this particular topic, and you will need to be able to talk about in conversation.

As part of your becoming an expert, you will need to write an *expert report*. This should be about a page, and should explain what you found out in easily accessible terms. It will be uploaded into a shared Google Docs document. As students should have some time to read all expert reports, it is due **three days before the seminar**.

Topics for expert reports can be found under readings in part A.3.

Presentations

In some sessions, there will be slots for student presentations. Presentations should be short (~10 mins.). Keep them easy and accessible. Your presentations should highlight one central point or argument to your fellow students. They should not be summaries of the literature: it's your job to extract the central point from the papers you read.

Deadline: **7 June**, per email. I expect your presentation by this date (slides or notes). I will send you feedback on your presentation, and I expect you to change your presentation accordingly. If you are not planning to use slides, please send me notes on your presentation, or your planned handout. Presentations are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Short Essays

Students who do not present will have to write an essay on a topic from the reading list, engaging with the literature for that topic. Essays should be 1,500-2,500 words long, and the deadline for them is **the day before the seminar**. Essays are graded on a pass/fail basis.

In your essay, I expect you to give an independent argument for a narrow claim. Thus, a good paper is not merely a retelling of one's

opinion, or a rhetorical appeal to some authority. Rather, it progresses from clear premises through a number of transparent steps to a conclusion. I have more information about the requirements of a good philosophical essay on my website.

Hausarbeiten (Research Essays)

If you want to write a *Hausarbeit*, we will decide together on a topic. The topic must be roughly related to the seminar, but does not have to be from the issues on the seminar list. It is best that you have a rough idea of what you want before the seminar, so that we can talk about it while I'm in Bayreuth.

There will be three strictly enforced deadlines: **15 July** for a one-page proposal (I will not accept research essays after this date!), **31 October** for handing in a draft (optional), and **31 December** for the finished version.

TIMETABLE

Friday, June 14	
12½-13	Welcome
13-13½	<i>Introductory Lecture</i> : Basic anarchist ideas
13½-15	<i>Student Presentations</i> : Three anarchist thinkers: Kropotkin, Stirner, Rothbard
15-17	<i>Marketplace of Ideas</i> : What motivated anarchists? How did they disagree amongst themselves?
17-18	<i>Design of Philosophical Questionnaire</i> : on what grounds will the issue of anarchism be decided?
Saturday, June 15	
10-12	<i>Introductory Lecture</i> : Philosophical anarchism <i>Workshop</i> : Philosophical attempts to justify the state, and their anarchist critics
12-13	<i>Student Presentation</i> : Nozick on the minimal state
LUNCH BREAK	
14-16	<i>Workshop</i> : How would life without a state work? What would social order look like?
16-17	<i>Student Presentation</i> : The Problem of Public Goods
17-18	<i>Example</i> : Privatised Courts
Sunday, June 16	
10-12	<i>Role-Playing Game</i> : The State of Nature
LUNCH BREAK	
13-14½	<i>Student Presentations</i> : Examples of Non-Centralised Government in History
14½-15½	<i>Group-Based Discussion</i> : What is the strongest objection to anarchism?
15½-16½	<i>Methodological Reflection</i> : Is anarchism utopian? What, if any, is the role of utopian theory?
16½-17	<i>Final Debate</i> : What have we learned about anarchism?
17-17½	Feedback

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

The following slots for student presentations need to be filled. Please contact me with your preferences.

#	Topic
A.2	Egoist anarchism Stirner, <i>Der Einzige und sein Eigentum</i> , II.3, „Die Freien“
A.2	Communist anarchism Kropotkin, “Law and Authority”, “Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles”
A.2	Anarcho-capitalism Rothbard, <i>The Ethics of Liberty</i> , part III: “The State Versus Liberty”.
B.6	Nozick’s argument for the minimal state Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , chapter 2, “The State of Nature”
C.7	Visions for a stateless society Huemer, <i>The Problem of Political Authority</i> , chapter 9, “The Logic of Predation”; chapter 10, “Individual Security in a Stateless Society”
C.8	The provision of public goods in anarchy Ostrom, <i>Governing the Commons</i> , ch. 3: “Analyzing Long-Enduring, Self-Organized, and Self-Governed CPRs”
D.10	Somalia Powell, Benjamin, Ryan Ford, and Alex Nowrasteh. “Somalia after State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement?” <i>Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization</i> 67, no. 3 (2008): 657–70
D.10	The Creation of the London Stock Exchange Stringham, Edward. <i>Private Governance: Creating Order in Economic and Social Life</i> . Oxford University Press, 2015. Chapter 5, “The Evolution of Rules in Exclusive Clubs From Coffeehouses to the London Stock Exchange”
D.10	Medieval Iceland Friedman, David. “Private Creation and Enforcement of Law: A Historical Case.” <i>Journal of Legal Studies</i> 8 (1979): 399–415
D.10	Pirates Leeson, Peter T. “An-arrgh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization.” <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 115, no. 6 (2007): 1049–94

READINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

I will provide a brief overview of the main claims of anarchists. For general literature, see the recommendations below.

For a useful informal introduction to anarchism, read Bryan Caplan's (right-leaning) "[Anarchism FAQ](#)". There's also the very extensive (left-leaning) "[Anarchist FAQ](#)", although I found that to vary a lot in quality.

INTRODUCTIONS

**Fiala, Andrew. "Anarchism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/anarchism/>

Miller, David. *Anarchism*. J.M. Dent, 1984. Chapter 1, "What is anarchism?".

Ward, Colin. *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Carter, Alan. "Analytical Anarchism: Some Conceptual Foundations." *Political Theory* 28, no. 2 (2000): 230–53.

HANDBOOKS

Levy, Carl, and Matthew Adams (eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Kinna, Ruth (ed.). *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*. Continuum, 2012.

ANTHOLOGIES

Graham, Robert (ed.). *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas* (3 vols.). Black Rose Books.

Guérin, Daniel (ed.). *No Gods, No Masters*. AK Press, 2005.

Horowitz, Irving Louis (ed.). *The Anarchists*. Aldine Transaction, 2005.

Sanders/Narveson, *For and Against the State: New Philosophical Readings*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.

ONLINE SOURCES

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library>

http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/index.htm#anarchism>

A. Anarchism in History

We will look at a couple of classic works in the history of anarchism. There is a wide breadth of anarchists, and there might be no two anarchists who fully agree in their views. Many anarchists were also more political activists than thinkers, and their writing is often concerned with concrete political issues.

Marshall, Peter. *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. PM Press, 2010.

Joll, James. *The Anarchists*. Harvard University Press, 1980.

Franks, Benjamin. "Between Anarchism and Marxism: The Beginnings and Ends of the Schism" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 207–27.

Levy, Carl. "Social Histories of Anarchism." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4 (2010): 1–44.

Avrich, Paul. *The Russian Anarchists*. AK Press, 2005.

2. THREE CLASSIC ANARCHISTS

There will be three student presentations on classic anarchist thinkers, each representing a strand of anarchist thought: Peter Kropot-

kin for communist anarchism, Murray Rothbard for anarcho-capitalism, and Max Stirner for egoist anarchism. We will use this session to get a first taste for the ideological diversity of anarchists, but also for some unifying themes.

There will be three student presentations, after which we will compare the three thinkers.

Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*.

Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historic Role*, “Law and Authority”.

Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*.

3. MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

In this session of the course, the expert knowledge you have gained in preparation will come into play. You will need to be able to summarise, and talk about, to your classmates about a topic in anarchism of your choice.

There will be a “marketplace of ideas”, in which you will present your ideas to others.

Topics can be found below. You can propose your own topics not currently on the list—just send me an email. Please consult the Google Docs document for further details, including suggestions for readings.

1. William Godwin
2. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
3. Emma Goldman
4. Lucy Parsons
5. Murray Bookchin
6. Henry David Thoreau
7. Ursula Le Guin (esp. her novel *The Dispossessed*)
8. Green anarchism, esp. John Zerzan’s primitivism
9. Collectivist anarchism, esp. Mikhail Bakunin
10. American individual anarchists in the 19th century: choose from Josiah Warren, Benjamin Tucker, or Lysander Spooner
11. Anarcho-syndicalism, esp. Rudolf Rocker
12. Christian anarchism, esp. Jacques Ellul
13. Pacifism, esp. Mahatma Gandhi
14. Left-wing market anarchism, esp. Charles Johnson and Gary Chartier
15. Noam Chomsky
16. The Paris Commune
17. Anarchists during the Spanish Civil War
18. Anarchists at Occupy Wall Street

B. Anarchism in Philosophy

In this section, we will look at how philosophers have argued for and against anarchism.

4. PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM

Philosophical anarchism is a “soft” form of anarchism. It denies that states and other political institutions possess authority, and that citizens have a duty to obey the state. This falls short, however, of a full-blown rejection of the state.

There will be a brief lecture on what philosophical anarchism entails. We will discuss what it would mean for a state to possess no authority.

**Simmons, John. “Philosophical Anarchism.” In *For and against the State: New Philosophical Readings*, edited by John Sanders and Jan Narveson, 19–39. Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.

Wolff, Robert Paul. *In Defense of Anarchism*. Harper & Row, 1970.

Edmundson, William. *Three Anarchical Fallacies: An Essay on Political Authority*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
Green, Leslie. *The Authority of the State*. Clarendon Press, 1988.
Wellman, Christopher, and John Simmons. *Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?* Cambridge University Press, 2005.

5. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE STATE

In this section, we will look at how the state could be justified, if it can be justified at all.

After a brief introduction of how the state might be justified, different groups of students will explore different arguments.

**Huemer, Michael. *The Problem of Political Authority: An Examination of the Right to Coerce and the Duty to Obey*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Excerpts. Chapter 2 (“The Traditional Social Contract Theory”) and Chapter 10 (“Individual Security in a Stateless Society”).
Long, Roderick, and Tibor Machan. *Anarchism/Minarchism. Is a Government Part of a Free Country?* Ashgate, 2008.
McLaughlin, Paul. *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism*. Ashgate, 2007.
Chartier, Gary. *Anarchy and Legal Order: Law and Politics for a Stateless Society*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

6. THE MINIMAL STATE

Perhaps the state in all its power cannot be justified. But some theorists, especially many libertarians, have shied away from advocated full-blown anarchy; instead, they argue, there should at least be a “night watchman” state which ensures public order and enforces property rights.

There will be a student presentation which we will use as a kick-off into comparing the minimal state with anarchy.

Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books, 1974.
Varden, Helga. “Nozick’s Reply to the Anarchist.” *Law and Philosophy* 28, no. 6 (2009): 585–616.
Mack, Eric. “Nozickian Arguments for the More-than-Minimal State.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Nozick’s Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, edited by Ralf Bader and John Meadowcroft, 89–115. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
Rand, Ayn. “The Nature of Government”.

C. The Economics of Anarchy

7. THE ECONOMICS OF ANARCHY

In this section, we will think about anarchy in broadly economic terms. A crucial insight of economists in the 1970s was that we can think of government (e.g., the provision of law, conflict-resolution, police, security, welfare) as an economic “good” like others; we can then start to apply standard economic techniques and concepts—e.g., from game theory—to the analysis of anarchy. In this section, we will start with an overview of the main views and problems in the economics of anarchy.

First, there will be a student presentation on Huemer’s account of anarchy. Then, students will discuss in small groups how various social problems (e.g., national defence, punishment for crimes, social welfare, enforcement of contracts) might be tackled in anarchy, and what anar-

chists are likely to propose. In a second stage, they will review the solution of another group and criticise it from the point of view of the anti-anarchist.

Powell, Benjamin, and Edward Stringham. “Public Choice and the Economic Analysis of Anarchy: A Survey.” *Public Choice* 140, no. 3–4 (2009): 503–38.

Buchanan, James M. “An Economic Theory of Clubs.” *Economica* 32, no. 125 (1965): 1–14.

Stringham, Edward. “Private Governance.” *The Routledge Handbook of Libertarianism*, 2017.

Friedman, David. *The Machinery of Freedom*. Open Court, 1973.

8. PROVISION OF PUBLIC GOODS

A classic problem that anarchism is supposed to have is that it fails to supply, or significantly under-supplies, important public goods: e.g., public defence, education, or investment into research that significantly improves humanity’s fate. Similarly, it is sometimes claimed that anarchic society would fall prey to the “tragedy of the commons”, over-exploiting common resources. In this section, we will look at how anarchists have answered these charges.

We will discuss what public goods are, and why it is often thought that the state is needed for the provision. There will be a student presentation on Elinor Ostrom’s empirical work on this issue.

Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Anomaly, Jonathan. “Public Goods and Government Action.” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 14, no. 2 (2015): 109–28.

Schmidtz, David. *The Limits of Government: An Essay on the Public Goods Argument*. Westview Press, 1991.

de Jasay, Anthony. *Social Contract, Free Ride: A Study of the Public Goods Problem*. Liberty Fund, 2008.

9. PRIVATISED COURTS

We will look at a particular sub-debate in this section: could, and should, courts be privatised? If so, how? Which obstacles would such a proposal face?

We will discuss Caplan/Stringham’s proposal, and potential problems with it as a case study.

**Caplan, Bryan, and Edward Stringham. “Privatizing the Adjudication of Disputes.” *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 9, no. 2 (2008).

Landes, William, and Richard Posner. “Adjudication as a Private Good.” *Journal of Legal Studies* 8, no. 2 (1979): 235–84.

Cowen, Tyler. “Law as a Public Good: The Economics of Anarchy.” *Economics and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1992): 249–67.

Friedman, David. “Law as a Private Good: A Response to Tyler Cowen on the Economics of Anarchy.” *Economics and Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (1994): 319–27.

D. Anarchism in Practice

How does anarchy work in practice? Unfortunately, we have few real historical examples that would allow us to answer that question very precisely, and the examples we have are often heavily contested. Still, some case studies exist, which we will consider in this part of the course.

10. ROLE-PLAYING GAME

There will be a role-playing game in which students re-enact a situation of social anarchy. After the game, we will discuss which, how, and why social conventions arose (or did not arise).

Abbink, Klaus. “Laboratory Experiments on Conflict”, in Garfinkel/Skaperdas (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Peace and Conflict*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kimbrough, Erik, Vernon Smith, and Bart Wilson. “Exchange, Theft, and the Social Formation of Property.” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 74 (2010): 206–29.

Powell, Benjamin, and Bart J. Wilson. “An Experimental Investigation of Hobbesian Jungles.” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 66, no. 3 (2008): 669–86.

11. EMPIRICAL EXAMPLES

While it is difficult to find examples of “pure” anarchy how some anarchists have imagined them, we have some historical examples of anarchic or semi-anarchic societies or specific social contexts. In this section, we will look at some of these cases.

There will be four student presentations, each on one of the papers below. We will then discuss whether these are examples of anarchy, whether they are successful examples, what made anything work or not work, and whether any lessons can be drawn from them for contemporary societies.

Powell, Benjamin, Ryan Ford, and Alex Nowrasteh. “Somalia after State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement?” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 67, no. 3 (2008): 657–70.

Stringham, Edward. *Private Governance: Creating Order in Economic and Social Life*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Chapter 5, “The Evolution of Rules in Exclusive Clubs From Coffeehouses to the London Stock Exchange”.

Friedman, David. “Private Creation and Enforcement of Law: A Historical Case.” *Journal of Legal Studies* 8 (1979): 399–415.

Leeson, Peter T. “An-arrgh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization.” *Journal of Political Economy* 115, no. 6 (2007): 1049–94.

E. Philosophical Objections

We covered some objection to anarchism already, in sections B.6 (on minimal government) and C.8 (on the provision of public goods). In this part, some further potential objections to anarchism will be raised.

12. THE THREAT OF SOCIAL DISORDER

Perhaps *the* objection to anarchism is that live in will be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes). In modern economic terminology, it is sometimes claimed that we face a natural Prisoner’s Dilemma, which, without the state, would spiral out of control. In response, the anarchist needs a plausible account of how social order without a state would look like.

We will only look at the topics in this section if time permits.

Morris, Christopher. *An Essay on the Modern State*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Chapter 3, “Social Order in Anarchy”.

Huemer, Michael. *The Problem of Political Authority*, part II: “Society without Authority”.

Axelrod, Robert, and Robert O. Keohane. "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions." *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 226–54.

13. SOCIAL WELFARE AND CHARITY

Another critique which might be levelled against the anarchist is that an anarchic society would fail to serve the interests of the poor, the disabled, and the otherwise least well-off. Anarchists often respond that there would be a system of charitable giving in anarchic society. But is such a system enough? Would it fulfil requirements of distributive justice?

Olasky, Marvin. *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. Regnery, 1994.

Beito, David. *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State: Fraternal Societies and Social Services, 1890-1967*. UNC Press, 2000.

Konczal, Mike. "[The Conservative Myth of a Social Safety Net Built on Charity](#)". *The Atlantic*, March 24, 2014.

Chartier/Johnson, *Markets Not Capitalism*, part 6: "Inequality and Social Safety Nets", esp. Jeremy Weiland, "Let the free market eat the rich!"

14. UTOPIANISM

A more conservative-leaning criticism of anarchism is that it rests on implausibly utopian claims about human nature and society. Just like any "rationalist" idea, these conservatives will argue, anarchism ignores the wisdom of tradition, rests on an implausibly subjectivist and individualist view of morality, and will lead to disaster in practice.

There will be a debate on the role of ideal theory in political philosophy. We will discuss what methods anarchists should use to bring about their aims, and whether anarchist theory provides any guidance on this question.

Kirk, Russell. "A Dispassionate Assessment of Libertarians". Heritage Foundation. May 28, 1988. <https://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/dispassionate-assessment-libertarians>

Oakeshott, Michael. *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*. Liberty Fund, 1991.

Honeywell, Carissa. "Utopianism and Anarchism". *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12, no. 3 (2007): 239–54.

Laurence, Davis, and Kinna Ruth (eds.). *Anarchism and Utopianism*. Manchester University Press, 2010.

Thaler, Mathias. "Hope Abjuring Hope: On the Place of Utopia in Realist Political Theory." *Political Theory* 46, no. 5 (2018): 671–97.

Kinna, Ruth. "Utopianism and Prefiguration", in Chrostowska/Ingram (eds.), *Political Uses of Utopia: New Marxist, Anarchist, and Radical Democratic Perspectives*. Columbia University Press, 2017.

15. FINAL DEBATE

We will go over many of the themes we have encountered so far.

16. STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the course.