

# Uğur Aytac

Utrecht University | Janskerkhof 13, 3512 BL Utrecht, Netherlands

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**AOS:** Political philosophy, democratic theory, power & legitimacy, resistance, political realism

**AOC:** Normative ethics, philosophy of social science, political economy, philosophy of technology

## EMPLOYMENT

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### Utrecht University

Assistant Professor in Political Philosophy (Tenured), Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, 2023-present

Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, 2022-2023

### University of Amsterdam

Lecturer & Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, 2021-2022

## VISITING APPOINTMENTS

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### University of Barcelona

Visiting Researcher, Department of Philosophy, 2025

### University of York

Visiting PhD student, Department of Philosophy, 2019

## EDUCATION

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### University of Amsterdam

PhD, Political Theory, 2017-2021

Thesis title: 'Alternatives to Moralism: Political Realist Essays on Power and Legitimation'

Supervisors: Enzo Rossi, Paul Raekstad.

### University of Bayreuth

MA, Philosophy & Economics, 2015-2017

### Bogazici University

BA, Philosophy, 2011-2015

BA, Economics, 2010-2015

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Peer-Reviewed Articles

- What is the Point of Social Media? Corporate Purpose and Digital Democratization. *Philosophy & Technology*, 38(26), 2025, 1-26. (winner of a Sabanci International Research Award in 2025)
- Big Tech, Algorithmic Power, and Democratic Control. *The Journal of Politics*, 86(4), 2024, 1431-1445.
- In Defense of Shirking in Capitalist Firms: Worker Resistance vs. Managerial Power. *Political Theory*, 52(4), 2024, 519-547.
- Digital Domination: Social Media and Contestatory Democracy. *Political Studies*, 72(1), 2024, 6-25.
- Ideology Critique without Morality: A Radical Realist Approach (with Enzo Rossi). *American Political Science Review*, 117(4), 2023, 1215-1227.
- Global Political Legitimacy and the Structural Power of Capital. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 54(4), 2023, 490-509.
- Political Realism and Epistemic Constraints. *Social Theory and Practice*, 48(1), 2022, pp. 1-27.
- On the Limits of the Political: The Problem of Overly Permissive Pluralism in Mouffe's Agonism. *Constellations*, 28(3), 2021, pp. 417-431.

### Policy Articles:

- Worker Agency in the Digital Age (with Carina Prunkl, Joel Anderson, Jeroen Hopster, and Juri Viehoff). United Nations Development Programme, Spotlight Article in *Human Development Report 2025*.

### Work in Progress:

- Justifying A Labor Right to Counterpublics (under review)
- Realist Ideology Critique and Effective Worker Resistance (with Ozan Alakavuklar) (under review)
- Legitimacy and Experimentation: What If There Are Alternatives? (under review)
- How To Do Political Theory in a Radical Realist Key (with Ben Cross, Enzo Rossi, Manon Westphal, Carlo Burelli, Koshka Duff, Janosch Prinz, and Paul Raekstad) (under review)
- Political Experimentation Between Knowledge and Contestation

### Book Reviews

- *A Philosopher Looks at Digital Communication*, Onora O'Neill. Cambridge University Press, 2021. *Metascience*, 32, 2023, pp. 219-222.
- *10% Less Democracy: Why You Should Trust Elites A Little More and the Masses A Little Less*, Garrett Jones. Stanford University Press, 2020. *Democratic Theory*, 8(1), 2021, pp. 128-132.

### SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

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- February 2026, Philosophy Colloquium, Koc University **(Invited)**.  
Paper title: Legitimacy and Experimentation: What If There Are Alternatives?
- August 2025, ECPR General Conference, Thessaloniki.  
Paper title: *Worker Resistance and Ideology Critique*
- March 2025, Law & Philosophy Colloquium, Pompeu Fabra University.  
Paper title: *Justifying A Labor Right to Counterpublics (Invited)*
- October 2024, Workshop “The New Structural Transformation of the Digital Public Sphere”, University of Groningen.  
Paper title: *What is the Point of Social Media? Corporate Purpose and Digital Democratization (Invited)*
- March 2023, Workshop on “Ethics and Politics of Technology”, Delft University of Technology.  
Paper title: *Big Tech, Algorithmic Power, and Democratic Control (Invited)*.
- September 2021, MANCEPT Workshops, University of Manchester.  
Paper Title: *Digital Domination: Social Media and Contestatory Democracy*
- December 2020, Workshop on “Political Normativity”, Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest.  
Paper Title: *Ideology Critique without Moralism (Invited)*.
- June 2020, RANT Workshop, VU Amsterdam.  
Paper Title: *Global Political Legitimacy and Structural Power (Invited)*.

### TEACHING AND SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

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#### Utrecht University

As Lead Instructor

- Political Philosophy, BSc in PPE (Spring 2025, 2026)  
Lectures (75 students), course coordination, and seminars
- Democracy & Digitalization, MA in Philosophy (Autumn 2025)  
Seminars and course coordination (15 students)

As Co-Instructor

- Institutions and the Rise of Capitalism, BSc in PPE (Autumn 2023, 2024, 2025)

As Supervisor (2024-present)

- An ongoing PhD student, Eight BSc theses in PPE, two MA theses in Philosophy

## University of Amsterdam

As Lead Instructor

The Ethics and Politics of Markets, MSc (Spring 2022)

Democracy & Digitalization, MSc (Autumn 2021)

Political Economy, BSc (Autumn 2021)

Political Theory & Economic Institutions, BSc (Spring 2020, Spring 2021, Spring 2022)

As Co-Instructor

Introduction to Political Theory: Utopia & Dystopia, BSc (Autumn 2021)

As Thesis Supervisor

Two BSc theses in Political Science (Spring 2021), five MSc theses in Political Science (Spring 2022)

## External Dissertation Committee Member

Jonne Maas, TU Delft (2025)

## TRAINING IN TEACHING

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- University Teaching Qualification (BKO), Utrecht University (January 2025)
- Two-day course on active teaching methods at the University of Amsterdam (Spring 2020)
- Two-day course on feedback methods at the University of Amsterdam (Spring 2020)
- Three-day course on teaching skills for PhD candidates and junior lecturers at the University of Amsterdam (Autumn 2018)

## AWARDS, GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

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- Sabanci International Research Award in Social Sciences (\$10,000) (2025)
- Postdoctoral grant by the Foundation of Science and Technology in Portugal (Declined, approximate value: €150,000) (2022)
- University of Amsterdam travel grant (€550) (2019)
- Fully funded PhD position within the NWO Project “Legitimacy Beyond Consent” (2017)
- DAAD doctoral scholarship (Declined) (2017)
- DAAD scholarship for graduate students (€10,500) (2015)
- High Honours Degree, Bogazici University (2015)
- Turkish Education Foundation merit scholarship for high-achieving students (Approximate value with exchange rates at that time: €19,000) (2010)

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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### Refereeing Experience

*American Political Science Review* (x4); *European Journal of Political Theory* (x4); *Constellations* (x2); *American Journal of Political Science*; *The Journal of Politics*; *Perspectives on Politics*; *Political Studies*; *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*; *Journal of Social Philosophy*; *Journal of Business Ethics*; *Social Theory and Practice*; *Journal of Ethics*; *Social Philosophy and Policy*; *Philosophy & Technology*; *Inquiry*; *Ethics & Global Politics*; *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*; *Moral Philosophy & Politics*; *Philosophia*; *Res Publica*; *Democratic Theory*; *Philosophy and Public Issues*; *Organization*

### Organizational Experience (Selection)

- Member of Scientific Committee, 4TU-ESDIT Conference: *Technology Ethics in Turbulent Times* (2026)
- Co-convenor, Conference Panel at the ECPR General Conference: *Digitalization of Work and the Prospects of Democratizing the Economy* (2025)
- Co-convenor, Conference at Utrecht University: *Reconceiving Business Corporations in Times of Political Contestation* (2025)
- Co-convenor, Conference Section at the ECPR General Conference: *The Political Theory of the Digital Public Sphere* (2023)

- Co-convenor, OZSW Workshop at Utrecht University: *New Directions in Democratic Theory* (2023)
- Co-convenor, Workshop at Utrecht University: *Order, Legitimacy, and Domination: Realist and Republican Perspectives* (2022)
- Co-convenor, Conference at the University of Amsterdam: *Global Capital as the Leviathan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* (2022)
- Convenor, Short Intensive Course at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research on *Experts, Science, and Politics* with Zeynep Pamuk (2020)
- Co-convenor & Co-initiator, *Amsterdam Graduate Conference in Political Theory* (2019)

### Administrative Roles

- Incoming Managing Director, The Ethics Institute, Utrecht University, starting from September 2026.
- Member, Board of Examiners, PPE BSc program, Utrecht University, 2023-present.
- Member, Curriculum Taskforce, PPE BSc program, Utrecht University, 2025.
- Member, Two Search Committees for 3 Postdoctoral and 1 PhD positions, 2024-2025.
- Co-coordinator, Study Group in Political Philosophy at the Dutch Research School of Philosophy (OZSW), 2023-2025.

### DEI Activities

- Member, Minorities and Philosophy working group at Utrecht University, 2022-2023.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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### Public Lecture

Should citizens govern Big Tech algorithms? *Utrecht Day of Philosophy*, 2023.

### Podcast (in Turkish)

Organizer & Host, 'Political Philosophy Interviews' in collaboration with *Öncül Analytic Philosophy Magazine* (5 episodes, 2020-2021)

## AFFILIATIONS

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- ECPR Standing Group on Political Theory (2022-present)
- ECPR Standing Group on Methods of Normative Political Theory (2022-present)

## LANGUAGES

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Turkish (native), English (fluent), Dutch (A2)

## REFERENCES

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**Enzo Rossi**, Associate Professor of Political Theory, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam. PO Box 15578, 1001 NB Amsterdam, Netherlands  
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