

JUS 303: Justice Theory

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Fall, 2008 Tues: 5:40-8:30 Eng G 214 SLN 75323

Seminar Objectives: This course seeks to acquaint you with the classical, modern, and postmodern literature on the nature of justice, and with the enduring questions which animate these writings. What is Justice? What is the Good Society? What kind of creatures does God, or Nature, intend us to be? What makes government legitimate? What obligations do we human beings have toward each other, and where do these obligations come from? How should the material wealth and the intangible rewards in society be distributed? What should society do to those who break the law? What should law seek to accomplish? Should we execute criminals who commit the most heinous crimes? What standard should guide the nature of punishment? What is the nature of morality, and where does it come from? Should men and women be paid the same for the same work, should “unearned” income be taxed the same as “earned” income, and should society guarantee a level of material existence for those who cannot care for or provide for themselves? What should be the standard for receiving income and other societal rewards; Need? Effort? Status? Market value? What is and what should be the relationship between God and the State? Should stem-cells be allowed to vote on whether they are kept or destroyed? Should SNL be allowed to satirize our President? Who should answer these questions? These questions, and many others, continue to animate our interests in the nature of justice. For some, this course will be their introduction to the classical canon of Western philosophy of justice; for others, this course will afford a revisitation of works or writers which may have been encountered in an undergraduate philosophy or classics course. Also, it is the expectation that this course will prepare students for teaching in this area, for those who have interests in doing so. And, finally, this course seeks to make a major (but by no means exclusive) contribution to the student’s preparation for further justice courses or research work.

Required Texts: There are five (5), all in paper, to be read (approx) in this order:

- (1) Robert Solomon and Mark Murphy, eds., 2nd ed. What is Justice? (Oxford, 2000)
- (2) Plato, The Republic, Benjamin Jowett, trans. (Dover Thrift Edition, 2000)
- (3) Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (Vantage, 1975)
- (4) George M. Fredrickson, Racism (Princeton Univ. Press, 2002)
- (7) Kent Sandstrom, et alia, Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality, 2nd ed. (Roxbury, 2006)

Seminar and Grading Requirements: You are expected to attend all seminar meetings, to do the readings, and to participate in class. In the rare event that you should have to miss one seminar meeting, you should notify the instructor in advance. Your course grade will be based on the following:

Exam #1	Sept. 23	20%
Exam #2	Oct. 21	20%
Exam #3	Nov. 25	20%
Paper	Due Dec. 16	40%

Provisional Reading Assignment Schedule

Aug 26	First Class
Sep 2	Solomon, pp. 13-14, 14-20, 44-49, 56-57; begin Republic
Sep 9	Plato, Republic
Sep 16	Solomon, pp. 21-34, 34-44
Sep 23	<u>Exam #1</u>
Sep 30	Solomon, Part II
Oct 7	Solomon, Part III
Oct 14	Solomon, Part V
Oct 21	<u>Exam #2</u>
Oct 28	Solomon, Part IV
Nov 4	Solomon, Part IV, plus Foucault, Parts 1 & 2
Nov 18	Foucault, Parts 3 & 4, all of Fredrickson
Nov 25	Sandstrom <u>Exam #3</u>
Dec 2	Class Presentation of Student Papers
Dec 9	Class Presentation of Student Papers
Dec 16	Class Presentation of Student Papers (PAPERS DUE)

Office Hours: Regularly Tues & Thurs 11-12, Tues 3-4:30, but available many, many others times; feel free to call for an appointment at 965-7685.

