

PHILOSOPHY 447/747: GLOBAL JUSTICE
Spring 2024; TR, 11-12:20pm; Porter Hall A21

Professor:

Danielle Wenner (she/her/Dr), dwenner@andrew.cmu.edu

Office Hours:

In person, Baker 145L, **Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm** or by appointment
[Virtual](#), **Wednesdays 3-4pm** or by appointment

Course Description & Learning Objectives

Until fairly recently, the dominant view of international relations has been that the governments and citizens of one country have no, or extremely few, moral obligations to those beyond their borders. With the rapid growth in globalization has come a drastic shift in attitudes about our moral and political obligations to those with whom we share global institutions of trade but neither legal systems nor national identities. This course aims to introduce students to the problem of global distributive justice in the context of a globalized world, with emphases on both theoretical accounts of justice and the practical implications of those accounts for important current global issues.

In addition to familiarizing students with contemporary debates within global justice, this course aims to help students strengthen their skills in analytic reading, interpretation, and writing. Assignments are therefore structured to emphasize writing and analysis (rather than content-reproduction, as in exams). To the extent possible, the course will be conducted as a seminar and is intended to be discussion- rather than lecture-based.

Course Goals

1. Describe some of the key issues and debates concerning justice on the global scale, and articulate a reasoned defense of your own view on each issue or debate.
2. Identify *arguments* made within these debates, and charitably and accurately express the content and logical structure of these arguments in your own words.
3. Identify how these arguments are supposed to work, and evaluate them on the basis of the quality of the arguments given, i.e. by evaluating (a) the truth values of an argument's premises, and (b) the actual strength of its inferences.
4. (Building on previous) Construct and critique various counterexamples and thought experiments for and against a position.
5. Construct your own *negative arguments* against philosophical positions, in which you provide careful reasoning against a given argument or position, using the evaluation process and methods in (3-4), being mindful of how a proponent of the original position might respond to your critique.
6. Construct your own *positive arguments* for your favored philosophical positions, using clear and careful reasoning, and anticipating potential counterexamples and other objections.
7. Communicate (5-6) effectively in a well-written, well-reasoned, conference-length philosophy paper.

Course Requirements

Class assignments are structured to improve students' reading habits, analytical skills, and writing. If you are struggling with reading or writing, please make use of office hours. During regularly scheduled office hours, no appointment is needed.

Two short goals assignments – 3% each, 6% total

You will be asked (twice) to brainstorm about your personal, professional, and social goals and how they relate to this class.

Five short response papers – 7% each, 35% total

Each student will complete five written responses to individual readings, 3-4 double spaced pages (~900-1200 words). Responses should seek to do three things: (1) Identify the main thesis(es) of the reading. What claim(s) is the author attempting to defend? (2) Reconstruct the argument offered in support of the thesis(es). What reason(s) does the author provide the reader for believing the thesis(es) to be true? (3) Raise a critical point about the reading. What is a weakness or limitation of the argument and/or how might the argument be strengthened? Here you might point out a false assumption, offer a counter-example, discuss problematic consequences of the author's view, highlight logical features of the author's argument, or offer independent/new arguments in support of the author's thesis.

*Each student will choose to write on one session from each of the following week clusters: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 9-10, and 11-14. To ensure even coverage, we will coordinate response schedules at the end of the first week. Responses should be submitted directly to me **via email** no later than **the night before the class in which a reading is to be discussed** (so by Monday or Wednesday night).*

Discussion Lead – 10%

Each student will be responsible for leading class discussion once during the semester. To coordinate, we will schedule discussion leads at the end of the first week. Further instructions will be provided in class and via email.

Term Paper – 39% total (see below for breakdown)

Each student will write a term paper of approximately 3000 words critically engaging with a topic relevant to the course. The term paper may be a more fully developed version of a short response paper, or an independent work. All term paper topics must be approved by me in advance. The term paper assignment is broken down as follows:

*Topic & research assignment (to be completed by **March 27**): 5%*

*Exposition & analysis of a research article (due for class **April 2**): 7%*

*Detailed outline of the paper (due for class **April 16**): 7%*

*Term paper (due **April 28**): 20%*

Further details about the term paper and associated assignments will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Attendance & Class Participation – 10%

*There is no attendance policy in this class. However, 10% of your grade consists in participation in in-class discussions of the readings, group activities, and regular class attendance. You should attend each class having closely read the assigned material for the day and ready to engage in detailed discussion and critical assessment of those materials. You will be asked regularly to assess your own attendance and participation. Frequent absenteeism, inability to participate in class discussions and activities due to not having completed the readings, and failure to contribute to class discussions will each negatively impact your participation grade. **Do not attend class if you are feeling unwell. If you are visibly sick while in class, you will be asked to leave.***

Important Dates

Feb. 26: Final drop deadline

March 4-8: No class; Fall Break

March 11: Mid-semester grades turned in

April 11: No class; Spring Carnival

April 25: Last class

April 28: Term paper due

CLASS POLICIES

MASKING REQUEST: PLEASE WEAR A MASK DURING CLASS, PARTICULARLY DURING SURGES

While masking is not required in CMU classrooms, I politely request that you wear a mask during this class. COVID-19 is an airborne virus that has disproportionately harmful impacts on disabled, chronically ill, and immunocompromised persons. COVID infection itself is extremely unpleasant and will cause you to miss class and fall behind. The risks of long COVID are significant, and the chances of experiencing long-term symptoms increase with each new infection. One-way masking (where only one person wears a mask while others do not) is significantly less effective at preventing the transmission of airborne viruses than when everyone is masked. This means that we cannot provide an equitable and inclusive atmosphere for all members of our campus community unless we protect one another by masking while indoors.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE FEELING UNWELL. IF YOU ARE VISIBLY SICK WHILE IN CLASS, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.

There is no official attendance policy in this class and attendance is not taken. However, you will be asked regularly to assess your own attendance and participation, and a pattern of missed classes will be noticed and will impact your grade. Missing a significant number of class meetings is also likely to impact your grade through your performance on class assignments. If you miss a class, for any reason, it is your responsibility to determine what you missed. It is strongly recommended that you exchange contact information with a few of your peers so that you can easily obtain class notes on missed discussions. **By default, I do not respond to emails asking “what did I miss in class?”**

YOU MUST DO THE READINGS FOR THIS CLASS. Philosophical inquiry is a joint endeavor, and the quality of this course will depend crucially on your thoughtful, considerate engagement with the readings and with each other. In general, I do not devote class meetings to lectures that explain the materials. Rather, class discussion is focused on assessment of core arguments, discussions of the implications of authors' views, and consideration of potential objections. Students should come to class having closely read and thought about all assigned materials. This requires, *at a minimum*:

- Determining the key point(s) the author is trying to establish or criticize;
- Understanding why the author considers it/them to be important;
- Identifying the reason(s) the author gives in support of their conclusion(s); and
- Considering whether those reasons are both (a) true or correct, and (b) actually in support of the author's conclusion(s).

Students often assume that there is some settled Knowledge within a discipline. On this model, the role of a faculty member is to impart that Knowledge to students, so that students can commit the Knowledge to memory and regurgitate it back to the faculty member to demonstrate competence. **This is not an accurate model of scholarly reality.** Particularly in philosophy, but also across disciplines, there are typically multiple, competing views of the world. Experts can and do disagree, and mapping, understanding, and assessing the bases for those disagreements is a core part of scholarly work. This is the work we will do in this class.

We will be discussing controversial topics about which many of you will have strong feelings. However, our purpose in this class is to **move past feelings and opinions**, and to evaluate and provide **reasoned arguments** for and against various positions on these issues. **Disrespectful comments towards other students or about racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexuality, or ability groups will not be tolerated.**

GRADING

Grades are assigned on the following scale:

High A	97.5	B+	87.5	C+	77.5	D+	67.5
A	95	B	85	C	75	D	65
A-	92.5	B-	82.5	C-	72.5	D-	62.5
A-/B+	90	B-/C+	80	C-/D+	70	R	60 or below

You are not defined by your grades. While I recognize that students are under intense pressure (both self-imposed and external) to achieve high grades, there is nothing inherently wrong with getting a B or a C. They are letters on a page, and their primary function is to **indicate where your work can improve.** Students also have widely varying reasons for taking a particular class, and some of those reasons are served perfectly well by doing satisfactory (C-level) work. An "A" on any assignment in this class indicates outstanding or truly exemplary work. A "B" is work that demonstrates a high level of competence. A "C" is satisfactory.

There is a steep learning curve to reading and writing philosophy effectively, which should provide you with strong incentives to work hard at the beginning of the semester and receive the kind of feedback you will need to improve and excel in your written assignments.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late short response pieces will not be accepted after the relevant material is discussed in class. If you must miss one of your selected dates, you will need to contact me to select another date and reading. The same goes for discussion leading. Requests for reasonable extensions on paper assignments **will be granted**, provided requests are made in advance of the deadline. **You do not need to provide a reason for asking for an extension.** However, please note that I do not check email outside of regular business hours, so extensions must be requested before 5pm on Friday for assignments with weekend due dates.

COMMUNICATION

Please note that I do not read or respond to student emails outside of normal business hours (i.e. if you email me in the evening or on the weekend, you will not receive a response until the next weekday.) I endeavor to always respond to student emails within one business day, and ask that you read and (where appropriate) respond to my emails in a similarly timely fashion.

OFFICE HOURS

I hold regularly scheduled office hours (in person) on Tuesday and ([virtually](#)) on Wednesday afternoons. Office hours are times that I set aside specifically to be available to meet with students. You do not need an appointment to meet with me in office hours – simply show up. If you need to meet with me and you cannot make it to regularly scheduled office hours, you may email me to set up a time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, GENERATIVE AI, & PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to the use of any ideas or words from another person or source without appropriate citation. All sources used for course assignments should be appropriately cited, including information found on the internet, in course readings, or from class discussions. If you are unsure about whether or not to cite something, err on the side of caution.

Large Language Models (LLMs, also often called “generative AI” or “AI”) like ChatGPT are trained on text stolen from the internet without authors’ permission, and as a result create plagiarized content. Submitting work produced by an LLM **with or without attribution** is a form of intellectual theft.

Practicing every step of writing, including brainstorming, research, outlining, drafting, and revision helps you to develop your understanding of course material, yourself, and how you relate to the topics you will write about. Practicing writing also helps you to develop your creativity and your original voice as a writer. For these reasons, among others, you may not outsource any step of your written assignments for this class to an AI tool. To do so will be considered plagiarism.

I have a zero-tolerance policy for cheating: **Any student found to have plagiarized on any assignment will receive a failing grade for the assignment, and at my discretion, for the entire course.** Additionally, all available institutional penalties will be sought.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

I and your classmates put a great deal of time and effort into preparing for an interesting class discussion, and you are expected to do the same. When entering the classroom, please place your phone on “silent” and put it away for the duration of our meeting. The use of laptops during class discussions is **discouraged but not forbidden**. In most cases, using a computer during discussion significantly distracts from what is going on and leads to disengagement from those around you. While some individuals can successfully use a computer without multitasking, most cannot – it is hard not to take a down moment to check your email or look at your calendar. And studies have shown that this kind of multitasking during class not only causes the computer user’s learning to suffer, but also that of the students sitting nearby who can see their screen.¹

VIDEOTAPING, AUDIO RECORDING, AND COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials, including lectures, syllabi, handouts, and presentations are the intellectual property of your professor. Students are prohibited from sharing any course materials with third parties, including on social media, without the express written permission of your professor. **Videotaping and audio recording are both prohibited without the express written permission of your professor.**

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities are legally entitled to reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education. If you have a disability and have an accommodation letter from the Disability Resources office, please discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate.

The ADA defines a disability as a medical condition that substantially limits one or more life activities – including things like walking, sleeping, taking care of yourself, learning, and regulating your emotions – or major bodily functions. If you have a medical condition, *including mental health conditions*, that significantly interferes with your schoolwork, you probably qualify. **You do not need to disclose your medical condition to your instructors to receive accommodations.**

Some students will need accommodations in college who did not need them before. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu. It is important to reach out sooner than later, as most accommodations only function as forward-looking modifications to class expectations, rather than mitigating low grades you may have already received.

¹ Sana, F., T. Weston and N. J. Cepeda (2013). "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." *Computers & Education* 62: 24-31.

More generally: take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding excess substance use, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. Also: make use of the resources available to you to manage the stresses and anxieties that we all experience sometimes. An important part of maturing is learning how and when to ask for help. Asking for help sooner rather than later can in many cases help to avert more serious crises. If you or anyone you know is experiencing anxiety or depression, I encourage you to seek support. You can contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) at [412-268-2922](tel:412-268-2922) or visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that you need.

I am committed to providing students with equal access to this class. If you are struggling – whether because of a medical condition or **for any other reason** – please come talk to me. It is an expectation in my classroom that both students and professor see everyone as whole people. Self-care is valid and important work, and should take priority over this class. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Prioritize caring for your health, both physical and mental.

Outline of Topics & Tentative Schedule of Readings

(All dates and readings are subject to change. I will always confirm what to read for the next class at the end of the previous meeting. All required readings will be provided on Canvas.)

Jan.16	Course Introduction
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Part I: Sacrifice and Moral Demands

Does our relative prosperity oblige us to contribute to efforts to eradicate poverty? If so, how much? Is there a limit to how demanding a moral theory can be, and why?

Jan. 18	<i>The principle of sacrifice</i> Peter Singer. (1972). "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 1(3): 229-243.
Jan. 23	<i>Moral demandingness</i> James Fishkin. (1982). "The Zone of Indifference" and "The Famine Relief Argument." <i>The Limits of Obligation</i> . New Haven, Yale University Press, chs. 4 & 9.
Jan. 25	<i>Moral demandingness, cont'd</i> David Sobel. (2007). "The Impotence of the Demandingness Objection." <i>Philosopher's Imprint</i> 7(8): 1-17.

Part II: Global Political Realism

Do international political obligations exist, or are international relations a Hobbesian state of nature?

Jan. 30	<i>Hobbes and International Relations</i> Charles Beitz. (1979). "International Relations as a State of Nature." <i>Political Theory and International Relations</i> . Princeton, Princeton University Press, Part I. Read pp. 12-34.
Feb. 1	<i>The Basis of International Obligations</i> Charles Beitz. (1979). "International Relations as a State of Nature." <i>Political Theory and International Relations</i> . Princeton, Princeton University Press, Part I. Read pp. 35-66.

Part III: Liberalism and the Scope of Justice Obligations

What is the nature of liberal obligations of justice? What is the proper scope of obligations of justice? Do our compatriots have a greater claim on us than do foreigners, and if so, why? If duties of justice are limited to those with whom we share certain social or political institutions, which institutions matter?

Feb. 6	Background: Rawlsian Liberalism John Rawls. (1972). <i>A Theory of Justice</i> . Cambridge, Harvard University Press, ch. 1, §§1-2; ch. 2, §§11-13 (stop at page 80) & 17
Feb. 8	Cosmopolitan Rawlsian Liberalism Charles Beitz. (1975). "Justice and International Relations." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 4(4):360-389.
Feb. 13	Statism Thomas Nagel. (2005). "The Problem of Global Justice." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 33(2): 113-147. Skip Section VII.
Feb. 15	Political vs. Associative Conceptions of Justice A.J. Julius. (2006). "Nagel's Atlas." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 34(2): 176-192.
Feb. 20	Practice-Dependence and Global Institutions Miriam Ronzoni. (2009). "The Global Order: A Case of Background Injustice? A Practice-Dependent Account." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 37(3): 229-256.

Part IV: Imperialism and Responsibility for Harm

What role do historical injustices play in determining our obligations to the global poor? Does the role of the United States in global relations ground obligations of a particular kind? Do citizens in the developed world participate in a system of global institutions which impose harms on the developing world?

Feb. 22	US Imperialism Richard Miller. (2010). "Modern Empire" and "Empire and Obligation." <i>Globalizing Justice: The Ethics of Poverty and Power</i> . Oxford, Oxford University Press, chs. 5-6.
Feb. 27	Justice in Rectification Thomas Pogge. (2001). "Eradicating Systemic Poverty: Brief for a Global Resources Dividend." <i>Journal of Human Development</i> 2(1): 59-77. Selections from Thomas Pogge. (1998). "Moral Universalism and Global Economic Justice." <i>World Poverty and Human Rights</i> . Malden, MA, Polity Press, ch. 4. Read section 4.9.
Feb. 29	Benchmarks of Harm Mathias Risse. (2005). "Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?" <i>Ethics and International Affairs</i> 19(1): 9-18. Thomas Pogge. (2005). "Severe Poverty as a Violation of Negative Duties." <i>Ethics and International Affairs</i> 19(1): 55-83. Read only to page 59 (page 5 of the .pdf).

INTERLUDE: TERM PAPER DISCUSSION

Mar. 12	Term Paper Discussion. No Readings. Attendance Mandatory.
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Part V: Exploitation & Global Labor Justice

What is the wrong of exploitation? Does benefiting from another's unfortunate circumstances generate special moral obligations to help that person? What is the nature of our relationship(s) to participants in global supply chains, and how do those relationships impact our obligations to those at the bottom of those chains?

Mar. 14	The Puzzle of Exploitation Paul Krugman. (1997). "In Praise of Cheap Labor." <i>Slate</i> March 21, 1997. Mikhail Valdman. (2009). "A Theory of Wrongful Exploitation." <i>Philosopher's Imprint</i> 9(6): 1-14.
Mar. 19	The Puzzle of Exploitation, cont'd Selections from Alan Wertheimer. (2011). "The Interaction Principle." <i>Rethinking the Ethics of Clinical Research: Widening the Lens</i> . Oxford, Oxford University Press, ch. 6. Matt Zwolinski. (2007). "Sweatshops, Choice, and Exploitation." <i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i> 17(4): 689-727. Read only Sections 1 & 3-5.
Mar. 21	Contributing To and Benefiting From Injustice Iris Marion Young. (2006). "Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model." <i>Social Philosophy & Policy</i> 23(1): 102-130.
Mar. 26	Ideology in Exploitation Theory Danielle Wenner and Derrick Gray. (2024). "Structural Injustice, Exploitation, and Static Non-Ideal Theory." <i>OSF Preprints</i> .
Mar. 28	The Political Nature of Global Labor Injustice Miriam Ronzoni. (2016). "Global Labour Injustice: A Critical Overview." <i>Global Justice and International Labour Rights</i> , eds. Y. Dahan, H. Lerner, and F. Milman-Sivan. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 27-52.

INTERLUDE: WRITING WORKSHOP

Apr. 2	Writing Workshop. No Readings. Attendance Mandatory.
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Part VI: Further Challenges to Liberal Paradigms in Global Justice Theorizing

Apr. 4	<i>Two-Tiered Political Theory</i> Olúfemi O. Táíwò (2019). "States Are Not Basic Structures: Against State-Centric Political Theory," <i>Philosophical Papers</i> 48 (1): 59-82.
Apr. 9	<i>Global Republicanism</i> Miriam Ronzoni. (2019). "The Cosmopolitan Responsibilities of Republican States: Inevitable, but Inevitably Constrained." <i>The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities</i> . Eds. R. Beardsworth, G.W. Brown, and R. Shapcott. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 319-330.
-- Spring Carnival --	
Apr. 16	<i>Writing Workshop. No Readings. Attendance Mandatory.</i>
Apr. 18	<i>Migration, Cosmopolitanism, and the State</i> Luis Cabrera. (2019) "Free Movement, Sovereignty, and Cosmopolitan State Responsibility." <i>The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities</i> . Eds. R. Beardsworth, G.W. Brown, and R. Shapcott. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 224-242.
Apr. 23	<i>Climate Change and Relational Justice</i> Michael Christopher Sardo. (2023). "Responsibility for Climate Justice: Political not Moral." <i>European Journal of Political Theory</i> 22 (1): 26-50.

CONCLUSION: TBD

Apr. 25	TBD/Overflow
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