

decentering political theories: a dialogue

Thursday, June 23, 2022, 6:00 pm

Universität Koblenz-Landau, Campus Koblenz, Room D038 and via ZOOM

Sanjay Seth (Goldsmiths, University of London): Political Theory and/as the bourgeois public sphere

This presentation argues that unlike other disciplines that have an external object/process they seek to accurately (re)present (eg, 'the past' for history, or 'the international' for international relations), political theory is knowledge 'for' rather than 'of', performance rather than representation. It is directed towards the public sphere, imagined as a realm of individuals possessed of their own 'values' who however inhabit a common world and engage in rational, critical debate about that which they hold in common. It 'performs' the liberal conviction that differing moral and political viewpoints being ineliminable, they must contend with each other in rational argument in a public sphere not itself marked by a commitment to any moral or political view. This way of conceiving and practising political theory, this paper concludes, renders it irremediably politically liberal and parochially Eurocentric.

Humeira Iqtidar (King's College London): Political Theory, Colonialism and Justice

Political Theory has come late to debates about colonialism. Academic political theorists managed to avoid the question of colonialism and its implications for their disciplinary debates and methods until a decade or so ago. What might be some reasons for this delay? And what implications does this delayed engagement carry for a discipline that is plagued by a lack of clarity regarding its boundaries and scope. Engaging in particular with critical theory and the surprising lack of interest in questions related to colonialism among prominent critical theorists today, I will discuss some implications of this for our understanding of justice.

This public event is part of the workshop "decentering theories: intercultural philosophy, comparative political theory, postcolonial studies and decolonial thought in dialogue", taking place at Universität Koblenz-Landau from June 23-25, 2022.