Capabilities theory, originally developed by Amartya Sen, has been extremely influential in development contexts as a metric of social equality and inequality. More recently, Martha Nussbaum has extended the theory, developing a capability-based political philosophy of justice, with universalist aspirations. However, despite its influence and appeal, significant questions remain concerning some of the foundational concepts of capabilities theory, such as Nussbaum’s use of the concept of human dignity, as well as the justification of the theory and its ability to guide concrete social policy decision-making. The aims of this workshop will be to critically appraise the theoretical foundations of capabilities theory and to investigate the theory’s application to a range of important practical issues, including disability, healthcare, ecological justice, and free speech.

**Program**

9.00am - 9.10am  
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION  
Professor Catriona Mackenzie (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

9.10am - 10.20am  
‘The Concept of Dignity in Nussbaum and Kant’  
Dr Paul Formosa and Professor Catriona Mackenzie (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

10.20am - 10.40am  
MORNING TEA

10.40am - 11.50am  
‘Each to Their Own: Can the Capabilities Approach be Legitimate and Justified?’  
Dr Jeremy Moss (Social Justice Initiative, University of Melbourne)

11.50am - 1.00pm  
‘What can human rights teach us about the capabilities approach?’  
Dr Linda Barclay (Philosophy, Monash)

1.00pm - 2.00pm  
LUNCH

2.00pm - 3.10pm  
‘Respecting patients as persons: could capabilities thinking help support ethical healthcare?’  
Professor Vikki Entwistle (Social Dimensions of Health Institute, University of Dundee)

3.10pm - 3.30pm  
AFTERNOON TEA

3.30pm - 4.40pm  
‘Applying a capabilities approach: universalist implications for freedom of speech’  
Associate Professor Katharine Geiber (Politics, University of Queensland)

4.40pm - 5.50pm  
‘Rethinking Ecological Justice: Capabilities and Critics’  
Professor David Schlosberg (Government, University of Sydney)

5.50pm - 6.00pm  
CONCLUSION  
Professor Catriona Mackenzie (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

To register, please contact Dr Paul Formosa at Paul.Formosa@mq.edu.au