

Normative Theories of Justice

Political Science G8651
Spring 2008
Thursdays 2:10-4
901 IAB

Prof. Johnston
705 IAB
Office hour Mon. 4-5

Course Description

An examination of classic and contemporary theories of justice with attention to issues of both distributive and retributive justice as well as other topics. Theorists to be discussed include Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Rawls, and other recent and contemporary writers.

Requirements

Students should complete weekly readings before the class sessions for which they are assigned. Students should attend class sessions weekly and participate in class discussions. One or more short papers (up to 1000 words) will be assigned during the semester. A final paper of 8000-10,000 words on a topic to be approved by the instructor will be due on Thursday, May 8 at 4 p.m.

Readings

The following books are available at Book Culture; their purchase is strongly recommended. The editions specified are strongly recommended, but not required.

Plato, Republic (Hackett)

C. Beccaria, On Crimes and Punishments (Hackett)

I. Kant, Metaphysics of Morals

J. Rawls, A Theory of Justice (2nd ed.)

R. Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia

F. Hayek, Law, Legislation and Liberty, vol. 2: The Mirage of Social Justice

B. Barry, Why Social Justice Matters

D. Miller, Social Justice

Schedule

Week 1 (Jan. 24)

Introduction (no reading assignment)

Week 2 (Jan. 31)

Plato, Republic, Books I-II

Week 3 (Feb. 7)

Plato, Republic, Books III-X

Week 4 (Feb. 14)

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book V

Week 5 (Feb. 21)

Beccaria, On Crimes and Punishments

Week 6 (Feb. 28)

Kant, Metaphysics of Morals: Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right

Week 7 (March 6)Rawls, A Theory of Justice (selection to be announced)

Spring Break

Week 8 (March 20)Rawls, A Theory of Justice (selection to be announced)**Week 9** (March 27)Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia**Week 10** (April 3)Hayek, The Mirage of Social Justice**Week 11** (April 10)Barry, Why Social Justice Matters**Week 12** (April 17)David Miller, Social Justice, Parts I and III**Week 13** (April 24)

Readings to be announced

Week 14 (May 1)

Readings to be announced

Week 15 (May 8)**Final Paper Due**

For the final two sessions of the semester, several possibilities are under consideration. One is David Schmitz, Elements of Justice. Another is Hanna Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice. A third possibility is a set of anthropological and experimental readings bearing on questions of fairness and justice. I will make a decision about these and any additional possibilities that are proposed by class participants several weeks into the semester after class discussion.