

**PHIL 174 Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice
Spring 2022**

Lectures: MWF 10am-10:50am (MHP 101)

All students must also register for one weekly discussion section

Jonathan Quong
School of Philosophy
quong@usc.edu

Office Hours: MF 11am-12pm (please email for other appointment times)

Note on Zoom and in-person learning

As required by the University, the first week of the semester will be conducted via Zoom only (all three lectures as well as the discussion sections). Beginning Jan. 18th, in-person teaching will resume as normal, unless there are any further policy notices from the university. Students are expected to attend both lectures and discussion section in-person unless there are valid reasons (e.g. COVID isolation rules) to participate remotely. Lectures and discussion sections will be available via Zoom for those who are required to isolate at home, but in-person participation is expected whenever possible.

Course Description and Learning Objectives

What is a just society? 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? What forms of resistance, if any, to unjust laws in a democracy are permissible? 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? Can there be systemic forms of injustice without any individuals acting unjustly?

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

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

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

Participation: Participation in discussion sections is an important part of making the course a success. Coming to your discussion section prepared, having done the required reading, and regularly making thoughtful contributions to the discussion is something on which you will be assessed. Your TA will provide more details on how participation will be assessed.

Writing Assignments: For the weekly writing assignments you must write 300-350 words in response to an assigned question, which must be submitted to your discussion section instructor on Monday at 5pm prior to the relevant class. Each assignment will be graded, and **you may choose which weeks to submit your writing assignments, but you must submit 5 (and no more than 5) assignments during the semester.**

You also have an opportunity to “revise and resubmit” one (and only one) of your 5 writing assignments if you wish. If you wish to take advantage of this option on a writing assignment submitted prior to the midterm, the deadline for the resubmission is **Tuesday Feb. 22nd**. If you take advantage of this option for an assignment submitted after the midterm, the deadline for resubmission is **Monday April 9th**. The option is not available for writing assignments submitted

on or after April 9th and is also not available for any assignments where the initial submission involves plagiarism. More details on this process will be provided by your TA.

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 **Wednesday February 16th at 5pm**.

The final exam will be **Monday May 9th at 8am**.

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.

Attendance: **Attendance at discussion sections is mandatory (via Zoom if needed)**. 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 the 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. 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/SJACS/>

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1

Course Introduction & Political Obligation

- 01/10 Introduction to Course
- 01/12 Legitimate Authority
- 01/14 Consent
- Reading: No required reading

Week 2

Political Obligation

- 01/17 MLK Day – University Holiday
- 01/19 Fair Play
- 01/21 Natural Duty
- Reading: A. John Simmons, "The Duty to Obey and Our Natural Moral Duties" pp. 93-120

Week 3

Dissent and Disobedience

- 01/24 Injustice and Illegitimacy
- 01/26 Civil Disobedience
- 01/28 Uncivil Disobedience
- Reading: Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

- Week 4** ***A Theory of Justice***
- 01/31 *Theory of Justice: Fundamental Ideas*
 - 02/02 *Theory of Justice: Fundamental Ideas*
 - 02/04 *Theory of Justice: Fundamental Ideas*
 - Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-19
- Week 5** ***A Theory of Justice***
- 02/07 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
 - 02/09 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
 - 02/11 *Theory of Justice: Two Principles*
 - Reading: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 52-78
- Week 6** ***Libertarianism***
- 02/14 Self-Ownership
 - 02/16 Rights
 - 02/18 Taxation and World-Ownership
 - Reading: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, & Utopia*, pp. 149-182
- Week 7** ***Freedom, Money, and Property***
- 02/21 President's Day – University Holiday
 - 02/23 Freedom and Money
 - 02/25 Freedom and Property
 - Reading: G.A. Cohen, "Freedom and Money"
- Week 8** ***Socialism***
- 02/28 Cohen's Camping Trip
 - 03/02 Equality and Community
 - 03/04 Objections
 - Reading: G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*
- Week 9** ***Crime and Punishment***
- 03/07 Consequentialism
 - 03/09 Retribution
 - 03/11 Duty
 - Reading: Tommie Shelby, "Punishment"

Spring Recess March 13—20

- Week 10** ***Gender and Justice***
- 03/21 Feminism and Gender Justice
 - 03/23 Families, Religions, and Liberalism
 - 03/25 Misogyny
 - Reading: bell hooks, "Black Women and Feminism"
- Week 11** ***Free Speech***
- 03/28 Rationales
 - 03/30 Speakers and Listeners
 - 04/01 Limits
 - Reading: Jeff Howard, "Dangerous Speech"
- Week 12** ***Borders and Immigration***
- 11/02 Background: Debating the Scope of Justice
 - 11/04 The Case for Open Borders
 - 11/06 The Case for Restrictions
 - Reading: Sarah Fine, "The Ethics of Immigration: Self-Determination and the Right to Exclude"
- Week 13** **War**
- 04/09 Just War?
 - 04/11 The Morality Equality of Combatants
 - 04/13 Terrorism and Noncombatants
 - Reading: Helen Frowe, *The Ethics of War and Peace*, ch. 2
- Week 14** ***Justice and Past Generations***
- 04/18 Compensation for Past Harms
 - 04/20 Do the Dead Have Rights?
 - 04/22 Inheriting Rights and Duties
 - Reading: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations"
- Week 15** **Structural or Systemic Injustice**
- 04/25 Structural Injustice: What and Why?
 - 04/27 Injustice Without Individual Wrongdoing?
 - 04/29 Review
 - Reading: Iris Marion Young, "Structure as the Subject of Justice"

Statement on 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. 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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. 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/ss

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

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

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