Political Science 7499: Global Justice

W 9am-11:45am  Autumn Semester 2016 (Class #25237)
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Course Description
Is it possible to achieve global justice? What would such a world look like and what does this tell us about how to live today in our own unjust world? These important questions motivate this political theory course about the possibility of justice between states and among the people of the world. Much contemporary political theory about global justice remains structured by its origin in the challenge Charles Beitz first posed in 1979: is it morally permissible to ensure a fair domestic distribution of wealth while ignoring glaring international inequalities? Answers to this question all came in the wake of the significant shift that John Rawls enacted by arguing that liberalism should be committed to a form of social justice that includes egalitarian redistribution. Consequently, political theory has recently debated whether or not those relatively settled post-Rawlsian convictions about justice should be extended by analogy to the world as a whole or defended as normatively best in their current, bounded form.

However, as critics have pointed out, the ascendance of the Rawlsian consensus within political theory has coincided with its retreat in the actual politics of the global North. The structure of the world economy has changed too, as neoliberalism increasingly began to influence economic policy starting around 1979. This poses important challenges for political theory. Can theories of global justice help us understand neoliberal realities? Which theories, if any, can help to guide action today? To answer this, we will read contemporary views of global justice as well as interdisciplinary work on neoliberalism and key works in the history of international political theory.

Course Policies

Course Requirements
Grades will be based on seminar participation and attendance (20%), a class presentation and discussion that you lead (20%), 2 short writing assignments (20%), and a final paper (40%).

Participation in Class Discussion
This is a graduate seminar so I trust that you know how to be a student. But I also know that, for many of you, political theory is not your primary field and may be one that you are exploring for the first time. And I recognize that reading theory can be challenging. Even if you are accustomed to digesting great quantities of information, reading conceptual and normative arguments requires distinct analytic skills; careful reading on the sentence-level to parse the particulars of a claim needs to be combined with a synthetic view of where that claim fits in a larger argument. And, like any disciplinary field, it can be hard to get oriented as the interesting
questions often presuppose some familiarity with earlier work. This is especially true for international political theory, which often incorporates (but does not always defend) assumptions about domestic politics.

In the context of these challenges, it is especially important for us to regard this seminar as a kind of collective research endeavor – a project that requires working together to understand these texts. That means you must attend every class and be an active participant in discussion. Being an active participant has several components and does not just mean talking a lot. First, being prepared to participate means that you need to do the assigned reading, of course, but it also means that you must bring your copy of the reading and your notes on it to each class. Trying to read a pdf on your phone is no substitute for a copy that you can actually work with. Second, if a discussion about ideas is to be more than an exchange of monologues, it requires being an attentive listener and treating your classmates and their contributions respectfully. This will make it possible for you to contribute by asking them clarifying questions, explaining why you agree or disagree with what they have said, sharing relevant passages, and taking good notes about others’ views. Finally, participating actively in class also means contributing your own comments and questions to the discussion. Don’t be afraid to say something that might be wrong or that you’re unsure about; those questions and speculations are often the most productive means of advancing our discussion and our understanding. A good class has people engaged in all these activities without anyone dominating the same form of participation every week.

Unexcused absences from class can be made up by writing a response paper that raises substantive issues with the week’s reading; this paper is due within a week of the missed class. Unexcused absences that are not made up will be deducted from your final grade for the course.

Class Presentation
Starting in Week 4, everyone will be responsible for beginning class with a presentation that discusses key arguments from the reading and then leading discussion structured by a set of questions you pose; most weeks will have two presenters, who can divide up the reading and class time.

Writing Assignments
You must write a short paper of 750-900 words reconstructing and evaluating the argument of one or more readings of your choosing before the seminar meets during Week 12. You must also write a short paper (500-750 words) engaging with one paper presented at the Association for Political Theory conference held on campus in October. Finally, you must write a final paper of approximately 6,000 words; I encourage you to develop this final paper out of the short writing assignments. Final papers longer than 8,000 words will not be accepted. A required paper swap where at least one other student in the course reads and responds to a draft of your final paper will be held in class on 11/30. Contributing to the paper swap counts as part of your class participation grade.

Late Work and Absences
I do not accept assignments more than 3 days late. Writing assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (ie, a B+ becomes a B). Extensions and excused absences will be granted in the case of illnesses or personal emergencies.
**Academic Misconduct**
It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

**Disabilities**
The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

**Required Texts**
All of the readings for this course will be available as PDFs through Carmen. However, if you are interested in political theory and are able to, I recommend that you purchase the following books (all of which are widely and cheaply available used):

**Reading Schedule**

**Week 1**  
**Intro and Overview (to be read before our first class meeting)**

8/24  
- David Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pages 1-38)
Week 2   The Possibility of International Justice
Francisco de Vitoria, “On the American Indians” in *Political Writings*, pages 231-292
(Stanford University Press, 1965), pages 150-159


Week 3   The Morality of the Nation-State
9/7  Emer de Vattel, selections from *The Law of Nations*
Preliminaries (pages 67-79), Book 1 – §§1-21 (pages 81-89), §§38-54 (96-112), §§83-94 (pages 131-135), §§97-99 (pages 138-139)
Book 2 - §§1-33 (page 259-279); §§35-39 (page 281-2); §§47-70 (page 287-297); §§79-92 (page 301-308); §§116-122 (page 319-322); §§152-164 (page 338-343)
Book 3 - §§1-4 (469-471)


Week 4   Globalizing Social Justice?
9/14  John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§1-4 (pages 3-19), §11 (pages 52-56), §22 (pages 109-112) plus final statement of the two principles (page 266)
Rawls, *Law of Peoples*, §§1-6 (pages 11-58)

Week 5   The Boundaries of Justice?

**Week 6  Liberal Alternatives**


**Week 7  Agents of Global Justice**


**Week 8  Approaches in Critical Theory**


Nancy Fraser, “Abnormal Justice” from *Scales of Justice*, pages 48-75


**Week 9  Neoliberal Governmentality**

10/19  Michel Foucault, Lectures of 9-12 from *Birth of Biopolitics* (pages 215-315)

Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life” *History of Sexuality, Vol 1* (pages 133-159)

**Recommended:** Bernard Harcourt, *The Illusion of Free Markets* (2012), Chapter 6

Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (2015), Chapters 1 and 2
10/20-10/22  Association for Political Theory Conference

Week 10  Neoliberal Freedom
10/26  Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Ch 1 (10-23); Ch 5-6 (56-87), Ch 9 (119-133); Ch 15 (220-239)
Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, Ch 2 (35-54) and excerpt from Ch 10 (107-122)


Week 11  The Global Supply Chain


Week 12  Vulnerability and Politics [last day short paper accepted]
11/9  Judith Butler, “Precarious Life, Grievable Life” and “Survivability, Vulnerability, Affect” from *Frames of War* (pages 1-62)

*Recommended:* Andrew Kuper, “More Than Charity: Cosmopolitan Alternatives to the ‘Singer Solution’” *Ethics & International Affairs* Vol 16 No 2: pages 107-120

Week 13 (11/16)  No class
Week 14 (11/23)  No class [OSU closed for Thanksgiving]
Week 15 (11/30)  Workshop and Draft Swap of Final Papers
Week 16 (12/7)  Final Paper Due