

SYLLABUS

PHIL 335
Social and Political Philosophy
Spring 2018

TR 9:30 PM – 10:45PM
3174 Haley Center
Scott Hill

What makes a state just? In this course we will examine four answers to this question. One answer, egalitarianism, holds that a state is just iff every citizen has the same amount of socially distributable benefits and burdens as every other citizen. Another answer, the difference principle, holds that a state is just iff there is no feasible way in which material benefits could be redistributed to citizens that would yield a larger share of resources for the citizens who are in the worst off class. A third answer, libertarianism, holds that a state is just iff everything possessed by a citizen was obtained fairly from the state of nature or obtained in a fair transaction. Finally, desertism holds that a state is just iff in every case in which a citizen deserves something good or evil, that citizen gets it. We will look at various problems and puzzles for each of these theories. And we will examine attempts to resolve those puzzles.

Required Reading

I will put reading assignments online.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by:

- Discussion: 10%
- 10 Reading Quizzes: 40%
- 2 Short Papers: 30%
- Long Paper: 20%

Discussion: Each member of the class will receive three color-coded single-use question cards with his or her name on them. The ranking of the cards will determine who is called on next. The ranking of the cards is as follows:

Red > Yellow > Green > hand with no card

If you want to ask a question or make a comment and would like to use a card, raise that card when attempting to get called on. Once called on, I'll collect your card. In order to get full credit in the participation category in a given two week period, each member of the class needs to use all of their cards. At the beginning of each two-week period, I'll redistribute your cards. No more than two cards can be used on a single day. Cards are not transferable. If you lose your cards sometime during the two-week period, you won't

be able to get full participation credit for that stretch of time. To use a card, the questions and comments need to be relevant and thoughtful. Also, to get credit for discussion over a two-week period, one must avoid use of electronic devices in class during that period. So remember to put away phones, computers, etc.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be about the readings and are do before we discuss them in class.

You may withdraw (although with a W on your transcript) until midsemester.

Excused Absences

Students are granted excused absences from class for the following reasons: Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family, the death of a member of the student's immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance, and religious holidays. Students who wish to have an excused absence from this class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case shall such notification occur more than one week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required. Please see the [Student Policy eHandbook](http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/) for more information on excused absences(http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/).

Make-Up Policy

Arrangement to make up missed major examination (e.g. hour exams, mid-term exams) due to properly authorized excused absences must be initiated by the student within one week from the end of the period of the excused absences. Except in unusual circumstances, such as continued absence of the student or the advent of University holidays, a make-up exam will take place within two weeks from the time that the student initiates arrangements for it. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no make-up exams will be arranged during the last three days before the final exam period begins. The format of the make-up exam will be *(as specified by instructor)*.

Disability Accommodations

Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Classroom Behavior

The AU Classroom Behavior Policy is strictly followed in the course; please refer to the Student Policy eHandbook at http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/ for details of this policy.

Academic Honesty

All portions of the Auburn University Student Academic Honesty code (Title XII) found in the Student Policy eHandbook at http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/ will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

Emergency Contingency

If normal class and/or lab activities are disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation (such as an H1N1 flu outbreak), the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

Office and Office Hours

Office: Haley Center 2202

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:45-11:45

I especially welcome questions through email. My email address is sah0057@auburn.edu. (Note: I don't check my email on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.)

Class Schedule

(Tentative: This schedule probably underestimates the number of readings we'll have)

Week 1: 1/11

Introduction

Week 2: 1/16, 1/18

Egalitarianism

Temkin, L. (1993), *Inequality* (Selected Passages)

Parfit, D. *Reasons and Persons* (Selected Passages)

Week 3: 1/23, 1/25

Luck Egalitarianism

Dworkin, R. *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (selected passages)

Week 4: 1/30, 2/1

Cohen, G. A. "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics*

Arneson, R. "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare," *Philosophical Studies*

Week 5: 2/6, 2/8

Sufficientism

Frankfurt, H. (1987), "Equality as a Moral Ideal." *Ethics*

Crisp, R. (2003), "Equality, Priority, and Compassion." *Ethics*

Week 6: 2/13, 2/15

The Difference Principle

Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 7: 2/20, 2/22

Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 8: 2/27, 3/1

Vallentyne, P. (2001), "Equality, Efficiency, and the Priority of the Worse-off." *Economics and Philosophy*, 16: 1–19.

Feldman, F. *Distributive Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 9: 3/6, 3/8

Libertarianism

Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Selected Passages)

Week 10: 3/12-3/16

Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Selected Passages)

Week 11: 3/20, 3/22

Vallentyne, P. (2011), "Nozick's Libertarian Theory of Justice,"

Feldman, F. *Distributive Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 12: 3/27, 3/29

Spring Break

Week 13: 4/3, 4/5

Desertism

Feldman, F. *Distributive Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 14: 4/10, 4/12

Feldman, F. *Distributive Justice* (Selected Passages)

Week 15: 4/17, 4/19

TBD Based on Class Interest

Week 16: 4/24, 4/26

TBD Based on Class Interest