Department of Philosophy

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Department of Philosophy

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Mohist Universal Love as an insurance

Date : 27 October 2025 (Monday)

Time : 16:45 – 18:15

Venue : LKK302 & Zoom Seminar

Scan the QR code or
click HERE to join the zoom meeting room.

Mohism is often associated with the image of being impractical, idealistic, or overly demanding. This image originates from Mohists insistence of 'universal love' which demands one to consider the interests of others as equally weighty to the interests of oneself. This is often criticized as naive and overly demanding. Contemporary literature has endeavored to offer more moderate interpretations of 'universal love,' which usually reserve the most demanding requirements for the ruling elites while the common people only need to fulfil moderate obligations. These moderate approaches to universal love do seem more reasonable, but the come with a cost of limiting Mohism's range of application. In this article, I propose an alternative interpretation that can avoid being naive or overly demanding without limiting the application of universal love to the elites. I will propose that Mohist universal love should be interpreted as a principle of justice that guides the distribution of resources in a fair manner. Yet it is not justified as a legitimate demand of sacrifice for the common good, but as a principle that promotes long-term enlightened self-interests of individuals, akin to a universal insurance scheme that protects individual welfare against the risk of a wide range of misfortune in this world.

All are welcome

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