

**PHIL 174 Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice  
Fall 2020**

Lectures: MWF 10am-10:50am

**Note:** The lectures are asynchronous and not “live”. All lectures will be recorded and made available via a link on Blackboard at the time they are scheduled to occur. Although all lectures will be recorded, I will also run a “live” Q&A session every Friday morning at 10am via Zoom (link to be provided). These sessions will also be recorded for students unable to attend at that time. Discussion sections are synchronous, though they will also be recorded.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-11am via Zoom (please email for appointment during these hours or for other appointment times)

### **Course Description and Learning Objectives**

What is a just society? What are we required to do to help bring about a more just society, and a more just global order? How should our political, economic, and legal institutions be designed if our goal is to live in a just society? As citizens, are we under a special duty to obey the laws of our society? Is there any sense in which wages in a free market economy can be unjust or exploitative? What is the relationship between freedom and money? 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?

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 world, 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

Quizzes:	10% of provisional grade
Writing Assignments:	25% of provisional grade
Midterm paper:	25% of provisional grade
Final exam:	40% of provisional grade

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

Quizzes: Each week (apart from the first week of semester) your discussion section instructor will provide a short quiz during discussion section. The quiz will focus on some aspect of the lectures, and so the quizzes reward students who are keeping up with the lectures. **You can miss a maximum of two quizzes without penalty.**

Writing Assignments: For the writing assignments you must write 250-300 words in response to an assigned question, which must be submitted to your discussion section instructor prior to class. Each assignment will be graded, however, **you only submit 6 assignments out of a possible total of 12 weeks.**

The Midterm Paper: is 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 **Thursday September 24<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.**

The final exam will be **Monday November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8am (24 hrs. "at home" exam).**

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.

*Participation:* Participation in discussion sections is an important part of making the course a success. Students who regularly make excellent 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. Also, students who choose to participate in USC's Joint Educational Project and successfully complete that program will receive an increase of one letter grade increment. Note, however, that **you can receive the one letter grade increment increase only once, either via excellent class participation or via successfully completing the JEP: you cannot receive two increases in your final grade.**

*Attendance:* **Attendance at discussion sections is mandatory.** If you are absent from more than two 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 four discussion sections your final grade will be *lowered by two increments*.

### **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.

Note: Lecture slides will be made available via Blackboard at the end of each week. You should check Blackboard and your University email account regularly for information about the course

### **Policies on Disability and Academic Integrity**

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. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>. 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/SIACS/>

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

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|---------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | <b><i>Course Introduction &amp; Political Obligation</i></b>                |
| • 08/17       | Introduction to Course  |
| • 08/19       | Legitimate Authority  |
| • 08/21       | Consent   |
| • Reading:    | No required reading   |
| <b>Week 2</b> | <b><i>Political Obligation</i></b>  |
| • 08/24       | Fair Play   |
| • 08/26       | Associative Duties  |
| • 08/28       | Natural Duty  |
| • Reading:    | A. John Simmons, "The Duty to Obey and Our Natural Moral Duties" pp. 93-120 |
| <b>Week 3</b> | <b><i>Dissent and Disobedience</i></b>                                      |
| • 08/31       | Injustice and Illegitimacy  |
| • 09/02       | Civil Disobedience  |
| • 09/04       | Uncivil Disobedience  |
| • Reading:    | Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"                     |
| <b>Week 4</b> | <b><i>A Theory of Justice</i></b>   |
| • 09/07       | Labor Day – No Class  |

- 09/09 *Theory of Justice: Fundamental Ideas*
- 09/11 *Theory of Justice: Fundamental Ideas*
- Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-19

**Week 5** *A Theory of Justice*

- 09/14 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
- 09/16 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
- 09/18 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
- Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 52-78

**Week 6** *Libertarianism*

- 09/21 Self-Ownership
- 09/23 Rights
- 09/25 Taxation and World-Ownership
- Reading: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, & Utopia*, pp. 149-182

**Week 7** *Freedom, Money, and Property*

- 09/28 Freedom
- 09/30 Freedom and Money
- 10/02 Freedom and Property
- Reading: G.A. Cohen, "Freedom and Money"

**Week 8** *Socialism*

- 10/05 Cohen's Camping Trip
- 10/07 Equality and Community
- 10/09 Objections
- Reading: G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*

**Week 9** *Crime and Punishment*

- 10/12 Consequentialism
- 10/14 Retribution
- 10/16 Duty
- Reading: Tommie Shelby, "Punishment"

**Week 10** *Gender and Justice*

- 10/19 Beyond Discrimination
- 10/21 The Role of the Family
- 10/23 Liberalism and Religion
- Reading: Gina Schouten, "Is the Gendered Division of Labor a Problem of Distribution?"

- Week 11**                      ***Free Speech***
- 10/26                      Rationales
  - 10/28                      Speakers and Listeners
  - 10/30                      Limits
  - Reading:                Jeff Howard, “Dangerous Speech”
- Week 12**                      ***Borders and Immigration***
- 11/02                      The Case for Open Borders
  - 11/04                      The Case for Restrictions
  - 11/06                      The Case for Restrictions
  - Reading:                Sarah Fine, “Freedom of Association is Not the Answer”
- Week 13**                      ***Justice and Past Generations***
- 11/09                      Do the Dead Have Rights?
  - 11/11                      Inheriting Rights and Duties
  - 11/13                      Review
  - Reading:                Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”

## **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### **Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic.

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)



*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)