Ethics and Public Policy

Government 60.04 / Public Policy 42
Spring 2016
Dartmouth College

Professor Julie Rose
Office: Silsby 202
Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-4pm

10A (Tuesday/Thursday 10:00-11:50)
X: Wednesday 3:00-3:50
Classroom: Reed 108

Course Description

This course examines the nature and validity of arguments about vexing moral issues in public policy. Students examine a number of basic moral controversies in public life, focusing on different frameworks for thinking about justice and the ends of politics. The primary aim of the course is to provide each student with an opportunity to develop the ability to think in sophisticated ways about morally difficult policy issues. Among the questions students address will be the following: Is torture ever defensible? Do people have basic moral claims to unequal economic holdings and rewards, or must any deviations from economic inequality be justifiable? What, if anything, are the moral limits to markets? Should people be permitted to move freely between countries? What do we owe to other societies and their citizens?

Course Requirements

The course requirements are:
- Participation 15% of final grade
- Reading quizzes 10%
- Short paper 1 10%
- Midterm exam 25%
- Short paper 2 15%
- Take-home final exam 25%

Participation
Your participation grade depends on your punctual attendance and your productive contributions to class discussions. Productive participation is regular, engaged, reflective, and well-informed by the readings. Meaningful discussions require listening and generously engaging with others’ contributions. The best way to participate is to take part in and facilitate clear exchanges that advance the conversation.

You are entitled to miss one day of class without an excuse and without it affecting your grade. You should reserve this day to use when necessary. If you miss any additional classes, for whatever reason, this will negatively affect your grade.

Reading quizzes
There will be frequent unannounced short quizzes on the assigned readings. These will be open book and open note. If you have done the assigned reading, the questions should be easy to
answer. You must be in class that day to take the quiz; no make-up quizzes will be granted. If you will not be in class, you must email me in advance with a valid excuse to avoid receiving a zero quiz grade. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Short papers
You will write a 3-4 page discussion paper in Week 3, due on Wednesday, April 13 by 9pm, and in Week 7, due on Sunday, May 15 by 6pm. The assignments will be distributed in Week 2 and 6.

Exams
The midterm exam will be in class in Week 5 on Weeks 1-4. Alternate times for the midterm exam will not be granted without a valid reason and advance notice. The final will be a take-home exam, due June 3 by 6pm, on Weeks 6-9. Late exams will not be accepted.

Readings
All readings will be posted on Canvas. You are required to bring the assigned readings, in printed form, with you to class.

The readings will be limited to around 75-100 pages per week. The readings require careful attention, so read thoroughly and carefully. It is to be expected that you will need to read some of the texts more than once to properly understand the arguments.

An excellent resource to supplement the course readings is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, which has refereed articles by experts in their fields, at plato.stanford.edu. Among the most relevant entries are those on Libertarianism, John Rawls, Consequentialism, Egalitarianism, Equality of Opportunity, Immigration, International Distributive Justice, as well as many others on general or related topics.

Class Format

Class sessions will combine lecture and discussion (sometimes in small groups, sometimes as a whole). I encourage you to interrupt the lectures to ask clarifying or substantive questions. It is important that you come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. I will sometimes call on students who have not volunteered an answer; you are welcome to pass.

Class Policies

Office Hours: I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00. If you would like to meet another time, do not hesitate to email me and we can make an appointment.

Honor Policy: Students are required to abide by the Academic Honor Principle (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/honor). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are ever in doubt about what the honor code requires, or what citations are required or how much collaborating or paraphrasing is permissible, either ask me or err on the side of caution.
X-Hours: There are no currently scheduled x-hours, but I do reserve the option to use them, with advance notice.

Email: I will reply promptly whenever possible, but am often away from email. If you have not heard back from me within 48 hours, send your message again.

Laptops and electronics: Laptops and other electronics are prohibited in class. You will remember more and be more present if you take notes by hand. See: www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom

Median Grade: The Government Department has a median grade policy, which is: “Except under extraordinary circumstances, median grades in GOV courses will not exceed A- in seminars, and B+ in all other courses.” See more at: https://govt.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate/courses#sthash.T3rZumAB.dpuf Accordingly, the median grade in this course is not expected to exceed a B+.

Learning disabilities: Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services are encouraged to see me privately as early as possible in the term. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accesibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Religious observances: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Subject to change with advance notice.

Week 1 - Introduction

Tuesday, March 29 – Course overview

Thursday, March 31 – Torture

- Bernard Williams, “Negative Responsibility: and Two Examples” and “Integrity” in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, Utilitarianism: For and Against (1973), pp. 93-100, 108-18
• Public Committee Against Torture v. State of Israel (1999), excerpts (16 pp.)

Week 2 - Libertarianism

Tuesday, April 5 – Libertarianism
• John Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, Chapter 5 (10 pp.)

Thursday, April 7 – Libertarianism & Inheritance
Paper assignment distributed in class.

Week 3 - Utilitarianism

Tuesday, April 12 – Utilitarianism & Poverty Relief
• Jeremy Bentham, “Of the Principle of Utility” (6 pp.)
• William Godwin, “The Archbishop and the Chambermaid” (2 pp.)
• Peter Singer, Practical Ethics, 3rd ed. (2011), pp. 8-15

Wednesday, April 13 - Paper due by 9pm; submitted on Canvas.

Thursday, April 14 – Effective Altruism and Philanthropy
• Peter Singer, The Most Good You Can Do, pp. 3-11, 39-65
  Optional:
• Rob Reich, “Philanthropy and its Uneasy Relation to Equality” (32 pp.)

Week 4 – Liberal Egalitarianism

Tuesday, April 19 – Justice as Fairness
• John Rawls, Justice as Fairness, excerpts

Thursday, April 21 – Egalitarianism and Sufficientarianism
• T.M. Scanlon, “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality,” in The Difficulty of Tolerance, pp. 202-218
• Harry Frankfurt, “Equality as a Moral Ideal,” *Ethics* 98 (1987), pp. 21-43  
• Harry Frankfurt, “Equality and Respect,” *Social Research* 64 (1997), pp. 3-15

**Week 5**

Tuesday, April 26 – Review

Thursday, April 28 – *Midterm exam; in class on material from weeks 1 to 4.*

**Week 6 – Market Ethics**

Tuesday, May 3 – Moral Limits of Markets
• Debra Satz, “Noxious Markets,” in *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale*, pp. 91-112  
• Michael Sandel, *What Money Can’t Buy*, excerpts  
• Jason Brennan, “If You May Do It for Free, You May Do It For Money,” *Bleeding Heart Libertarians*, September 9, 2015 (4 pp.)

Wednesday, May 4 – *Debate on the Moral Limits of Markets between Satz and Brennan*, 4:45pm, Filene Auditorium, Moore Hall

Thursday, May 5 – Evaluating Markets  
*Paper assignment distributed in class.*  
• Debra Satz, “Ethical Issues in the Supply and Demand of Kidneys,” in *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale*, pp. 189-205  

**Week 7 – Equality of Opportunity**

Tuesday, May 10 – Equality of Opportunity
• Christopher Jencks, “Whom Must We Treat Equally for Educational Opportunity to be Equal?” *Ethics* 98 (1988), pp. 518-533

Thursday, May 12 – Affirmative Action
• Ronald Dworkin, “The Rights of Allan Bakke,” in *Ethics in Practice*, pp. 443-448  
• Elizabeth Anderson, “Understanding Affirmative Action,” in *The Imperative of Integration*, pp. 135-154

*Sunday, May 15 - Paper due by 6pm; submitted on Canvas.*

**Week 8 – Immigration and Borders**
Tuesday, May 17 - Freedom of Movement & Open Borders

Thursday, May 19 – Social Justice & Immigration
  • David Miller, “Immigration: The Case for Limits” in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*

Week 9 – Global Justice

Tuesday, May 24 – Global Distributive Justice
  • Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, introduction, sections 3-4, 15-16
  • Charles Beitz, “Justice and International Relations”

Thursday, May 26 – Philanthropy and Intergenerational Justice
  • Rob Reich and Chiara Cordelli, “Philanthropy and Future Generations”
  *Optional:*
    • Rob Reich, “Repugnant to the Very Idea of Democracy? On the Role of Foundations”

Thursday, May 26 – *Workshop with Rob Reich, 4pm. Attendance optional.*

Week 10

*Friday, June 3 – Take-home final exam due by 6pm; submitted on Canvas.*