

The **Department of Law** at the **University of Cyprus** kindly invite you to a research seminar on

**Civil Disobedience in a Democracy: A Matter of Right?**

**Wednesday, 16 December 2020 at 16:00-18:00**

by Dr. Andreas Marcou

Chair: Dr. Charalambos Papacharalambous

**Abstract**

From protest against the recent state-mandated lockdown and vaccinations, to dissent against police brutality and racial injustice, people around the world resort to unlawful acts to challenge government action, raise awareness for an ongoing injustice, or as a means to express their political positions. Many of these protesters lay claim to civil disobedience, a method of political lawbreaking that has a long and venerable history. And yet not all protests support agendas that are equally morally valuable, or even factually correct. In this paper, I evaluate the existence of a moral, not a legal, right to civil disobedience. Recognising a moral right to civil disobedience means that citizens may disobey even if they defend offensive or unworthy ends. Against arguments that view the moral right to civil disobedience as a substitute of moral rights of political participation, I draw a link between democratic government and the moral right to engage in unlawful protest. The moral right to civil disobedience emerges as a corollary, not a substitute, to rights of political participation inherent in a democracy. Discussion on a moral right to civil disobedience is not of sheer academic concern. In fact, this paper investigates the most appropriate state responses to civil disobedience, given the existence of a moral right to disobey. I maintain that the relevant courts adjudicating instances of civil disobedience should, in recognition of the moral right to disobey, refrain from attaching harsh punishments and instead opt for lenient or symbolic punishment.

**Speaker Bio**

Dr Andreas Marcou is a Lecturer in EU Law and Theory at the School of Law of UCLan University (Cyprus). Andreas completed his PhD in Law at Queen Mary, University of London, in 2020. In addition, Andreas holds an LLB from the same University and an MA in Legal and Political Theory from University College, London. His research interests include republican and liberal theories, law's authority, theories of democracy and legitimacy at the national and the European level, and the duties and responsibilities of citizens within a liberal democracy. Andreas is a Research Fellow of the Jean Monnet Module 'EU Law and Governance in Populist Times' running at UCLan Cyprus, and an Editor of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Populism.

**Practical Details**

**Language:** The seminar will be conducted in English.

**Format:** Online Webinar

**Registration:** Participation is open, but you must register [here](#) to receive an individual access to the Zoom meeting.