

PHIL 835:
Structures of (In)Justice

Spring 2017
Tuesdays, 3pm
Baker Hall 150

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This course aims to provide students to a graduate-level familiarity with contemporary political philosophy. We will begin with an introduction to the Rawlsian liberal political tradition and some of its detractors, with a special focus on the role of the “basic structure” in Rawlsian political theory. Within this discussion, we will also consider the debate between ideal and non-ideal theory, a thread that will continue throughout the semester. The second part of the class will explore difficult questions regarding how collective action – both coordinated and uncoordinated – contributes to (in)justice, including the nature of complicity, what it means to contribute to injustice, and how responsibility for (in)justice should be distributed. The final third of the class will be focused on the structural nature of racial injustice and potential causes and remedies of these defects in the basic structure.

Required Texts

Required course readings will be made available electronically the Wednesday before each class meeting. Course readings will draw heavily from the following books:

- Rawls, John. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, John. (1993). *Political Liberalism*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Kutz, Christopher. (2000). *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. (2011). *Responsibility for Justice*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, Elizabeth. (2010). *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Shelby, Tommie. (2016). *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Course Requirements

Short Response Pieces – 20% - 6 short response pieces, with the lowest grade dropped. No longer than 3 double-spaced pages, the goal of the response piece is not expository but analytical. Argue for a thesis, raise an objection, or clarify a point that you think is important and interesting. Short response pieces are due **no later than 8am on the day of class**, and may (will) be used during class discussion. Each student must turn in **at least one response piece during each of the months** Jan, Feb, Mar, and Apr.

Conference Paper & In-Class Presentation – 25% - A conference-length (~3000 words) paper which you will present in class on a week of your choosing. Papers must be distributed to all members of the group **no later than 8pm the night before** your presentation. Students are expected to read each other’s papers and come to class ready to give constructive feedback.

Conference Paper Re-Write – 35% - A revision of your presented paper in light of our discussion on your presentation day and my comments. All students will have at least two weeks to complete their revisions.

In-Class Participation – 20% - Please complete all readings before class & come to class prepared to contribute to discussion. In particular, be prepared to explain the major theses of assigned readings, the arguments for those theses, and to critically evaluate those arguments. Each week, one participant will be responsible for leading our discussion by providing a critical précis of the reading and raising a few interesting points for discussion.

Class Policies

Late short response pieces are not accepted. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade (5 points) for every day or portion of a day that they are late. In this class there is a zero-tolerance policy for cheating: any student found to have plagiarized on any assignment will receive a failing grade for the entire course, and all available institutional penalties will be sought.

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a documented disability, please notify me and contact Disability Resources at: access@andrew.cmu.edu or 412-268-2013 as soon as possible.

Outline of Topics & (Tentative) Schedule of Readings

Part I: Distributive Justice & the “Basic Structure”

1st Meeting (17 Jan)

Theory of Justice, Ch. 1, §§1-6.

Charles Mills (2005). “‘Ideal Theory’ as Ideology.” *Hypatia* **20**(3): 165-184.

2nd Meeting (24 Jan)

Theory of Justice, Ch. 2, §§11-17.

Laura Valentini (2009). “On the Apparent Paradox of Ideal Theory.” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* **17**(3): 332-355.

3rd Meeting (31 Jan)

Theory of Justice, Ch. 3

Eva Feder Kittay (1999). “The Presuppositions of Equality”, ch. 3 of *Love’s Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*. New York: Routledge.

4th Meeting (7 Feb)

Political Liberalism, Intro, Lecture I, §§1,2,5,6,7

Michael Sandel (1984). “Morality and the Liberal Ideal: Must Individual Rights Betray the Common Good?” *New Republic* **190**(18): 15-17.

5th Meeting (14 Feb)

Political Liberalism, Lecture VII

John Rawls (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, §§14-16.

G.A. Cohen (1997). “Where the Action is: On the Site of Distributive Justice.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* **26**(1): 3-30.

Part II: The Structure of Responsibility & Accountability

6th Meeting (21 Feb)

Liam Murphy (1999). "Institutions and the Demands of Justice". *Philosophy & Public Affairs* **27**(4): 251-291.

Iris Marion Young (1990). "Displacing the Distributive Paradigm", ch. 1 of *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

7th Meeting (28 Feb)

Complicity, chs. 2-3

8th Meeting (7 Mar)

Complicity, ch. 4

John Gardner (2007). "Complicity and Causality". *Criminal Law and Philosophy* **1**(1): 127-141.

9th Meeting (21 Mar)

Responsibility for Justice, chs. 1-2

10th Meeting (28 Mar)

Complicity, ch. 6

Responsibility for Justice, ch. 4

Part III: The Structure of Racial Injustice

11th Meeting (4 Apr)

Imperative of Integration, chs. 1-3

Jack Knight (2014). "The Imperative of Non-Ideal Theory." *Political Studies Review* **12**: 361-368.

12th Meeting (11 Apr)

Imperative of Integration, chs. 4-6

Sally Haslanger (2015). "Social Structure, Narrative, and Explanation." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* **45**(1): 1-15.

13th Meeting (18 Apr)

Dark Ghettos, Intro, chs. 1-2

14th Meeting (25 Apr)

Dark Ghettos, chs. 3-5

15th Meeting (2 May)

Dark Ghettos, chs. 6-8