

## The Ethics of Exploitation: Theory and Applications

**Time and place:** University of Gothenburg, November 10-13 and 17, 2025. The course is campus-based, but the November 17 session can be given in hybrid format upon request.

**Instructors:** Erik Malmqvist, University of Gothenburg ([erik.malmqvist@gu.se](mailto:erik.malmqvist@gu.se)), Nicola Mulkeen, Newcastle University, and András Szigeti, Lund University

**Course description:** The concept of exploitation plays an important role in our moral thought and discourse. It looms large in public and policy debates about practices such as “sweatshop” employment, gig work, commercial surrogacy, medical research in developing countries, and organ markets. It is also central to social criticism, for instance in the socialist and feminist traditions. However, while charges of exploitation are common, their nature and normative significance remain unclear. This has inspired extensive recent debates in moral and political philosophy about the ethics of exploitation.

This course provides an in-depth overview of these debates. Questions to be addressed may include: What is exploitation? What distinguishes it from similar phenomena, such as coercion and domination? What, if anything, is morally wrong with exploiting people when they benefit from and consent to being exploited? Who, if anyone, is responsible for preventing or mitigating exploitative arrangements? How is exploitation related to structural injustice? These questions will be explored through careful analysis of key contributions to exploitation theory together with discussions of putatively exploitative real-world practices.

The course is a 7.5-ECTS course, equivalent to five weeks of full-time study, or 200 hours, but the teaching is condensed to five days.

**Examination:** The course is examined by (1) an in-class oral presentation and critical assessment of a key course reading and (2) a course essay on a topic covered by the course.

**Practical:** Due to the intense format, students will need to prepare by reading major parts of the literature before the start of the course.

**Content:** A reading list will be provided closer to the start of the course.

**Language of instruction:** English

**Contact and application:** The course is open to students on the master’s and PhD level in philosophy (or the equivalent) at all Swedish universities. PhD students apply in Fubas: <https://fubasextern.gu.se/fubasextern/info?kurs=FP30110>. Please also notify Erik Malmqvist ([erik.malmqvist@gu.se](mailto:erik.malmqvist@gu.se)) that you have applied. Master’s students are advised to contact Sandra Schriefer ([sandra.schriefer@gu.se](mailto:sandra.schriefer@gu.se)) to apply. Deadline for application: October 13, 2025.

If you have questions about the course, please contact Erik Malmqvist.