

PHIL 537 Political Philosophy

Seminars: Mondays 2pm – 4:30pm

Room: MHP 102

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1pm – 3pm or by email appointment

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Overview

This seminar will focus on the topic of justice, in particular distributive justice. Here are some of the questions we will tackle:

- What is the main site of distributive justice, that is, who or what are the relevant objects to which principles of justice apply?
- What are the grounds of distributive justice? Is justice primarily concerned with one value, such as equality, or is it comprised of a plurality of conflicting considerations?
- What is the scope of principles of distributive justice? Are they global in scope, or limited to those with whom we stand in particular relationships?
- What is the correct principle of distributive justice? Equality, priority to the worst off, sufficiency, or something else?
- What is the currency of distributive justice, that is, what gets distributed by the principles of distributive justice? Welfare, resources, capabilities?
- What role, if any, should judgments about individual responsibility play in a theory of justice?

To help us address these questions we will read works by philosophers such as: Elizabeth Anderson, G.A. Cohen, Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, Robert Nozick, Derek Parfit, Michael Otsuka, Samuel Scheffler, Hillel Steiner, and John Rawls. No background in political philosophy is presupposed.

Expectations and Requirements

Each week there will be two or three papers that are listed as required reading. Everyone will be expected to have read this material prior to class, and be prepared to

discuss this material. I also provide a brief list of further readings for each week, but there is no expectation that anyone will have read this material.

Those taking the course for credit will be evaluated as follows:

Essay (5,000 words)	70%
Seminar presentation	20%
Seminar participation	10%

Topics and Readings (note the schedule below is provisional and subject to revision)

Week 1 (8/26) Introduction (no reading)

Week 2 (9/2) Labor Day (no class)

Part I The Role and Site of Distributive Justice

Week 3 (9/9) Social Cooperation and Social Contract

Required: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, sect. 1-4, 10-17
Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 183-204

Further: Barry, *Theories of Justice*, pp. 241-254
Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, pp. 223-226
Buchanan, "Justice as Reciprocity versus Subject-Centered Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1990)
Gibbard, "Constructing Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1991)

Week 4 (9/16) The Basic Structure as Subject

Required: Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, lecture VII
Murphy, "Institutions and the Demands of Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1999)

Further: Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*, chapters 6 and 9
Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 205-213
Cohen, "Where the Action Is: On the Site of Distributive Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1997)
Porter, "The Division of Moral Labor and the Basic

Structure Restriction," *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics* (2009)

Scheffler, "Is the Basic Structure Basic?" in *The Egalitarian Conscience*

Week 5 (9/23)

Facts, Principles, and Rules of Regulation

Required:

Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, chapters 6-7

Further:

Miller, "Political Philosophy for Earthlings," *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*
 Freeman, "Constructivism, Facts, and Moral Justification," in *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*
 Valentini and Ronzoni, "On the Meta-Ethical Status of Constructivism: Reflections on G.A. Cohen's "Facts and Principles"" *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* (2008)
 Pogge, "Cohen to the Rescue!" *Ratio* (2008)

Part II

Principles of Distributive Justice

Week 6 (9/30)

Priority

Required:

Parfit, "Equality or Priority?" in *The Ideal of Equality*
 Otsuka and Voorhoeve, "Why it Matters that Some Are Worse off than Others: An Argument Against the Priority View," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (2009)
 Williams, "The Priority View Bites the Dust?" *Utilitas* (2012)

Further:

Parfit, "Another Defence of the Priority View," *Utilitas* (2012)
 Temkin, "Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection," *The Ideal of Equality*
 Crisp, "In Defence of the Priority View: A Response to Otsuka and Voorhoeve," *Utilitas* (2012)
 Otsuka, "Prioritarianism and the Separateness of Persons," *Utilitas* (2012)

Week 7 (10/07)

Sufficiency

Required:

Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal," *Ethics* (1987)
 Crisp, "Equality, Priority, and Compassion," *Ethics* (2003)

Casal, "Why Sufficiency is Not Enough," *Ethics* (2007)

Further: Frankfurt, "Equality and Respect," *Social Research* (1997)
 Temkin, "Egalitarianism Defended," *Ethics* (2003)
 Crisp, "Egalitarianism and Compassion," *Ethics* (2004)
 Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, chapter 9

Week 8 (10/14) Equality

Required: Nagel, "Equality," in *Mortal Questions*
 O'Neill, "What Should Egalitarians Believe?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (2008)
 Mason, "Equality of Opportunity, Old and New," *Ethics* (2001)

Further: Richards, "Equality of Opportunity," *Ratio* (1997)
 Scanlon, "The Diversity of Objections to Inequality," in *The Difficulty of Tolerance*
 Williams, "The Idea of Equality," in *Problems of the Self*
 Sreenivasan, "Equality, Opportunity, Ambiguity," *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics* (forthcoming)

Part III The Currency of Distributive Justice

Week 9 (10/21) Equality of Welfare

Required: Dworkin, "What is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1981)
 Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics* (1989)

Further: Arneson, "Liberalism, Distributive Subjectivism, and Equal Opportunity for Welfare," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1990)
 Cohen, "Expensive Taste Rides Again," in *Dworkin and his Critics*
 Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, chapter 7
 T.M. Scanlon, "Preference and Urgency," *Journal of Philosophy* (1975)

- Week 10 (10/28) Equality of Resources
- Required: Dworkin, "What is Equality? Part 2: Equality of Resources,"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (1981)
Otsuka, "Luck, Insurance, and Equality," *Ethics* (2002)
- Further: Olson, "Equality and Responsibility" (unpublished)
Williams, "Dworkin on Capability" *Ethics* (2002)
Dworkin, "Sovereign Virtue Revisited," *Ethics* (2002)
Heath, 'Dworkin's Auction,' *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics*
(2004)
- Week 11 (11/04) Democratic Equality
- Required: Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* (1999)
Scheffler, 'What is Egalitarianism?' *Philosophy & Public*
Affairs (2003)
Dworkin, 'Equality, Luck and Hierarchy', *Philosophy & Public*
Affairs (2003)
- Further: Stemplowska, "Responsibility and Respect: Reconciling Two
Egalitarian Visions" in *Responsibility and Distributive*
Justice
Scheffler, "Choice, Circumstance, and the Value of
Equality," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 4 (2005)
Arneson, "Luck Egalitarianism Interpreted and Defended,"
Philosophical Topics 32 (2004)
Schemmel, "Distributive and Relational Equality," *Politics,*
Philosophy, & Economics (2012)
- Part IV** **Freedom, Equality, and Efficiency**
- Week 12 (11/11) Self-Ownership and Equality
- Required: Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, chapters 3-4
Vallentyne, Steiner, and Otsuka, "Why Left-Libertarianism is
Not Incoherent, Indeterminate, or Irrelevant,"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (2005)
- Further: Steiner, "Choice and Circumstance," *Ratio* (1997)

- Otsuka, 'Self-Ownership and Equality: A Lockean Reconciliation,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1998)
- Vallentyne, "Self-Ownership and Equality: Brute Luck, Gifts, Universal Domination, and Leximin," *Ethics* (1997)
- Fried, 'Left-Libertarianism: A Review Essay,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 32 (2004)
- Quong, "Left-Libertarianism: Rawlsian not Luck Egalitarian," *Journal of Political Philosophy* (2011)

Week 13 (11/18)

A Trilemma

Required:

- Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality*, chapter 5
- Casal, "Mills, Rawls, Cohen, and the Egalitarian Trilemma" (unpublished)

Further:

- M. Titelbaum, "What Would a Rawlsian Ethos of Justice Look Like?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (2008)
- Fabre, "Distributive Justice and Freedom: Cohen on Money and Labour," *Utilitas* (2010)
- Otsuka, "Freedom of Occupational Choice," *Ratio* (2008)
- Quong, "Justice Beyond Equality," *Social Theory and Practice* (2010)

Part V

The Scope of Distributive Justice

Week 14 (11/25)

Cosmopolitanism

Required:

- C. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, part III
- S. Caney, *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory*, chapter 4

Further:

- C. Beitz, "Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment," *Journal of Philosophy* (1982)
- D. Miller, "Against Global Egalitarianism," *Journal of Ethics* (2005)
- T. Pogge, *Realizing Rawls*, part III
- A. Sangiovanni, "Global justice and the moral arbitrariness of birth" *The Monist* (2011)

Week 15 (12/02)

Coercion and Authorship

Required:

M. Blake, "Distributive Justice, Coercion, and Autonomy,"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (2001)

T. Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (2005)

A. Abizadeh, "Cooperation, Pervasive Impact, and Coercion:
On the Scope (not Site) of Distributive Justice,"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (2007)

Further:

R. Child, "Global Migratory Potential and the Scope of
Justice," *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics* (2011)

J. Cohen and C. Sabel, "Extra Rempublicam Nulla Justitia?"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (2006)

A.J. Julius, "Nagel's Atlas," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (2006)

Sangiovanni, "Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,"
Philosophy & Public Affairs (2007)