

The University of Calgary
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 453 Lecture 01
Social and Political Philosophy
Fall 2009 – E. Brake

Instructor: Elizabeth Brake
Office: 1220 Social Sciences
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00-1:30
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Lectures: MW 4:00-5:15, SS 541

Texts:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003 (rev. ed.)
Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 (2nd ed.)

Required reading will also be posted on the Blackboard web-site; see details below.

Course description:

This course will focus on contemporary debates in political philosophy. We will first examine John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, an influential liberal egalitarian text. We will then consider libertarian, communitarian, feminist, and anti-racist critiques of liberalism. Specific issues to be discussed include the extent of the liberties, redistributive taxation, the division between the public and the private, and equal opportunity.

Assessment:

<i>Weight</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due dates</i>
10% each	2 short essays	Sept 30, Oct 14
10%	Paper proposal	October 28
30%	Mid-term	November 9
10%	In-class final	December 7
30%	Term paper (2500 words)	December 11

The paper proposal will consist of a one-page abstract explaining your topic and proposed argument, and a short bibliography of key readings not assigned in class.

To pass the class, you must hand in all assignments. *Late work* will be penalised 3 points a day, unless there is a documented excuse such as illness or family emergency. I will count e-mailed assignments as late until I receive a hard copy. Assignments handed in outside class must be placed in the box on the 12th floor of Social Sciences.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. I will report any instance thereof – downloading papers from the Internet, copying or paraphrasing material from a book, web-site, or a fellow student – to the Faculty of Humanities and assign an F for the course or the assignment.

As stated in the University Calendar, letter grades reflect the following standards:

A: Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.

B: Good — clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.

C: Satisfactory — basic understanding of the subject matter.

D: Minimal pass — marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.

F: Fail — unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Grading scale:

A+	97-100	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	60-66		
F	59 and below				

There is a Blackboard site for this course. Log in at <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/> using your U of C e-mail username and password. I use Blackboard

- to post grades

- to make announcements

- to post course documents (this outline, assignments, handouts/overheads, required reading)

I will accommodate students with disabilities. If you need accommodations, you may wish to contact the *Disability Resource Centre* (220-8237).

Reading schedule:

Week 1: Sept 14, 16 Justice as fairness: *Theory* I.1-9, Kymlicka ‘Introduction’, and 53-7

Week 2: Sept 21, 23 Rawls’ principles of justice: *Theory* II.10-17

Week 3: Sept 28, 30 The original position: *Theory* III and IV. 32, 33

Week 4: Oct 5, 7 The argument, implications, and problems: *Theory* IV. 35 and V. 42, Kymlicka 57-97

Week 5: Oct 14 Stability, neutrality, and the communitarian critique: *Theory* V.50, VII.60, VIII.69-72, 77, Kymlicka 208-244

Week 6: Oct 19, 21 Rawls’ response: Public Reason: Rawls, “Idea of Public Reason Revisited” (BB)

Week 7: Oct 26, 28 Perfectionist and communitarian critique: Arneson (BB), Kymlicka 244-283

Week 8: Nov 2, 4 Libertarianism: Kymlicka 102-127, 138-159, Nozick (BB)

- MIDTERM/READING WEEK -

Week 10: Nov 16, 18 Marxism: Kymlicka, Chapter 5

Week 11: Nov 23, 25 Feminism: Kymlicka 166-168, 176-195, 377-398, Okin (BB)

Week 12: Nov 30, Dec 2 Anti-racism: Shelby and Shiffrin (both on BB)

Assigned reading to download from Blackboard:

- 1) Richard Arneson, "Perfectionism and Politics," *Ethics* 111:1 (2000): 37-63.
- 2) Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 149-164, 174-204, 213-231.
- 3) Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), pp. 89-109.
- 4) John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 64:3 (1997): 765-807.
- 5) Tommie Shelby, "Race and Social Justice: Rawlsian Considerations," *Fordham Law Review* 72 (2003-04): 1697-1714.
- 6) Seana Shiffrin, "Race, Labor, and the Fair Equality of Opportunity Principle," *Fordham Law Review* 72 (2003-04): 1643-1696.

PLEASE NOTE: Access to some articles is via the University Library JSTOR subscription, which may be accessed off-campus by finding the e-journal via the Library catalogue and logging in. In these cases, I have attached pdfs (right below the link) for your convenience.