

**PHIL 174 Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice
Spring 2017**

Lectures: MF 8:30am-9:45am

Location: MHP 101

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Office Hours: MF 10am-11am or by email appointment

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Course Description and Learning Objectives

What is a just society? What are we, as moral agents and citizens, required to do to help bring about a more just society, and a global society that is more just? How should our major political, economic, and legal institutions be designed if our goal is to live in a just society? Is there any sense in which wages in a free market economy can be unjust or exploitative? As citizens, are we under a special duty to obey the laws of our society? Do principles of justice apply only within particular political communities, or are principles of justice global in scope? What restrictions on immigration, if any, are compatible with living in a just global community? Do we have duties of justice arising from wrongs committed by past generations? Do we owe duties of justice to future generations?

This course will focus on these questions, among others, and in doing so provide you with the opportunity to think critically about issues that are both philosophically interesting and politically important.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to identify the central factors relevant in differentiating competing conceptions of justice and good citizenship. You should be able to engage in clear, careful analysis of how we, as moral agents and citizens, may be required to act to bring about a more just society and a more just global society, and also be able to make informed contributions to debates about how we might improve legal, economic and political institutions.

Required Texts

All the required texts will be posted on Blackboard.

Note that it is strictly forbidden to use and/or distribute these texts for any purpose other than reading for the class. Doing so would constitute a copyright violation.

Grading

Midterm paper: 1/3 of provisional grade

Final exam: 2/3 of provisional grade

Your grades on the midterm and the final exam constitute your *provisional* grade for the course. Your *final* grade can also be affected by your *preparation*, *participation*, and *attendance*. More on all this below.

The midterm paper must be 2,000-2,300 words in length. You are required to submit the essay via Blackboard. There will be a penalty of one letter grade increment for every day after the deadline an essay is submitted. So, for example, if you submit your paper one day late, and the paper is judged to be worth an A, you will only receive an A- grade for the paper. If you submit the same paper two days late, it will receive a grade of B+, and so on. Note that a submission on the correct date but after the 5pm deadline will count as one day late.

The midterm paper is due **Monday February 13th at 5pm.**

The final exam will be **Monday May 8th at 11am.**

Further details about the content of the midterm paper and the final exam will be provided in due course. Please see the University Catalogue or Grade Handbook for definitions of particular grades.

Preparation: Each week, except for the first week and the last week, you must write approximately 250-300 words on the week's reading, which must be submitted to your discussion section instructor at the outset of class. You can choose to provide a brief summary of one part of the week's reading, or you can provide your own analysis or critique of some part of the weekly reading (e.g. explain why you think the author is mistaken about some point, or discuss some point that is puzzling you). These assignments will not be graded, but they must

be completed each week to a minimal standard. Students who fail to submit their weekly writing assignment (or hand in assignments that fails to meet the minimum standard) more than twice will have their final grade *lowered by one grade increment*. So, for example, if your provisional grade is a B+, but you fail to submit your writing assignments three or more times, then your final grade will drop to a B. Successfully completing the weekly writing assignments is thus a way of *maintaining* your provisional grade. These weekly assignments provide you with an extra incentive to keep up with the weekly readings and come prepared to each discussion section.

Participation: Participation in discussion sections is an important part of making the course a success. Students who regularly make excellent class contributions in discussion sections will, at the end of the course, have their overall grade increased by one letter grade increment. So, for example, if your provisional grade is a B+ but you regularly make excellent contributions to your discussion section, your final grade will be an A-. Note: *your performance in class discussion can only improve your final grade*—it cannot diminish your final grade.

Attendance: Attendance **at both lectures and discussion sections is mandatory**. If you are absent from more than two of your discussion sections without a valid and verifiable excuse your final grade will be *lowered by one grade increment*. If you are absent from more than five lectures without a valid and verifiable excuse your final grade will be *lowered by one grade increment*. Discussion section instructors will take attendance at both lectures and discussion sections.

Preparation for Class/Class Format

The format for the course is a combination of lectures and discussion, and you are encouraged to ask questions of me, your discussion instructor, and of each other whenever something is puzzling, or whenever you feel an important point is being overlooked. The aim of the course is to have thoughtful and well-reasoned discussions and arguments about the issues, and the course will be more intellectually rewarding the more each person joins in the discussion. Participating in discussion sections is also a small part of how you will be assessed (see above). If you are particularly uncomfortable with public speaking, please speak to your discussion section instructor about this.

You will be expected to come to the discussion sections having done the required reading. When you prepare for class, it's important not simply to read the assigned material, but to read it carefully and critically. This may be the first time

you have read philosophical work, and the style of writing and argument can take some getting used to. You will see from the syllabus that I have not assigned a great deal of reading for each week measured in terms of the number of pages, but the material is sometimes dense and difficult: a lot of complicated arguments can be found in the space of just a few pages, and this means you may need to read the material more than once to gain a clear understanding of an author's argument. I strongly encourage you to make careful notes as you read. Of course different people have different methods of note-taking, but whatever your method, you should be taking notes in a way that will help you achieve the following aims:

- Gain a clear understanding of the author's main claims and the arguments the author uses to try and establish these claims. You have a clear understanding when you can accurately summarize the author's key claims and arguments in your own words.
- Identify any terms/claims/ideas that remain puzzling to you.
- Try to understand how the author's view might be challenged. This means you must read with a critical eye. Try to identify the weak points in an argument or think of counterexamples to what the author is saying, or look for implications of their view that might seem unacceptable or inconsistent.
- Try to understand the wider implications of the author's position—see how his/her view fits (or doesn't fit) with the views of other philosophers we are reading.

Policies on Disability, Academic Integrity, and Electronic Devices

Students who need to request accommodations based on a disability are required to register each semester with the Disability Services and Programs. In addition, a letter of verification to the instructors from the Disability Services and Programs is needed for the semester you are enrolled in this course. If you have any questions concerning this procedure, please contact the course instructor and Disability Services and Programs at (213) 740-0776, STU 301.

No form of plagiarism or other type of academic dishonesty will be tolerated, and **ignorance of the rules regarding plagiarism is no excuse**. If in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or any other question about academic integrity, please ask your discussion section instructor or me. Do not assume the answer can be obtained from another source. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the

expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>

The use of tablets, laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices in lectures is prohibited. The use of these devices is distracting for other students, and studies have shown that students who take notes by hand tend to do better learning the material being discussed. Lecture slides will be made available via Blackboard after class. You should check Blackboard and your University email account regularly for information about the course.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1 Course Introduction & Political Obligation

- 01/09 Introduction to Course
- 01/13 Consent & Fair Play
- Reading: No required reading

Week 2 Political Obligation

- 01/16 No Class - MLK
- 01/20 Associate Duties & Natural Duty
- Reading: A. John Simmons, "The Duty to Obey and Our Natural Moral Duties" pp. 93-120

Week 3 A Theory of Justice

- 01/23 *Theory of Justice*: Fundamental Ideas
- 01/27 *Theory of Justice*: Fundamental Ideas
- Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-19

Week 4 A Theory of Justice

- 01/30 *Theory of Justice*: Two Principles
- 02/03 *Theory of Justice*: Two Principles

- Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 52-78

Week 5 ***Libertarianism***

- 02/06 Self-Ownership
- 02/10 World-Ownership
- Reading: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, & Utopia*, pp. 149-182

Week 6 ***Freedom, Money, and Property***

- 02/13 Defining Freedom
- 02/17 Distributing Freedom
- Reading: G.A. Cohen, "Freedom and Money"

Week 7 ***Socialism***

- 02/20 No Class – President's Day
- 02/24 Principles
- Reading: G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*

Week 8 ***Socialism/What Should Be For Sale?***

- 02/27 Limits
- 03/03 What Should be for Sale?
- Reading: Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not be For Sale*, pp. 91-112

Week 9 ***Gender v. Culture?***

- 03/06 Gender Inequality and Discrimination
- 03/10 Liberalism, Culture, and the Family
- Reading: Susan Moller Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"

Week 10 ***Spring Break***

- 03/13 No Class
- 03/17 No Class

Week 11 ***Religion and Politics***

- 03/20 Political Liberalism
- 03/24 Objections
- Reading: Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God v. John Rawls?"

Week 12 ***Global Justice***

- 03/27 The Case for Global Justice

- 03/31 The Case Against Global Justice
- Reading: Cécile Fabre, "Global Distributive Justice: An Egalitarian Perspective"

Week 13 *Borders and Immigration*

- 04/03 The Case for Open Borders
- 04/07 The Case for Restrictions
- Reading: David Miller, "Immigration: The Case for Limits"

Week 14 *Justice and Past Generations*

- 04/10 Inheriting Rights
- 04/14 Inheriting Duties
- Reading: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations"

Week 15 *Justice and Future Generations*

- 04/17 Justice Between Generations
- 04/21 The Non-Identity Problem
- Reading: Tim Mulgan, *Ethics for a Broken World*, pp. 1-16, 173-178, 181-184

Week 16 *Justice and Future Generations, and Review*

- 04/24 The Just Savings Principle
- 04/28 Review
- Reading: No required reading