

FALL 2013

PHIL 192J SEMINAR: CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF JUSTICE

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Meetings: MW 12:00-1:15pm, DH 208
Instructor: Prof. Christina Bellon
Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00 in MND 3000; and by appointment.
Contact: MND 3000, 278-4759, www.csus.edu/indiv/b/bellonc.

Please keep all course related communications within Blackboard Messaging.

A Note on Availability: Other than during scheduled office hours, communication will be answered generally within one working day. After 5pm M-F or on the weekend, do not expect a response until the next business day.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

This seminar 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. 3units.

Pre-requisite: 6 units in Philosophy or Instructor permission.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is no assigned textbook for this course. All required readings are available for download or printing in Blackboard. As such, students will be expected to come to class with access to the assigned readings for each class period.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Develop competence in philosophical and ethical language and literature, especially those theories pertaining to social and	1. Accurately describe and distinguish between a variety of formulations of the concept of justice and several related ethical and political concepts,	1. Content in each of: a. In-class analyses b. Philosophical Analyses

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
institutional justice.	theories, and positions; 2. Express own judgment in a cogent and clear fashion; 3. Engage in cogent and respectful discussion of difficult and sometimes controversial issues; 4. Analyze specific philosophical arguments for consistency and credibility (including one's own).	
Develop written and oral communication skills, especially as those are associated with argumentative writing and public speaking.	1. Writing competently in concise, precise and well developed logical style; 2. Expression of a point of view through the formulation of a coherent and consistent argument; 3. Presentation of an exposition of text in a coherent manner to an audience of peers.	1. Quality of the form (essay structure, logic) and mechanics (syntax, grammar) of each of: a. Philosophical analyses b. on-line discussion 2. Substance, structure, and delivery of on-line discussions.
Develop an appreciation of the diversity of contemporary understandings of justice, what constitutes it, and how to accurately formulate a theoretical model of its central tenets.	Accurately describe and distinguish the central elements of each considered theoretical account of justice.	Discussion of similarities and divergences between a variety of contemporary theories of justice: a. Philosophical Analyses b. on-line discussion

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated by several means. These will include a series of short in-class interpretive essays, weekly on-line discussions, and a major essay project. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%). ***ALL assignments and essays are administered within Blackboard. Print or hand submitted copies will not be accepted, except for work assigned and completed in class. All assignments must be completed in the appropriate assignment or assessment area in Blackboard.***

GRADING SCALE

A Outstanding (96pts and above)

B Range Satisfactory (80-89pts)

D Range Poor (60-69pts)

This is based upon a 100 pt scale with 1pt = 1%

A- Very Good (90-95pts)

C Range Minimally Satisfactory (70-79pts)

F Unacceptable (below 60pts)

TECHNOLOGY COMPONENT

Please note, this course includes a significant Blackboard component. Essay assignments can be found there, as well as required group discussion, and general calendar and class notification options. Technical problems must be addressed to the ITC Help Line @ 278-7337.

A NOTE ON PARTICIPATION

As this is an upper division course, it should be taken as an opportunity for you to enhance your communication skills. I strongly encourage you to come regularly, do the readings ahead of time, and participate in class discussions and activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class.

ANALYTIC EXERCISES (20PTS)

At least ten times during the semester, you will be given a question at the beginning of class which will prompt you to reflect on some aspect of the assigned reading. This might require you to read a select passage from the text – ALWAYS bring your text to class!

You will have approximately ten minutes in class to write and submit a one page (250 words) reflection. These prompts will serve to focus discussion for the class period. If more than ten opportunities are provided, your grade for this component of the course will consist of your best ten scores.

These submissions will be graded as excellent (A: 2.0), good (B: 1.75), satisfactory (C: 1.5), unsatisfactory (D: 1.0) on a two-point scale. Failure to submit a response during the class period assigned will result in a zero grade (F: 0). No make-ups, no late submissions.

PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSES (60PTS)

You will be required to write and submit four formal philosophical analyses, each of which will consist of a 2000 word (double spaced, normal font & margins) explication and critique of an assigned article from the readings. Detailed instructions and requirements are found in the assignment area of Blackboard.

Failure to submit all four analyses as instructed will result in a grade of F for the course! It is your responsibility to ensure your analyses are submitted in the designated area in Blackboard. Late penalties should be taken seriously, as should ensuring that you submit your assignments properly.

ON-LINE DISCUSSION (20PTS)

Every student will be required to contribute at least 12 times to the on-line discussion in the discussion boards area of Blackboard, including at least three times to each of the four discussion topics. Each student is also expected to read and follow the discussions of their class-mates. Contributions may consist of:

- (i) asking philosophical questions which probe the reading and engage in further explication and analysis of the text,
- (ii) responding thoughtfully to someone else's question,

- (iii) suggesting connections between this reading and other course material,
- (iv) bring current events and other empirical facts/evidence to bear on the reading.

All of this must be conducted in the effort to better understand the texts and to further our appreciation of the material's strengths and weaknesses. Polemics, ideological shortcuts, and other rather thoughtless and unscholarly contributions will not satisfy this requirement and should be resisted. Proper on-line etiquette is expected; violations will not be tolerated.

Each student must have made a total of 12 contributions to on-line discussion by the end of semester (with at least three postings to each of the four course sections). Further, *each student must have read at least ¾ (three-quarters) of the available contributions of their fellows to qualify for a satisfactory grade of C- or better (regardless of how many submissions they have made).*

BONUS OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the semester, students will have the opportunity to earn bonus points by attending specified events and writing an analysis of it. Details and Instructions can be found in the Bonus Opportunities area of the Blackboard course content. Students can earn up to a maximum of 5 bonus points in this way.

COURSE POLICIES AND ETIQUETTE

EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected from all class participants. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. **All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class unless being used explicitly for class activities.**

DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

CSUS attracts a diverse population of students, faculty and staff with a wide range of cultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and backgrounds. Opinions may vary on many issues, but students and faculty in this class will be expected to converse and debate in a respectful and tolerant manner.

This class will only be rich if everyone feels free to express her/his views and personal understanding of the course material. Because this is a philosophy class, and philosophy prompts us to think in ways that may be unfamiliar, let us all be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. Everyone has a

responsibility to make the classroom environment a place where we can respectfully agree to disagree, and perhaps even settle some long unsettled questions.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. ***When submitting any assignment in Blackboard, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!***

No extensions, no exceptions. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. ***It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy***
<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Every effort has been made to ensure this course is designed to maximize opportunities for student success across the diversity of the student body. However, it may be the case that some elements of the course will require modification to ensure equal opportunity for students with documented disabilities to succeed. Students who have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., must see the instructor by the ***end of the third week of semester*** to allow arrangements to be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date might impede her ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services for Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you. All information shared with the instructor will remain confidential.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Se 4, 9-11 Introductions; What Is Justice?
Read: Sterba, "Recent Work on Alternative Conceptions of Justice;"
 Heller, "The Complexity of Justice."
 Krause, "Partial Justice;"
 Miller, "Recent Theories of Social Justice;"
- Section I: *Ancient Greek Roots of Contemporary Conceptions of Justice***
- Se 16-18 Plato (428-348BCE) on Justice and the Soul
Read: *Republic*, Bk I, II & V; Okin, "Philosopher Queens."
- Se 23-25 Plato on the Individual and Society
Read: *Crito*; *Euthyphro*
- Se 30-Oct 2 Aristotle (384-322BCE) on the Principal Virtue of Politics
Read: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk V, *Politics*, Bk I, II, VII, VIII;
 Okin, "Justice and Gender."
- Oc 7 (Mo) Philosophical Analysis #1 on Schmitz, "When Justice Matters," due at noon.**
- Section II: *Modernizing Contractual Justice: A Method for Establishing Just Institutions***
- Oc 7-9 Justice as Fairness: Equality, Neutrality and Rationality
Read: Rawls, "The Sense of Justice;" Rawls, "Justice as Fairness;"
 Ackerly, "Rawls: An Introduction."
- Oc 14-16 More Rawls
Read: "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical."
- Oc 21-23 Taking Rawls to Task: Fairness, Neutrality?
Read: Kymlicka, "Liberal Individualism, Liberal Neutrality;"
 Young, "Taking the Basic Structure Seriously."
- Oc 28 (Mon) Philosophical Analysis #2 on Hampton, "Should Political Philosophy be Done without Metaphysics?" due at noon.**
- Section III: *Liberty Trumps Equality: Forming a Just Society from Private Property***
- Oc 28-30 What's Mine Is Mine: Libertarian Justice
Read: Nozick, excerpts *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Ch 3 & 10; and "Distributive Justice."
- No 4-6 **Read:** Nock, "Equal Freedom, Unequal Property, Okin, "Libertarianism: Matriarchy, Slavery, and Distopia."
- Section IV: *Communities of Justice: Determining Value and Its Just Distribution***
- No 11 Veterans' Day (Remembrance Day) – No classes held, campus closed.**
- No 13-20 **Read:** Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self;" Taylor, "Politics of Recognition."
- No 25 Philosophical Analysis #3 on Habermas, "Multiculturalism and the Liberal State", due at noon.**

Section V: *Deliberative Justice: Let's Talk About It*

No 25-Dec 4 Deliberating about Justice: Transparency, Equality, Rationality

Read: Benhabib, "From Redistribution to Recognition," "Democracy and Multicultural Dilemma;"

No 28-Dec 1 Thanksgiving Break – No classes, campus closed.

Dec 9-11 Developments in Deliberation

Read: Young, "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy;" and Fung, "Deliberation Before Revolution."

Dec 16-20 Exam Week – No classes.

Final Philosophical Analysis on Charney, "Political Liberalism, Deliberative Democracy and the Public Sphere." Due at noon on Wednesday, Dec 18, Time Certain.

Final Discussion Topic closes.