

Philosophy 380: Justice

Syllabus (© Spring 2018)

Class Days / Times: 12:30 – 1:45 pm on Tuesdays & Thursdays in BURKHARDT 221

Professor: Dr. Rachel Fredericks

I prefer that my students call me Rachel, just like everyone else, but you may call me Professor (or Doctor) Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Email Address: rlfredericks@bsu.edu

I prefer communicating by email, not telephone, and I can usually respond to student emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: Mondays, noon – 1:00 pm; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:45 – 2:45 pm; Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:00 pm; and by appointment (email me to schedule as needed)

Office Location: North Quad (NQ) 230 / **Office Phone:** 765-285-1261

Office hours are a chance to have a conversation about course material, whether you are struggling or you are curious to go beyond what we discussed in class. They can be incredibly helpful, and I enjoy getting to know you better one on one.

Course Description

What is justice? What does justice *require* us to do (as individuals and/or groups)? What does morality *allow* us to do as we pursue justice, whether for ourselves and/or for others? That is, what methods for reducing injustice are morally acceptable?

In this course, we will investigate many ethical questions relating justice and injustice. The answers we develop are sure to be provisional, contested, and incomplete. We cannot expect to arrive at completely clear, completely certain, and universally agreed upon answers to these ethical questions. But never fear! We can learn an awful lot about ourselves, other people, and social structures by thinking carefully and critically about such questions even in the absence of obviously correct answers to them. Maybe more importantly, we can develop lots of transferrable skills relating to critical thinking and problem-solving (note the specific skills listed as course objectives), by practicing philosophical tasks that relate to the subject matter of justice.

Note: this course is *not* primarily about *criminal* justice. Our goal is not just to answer descriptive questions about what the legal system says (either now or in the past). Instead, we take a critical approach, always considering whether the legal system (or any other social / political institution) is (descriptively) as it (normatively) should be.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to work independently and / or collaboratively to:

1. Read, analyze, and understand complex philosophical texts,
2. Critically evaluate arguments advanced by professional philosophers and peers,
3. Actively listen to, recognize the credibility of, and appreciate the views of others who are different (in various ways) from themselves
4. Synthesize different ideas about justice and draw connections between different forms of injustice,
5. Propose and defend creative and feasible action plans designed to work toward solving real-world problems relating to injustice, and
6. Respond to constructive criticism of their work provided by their peers, community members, and their professor.

Required Texts

All required (and recommended) readings will be distributed online via Canvas.

- Always do the required reading *before* class on the day listed.
- Always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of the reading with you to class.

Students may not reproduce, distribute, or publicly post course materials without my permission. Assignments, handouts, and other materials are protected by copyright.

Schedule

All groups of students have different interests, needs, and talents, so I might change this schedule, but I will do so as little as possible and give as much warning as I can if / when I do make schedule changes.

Week 1 (January 8-12): INTRODUCTION

Tuesday: Syllabus

Thursday: David Miller, "Justice," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2017

Read from the very beginning to the end of section 2.4 (pp. 1-8 in the pdf)

Homework 1: Summarizing and Questioning a Text (10 points) DUE via Canvas
30 minutes before class starts

Week 2 (January 15-19): EPISTEMIC JUSTICE

Tuesday: Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, pp. 9-29

Thursday: Guest presentation: Ms. Dorica Watson of FORWARD S.T.E.P.S.

5 points available during class

OPEN INVITATION to dinner & program with FORWARD S.T.E.P.S. TONIGHT in the basement of First Baptist Church, 6:00 – 8:00 PM (and every Thursday this semester)

Week 3 (January 22-26)

Tuesday: Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, pp. 9-29

5 points available during class

Thursday: INSTEAD OF OUR REGULAR CLASS, we will attend dinner & a LISTENING SESSION with FORWARD S.T.E.P.S. TONIGHT in the basement of First Baptist Church, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Homework 2: Connecting Course Material to the News (10 points) DUE via Canvas by 5:30 PM

5 points available during evening activities

Week 4 (January 29 – February 2)

Tuesday: Peter Higgins, Audra King, and April Shaw, "What is Poverty?"

Homework 3: Defining and Reflecting on Familiar Terms (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Thursday: Peter Higgins, Audra King, and April Shaw, "What is Poverty?"

5 points available during class

Week 5 (February 5-9): ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Tuesday: INSTEAD OF OUR REGULAR CLASS, we will attend a POVERTY SIMULATION in the STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM from 6:00 to 8:30 PM

Thursday: Lisa Herzog, "Basic Income and the Ideal of Epistemic Equality"

Homework #4: Reflecting on an Experience (15 points) DUE via Canvas by noon on Monday, February 12

Week 6 (February 12-16)

Tuesday: Simon Caney, "Responding to Global Injustice: On the Right of Resistance"

5 points available during class

Thursday: Simon Caney, "Responding to Global Injustice: On the Right of Resistance"

Homework #5: Identifying a Problem and Proposing a Solution (20 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 7 (February 19-23)

Tuesday: TBD / Work session

5 points available in class

Thursday: INSTEAD OF OUR REGULAR CLASS, we will attend DINNER and give our PRESENTATIONS to FORWARD S.T.E.P.S. TONIGHT in the basement of First Baptist Church, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

10 points available during evening activities

Week 8 (February 26 – March 2)

Tuesday: Andrew Sayer, "Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work"

Homework #6: Synthesizing Course Material (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Thursday: Andrew Sayer, "Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work"

5 points available during class

SPRING BREAK (March 5-9)

Have fun!

Week 9 (March 12-16): DISABILITY JUSTICE

Tuesday: Elizabeth Barnes, "Disability and Adaptive Preferences"

Thursday: Elizabeth Barnes, "Disability and Adaptive Preferences"

Homework #7: Recreating an Argument (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Week 10 (March 19-23)

Tuesday: TBD / Work session

5 points available during class

Thursday: INSTEAD OF OUR REGULAR CLASS, we will PREPARE DINNER & GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR ACTION PLANS from FORWARD S.T.E.P.S. TONIGHT in the basement of First Baptist Church, 4:30 – 8:00 PM

5 points available during evening activities

Week 11 (March 26-30)

Tuesday: Guest presentation: Ms. Dorica Watson of FORWARD S.T.E.P.S.

Thursday: Sophia Isako Wong, "Duties of Justice to Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities"

5 points available during class

Week 12 (April 2-6)

Tuesday: Sophia Isako Wong, "Duties of Justice to Citizens with Cognitive Disabilities"

Homework #8: Evaluating an Argument (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Thursday: Sarah Roberts-Cady, "Exploring Eco-Ability: Reason and Normalcy in Ableism, Speciesism, and Ecocide"

Week 13 (April 9-13)

Tuesday: Sarah Roberts-Cady, "Exploring Eco-Ability: Reason and Normalcy in Ableism, Speciesism, and Ecocide"

Homework #9: Applying Philosophy to the News (10 points) DUE via Canvas 30 minutes before class

Thursday: Michael Doan, "Epistemic Injustice and Epistemic Redlining"

Week 14 (April 16-20): STUDENTS' CHOICE (10 points available sometime this week)

Tuesday: TBD

Thursday: TBD

Week 15 (April 23-27): STUDENTS' CHOICE (10 points available sometime this week)

Tuesday: TBD

Thursday: TBD

Week 16 (April 30 – May 4)

Final Exam Period

Tuesday, May 1, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM, in our regular location, BURKHARDT 221

Assignments & Assessment

All assignments (other than those completed during class):

- Need to be typed (double-spaced, please!!) and submitted (as attachments!!) electronically via Canvas
- Must include appropriate citations for all quotations *and paraphrases*, plus a complete list of bibliographic references at the end.
 - Please use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references.
 - You do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page.
 - Please do provide the URL for any sources found on the Internet.
- Will be given comments & grades electronically, via Canvas
- Will be graded anonymously, so PLEASE do NOT write your name within the document.
 - Empirical research shows that basically everyone has implicit (unconscious) biases, even if they are strongly committed to equality, fairness, and so on. Thankfully, we can do things to minimize the effects of implicit bias, and anonymous grading is an easy and effective one.

Attendance and active class participation are key to success in this course. Philosophy is an activity (something you *do*), not just something you passively watch or listen to. So, I expect you to come to class having done the assigned readings and ready to ask

questions and explain your views. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion are the primary basis for your participation grade, but I also take into account office hours, notes you write on your card, and email conversations.

Generally, for homework, you will practice a specific skill as you do the reading BEFORE class, so your homework will be about material that we haven't yet discussed. You may not be used to that, but it has lots of benefits. It gives everyone an incentive to come to class prepared, which means we have better discussions during class. Completing the work on your own also helps you remember the material better than you otherwise would, which comes in handy for the final exam. It also helps you practice your critical thinking skills and makes you more independent thinkers, which is so, so valuable. Seeing how you do on your own also helps me figure out appropriate pacing, your interests, and other things that help me improve the course over time. However, if you have questions about the homework, you can always get in touch with me for clarification (earlier is always better!). You are also welcome to talk to classmates about homework, *so long as* everyone turns in their own original work; talking about the material with different people can be very useful, but everything you turn in should be written in your own words, using your own voice, not someone else's.

Late homework will not earn credit unless (a) you and I agree upon an alternate arrangement ahead of time, which requires planning and good reasons on your part, or (b) you experience a documented illness or other emergency beyond your control. In the latter case, you need to contact me with your documentation as soon as possible. Similarly, if you miss a class during which we do an in-class activity for credit, you will not earn credit for that activity, unless you've made arrangements with me ahead of time or show me appropriate documentation to excuse your absence. While late homework does not earn points (unless you fulfill (a) or (b)), I will give you feedback on late homework that you submit, so you have the opportunity to learn from your efforts.

You will have some choice about whether you want to take an exam, write a paper, or complete a project for your final. I'll present you some options around midterm time.

Your final grade will be based on:

- In-class assignments: 60 points
- Homework: 105 points
- Students' Choice (TBD combination of in class and homework): 20 points
- Final project/paper: 50 points
- Participation: 15 points
- Total: 250 points

Here is the schema I will use to convert points to letter grades:

A = 95% = 237 points

C = 73% = 182 points

A- = 90% = 224 points

C- = 70% = 174 points

B+ = 87% = 217 points

D+ = 67% = 167 points

B = 83% = 207 points

D = 63% = 157 points

B- = 80% = 199 points

D- = 60% = 149 points

C+ = 77% = 192 points

F = <60% = ≤148 points

Philosophical Writing

In philosophical writing, every word and phrase matters. Since philosophical writing tend to be an unfamiliar and challenging form of writing for students, I recommend paying careful attention to (a) the detailed assignment prompts, (b) the detailed writing guidelines and tips posted on Canvas and discussed in class, and (c) the written feedback on your assignments.

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization
 - a. Is the assignment well organized?
 - b. Does it have a clear thesis statement in the first person?
 - c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?
2. Exposition and Interpretation
 - a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) considered?
 - b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
 - c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?
3. Argument and Critical Evaluation
 - a. Do you give rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
 - b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
 - c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?
4. Writing Style
 - a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
 - b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
 - c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

The Writing Center

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your text during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter, stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

The Learning Center

Did you know that the Learning Center offers free tutoring for many courses, including science and humanities, languages, math and business, help with any writing task, and study strategies, including time management, test taking, note taking, and effective textbook reading?

The Learning Center opens for Fall 2017 tutoring on Monday, August 28th, at 9 am. Hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 am-8 pm, and Friday, 9 am-12 pm. Call 765-285-3780 or visit NQ 350 to make an appointment to meet with a tutor. Check them out online at www.bsu.edu/learningcenter. They can help!

Student Conduct

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or the professor; dominate class discussion; disparage or disrespect the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree); habitually arrive late or leave early; make or receive phone calls; text; surf the internet; or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

Academic Dishonesty

Academically honest students do not use others' ideas or words without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarism, a form of academic *dishonesty*, is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought. If I discover that a student has plagiarized, cheated, or otherwise violated the academic dishonesty policy, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question, and if the violation is sufficiently significant, may fail the course as whole, at my discretion.

More detailed resources relating to academic dishonesty and how to avoid it are posted on Canvas. If, after investigating them, you have questions, please contact me *as soon as possible*. It is much better for everyone if you get help clearing up any confusion right away, rather than waiting and needing to deal with a bigger problem.

Diversity & Inclusion

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the various experiences and world views of those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our [Beneficence Pledge](#). For Bias Incident Response information, go to <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter/bias-incident-reporting> or e-mail mc2@bsu.edu.

Disability Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Concerns or Problems

If you have a concern or problem about the course, please contact me ASAP so we can work together on the best possible plan for moving forward! 😊