

<p>Institution: University College London</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 32 – Philosophy</p>
<p>Title of case study: The use of research-based teaching materials in political philosophy</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor Jonathan Wolff at UCL has produced several important monographs which are aimed at both researchers and students, including <i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> (1996 and 2006) and <i>Ethics and Public Policy</i> (2011). These books continue to have great influence on the way in which political philosophy is taught, and are widely used in schools and adult education, as well as within Higher Education Institutions. Curricula throughout the world are designed around them. Both books, but particularly <i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> – which exists in English and in many translations – have had a profound effect, both in terms of adoption, and in the response from instructors and students.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The impacts described here arise from two major strands of research in political and moral philosophy conducted by Jonathan Wolff at UCL, where he has been a member of staff since 1986. The first of these is his exploration of contemporary problems in political philosophy drawing on the works of the great political philosophers of the past. This gives rise not only to a better understanding of philosophical problems, but also to insights into how earlier political philosophers can be read. The fruits of this research include, for example, a reading of Hobbes that sharply contrasts the ‘actual contract’ elements of his argument with his ‘hypothetical contract’ and explores their contrasting strengths and weaknesses [a]; an exploration of the limits to voluntarist theories of political obligation and the theory of fairness [b]; a discovery of a previously unnoticed paradox in democracy based on the distinction between voting on self-interested grounds and voting on ideas of the common good [c]; and a detailed discussion of a difficult passage in Mill on the regulation of indecency, which is used to motivate a ‘progressive indirect utilitarian’ reading of Mill’s liberty principle [d].</p> <p>In 1996, Wolff published <i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> (hereafter IPP) [e], in which much of this earlier research is combined with fresh research and presented for a non-expert audience. Rather than merely summarising the seminal texts and debates about the interpretation and merits of the ideas and arguments of political philosophers past and present, IPP integrated Wolff’s ongoing research into those debates. Thus, clear accounts of the work of the major political philosophers and main questions in political philosophy are interrogated through a series of linked questions (beginning with ‘why should anyone be entitled to hold political power?’), each of which is addressed by drawing on Wolff’s earlier work (including, but not being limited to [a], [b], [c], [d]) to answer questions about the nature, justification, and organisation of the state and of citizens’ obligations, and to explore the concept of liberty and its limits. The book also explores distributive justice and the feminist critique of individualism.</p> <p>The second strand of Wolff’s research lies in applied ethics, and is taken forward in his 2011 monograph <i>Ethics and Public Policy</i> (EPP) [f]. In this book the research described above is developed further via consideration of moral and political dilemmas of public life, many of them related to Wolff’s work with public policy bodies or committees such as the Gambling Review Body, Rail Safety and Standards Board, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Academy of Medical Sciences. EPP includes applications of philosophical ideas on topics such as the regulation of gambling, social provision for disability, the value of universal health care, crime and the justification of punishment, drug policy, public safety and the limits of the free market, as well as a methodological investigation of how moral and political philosophy can shed light on public policy. Much of the book is a reflection on the surprising and unwelcome discovery that the straightforward application of philosophical ideas to public policy will often yield unacceptable social policies. Nevertheless it aims to provide a model of the contribution that philosophers can make to the formation of ethically acceptable public policies.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[a] Jonathan Wolff, “Hobbes and the Motivations of Social Contract Theory”, <i>International Journal</i></p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

of *Philosophical Studies* 1994, 2: 271–286. Peer reviewed journal. DOI: [10.1080/09672559408570795](https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559408570795).

[b] Jonathan Wolff, “Political Obligation, Fairness and Independence”, *Ratio* 1995, 8: 87–99. Peer reviewed journal. Google scholar citations: 19 (Oct 2013). DOI: [10.1111/j.1467-9329.1995.tb00071.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9329.1995.tb00071.x).

[c] Jonathan Wolff, “Democratic Voting and the Mixed-Motivation Problem”, *Analysis* 1994: 193–6. Peer reviewed journal. Google scholar citations: 10 (Oct 2013). DOI: [10.1093/analys/54.4.193](https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/54.4.193).

[d] Jonathan Wolff, “Mill, Indecency and the Liberty Principle”, *Utilitas* 1998, 10: 1–16. Peer reviewed journal. Reprinted in *Mill’s Political and Legal Philosophy*, ed. C. L. Chen Ashgate 2000. Google Scholar Citations: 9 (Oct 2013). DOI: [10.1017/S0953820800005975](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820800005975).

[e] Jonathan Wolff, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press 1996 and 2006 (revised edition). Google Scholar citations: 204 (Oct 2013). Submitted to RAE 1996; available on request.

[f] Jonathan Wolff, *Ethics and Public Policy*, Routledge 2011. Google Scholar Citations: 19 (Oct 2013). Submitted to REF2.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Research by Jonathan Wolff has had a significant influence on the design and delivery of curricula in the UK and beyond, particularly through the publication of the two major research-based books ([e] and [f]) described above. Both IPP and EPP were consciously developed to serve as useful pedagogical resources to engage students and self-directed learners, including those with little prior exposure to political philosophy, while at the same time drawing on and presenting substantial original research.

Although *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* [e] was first published in 1996, it has continued to have a lasting and substantial impact on the development and delivery of philosophical education throughout the period of assessment. Since 2008 the average yearly sales figures for the English language edition alone are 5,000 and have not fallen below 3,900 per year [1]. The revised edition, published in 2006, has sold over 25,000 copies since 2008: 43% in the UK, 24% in the US, 14% in Europe, and 19% in the rest of the world. Sales regularly spike significantly in September, indicating that it is predominantly used for teaching [1]. IPP is also widely disseminated through photocopying, and has generated more than £23,000 in photocopying royalties since 2008; about half from UK schools and further education colleges, a further third from UK higher education and the remainder from overseas [2].

Students of philosophy, political science and other fields have all benefited from the research. The *reach* of the books’ impacts on education in these fields is demonstrated by their use in a large number of institutions across several countries (including China, Bangladesh, Switzerland, the US and Canada) [3], and by the diversity of their readers, who range from school students and undergraduates to postgraduates and adult learners. The *significance* of their impact upon these beneficiaries is suggested by the high number of modules and courses modelled, in part or in whole, on the books, and by the excellent feedback received from instructors and students who have used them. It is also demonstrated by the sheer fact that so many courses have continued to rely on IPP 17 years since its initial publication, and despite the subsequent appearance of many excellent competing texts. In spite of being less than two years in print by July 2013, EPP has similarly already become a core text for some courses on applied ethics.

Impacts on curricula for university students: Both books are key texts for courses at a range of institutions in the UK and overseas [3], where they have received excellent feedback from both students and teachers. In many cases, the courses that use them rely very heavily indeed on the books: at the University of Lancaster, for example, the first part of the course Understanding Politics and Governance follows IPP chapter by chapter [4]; the same is true at Florida State University, whose Introduction to Political Philosophy course (PHM 2300) is likewise structured, chapter by chapter, almost entirely around IPP. In Canada, the University of Western Ontario used IPP as the basis for a very large course, POL1020E, and set EPP for course tutorials [5]. In 2012–3 around 500 students were enrolled on this course, which is required for Political Science

Impact case study (REF3b)

programmes, and the course is currently being repeated in 2013–4 with a similar enrolment [5].

The longevity of these courses suggests the *significance* of the use of these books to them. At the Open University, for example, extracts from IPP were used in the set book (*Arguments for Freedom*) used for course A211 which ran for ten years until 2011 with an average student enrolment of 700, and for AA311, half of which was organised explicitly around IPP [6].

Further evidence of the significance of the text to course leaders in the field may be found in the feedback they provide, both directly to Wolff, and to their students, wherein they have also cited the significance of these books to their teaching. At Dublin City University, for example, where IPP is essential reading for the course LG116, the course module guide ends with the words: “By far the best and most accessible introduction to political philosophy. Read it from start to finish, and you may surprise yourself by enjoying it” [7].

Further global impacts: As the book sales and royalties listed above indicate, IPP reaches a large audience overseas. Its English language version is used in overseas territories such as Japan, Bangladesh, Norway and Germany, as well as the USA, Canada, and Australia. It has been translated into Traditional Chinese (for Taiwan and Hong Kong) Simplified Chinese (twice), Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, Croatian, Lithuanian, Mongolian, and Persian (an unauthorised translation for the Iranian market) [1].

An example of its international use comes from China where IPP is a widely used book on political philosophy. For example, on DangDang.com, the largest book retailer in the country, the Chinese edition received 180 reviews between its publication in 2009 and July 2013, 99.4% of which awarded the book at least 4 of a maximum 5 stars [8]. The newly established Asian University for Women in Chittagong, Bangladesh, likewise structured its introductory course on Political Philosophy (first taught in 2012) around IPP, which was also the assigned primary text [3].

At a more anecdotal level Wolff has, over the years, received many unsolicited emails about the book from university and school students, members of the public and teachers, commending it as a compelling and accessible exploration of research. As a Jordanian undergraduate at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich explained: 'It's really one of the very few books that actually get the ideas across so easily, without having to over-complicate things.' (24 April 2012) [9]. This accessible but comprehensive presentation of Wolff's research findings allows the book's wide-ranging readership to engage meaningfully – often for the first time – with key tenets of Western political philosophy.

Impacts on learning outside the university: The reach of the educational impacts of IPP and EPP extends even beyond its very significant contributions to curricula at higher education institutions (HEI) internationally. These wider impacts are delivered particularly through its use as the basis for less traditional higher education learning resources, which allow a broader cross-section of both UK and international communities to engage with political philosophy at undergraduate level. At a local level, for example, The University of the Third Age (U3A) in Poole organised a reading group for mature students using EPP in 2012; the group was so successful that it was recommended to other U3A groups [10]. Rather wider, international benefits accrued from Wolff being contracted in April 2006 to write an online module for the Oxford University Extension Course, which follows IPP chapter by chapter. The course ran 11 times between 2009 and 2013, and was taken by approximately 320 students internationally [11].

The books have, moreover, introduced political philosophy to new, young audiences, including school students. Both IPP and EPP are designed to enable students to engage with questions of philosophy and consider their applications to issues or debates relevant to their own daily experience. This makes the two books particularly well suited for non-traditional learners, and even for GCE students. Alongside the reader *Political Thought* (also co-edited by Wolff), IPP is the only work of political philosophy listed in the Teacher Resource Bank for GCE Philosophy published by AQA, the UK's largest provider of academic qualifications for 14–19 year olds. In 2013, 2,491 students took the Philosophy A level and 5,129 the AS level [12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] Sales figures, information about seasonal sales trends and evidence of translations of IPP have

Impact case study (REF3b)

been provided to UCL by OUP; a copy is available on request.

[2] Royalty statements (in addition to a spreadsheet showing the breakdown of photocopying by category) been provided by ALCS; a copy is available on request.

[3] In addition to the indicative examples provided below, a portfolio of several courses reliant on IPP and EPP at various national and international HEIs is available on request.

[4] For the heavy use of IPP as the basis for the University of Lancaster's Understanding Politics and Governance Part I course, see p. 10 of the 2012 Course Handbook, available on request.

[5] For use of IPP as a core text and EPP as the basis for tutorial topics in Western Ontario course POL1020E, see 2012 course guide (available on request). Enrolment figures provided by the course leader.

[6] A copy of a statement provided by the Open University about the content, duration and enrolment figures for its courses A211 and AA311 is available on request.

[7] For endorsement of IPP as an undergraduate learning resource see p. 10 of the Dublin City University course LG116 module guide. Available on request.

[8] Positive reviews of IPP provided by Chinese readers may be viewed on the Dangdang.com sales page – printout, translation and analysis available on request.

[9] Copy of the email from a Ludwig Maximilian University student (received 24 April 2012), endorsing IPP's utility and accessibility, is available on request. Many similar unsolicited statements are also available on request.

[10] A copy of a statement provided by the U3A Poole course leader about the reading group set up in 2012 for mature students using EPP is available on request.

[11] Oxford University Extension Course page:

<http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/details.php?id=V500-2&search=political%20philosophy&submitbutton=Search&multisearch=single>. Enrolment figures provided in an email from the course leader; available on request.

[12] For the inclusion of IPP in the AQA Teacher Resource Bank for GCE Philosophy (see p. 1) available at: <http://bit.ly/18StmF6>. AQA student statistics for June 2013: available on request.