

Contemporary Political Theory

--Justice--

POL 394

Meets: Wed 1.00-3.30

Room: CSS 222

Professor: Dr. Julia Maskivker

Political Science Department

Office: CCS 236

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3 or by appointment

John Rawls said that justice is the first virtue of social institutions. Plato, much earlier, affirmed that justice is a fundamental quality of the soul. Either a characteristic of society or of the person, political theorists and philosophers have pondered about it for millennia, and they still do so passionately. What is Justice? What institutions does it require? What political and economic systems does it support? What does it mean to “live in a just society?” This course will overview the leading contemporary conceptions of justice, including utilitarian, liberal, libertarian, and communitarian, and their implications for the design of political, economic, and social institutions. Furthermore, this class will explore particular issues being debated in liberal democracies today such as the ethics of immigration, global justice and world poverty, multicultural rights, gender equality, and the justice of war, among others.

Requirements

A midterm and a final, one 10-15 page long research paper, at least ONE presentation, and participation in the debate sessions and as a discussion leader (see below). The paper should be rigorous and related to the class content. It should be at least 15 pages long. It is due on the day scheduled for the final exam. No exceptions. This is a seminar, hence, it will consist of informed and interactive discussion among students and the professor, for which high motivation is needed. If you are not ready to engage in this type of intellectual inquiry, do not take this class.

Community Engagement Component: This class is partnered with United Pico Florida (<http://www.picoflorida.org/>). PICO United Florida is a network of federations of congregations in Orange, Alachua, Seminole, Escambia, Miami-Dade, St. Lucie, and Osceola Counties of Florida. Their 90 congregations represent more than 60,000 families and unite low to moderate income communities in Florida to work for systemic change. PICO Florida’s current issue campaigns address foreclosure prevention, voting rights, immigrant justice, youth violence, and jobs disparity. **As one requirement for this class,**

you will have to engage once in one of their issue campaigns. Particular activities and forms of cooperation will be discussed along the semester and as they are reported by PICO. You will have to write a short reaction paper after your contribution.

Discussion Leaders

Each week, a pair of students will be responsible for helping to lead our discussion. As discussion leader, your job will be to draw from the week's readings to pose interesting questions and offer comments and interpretations. Everyone must be a discussion leader at least once. The message boards on Foxlink are also a good medium for conversing with me and with your fellow classmates if you have queries or contributions between class meetings.

Presentations

At the beginning of the semester, I will hand out a presentation schedule and students will choose a week in which to present. The presentation should be about 20-25 mins long, about all or some of the readings assigned for the week in question. The student is not expected to uncritically repeat the arguments in the readings. On the contrary, she or he will present an original interpretation and pose questions to the class. The readings can be related to current affairs or historical phenomena. In any case, the presentation is an opportunity to offer an original view or interpretation of a topic, you can object to the author or relate his or her arguments to some issue of your interest. ******You will be expected to have a hand out to distribute to the class.**** The presentation should end with a series (1-3) of questions posed to the class**

Paper

In the paper you should depart from one theoretical problem or question studied in this course and apply it to some contemporary, or historical, issue so as to provide insights on how political democratic theory bears on current, or past, political and social phenomena. A **Proposal** should be turned in to at the specified date (see schedule)

*****Specific guidelines for writing a good paper in a political theory class are posted on blackboard. You are encouraged to come to my office hours to discuss ideas and drafts. Every student is required to come to my office hours at least once with a draft of the paper so that I can see how it is shaping up before you submit the final version *** IT IS UP TO YOU TO START WRITING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND TO SUBMIT YOUR DRAFTS TO ME. YOU SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY AVAILABILITY. BE SURE TO CONTACT ME IN ADVANCE TO ARRANGE A MEETING.**

Percentages

Midterm: 20%, Final: 20%

Paper: 35 %

Presentation and class participation: 25 %

Academic Integrity

You must become familiar with Rollins' Academic Honor Code. You can find the code online at: http://www.rollins.edu/studentrecords/main/academic_regulations.html

Please read the honor pledge and learn what constitutes an honor code violation, especially as regards cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism is intellectual theft and you must know what constitutes it to avoid it. Failing to cite sources or incorrectly citing your sources constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism can be unintentional, but it should be punished regardless of intention since it devalues academic quality, and irrevocably damages the credibility of the individual responsible for it. Because of this, please refrain from committing it, by getting familiarized with the honor code.

Evaluation Criteria

In this class, average work earns a C. If the student writes an acceptable exam, and fulfills all the other assignments for the class, she will receive a C. Students receiving an A will have written an excellent exam, or set thereof, participated actively in class, and fulfilled all the other requisites for the course equally satisfactorily. A B range grade will be awarded for students who fulfill the criteria for a C, but their written assignments are of superior quality. The participation grade will be based upon the quality and quantity of participation. For this reason, it is advisable that you carefully reflect on what you are going to contribute to the class. The superior A grade will be awarded to students who regularly offer insightful comments. Coming to my office hours also contributes to a good grade for this class. Excessive absences will make it impossible for you to receive a grade above the C range. (they can also make you fail the class).

Late Paper and Email Policy

I do not accept late papers or allow make-up work for no justified reasons. I expect to receive papers on time. I do not accept work that is emailed to me. No exceptions. You must give me a paper copy of your essays in class.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance in every class session is essential. *You are allowed a total of four absences.* Each absence over the specified limits will result in the final grade being dropped 1/3 of a letter. Therefore, if your final numerical grade is equivalent to a B-, and you have five absences, your final grade for the course would drop to a C+. Arriving after attendance has been taken counts as one half of an absence. You should save your absences for dire emergencies or serious illnesses. Meetings, job interviews, or early departures for weekend trips are not excused and will count as absences.

Disability Services Statement

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability on this campus and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to participate in your classes, please

make timely arrangements by disclosing this disability in writing to the Disability Services Office at (box 2613) - Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL, 32789. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 407-646-2354 or email: gridgeway@rollins.edu

Core books for this course (available at the College Bookstore, you can buy them via Amazon as used, too, if you would like to save money):

Political Philosophies in Moral Conflict, Peter Wenz (University of Illinois Press)

Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy, edited by Charles Wilber (Rowman and Littlefield)

Global Justice, Seminal Essays: Volume One, edited by Thomas Pogge et al. (Polity)

Other materials will be posted on Blackboard.

JANUARY 15: Intro to class and syllabus.

January 22: Liberal Egalitarianism: Rawls + Rawls intro by Cohen + nytimes article veil of opulence (bb) + Wenz chapter 6 + Nytimes article on veil of opulence + welfare state nytimes articles

January 29: Libertarianism: Nozick (bb) + Sandel on Nozick (bb) + Wenz ch 4 + wealth redistribution nytimes articles

February 5: Utilitarianism: Mill + Bentham + Carrit critiques (bb) + Wenz ch 2. + Class activity

February 12: Comunitarianism and Multiculturalism: self determination article + is multiculturalism bad for women? + Sandel on communitarianism (all in bb) + wenz chapter 7 + Nytimes article on polygamy. Class activity + NYtimes article Favoritism

February 19: Compolitanism: Wenz ch 11, Pogge ch 2, 15, 13, 10

February 26: Global Justice and duties of beneficence: Beitz, Does Global Inequality Matter? + Singer (bb) + Pogge ch 1, 5, 21

March 5: SPRINGBREAK

March 12: The ethics of immigration: Pogge ch 8 + chapters from Cohen book (bb) + NYtimes on immigration (bb) + Maskivker on brain drain (bb) + Pogge 9,10.

MARCH 19: Just war and terrorism: Walzer justice of war (bb) + torture article (bb) + NYtimes article on drones (bb) + NYtimes article Just war Theory (bb) + new book on dirty hands

March 26. Feminism and Gender Justice: choice feminism articles + care versus justice article (bb) + wenz ch 9 + England article (bb) + NYtimes articles on gender equality (bb)

April 2: The ethics of the market: Anderson article (bb) + Sen article (bb) + Sandel new book chapters (bb)

April 9. RESEARCH DAY, paper proposal, due to me on April 10

April 16: The Ethics of voting: Duty to vote and compulsory versus optional voting. Brennan, polluting the polls (bb) + Hill on Australian case (bb) + Lacroix article (bb) + Lardy (bb) + compulsory voting subverts dem article (bb)

April 23: Presentation of papers + the nature of political theory article (wrap up, bb)