

**Meetings**

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:45 Eureka 413C

**Instructor**

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**Office hours**

Tuesday/Thursday 12pm-2pm

**Reasonable Accommodation**

If your circumstances require accommodation or assistance in meeting the expectations of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. You may need to provide documentation to the University office of SSWD (in accordance with the University policy outlined here: <http://www.csus.edu/ummanual/acad/UMA00215.htm>).

**Description**

*From the catalogue*

Examines the concept of justice in its contemporary usage, in light of the historical roots of the concept; considers several principal theoretical models of justice and the just society, including libertarian, liberal, contractarian, communitarian, and feminist variations. Related concepts include, equality, freedom, democracy, oppression, discrimination, and conflict.

*More!*

The focus this semester will be on economic justice.

Libertarian and classical liberal political philosophers typically reject concerns about social justice, and modern liberal theorists count this rejection as a major deficiency of classical liberal views. Modern liberals typically make a concern for social justice paramount, such that the institutions of a society should be evaluated on the basis of how the least well-off fare under them. The first aim of this seminar is to get clearer about the proper place of social justice in liberal political theory.

Modern egalitarian liberal political philosophers typically reject concerns about the so-called economic liberties, or a commitment to relatively strong property rights and free markets, and classical liberals count this rejection as a major deficiency of modern liberal views. Some classical liberals, usually libertarians, make a commitment to economic liberalization paramount, such that property rights trump most concerns about the least well-off. The second aim of this seminar is to get clearer about the proper place of the economic liberties in liberal political theory.

We will examine this conflict beginning with “classic” readings, but very quickly move on to more contemporary expressions of classical liberal views. Of particular interest will be recent positions, which some have taken to calling Neoclassical Liberalism. Its advocates embrace social justice as an ideal alongside their commitment to free markets. Is this liberal “third way” coherent? How far does it go towards resolving the basic intramural dispute in liberal political theory?

### **Objectives**

The course will introduce to students to key concepts, positions and arguments in contemporary theories of justice. Students will develop an understanding of how philosophers approach questions related to social justice, how they reach conclusions about social and civil matters and how they argue for them. In addition, students will actually do these things. The course will provide students with resources for reflecting on their own views. It will form a solid foundation for further studies in political philosophy or philosophy generally, as well as complement other intellectual pursuits. The course aims to contribute to an educational program that produces well-rounded graduates who are not only equipped to achieve excellence in science, business, industry or whatever, but who also care about how their work affects others.

### **Outcomes**

(1) Students understand how they can employ philosophical tools to answer questions about social justice. (2) Students understand the nature and methods of political theorizing as well as how political philosophy interacts with cognate disciplines like economics and political science. (3) Students improve their abilities to think critically, analyze complex problems, evaluate arguments, and argue cogently for their own views. (4) Students improve their reading, writing, and oral communication skills. (5) Students understand some of the leading contemporary positions in political philosophy.

### **Texts**

Some essays and excerpts are available on the internet or SacCT. See below.

**Schedule** (subject to change – listen for announcements and check SacCt for updates)

January 24     Introduction to course: Liberalism, old and new

26, 31, Feb 2     Rawls and his critics

- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, [1971] 1999), Ch. 2.
- Friedrich Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: The Mirage of Social Justice* (Routledge, 1976), selections from Chs. 7 and 9.

7, 9, 14      Critiques of egalitarianism

- Harry Frankfurt, "Equality as a moral ideal"  
[https://www.law.upenn.edu/institutes/cerl/conferences/prioritarianism\\_papers/Session3Frankfurt.pdf](https://www.law.upenn.edu/institutes/cerl/conferences/prioritarianism_papers/Session3Frankfurt.pdf)
- Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics*, 109/2 (1999), pp. 287-337.

16, 21, 23      Libertarianism and its critics

- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974), Ch. 7.
- Loren Lomasky, "Libertarianism at Twin Harvard," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 22/1 (2005), pp. 178-199.
- Thomas Nagel, "Libertarianism Without Foundations," *The Yale Law Journal*, 85/1 (1975), pp. 136-149.

28, Mar 2, 7      More critiques of libertarianism

- Samuel Freeman, "Capitalism in the Classical and High Liberal Traditions," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 28/2 (2011), pp. 19-55.
- Samuel Freeman, "Illiberal Libertarians: Why Libertarianism is Not a Liberal View," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 30/2 (2001), pp. 105-151.

9      A third way? Neoclassical Liberalism

- Jason Brennan and John Tomasi, "Classical Liberalism" (in David Estlund ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Philosophy*, 2012).

14, 16      Projects

- Loren Lomasky, "Personal Projects as the Foundation for Basic Rights," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 1/2 (1984), pp. 35-55.
- Loren Lomasky, "Liberty and Welfare Goods: Reflections on Clashing Liberalisms," *Journal of Ethics*, 4 (2000), pp. 99-113.

SPRING BREAK

28, 30, Ap 4, 6 Market Democracy

- John Tomasi, *Free-Market Fairness* (PUP, 2012), Chs. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 (up to p. 254).

11, 13, 18, 20 Consequences

- David Schmidtz, *The Elements of Justice* (CUP, 2006), Parts 1-2 and 4-5.

25, 27, May 2, 4 Public Reason

- Gerald Gaus, *The Order of Public Reason* (CUP, 2011), Chs. VI and VIII (Sections 22-24).

9, 11 Loose ends, recap and conclusion

### Assessment

Please do not plagiarize or cheat. If you do then *at a minimum* you will be marked with a zero on the assignment. Multiple and/or flagrant violations will lead to me assigning a failing grade for the course and initiating disciplinary action through the Office of Student Affairs. Familiarize yourselves with the University's Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures document (here:

<http://www.csus.edu/um anual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>)

Consistent with Sacramento State's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a 'similarity score'. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

You may choose to submit papers to Turnitin assignments without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number). The system will automatically show this information to faculty in your course when viewing the submission.

Your final course mark is based on the following:

- a. reading summaries (25). These are short (no more than 200 words), basic summaries of each assigned reading. They should be thoughtful and grammatical. You need to identify the author's thesis and the basic strategy he or she uses for prosecuting it. Use the method of successive elaboration detailed in the document in the course folder. They are due before the meeting that I announce we will be discussing it. Write them in a running "journal" – a google doc that you have shared with me.
- b. 1 oral presentation/discussion leading (10). Look over the meeting topics and let me know which/when you want to be responsible for leading discussion. First come, first serve.

c. 2 philosophical analysis essays (20 each = 40). Select any 2 of your written summary assignments to expand into a full philosophical analysis as described this link:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20Write%20an%20Analysis.htm>. Here are some additional guidelines for your writing:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/WritingGuidelines.html>. Here are grading standards:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/Grading%20Standards.html>.

One analysis essay must be based on the reading that you were discussion leader for.

Both essays are due 2 weeks after the initial reading summary for it was due.

d. 1 final exam (25). Details to follow.

$a + b + c + d = \text{final course mark}$

Grading scale:

93 and above = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

67-69 = D+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

59 and below = F