

PHIL 4300 SEMINAR IN ETHICAL THEORY OR META-ETHICS

Justice without Ideals

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

FALL 2023

UPDATED 2023 SEPTEMBER 5

TERM: 2023 Fall
 MEETINGS: Thursdays 11:30 to 2:30 p.m.
 INSTRUCTOR: Jay Drydyk
 OFFICE/HOURS: Thursdays 2:30 to 4:00 or online by appointment
 PHONE: Please use email instead.
 EMAIL: jay.drydyk@carleton.ca

Does it make sense to work towards social and global justice if we do not have an ideal of justice in mind, a clear conceptions of what a fully just society and world would be? Without knowing what justice is ideally, how can we recognize injustices in the actual world? On the other hand, we don't need to know what heaven is like in order to recognize moral wrong-doing, so why should it be harder to recognize injustice? In this seminar we will consider this question as it has been taken up in recent debates on ideal and non-ideal theorizing about justice, including the thinking of John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Charles Mills, and others.

READINGS: available in digital format on *Ares*.

ASSIGNMENTS	WEIGHT
Presentation. Each student in 4330 will present some of the readings for one of the classes, after a consultation meeting with instructor, which will clarify the questions to be discussed. Readings for each week will be distributed among students who have volunteered for that week.	10
Research proposal. This written assignment of around 250 words has three components: (a) A succinct statement of the research question you would like to address in your final paper for this course, and what you think a plausible answer might be. (b) A list of the top 3 articles or book chapters that you will work with in addressing this question. For each one, write a sentence or two about how it might relate to your question – e.g., does it argue for or against the ‘plausible answer’ you are exploring? (c) A few more sentences about how your paper will contribute – e.g., which larger debate does it relate to, and which side does it support? <i>Due in written form by 11:55 p.m. on Monday, October 16, and presented in class October 19.</i>	10
Seminar paper (1500 words). State your main arguments for the answer you propose to your research question on ideal or non-ideal theorizing about justice. This can be the question discussed in your research proposal, or it can be a new question. You are advised to consult with the instructor in case you decide to work on a new question. <i>Due 11:55 p.m. on the Monday night before the date on which you present your paper for discussion in class</i> (Presentation dates are November 23, November 30, and December 7).	20
Final paper (target length 16 pages or 4000 words including reference list) <i>due no later than December 22.</i> This paper will normally be based on your seminar paper and may include portions of your discussion paper and your seminar paper.	40
Participation (including attendance)	20

COURSE CALENDAR

Week I September 7	<p><i>Introduction to the course.</i> <i>Do we need ideals of justice, either in theory or practice?</i></p> <p>No reading for today.</p> <p><i>Be prepared to discuss: What do you want from a theory of justice? And why? Are there any particular struggles for justice that especially interest you?</i></p>
Week II September 14	<p><i>NO CLASS</i></p> <p>Go to BrightSpace for the link to sign up for your presentation on readings. Go to BrightSpace for the link to sign up for your seminar presentation.</p> <p>Rawls & Sen reading binge (preparing for weeks III and IV):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i>, §§1-6, §§12-13, §§18.5-18.6. • John Rawls, <i>The Law of Peoples</i>, pp. 11-23. • Amartya Sen, 'What do we want from a Theory of Justice?'
Week III September 21	<p><i>Ideal Theory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i>, §§1-6, §§12-13, §§18.5-18.6. • John Rawls, <i>The Law of Peoples</i>, pp. 11-23.
Week IV September 28	<p><i>Are ideals necessary, sufficient, or even helpful?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amartya Sen, 'What do we want from a Theory of Justice?' • Ingrid Robeyns, 'Ideal Theory in Theory and Practice.' • Frederick Douglass, 'What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?'
Week V October 5	<p><i>Combatting injustice, without ideals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Wiens, 'Prescribing Institutions Without Ideal Theory.' • Jacob Barrett, 'Social Reform in a Complex World' • Jeffrey Carroll, 'Ideal Theory for a Complex World' (pp. 542-48 only)
Week VI October 12	<p><i>Ideals as ideological</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles W. Mills, '"Ideal Theory" as Ideology', in <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism</i>, pp. 72-90. • James Boettcher, 'Race, Ideology, and Ideal Theory.'
October 16	<p><i>Upload research proposals</i></p> <p><i>Upload your written proposal before 11:55pm Monday, October 16.</i></p>
Week VII October 19	<p><i>Present research proposals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: research proposals of the other students • Be prepared to present your proposal orally in class (5 minutes)

FALL BREAK

<p>Week VIII November 2</p>	<p><i>Judgments of injustice I: Where do they come from?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i>, §§7-10. • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Bk.V, Ch.1-3. • Ali Kazemi and Kjell Törnblom. 'Social Psychology of Justice: Origins, Central Issues, Recent Developments, and Future Directions,' pp. 209-213. • Victor Kumar and Richmond Campbell, 'Pluralism', in <i>A Better Ape</i>, pp. 83-93.
<p>Week IX November 9</p>	<p><i>Judgments of injustice II: Are they inherently conflictual?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham, 'When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize'. • Victor Kumar and Richmond Campbell, 'Progress', in <i>A Better Ape</i>, pp. 175-199.
<p>Week X November 16</p>	<p><i>Objectivity and impartiality: progressive public reasoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amartya Sen, <i>The Idea of Justice</i>, Chapter 5, 'Impartiality and Objectivity,' and Chapter 6, 'Closed and Open Impartiality', pp. 114-152.
<p>November 20</p>	<p><i>Upload and circulate seminar papers</i> <i>Upload your seminar paper and email it to the class before 11:55pm Monday, November 20 if you are scheduled to present it on November 23.</i></p>
<p>Week 11 November 23</p>	<p><i>Seminar papers [6 slots for presentation]</i> <i>The author of the seminar paper will give a short presentation summarizing the purpose of the paper and how that purpose was achieved. Everyone else will be prepared to give helpful comments and questions for improving the paper, developing it into the final research paper for the course. Expect 5 minutes presentation followed by 20 minutes of discussion for each paper.</i> <i>Be prepared to comment on other students' seminar papers.</i></p>
<p>November 27</p>	<p><i>Upload and circulate seminar papers</i> <i>Upload your seminar paper and email it to the class before 11:55pm Monday, November 27 if you are scheduled to present it on November 30.</i></p>
<p>Week 12 November 30</p>	<p><i>Seminar papers [6 slots for presentation]</i> <i>Be prepared to comment on other students' seminar papers.</i></p>
<p>December 4</p>	<p><i>Upload and circulate seminar papers</i> <i>Upload your seminar paper and email it to the class before 11:55pm Monday, December 4 if you are scheduled to present it on December 7.</i></p>
<p>Week 13 December 7</p>	<p><i>Seminar papers [6 slots for presentation]</i> <i>Be prepared to comment on other students' seminar papers.</i></p>
<p>December 22</p>	<p><i>University deadline for the final paper</i></p>

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES.

This course will enable students to become familiar with:

- (1) Two ways of seeking greater social and global justice: (a) aiming for an ideally just society/world, or (b) diagnosing and removing the causes of injustice.
- (2) Philosophical debates about the comparative strengths and weaknesses of those two approaches.
- (3) Sources of normative judgment about injustice, as understood in philosophy and moral psychology.
- (4) Debates on whether and how normative judgments about injustice can be coherent, objective, or impartial.

In addition, the course will enable students to:

- (5) Present and explain key points in philosophical literature to peers.
- (6) Formulate research questions on (2), (3), (4), or related topics.
- (7) Develop arguments and perspectives on those questions in writing, defending them against objections.
- (8) Comment helpfully on research proposals, arguments, and perspectives of other students.

SOURCES OF REQUIRED READINGS, IN ARES COURSE RESERVES

- Aristotle. 2000. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Roger Crisp. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. [book online @CU library]
- Barrett, Jacob. 2020. "Social Reform in a Complex World." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 17 (2): 103–32.
- Boettcher, James. 2009. "Race, Ideology, and Ideal Theory." *Metaphilosophy* 40 (2): 237–59.
- Carroll, Jeffrey. 2022. "Ideal Theory for a Complex World." *Res Publica* 28 (3): 531–50.
- Douglass, Frederick. 2009. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July." In *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: An African American Anthology*, edited by Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, 2nd ed., 103–6. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Haidt, Jonathan, and Jesse Graham. 2007. "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize." *Social Justice Research* 20 (1): 98–116.
- Kazemi, Ali, and Kjell Törnblom. 2008. "Social Psychology of Justice: Origins, Central Issues, Recent Developments, and Future Directions." *Nordic Psychology* 60 (3): 209–34.
- Kumar, Victor, and Richmond Campbell. 2022. *A Better Ape: The Evolution of the Moral Mind and How It Made Us Human*. Oxford: University Press. [book online @CU library]
- Mills, Charles W. 2017. "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology." In *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. [book online @CU library]
- Rawls, John. 2002. *The Law of Peoples; with "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited"*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [book online @CU library]
- Rawls, John, and Erin I Kelly. 2001. *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [book online @CU library]
- Robeyns, Ingrid. 2012. "Are Transcendental Theories of Justice Redundant?" *Journal of Economic Methodology* 19 (2): 159–63.
- Sen, Amartya. 2006. "What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?" *The Journal of Philosophy* 103 (5): 215–38.
- Sen, Amartya. 2009. *The Idea of Justice*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. [book online @CU library]
- Wiens, David. 2012. "Prescribing Institutions Without Ideal Theory." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20 (1): 45–70.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2023-24)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 6	Classes start.
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 9	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 23-27	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 8	Classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 19-23	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 27	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Mar. 29	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 10	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 11-12	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 13-25	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 25	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735