

# FIL 4330 Political Philosophy

## Detailed course description

What is territory? Who is a territorial agent? On what grounds are both general and specific claims to territory made by them? And what rights do territorial rights actually encompass? In this course, we will examine the main justificatory theories of territorial rights, and get a grasp of their weaknesses and strengths. The course will be divided into five parts.

In the first part, we will look at the notion of “common ownership of the earth” as conceptualized by Grotius (to defend the freedom of the seas), and by contemporary authors seeking to defend a global proviso on the appropriation of land and natural resources.

In the second part, we will look at connection-based theories, namely, at those theories that ground territorial rights on some morally relevant link between the agent making the claim (be it individual or collective) and a specific geographical space. In particular, we will examine Locke’s famous argument of labor-mixing as originating property rights and, therefore, territorial rights. Contemporary Lockean accounts will also be examined, as well as nationalist theories, and theories based on the political self-determination of territorial agents.

In the fourth part, function-based theories will be analyzed. As opposed to connection-based ones, these seek to justify why the territorial agent (paradigmatically the state) needs *some* territory, rather than *a specific* territory, in order to perform its basic functions, like establishing justice or protecting human rights.

In the fourth and fifth part, we will look at two different elements of territorial rights: rights over natural resources and the right to control borders. We will discuss attempts to disentangle these rights from the full “package” of territorial rights. Ultimately, this will lead us to reflect on the possibility of reconceptualizing sovereignty and sovereign agents.