

Philosophy 109
Justice and Equality

Fall 2014
 Dewey 4-162, MW 10:25-11:40

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 Hours: R 11:00-1:00
 and by appointment
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What is justice? Is it universal or do ideas about justice vary across cultures and over time? Does justice require equality? If so, equality of what? What steps must we take to become more just and more egalitarian? What can art tell us about justice? What can justice tell us about art? In this unique course, taught by multiple faculty from across the humanities and social sciences, we will consider different conceptions of justice and equality, with special attention to their relevance to the contemporary moment.

The course has three main goals:

First, it will serve as an introduction to many of the ways in which past and contemporary thinkers have understood concepts of justice and equality and attempted to put them into practice.

Second, you will encounter the approaches and methods of multiple disciplines. By the end of the semester, you will have an understanding of how to analyze primary sources (i.e., original texts) and connect them to larger interpretive frameworks.

Finally, this course will develop writing and critical thinking skills. In the writing component of our class, we will stress the idea that a good paper involves reading closely, developing controversial and coherent ideas, and then conveying those ideas to the reader effectively. By engaging with a variety of perspectives, you will be challenged to draw and defend meaningful comparisons between different societies and moments in time and to relate knowledge of the past to contemporary issues.

This course is part of a group of three courses that share a common set of readings and a meeting time. At various points in the term, all three classes will meet as a group to discuss common themes. The other sections are REL 112, taught by Prof. Aaron Hughes, and HIS 105, taught by Prof. Thomas Devaney.

Required Texts:

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Anchor, 1994)
 Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence* (University of California, 2004)
 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Dover, 1995)
 Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (Grove Press, 2004)
 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Bantam, 1992)
 Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 1992)
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Penguin, 1968)
 Readings on Blackboard

Course Requirements:

Class participation is worth a significant portion of your grade. The class is based on student discussions, not on lectures. You are expected to come to class, and you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings – if only to ask relevant questions about them. Most of your class participation grade is based on regular, substantive participation in class discussions.

IQ responses. IQ means an idea and question. Before each class, you should send me by email a detailed and informed question and an idea about the reading. These will be the basis of our conversation. Both the idea and the question should emerge from the particular text we are reading that day and should be able to be defended upon closer group examination. In total, the response should be a paragraph (less than one page). Please email them to me by midnight the day before each class (excluding plenaries).

Papers will constitute the major assignments in the course. Twice during the term, we will give you a series of questions about particular texts or about a particular case or both. You will choose one set of questions and write a 4-6 page paper answering those questions. For your final assignment, you will write an 7-10 page paper.

The course grade is divided into 500 points, apportioned as shown:

First paper	Oct 10	100 points
Second paper	Nov 14	100 points
Final assignment	Dec 12	125 points
IQ responses		50 points
Participation		125 points

Students who get more than 465 points will get an A in the class (not A-, but A). A B requires 415 points; a C, 365 points.

Schedule of meetings

Plenary sessions will meet in LeChase 163, and they will include all three sections of the class. Readings designated BB can be found on the Blackboard site for the class.

W Sept 3: Introduction

M Sep 8: Plenary 1: Case Study on Rwanda

Film: “In the Tall Grass”

W Sep 10: Case Study: Rwanda

Readings: Jean Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*, 3-29 (BB); Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*, 10-16, 71-87, 157-164, 202-207 (BB).

M Sep 15: The Biblical Tradition

Readings: Book of Job (BB, but any version will do)

W Sep 17: Plenary 2: Justice and Equality in Greek Philosophy

Guest Speaker: Randall Curren, Department of Philosophy

Readings: *Republic*, Book I, all (pp 1-31)

M Sep 22: Plato

Readings: Republic, Book II to 377d; Book III, 412b to end, Book IV, all (pp. 32-53, 88-121)

W Sep 24: Plato

Readings: Republic,; Book V, to 474d (pp. 122-49)

M Sep 29: Plato

Readings: Republic, Book VII, to 521c; Book VIII, all (pp. 186-93, 213-40)

W Oct 1: Medieval Islamic Attitudes

Readings: Alfarabi, "The Political Regime," in *Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (Cornell UP, 1963), 31-57 (BB).

M Oct 6: Plenary 3: The Renaissance

Lecture by Thomas Devaney, Department of History

W Oct 8: Renaissance

Readings: Giovanni and Lusanna, chaps 1-3; Christine de Pisan, *Book of the City of Ladies* (short excerpt) (BB)

F Oct 10: First paper due**M Oct 13: Fall break (no class)****W Oct 15: Renaissance**

Readings: Giovanni and Lusanna, chaps 4-5; Laura Cereta, *Letters* (excerpts) (BB)

M Oct 20: The Encounter in the Americas

Readings: Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short History of the Destruction of the Indies* (excerpts) (BB); Michel de Montaigne, "On Cannibals" and "On Coaches" (BB)

W Oct 22: Plenary 4: Enlightenment

Lecture by Professor Dees, Department of Philosophy

Readings: Social Contract, Books I (pp 49-68)

M Oct 27: Rousseau

Readings: Social Contract, Books II, III, chapters 1-2 (pp 69-110)

W Oct 29: Rousseau

Readings: Social Contract, Book III, chapters 4, 12-18; Book IV, chapters 1-3, 8 (pp. 112-14, 136-57, 176-87)

M Nov 3: No class

W Nov 5: Kant and Mendelssohn

Readings: Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (BB); Moses Mendelssohn, “Letter to Johan m Caspar Lavater” (BB); Johann David Michalis, “Arguments Against Dohm” and Moses Mendolssohn, “Response to Dohm” (BB)

M Nov 10: The Communist challenge

Readings: *The Communist Manifesto*

W Nov 12: Frederick Douglass

Readings: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

F Nov 14: Second paper due**M Nov 17:** Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth

Readings: “Declaration of Sentiments” from the Seneca Falls Convention (BB); Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman” speech (BB); Douglas Linder, “The Trial of Susan B. Anthony for Illegal Voting” (BB); Susan B. Anthony, “Is it a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?” (BB)

W Nov 19: Martin Luther King

Readings: Letter from a Birmingham Jail (BB); “I have a Dream” speech (BB)

M Nov 24: Fanon

Readings: *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1-63.

W Nov 26: *Thanksgiving break (no class)***M Dec 1:** Achebe

Readings: *Things Fall Apart*, Part One (pp. 3-125)

W Dec 3: Plenary 5: Twentieth-Century Africa

Lecture by Cilas Kemedjio, Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, Director of the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies

M Dec 8: Achebe

Readings: *Things Fall Apart*, Part Two (pp. 129-209)

W Dec 10: Conclusions**F Dec 12: Final paper due**