

Phil 167 Contemporary Political Philosophy

Syllabus
Winter 2025
Tu/Thu. 11:00 am-12:20 pm
Warren Lecture Hall
Room 2115

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Drop-in Hours: Tu. 12:30-1:30/W. 1:00-2:00 pm

The best way to contact me is in person or by email (I don't check Canvas messenger).

1. Overview

One of philosophy's most ancient goals has been to characterize the nature of justice. This class pays particular attention to contemporary philosophers who have attempted to do so in systematic terms. Our investigation begins with Rawls's theory of justice as fairness, perhaps the most influential such theory of the 20th century. We will get some sense of the extraordinary impact of Rawls's theory by examining its prominence in current debates about racial, sexual and economic justice. We will then turn our attention to two rival systems, classical liberalism and libertarianism, both of which are highly influential in contemporary society, and which seek to limit the political and economic role of government. Interspersed with our examination of such systematic views will be examinations of more particular subjects, as they include investigations of privilege and intersectionality as political concepts, as well as the question of what a just immigration policy would look like. Here and elsewhere, the class touches on hotly debated issues in American political life. In the final weeks we will again take up a systematic approach by wading into the debate between proponents of luck egalitarianism and democratic equality, with an eye to determining whether their disparate views about the relationship between luck and justice can be reconciled.

The class assumes no background in philosophy and students who put in effort can do well.

Please note that there is a strong penalty for using ChatGPT to create or partially create written work for this class. Students who are found to have done so will receive a class grade of F (fail).

2. Assessment

A 1,500-word essay due at 5:00 pm Wednesday January 29 (25%)

A 1,500-word essay due at 5:00 pm Wednesday February 26 (25%)

An in-person exam on Thursday March 20 at 11:30 am (35%)

Class participation (15%)

3. Readings and Schedule

All readings will be available on Canvas.

Week One Justice as Fairness

Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. George Sher (ed.) *Moral Philosophy: Selected Readings* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987): 453-72.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971): 65-83.

Week Two Racial Justice

Matthew, D.C. Rawls and Racial Justice. *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* (2017). 16/3: 235-58.

Heath, Joseph. Is Majority Privilege Unjust?. *Public Affairs Quarterly* 36/4 (2022): 257-279.

Week Three Sexual Justice

Okin, Susan Moller. Justice as Fairness: For Whom? *Justice, Gender and the Family*. (New York: Basic Books, 1989): 89-109.

Also Tuesday: Rawls, John. The Family as a Basic Institution. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001): 162-7.

Lawford-Smith, Holly, and Kate Phelan. The Metaphysics of Intersectionality Revisited. *Journal of Political Philosophy* 30/2 (2022): 166-87.

Week Four Incentives & Conservatism

Cohen, G. A. The Incentives Argument. *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 27-57.

First essay due at 5:00 pm Wednesday

Cohen, G. A. Rescuing Conservatism: A Defense of Existing Value. Otsuka, Michael ed. *Finding Oneself in the Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): 143-74.

Week Five Classical Liberalism

Hayek, Friedrich. The Use of Knowledge in Society. *The American Economic Review*, 35/4 (1945): 519-530.

Hayek, Friedrich. Cosmos and Taxis. *Law, Legislation and Liberty: Volume I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 35-54.

Week Six Libertarianism

Moller, Dan. Morality and The State. *Governing Least: A New England Libertarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 13-27.

Moller, Dan. Libertarianism: A Classic Argument Revisited. *Governing Least*: 28-47.

Week Seven Immigration and Unity

Carens, Joseph. The Case for Open Borders. *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 225-54.

Wenar, Leif. The Value of Unity. *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 51/3 (2023): 195-233.

Week Eight Luck and Justice I

Dworkin, Ronald. Equality of Resources. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10/4 (1981): 283-314.

Second essay due at 5:00 pm Wednesday

Dworkin, Ronald. Equality of Resources. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10/4 (1981): 315-345.

Thursday Optional: Heath, Joseph. Dworkin's Auction. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 3/3 (2004): 313-335.

Week Nine Luck and Justice II

Anderson, Elizabeth. What Is the Point of Equality? *Ethics* 109/2 (1999): 287-311.

Anderson, Elizabeth. What Is the Point of Equality? *Ethics*: 312-337.

Week Ten Luck and Justice III

Arneson, Richard. Democratic Equality and Relating as Equals. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy Supplementary Volume* 36 (2010): 25-52.

Gheaus, Anca. Hikers in Flip-flops: Luck Egalitarianism, Democratic Equality and the Distribuenda of Justice. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35/1 (2018): 54-69.

In-person exam Thursday of exam week.

4. General Information

Student Drop-in Hours

I am happy to meet with students in person or on Zoom during office hours. I am also available by appointment. I am always happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you.

Email Policy

I am happy to reply to emails sent from UCSD email addresses. I do not reply to emails from non-UCSD addresses. Please note that there are two subjects I do not discuss by email, even if they are sent from a UCSD account. These are:

- a) Requests for information about an exam that arrive in the 24-hour period immediately preceding the exam.
- b) Requests to discuss grades. If you have an issue with a grade please make an appointment to discuss it during my office hour next quarter. If you are a graduating senior let me know and we will make alternative arrangements.

Submission

All essays will be submitted electronically. Hard copies are not required.

One-time Discretionary Extension

I'm happy to grant each student one essay extension of 48 hours without requiring a medical certificate or other documentation. In order to grant such an extension I (Professor Lamey) need to receive your request before noon (San Diego time) on the day the essay in question is due. Email is fine, but please note that UCSD's email servers sometimes go down, and students are advised not to leave their requests to the last minute. Requests received after noon on the day before the due date will require documentation, as will requests for extensions longer than 48 hours. Please note that if you receive an extension your paper may be graded and returned 48 hours after those that were completed on time.

Note that each student is entitled to one discretionary essay extension. So if you receive one for your first essay, any extension for the second essay will require documentation. Also please note that discretionary extensions are NOT available for assignments due during exam-week.

Finally, discretionary extensions are not available to students who are chronically absent from class (i.e. more than occasional absences). Showing up to participate is an important part of your grade and of our class as a whole.

Late Work

For all essays handed in after the due date and without an extension, a five percentage point penalty applies for the first day of the missed deadline. After that, a subsequent penalty of two percentage points per day will be applied for the next thirteen calendar days after the due date (including Saturdays and Sundays). No assignment can be accepted after more than fourteen calendar days except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with your professor. Assignments that are handed in late without an extension will be graded and returned after those that were completed on time and will not receive comments.

Accommodation for Disability

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382 (phone), osd@ucsd.edu (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web)

Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. More information about UCSD's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2>

Health and Well-being

Throughout your time at UC San Diego, you may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning. These may include physical illness, housing or food insecurity, strained relationships, loss of motivation, depression, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol and drug problems, feeling down, interpersonal or sexual violence, or grief. These concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. If there are issues related to coursework that are a source of particular stress or challenge, please speak with me, Professor's Lamey, so that I am able to support you. UC San Diego provides a number of resources to all enrolled students, including:

Counselling and Psychological Services (858-534-3755 | caps.ucsd.edu) Student Health Services (858-534-3300 | studenthealth.ucsd.edu)
CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center (858-534-5793 | care.ucsd.edu) The Hub
Basic Needs Center (858-246-2632 | basicneeds.ucsd.edu)

We care about you at UC San Diego, and there is always help available.