

Theories of Social Justice

Political Science 331/5331
Fall 2021, Tuesday/Thursday, 2:30–3:50 pm
Classroom: Seigle L004

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Wednesdays, 10:00–11:00 am

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This course overviews the leading contemporary conceptions of social justice, including utilitarian, libertarian, liberal-egalitarian, communitarian, and deliberative-democratic theories, and their implications for the design of political, economic, and social institutions. In addition, this course will examine special topics such as justice between generations, global justice, and the rights of resistance or disobedience.

Learning objectives: By the end of this course, students should have a set of tools for critically evaluating laws, policies, institutions, and social practices with respect to their justice or injustice, as well as an understanding of the theoretical foundations supporting those evaluations. Students should be able to appraise and articulate justice-based arguments for the purpose of engaging in reasonable public discourse and political action.

Course Requirements

This course is open to undergraduates, graduate students, and auditors. The requirements for undergraduate students taking the course for a letter grade are as follows:

1. **Readings.** The required readings listed below average about 75–100 pages per week. These are sometimes dense and difficult works, demanding careful attention. Optional supplementary readings are listed at the end of the syllabus, which might be helpful in studying for the exams or in writing the term paper.
2. **Quizzes.** There will be ten (10) short multiple-choice quizzes, designed to test whether you have done the readings and listened to the lectures. Combined, the quizzes will count for 10% of your final course grade.
3. **Exams.** There will be three (3) exams, the first on September 28th, the second on November 4th, and the third on December 22nd. The exams are designed to test your understanding of the theories we discuss in class. Each exam is worth 20% of your final course grade.

4. **Term Paper, 7–10 pages**, due Monday, December 13th. Paper topics can be found on the course website in Canvas, but with permission you may write on any topic you choose related to the issues discussed in this class. The term paper is worth 30% of your overall grade. Late papers will be marked down two (2) points per day until turned in; extensions will be considered only if requested at least one week (7 days) in advance of the due date.

Graduate students enrolled in the parallel course Political Science 5331 are expected to attend the lectures and do the scheduled readings. The supplementary readings listed at the end of the syllabus are also recommended. Enrolled graduate students will also meet once per week in my office (date and time TBA) to discuss the readings in further depth. Graduate students must write either two shorter papers of at least 10 pages each, or one seminar paper of 20 or more pages in length.

Grading and Expectations

All grading in this course will be on a numerical scale, with the standard correspondence to letter grades as follows:

97–100	A+	74–76	C
94–96	A	70–83	C-
90–93	A-	67–69	D+
87–89	B+	64–66	D
84–86	B	60–63	D-
80–83	B-		
77–79	C+	59 and below	F

Quizzes are multiple-choice. They are designed to be easy, and merely confirm that you have done the reading and listened to the lectures. Each quiz will have six (6) questions, worth two (2) points each. Once you have enough points to secure a grade you are happy with, feel free to skip the rest!

The *exams* are non-cumulative, each covering roughly one third of the course. They will have two parts: a set of identifications, followed by a short essay. The purpose of the exams is to demonstrate your understanding of the theories and their possible applications or implications, and will be graded on that basis. Exams will be graded on a curve.

In contrast to the exams, the purpose of the *term paper* is to provide an opportunity for you to develop and express your own ideas or arguments about social justice. Paper topics can be found on the Canvas website. Papers will be graded on how interesting, clear, and persuasive they are. Although term papers should demonstrate facility with the theories discussed in class, they should not merely recapitulate either the readings or the lectures: term papers that do the latter will generally receive low marks. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor or assistant instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss their term papers.

Extra Credit: Several opportunities for earning extra credit have been built into the class, as follows.

+1 pt for Attendance. Since this is a lecture course, attendance and participation are not required. However, the best learning occurs in person with fellow students. To reward attendance, students will earn 1/20th of a point towards their final course grade for each lecture they attend, up to a maximum of one (1) point total.

+1 pt for Topic Proposal. The topic of the lecture on December 2nd will be determined by class vote. Students can earn up to one (1) extra point towards their final course grade by submitting a topic proposal on or before November 1st. Proposals should explain how the proposed topic relates to or builds on the ideas discussed in this course, and be *no longer than 500 words*.

+1 pt for Course Evaluations. Course evaluations help us make our teaching better! Students who complete the course evaluation for both instructor and assistant will earn one (1) extra point towards their final course grade.

Note on Academic Integrity: Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand and adhere to Washington University's Academic Integrity Policy (see: wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies). Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension or expulsion from the University. If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask!

Inclusive Learning Environment Statement

The best learning environment is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. Washington University is dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

Resources are available to those who perceive any learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, Washington University encourages students to speak directly with their instructors about any suggestions or concerns they may have regarding a particular situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants – including faculty, staff, and students – who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (personally or

2. LIBERTARIANISM

September 16 Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 2, 5, 9
Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. ix–xiv, 3–12, 90–95, 174–182

September 21 Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. 12–17, 22–35, 51–59, 65–73,
88–90, 101–119

Quiz #3 (online in Canvas)

September 23 Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. 149–164, 167–174, 232–238,
265–274, 333–334

September 28 **First Exam**

3. LIBERAL EGALITARIANISM

September 30 Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ch. 8
Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, selections (online)
Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, preface, p. vii–ix

October 5 Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, §§ 1–8

Quiz #4 (online in Canvas)

October 7 Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, §§ 11–13, 15–17, 68

October 12 no class (fall break)

October 14 Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, §§ 20–26, 33, 29

October 19 Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, §§ 31, 14, 43, 48, 40
Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, p. 183, 198–204,
213–231

Quiz #5 (online in Canvas)

4. COMMUNITARIANISM

October 21 Sandel, “Morality and the Liberal Ideal” (online)
Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. xi–xvi, 3–21, 26–28

October 26 Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 28–51, 64–78, 84–91, 201–206

Quiz #6 (online in Canvas)

- October 28 Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 21–26, 95–112, 119–123, 129–143, 148–154, 160–164, 206–211
- November 1 **Optional Topic Proposal Due** (before 12:00 noon)
- November 2 Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 52–63, 281–287, 291–304, 312–321
- November 4 **Second Exam**

5. DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

- November 9 Cohen, “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy” (in Bohman and Rehg)
Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy” (online)

Quiz #7 (online in Canvas)

- November 11 Cohen, “Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy” (in Bohman and Rehg)
Habermas, “On the Internal Relation between the Rule of Law and Democracy” (online)
- November 16 Knight and Johnson, “What Sort of Equality Does Deliberative Democracy Require?” (in Bohman and Rehg)

Quiz #8 (online in Canvas)

6. JUSTICE BETWEEN GENERATIONS

- November 18 Sidgwick, “The Meaning of Utilitarianism” (online)
Elliot, “Future Generations, Locke’s Proviso, and Libertarian Justice” (online)
De Shalit, *Why Posterity Matters*, selections (online)
- November 22 Future Generations 1 – Resource Consumption:
Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, § 44
Barry, “Justice Between Generations” (online)
- November 25 no class (Thanksgiving)
- November 30 Future Generations 2 – Population:
Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, selections (online)

Quiz #9 (online in Canvas)

- December 2 Topic TBA
- December 7 Justice and Resistance:
Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, §§ 55–57, 59
Walzer, “The Obligation to Disobey” (online)
Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 18–19

Quiz #10 (online in Canvas)

- December 9 Concluding Lecture
- December 13 **Term Paper Due** (before 12:00 noon)
- December 22 **Third Exam** (3:30 – 5:30 pm)

Optional Supplementary Readings

An extensive literature exists on all the topics covered in class, and this bibliography is hardly comprehensive. I have selected works here mainly for their usefulness in explaining the arguments we have discussed in class. If forced to recommend a single book to read alongside the primary readings and lectures, I would recommend Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. He does not cover every topic we discuss, and his understanding of the issues does not always agree with mine, but as a general introduction to theories of justice his book is hard to beat.

UTILITARIANISM:

- J.S. Mill, *Representative Government*, and *The Subjection of Women*
Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, bk. 4
Driver, *Consequentialism*
Goodin, *Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy*
Sen and Williams (eds.), *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, chs. 1, 11
Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 2
Griffin, *Well-Being: Its Meaning, Measurement, and Moral Importance*
Brandt, *A Theory of the Right and the Good*
Brink, *Mill’s Progressive Principles*

LIBERTARIANISM:

- Narveson, *The Libertarian Idea*
Steiner, *An Essay on Rights*
Tomasi, *Free Market Fairness*
Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 4
Kukathas and Pettit, *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics*, ch. 5

Cohen, *Self-ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, chs. 1–4
Otsuka, *Libertarianism without Inequality*
Huemer, *The Problem of Political Authority*

LIBERAL EGALITARIANISM:

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*
Barry, *Justice as Impartiality*, chs. 1, 3–4, and 7
Pogge, *Realizing Rawls*, parts 1–2
Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 3
Kukathas and Pettit, *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics*, chs. 1–4
Sen and Williams (eds.), *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, chs. 5, 8
Lovett, *Rawls's A Theory of Justice: A Reader's Guide*
Shiffrin, "Race, Labor, and the Fair Equality of Opportunity Principle"

COMMUNITARIANISM:

Walzer, *Thick and Thin*
Miller, *Principles of Social Justice*
Taylor, *Philosophical Papers, vol. II*, chs. 7 and 11
Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*
Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 6
Kukathas and Pettit, *Rawls: A Theory of Justice and Its Critics*, ch. 6
Sen and Williams (eds.), *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, ch. 6
Mulhall and Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY:

Christiano, *Rule of the Many*
Bohman and Rehg, eds. *Deliberative Democracy*, essays 2, 8, and 10
Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*
Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*
Elster, ed. *Deliberative Democracy*
Knight & Johnson, *The Priority of Democracy*
Estlund, *Democratic Authority*
Lafont, *Democracy without Shortcuts*

JUSTICE BETWEEN GENERATIONS:

de-Shalit, *Why Posterity Matters*, chs. 1–5
Thompson, *Intergenerational Justice*
Mulligan, *Future People*
Waldron, "Superseding Historic Injustice"
King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
Walzer, *Obligations: Essays on Disobedience, War, and Citizenship*
Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, ch. 8
Delmas, *The Duty to Resist*