Lecture 10 – Against Redistribution

1. Last time:
   a. The rejection of utilitarianism as a consequentialist theory of morality, justice and rights
   b. The non-utilitarian account of rights: rights as constraints on the pursuit of worthy goals
   c. The fundamental right not to be subjected to force and aggression (e.g. to benefit others)

2. Context for today’s discussion
   a. Large and growing economic inequalities in America and other countries
   b. Disputes about the justice of economic inequalities

3. Utilitarianism supports redistributive taxation in the direction of more equality
   a. Because of the declining marginal utility of wealth
   b. So long as redistributive taxation does not reduce aggregate economic output/growth

4. Nozick’s two central claims in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*
   a. The minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified
   b. Any state more extensive than the minimal state violates people’s rights

5. Nozick’s argument against a more extensive, redistributive state
   a. Arguments in favor of a redistributive state typically invoke some “patterned” principle
   b. But all such principles have unacceptable implications (they require violating people’s rights)

6. Nozick’s two main arguments for why all patterned principles are unacceptable
   a. Maintaining a pattern requires continual interference with people’s liberty to do what they please with what they own
   b. Maintaining a pattern requires redistributive taxation of income from labor, but taxation income from labor is on a par with forced labor: it gives others a property right in you, your actions, and your labor