

FIL 2311 Political Philosophy

Detailed course description

That justice is “to give each their due” is one of the most common tropes in political philosophy. And yet, from Socrates onwards, the question of what this really means and requires has been hotly contested.

In this course, we examine different approaches to justice within the Western liberal tradition. Specifically, we focus on justice as a central virtue of social and political institutions, and explore its connection to concepts like property, liberty, fairness, equality and utility. We also look at the scope of justice and its evolution: Is justice realizable only at the state level, or should we aspire to global justice? Is justice a purely human affair, or should nonhumans also be included within its sphere? Along the way, we address critiques of justice as a tool for perpetuating the historical domination and oppression of different groups, in particular women.

Given that the literature on the subject is Pantagrueian, the main aim of the course is to give students a compass with which they can later navigate on their own in search for more specialized and in-depth treatment of the manifold questions that justice raises.

Learning outcome

After having completed the course you are expected to:

- have good knowledge of the core texts for the course
- be able to acquire knowledge of and critically relate to the latest research contributions within the topic of the course
- be able to discuss the problems addressed in the course in a critical and professional manner, both orally and in writing
- be able to write an essay (around 10 pages/3800 words) answering a precise question in such a way that the essay has a clear and self-developed argumentative structure and demonstrates an updated acquaintance to the field

Teaching

12 double sessions with seminars. Active participation in class is expected. The course has the following compulsory tuition activities:

- An obligatory draft of the final essay
- Mandatory presence at the seminars (you must be present a minimum of 9 out of 12 times). We expect active participation in class discussions from all the students.
- An oral presentation of a question/problem regarding one of the readings in the syllabus. Depending on how many students enroll in the course, the presentations will be in groups.
- Weekly participation in Canvas: each week you must post a question related to the readings of that session.

All the obligatory tuition activities must be accepted as satisfactory in order to be able to hand in the term paper.

Examination

One essay of around 10 pages/3800 words, excluding bibliography. The topic must be approved of by the teacher. You submit your essay in Inspira.

When you write an essay you are entitled to receive individual tutoring. However, this requires that you submit a draft. This is also a requirement in order to be able hand in the term paper.

Important dates

TBC: Deadline to hand in first draft in Canvas.

TBC: Deadline to hand in term paper in Inspira.

Contact details and office hours

Alejandra Mancilla, alejandra.mancilla@ifikk.uio.no. Office room 417, Georg Morgenstiernes hus. Office hours: TBC

Syllabus

Books and book chapters

Garner, R. *A Theory of Justice for Animals: Animal Rights in a Nonideal World*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Chapters 1–3.

<https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199936311.001.0001/acprof-9780199936311-chapter-1>

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Chapters V–IX.

<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/locke-the-two-treatises-of-civil-government-hollis-ed>

Mill, John Stuart. “On Liberty.” In *On Liberty and Other Essays*, 5–128. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-xviii-essays-on-politics-and-society-part-i>

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Revised ed. Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 1999. Chapter 1 (§1–4), Chapter 2 (§11–17), Chapter 3, Chapter 4 (§32–35; §39–40).

Articles and book chapters

Anderson, Elizabeth. “What Is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics* 109 (1999): 287–337.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/233897>

Miller, David, “Justice”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/justice/>

Miller, David. “Two Ways to Think About Justice.” *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 1, no. 1 (2005): 5–28.

<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1470594X02001001001>

Nagel, Thomas. “The Problem of Global Justice.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2005): 113–47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2005.00027.x>

Okin, Susan Moller. “Justice and Gender.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 16 (1987): 42–72. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2265205>

Pateman, Carole. “Women and Consent.” *Political Theory* 8, no. 2 (1980): 149–68.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/190792>

Pogge, Thomas. "Recognized and Violated by International Law: The Human Rights of the Global Poor." *Leiden Journal of International Law* 18, no. 04 (2005): 717–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156505002980>

Sen, Amartya. "What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?" *The Journal of Philosophy* 103, no. 5 (2006): 215–38.
https://www.pdcnet.org/jphil/content/jphil_2006_0103_0005_0215_0238

Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1972): 229–43.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265052>

Recommended readings

Campbell, Tom. "Humanity before Justice." *British Journal of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (1974): 1–16.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/193624>

Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*. *Zoopolis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Noel Malcolm. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012.
http://files.libertyfund.org/files/869/0161_Bk.pdf

Miller, David. "Against Global Egalitarianism." *Journal of Ethics* 9, no. 1–2 (2005): 55–79.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/25115815?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, 1974.

Okin, Susan Moller. "'Forty Acres and a Mule' for Women: Rawls and Feminism." *Politics Philosophy Economics* 4 (2005): 233–48.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1470594X05052540>

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. Expanded edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Rawls, John. *The Law of Peoples*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality." In *The Social Contract and Discourses*, 31–126. Oxford World's Classics. London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1973.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11136>

Thucydides. "The Melian Dialogue", in *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Pelopponesian War*. New York: Random House, 1951.

Walzer, Michael. *Spheres of Justice*. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Edited by Sheila Rowbotham. London: Verso, 2010.

Schedule

SESSION	DATE	TOPIC	READING LIST
1	26.08	I. Introduction	Miller, David, "Justice." Miller, David. "Two Ways to Think About Justice." Sen, Amartya. "What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?"
2	09.09	II. Conceptualizing justice IIa. Justice and property	Locke, <i>Two Treatises of Government</i> , Book II, ch. V.
3	16.09		Locke, <i>Two Treatises of Government</i> , Book II, chs. VI–IX. Carole Pateman, "Women and Consent."
4	23.09	IIb. Justice and liberty	John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , chs. 1–2.
5	30.09		John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , chs. 3–5.
6	07.10	IIc. Justice and fairness	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , Chapter 1 (§1–4), Chapter 2 (§11–17).
7	14.10		John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , Chapter 3, Chapter 4 (§32–35; §39–40). Susan Okin, "Justice and Gender."
8	21.10	IId. Justice and equality	Elizabeth Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?"
9	28.10	III. The scope of justice IIIa. Global justice	Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality."
10	04.11		Thomas Pogge, "Recognized and Violated by International Law: The Human Rights of the Global Poor."
11	18.11		Nagel, Thomas, "The Problem of Global Justice."
12	25.11	IIIb. Justice for nonhumans	Robert Garner, <i>A Theory of Justice for Animals: Animal Rights in a Nonideal World</i> , chs. 1–3.