

PSC 6875

Justice: an introduction to political theory

Dr. Peter Busch

Spring 2011

Meeting times: 10:30-11:20, MWF John Barry 213

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Office hours: SAC 130, MWF 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

In this course we will ask the most enduring question in politics: What is justice?

Our road map will be Plato's *Republic*, the best book ever written on the subject. Each unit of the course will start with one of the major views of justice offered by the men with whom the philosopher Socrates converses in the dialogue. Our focus will be on the beginning (Book I and the start of Book II), leaving later sections of the *Republic* for PSC 6000 (Early Political Theories).

Foundational though the Socratic conversation is, however, we won't be taking it for granted. Instead, we will illustrate, complicate, and challenge it with texts by William Shakespeare, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Frederick Douglass, among others. The course ends with a perspective perhaps very different from the Socratic one: the view of justice taken by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his last speech, "I've been to the Moutaintop."

If you are a political science major, a student who would like to fulfill your social science requirement in the A & S core curriculum, or simply a serious person who is curious about philosophy, this course is for you. It is writing-intensive and discussion-based, and it gives you a chance to talk with faculty in political science and other disciplines that have something to say about justice.

The Department of Political Science and the Center for Liberal Education are sponsoring this course with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Evaluation

Class participation (20%)

This means not only attendance, but active conversation about the texts on a regular basis. I will be evaluating the quality as well as the quantity of your participation throughout the semester. You will need to do the reading assignments, think about them, and contribute your ideas to our discussion.

Formal essays (50%)

You will be writing three essays, one on each of the major sections of the class (see below). The essays will be approximately five pages in length.

Final exam (30%)

The final for this course will be a closed-book exam taken during the official final exam period. Although it will be a cumulative exam on all the readings and discussions for the course, it will include one substantial essay focusing on the material from the end of the course (which you won't be writing on otherwise).

Academic Integrity

I expect all my students to adhere to the most rigorous standards of academic integrity. I will assume that you are familiar with the Arts and Sciences academic integrity policy, which is available online. Be advised that any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any assignment will receive either an F for the assignment or an F for the course (depending on the seriousness), and a letter will be filed with the student's dean and with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A second offense either in this course or in any other course at Villanova will result in dismissal from the university with a permanent indication of the reason for dismissal on the student's transcript.

Attendance

Class participation is worth 20% of your grade, and if you miss more than a few classes this will quickly go to zero. If you miss more than 6 classes it will be hard for you to pass the class.

Texts

1. For purchase
 - a. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* (Oxford University Press, ISBN 0199536120)
 - b. Gilman, *Herland* (Signet, ISBN 0451525620)
 - c. Plato, *Republic* (Trans. Bloom; Basic Books, ISBN 0465069347)
2. Free, from me
 - a. Coursepack, which includes texts used in the second half of the course
 - b. Other texts posted online on WebCT
3. Your choice (you may already own a Bible, and are free to use it if you like)
 - a. Hebrew Bible (suggested edition: *First Five Books of Moses*, trans. Alter, ISBN 0393333930)
 - b. New Testament (e.g., Catholic Study Bible, New Revised Standard Edition, or King James)

Schedule of the Course

Introduction: investigating justice

M 1/10	What is justice?	
W 1/12	Opening of the <i>Republic</i>	Rep. 327a-328b

Part I

F 1/14	Cephalus: honesty (and piety)	Rep. 328c-331d
M 1/17	MLK day – no class	
W 1/19	Biblical justice	Exodus chapters 1-9
F 1/21	Biblical justice	Exodus 10-19
M 1/24	Biblical justice	Exodus 20-31
W 1/26	Biblical justice	Exodus 32-40
F 1/27	Biblical justice	Deuteronomy 1-4

Part II

M 2/1	Polemarchus: helping friends, harming enemies	Rep. 331d-332c
W 2/3	Polemarchus	Rep. 332c-334b
F 2/5	Polemarchus	Rep. 334c-336a
Sat 2/6	Essay 1 due on WebCT	
M 2/8	Julius Caesar: my friend or my country?	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act I
W 2/10	Julius Caesar	Act II
F 2/12	Julius Caesar	Act III
M 2/15	Julius Caesar	Act IV
W 2/17	Julius Caesar	Act V

F 2/19	Herland: a republic of women?	<i>Herland</i> , chapters 1-2
M 2/21	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 3-4
W 2/23	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 5-6
F 2/25	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 7-8
3/1-3/5	No class: spring break	
M 3/7	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 9-12

Part III

W 3/9	Thrasymachus: the advantage of the stronger	<i>Republic</i> 336b-339a
F 3/11	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 339a-344c
Sun 3/13	Essay 2 due on WebCT	
M 3/14	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 344c-350d
W 3/16	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 350d-354c
F 3/18	Guest speaker on Thrasymachus and realism in IR	

M 3/21	Abraham Lincoln: the case for obeying the law	“Lyceum Speech”*
W 3/23	When “the stronger” are the people	Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate*
F 3/25	Lincoln replies	Lincoln-Douglas Debate

M 3/28	Frederick Douglass, 4 th of July Speech *	
W 3/30	Frederick Douglass, 4 th of July Speech *	
F 4/1	No class – Dr. Busch in Chicago	
M 4/4	Obeying law while disobeying laws?	MLK, “Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience”*
W 4/6	Guest speaker	

Part IV

F 4/8	Glaucou: Is justice good when it demands sacrifice?	
Sun 4/10	Essay 3 due on WebCT	
M 4/11	Glaucou	
W 4/13	The case of Socrates	Plato, <i>Apology</i> excerpt*
F 4/15	Sermon on the Mount	Matt. 5-7*
M 4/18	Guest lecturer on religion and politics	
W 4/20	The promised land	MLK, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” (YouTube)
F 4/22, M 4/25	No class: Easter	
W 4/26 (deemed a “Friday”)	No class: conferences for final project	
F 4/28	Wrap-up	

Blue book final exam: Thur, May 5 1:30 - 4:00