

PHIL 321: SOCIAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (SPRING 2017)
GAIGE 203, MONDAY/THURSDAY 12:00-1:20

Professor Amy Berg
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OFFICE: Gaige 225
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 2-4 (or by appointment)

COURSE OVERVIEW

One of the main tasks of political philosophy is to come up with theories of justice. How should society be organized? How do we define justice, and what is its relationship to injustice? Some of the most important work in 20th-century political philosophy, from Rawls's *Theory of Justice* to Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, attempts to answer these questions. But are these philosophers missing something? In her classic work of feminist political philosophy, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (JGF), Susan Moller Okin argues that theories of justice systematically ignore or distort the ways in which gender affects how we think about justice. By reading classic texts from 20th-century political philosophy together with Okin's work, and the work of other feminist political philosophers, we will:

- **Survey** influential theories of justice,
- **Assess** Okin's criticisms of these theories, and
- **Explore** what changes, if any, we should make to our understanding of justice in light of these criticisms.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

You will need:

- The readings. We will be using one book and a number of other readings:
 - The book, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (Susan Moller Okin, Basic Books 1991, ISBN 978-0465037032), is available at the RIC Bookstore. It is also widely and cheaply available at other bookstores.
 - The rest of the readings you will need are collected in a course reader, which is also available at the Bookstore. You will be responsible for bringing the reading for the day with you to class.

Complete all assigned readings before coming to class.

- Access to Blackboard, where I will post the syllabus, assignments, and other information.

Assignments: There are five assignments due in this course:

- Two take-home exams, due before class on February 22 and March 15.
- A draft of the final paper is due before class on March 29.
- Comments on a peer's paper are due before class on April 12.
- The final version is due during finals week.

All assignments will be graded anonymously; you should put your student ID number, *not* your name, on them. Submit all assignments via Blackboard, where they will be checked using SafeAssign. **You must turn in all assignments in order to pass this course.**

Attendance and participation:

- Participation is part of your final grade in this course; to participate, you need to attend. You are allowed **two unexcused absences** over the course of the semester; if you must be absent more than that, please speak to me (and bring documentation from a doctor or

dean). I will deduct one percent from your participation grade for each additional unexcused absence.

- But participation is more than just attendance! In order to receive full participation points, come ready to make active, serious, charitable contributions to class discussion. **I reserve the right to call on students at random if you are not participating actively.** If you are not comfortable participating in class, I will count active, serious, charitable visits to my office hours toward your participation grade. When I grade participation, here's what I'm looking for:
 - A range: Attends all (or almost all) class sessions, does the reading, actively and positively participates in all group activities, asks questions or offers comments at least every other class session, comes to office hours at least a couple of times.
 - B range: Attends most class sessions, does the reading, participates in most group activities, asks questions or offers comments sporadically. Is never a distraction.
 - C range: Attends only occasionally, does not do the reading, does not participate very actively in class (or else is a distraction), never comes to office hours.
 - D or F range: Rarely if ever attends class, either does not participate or is an active distraction in class, never comes to office hours or communicates with me via email.

The grade breakdown is:

- **Take-home exam 1:** 20%
- **Take-home exam 2:** 30%
- **Final paper draft:** (ungraded, but failure to turn in a complete draft will result in a deduction to your final paper grade)
- **Comments on a peer's draft:** (ungraded, but failure to give serious comments will result in a deduction to your final paper grade)
- **Final paper:** 40%
- **Participation:** 10%

The grade scale is:

B+: 87-89%	A: 93-100%	A-: 90-92%
C+: 77-79%	B: 83-86%	B-: 80-82%
D+: 67-69%	C: 73-76%	C-: 70-72%
F: below 60%	D: 60-66%	

Lateness policy: Assignments must be turned in at the start of class on the day they are due.

There are no exceptions unless you make prior arrangements with me. I will deduct three percent of your final grade if the paper is turned in the day it's due any time after the start of class and one-third of a grade for each day after that that the paper is late (so, for example, a paper that would have gotten 100% if it were turned in on time on Monday would get 88% if turned in on Thursday).

On writing: Your success in this class depends on the ability to express yourself clearly. Here are some writing resources I recommend:

- **The Writing Center** (Craig-Lee 225; <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>) will talk through ideas, work through a draft with you, and generally give advice at all stages of the writing process.

- *Style*, by Joseph M. Williams (University of Chicago Press, 1990) is an excellent guide to clear and forceful writing. It's widely and cheaply available at bookstores and through Amazon.

Other policies

- **Electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) are not allowed in class**, except by permission. I am happy to give permission if you need to use an electronic device in order to be successful in this course; please speak with me during the first two weeks of the course. If you need to use a RIC computer to print or to view documents on Blackboard, there are computers available at Adams Library.
- **Academic honesty is critical to your success in this course.** RIC has policies regarding academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and other behaviors. **Cheating** includes receiving unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment. **Plagiarism** involves the theft of "intellectual property." The college policy against plagiarism bans word-for-word plagiarism, patchwork plagiarism, unacknowledged paraphrasing, and unacknowledged facts. I also ban self-plagiarism (that is, you may not turn in work you have written for a previous class). **Other dishonest behaviors** include anything else that provides an unfair advantage over other students or that sabotages another student's efforts. I am happy to talk to you if you have any questions about academic integrity, or you can consult the Academic Standards section of the RIC Student Handbook (<http://www.ric.edu/studentlife/documents/RICStudentHandbook.pdf>). If I suspect that you may be violating academic integrity standards, the minimal consequences will be a zero for the assignment, and you will not be allowed to redo it. Additional consequences may occur, including your failing the class and/or being brought before the Academic Integrity Board. I will also report you to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- Rhode Island College, and I, are committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with documented disabilities. If you are seeking reasonable classroom accommodations under the ADA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you must register with RIC's Disability Services Center (Fogarty 137, 456-2776). To receive accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Disability Services forms and meet with me during the first two weeks of the course to discuss how we can implement them.
- In addition to the Writing Center, OASIS (Adams Library, lower level; <http://www.ric.edu/oasis/>) and Learning For Life (Adams Library, level 1; <http://www.ric.edu/learningforlife/>) are here to support you with challenges you may face during your time at RIC. If you'd like information on how to access and use these resources, please don't hesitate to talk with me.
- You are welcome and encouraged to come to my office hours or make an appointment with me whenever you want to talk about the course material, your assignments, or any other philosophy-related concerns you have.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS [READINGS LABELED "JGF" ARE FROM *JUSTICE, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY*; ALL OTHER READINGS ARE IN THE COURSE READER]

Thursday, January 18: Course introduction
Reading: None

Monday, January 22: Defining justice
Reading: Plato, *The Republic*

Thursday, January 25: CLASS CANCELED

Monday, January 29: Gender justice
Reading: Johnson, *The Gender Knot*; Hofstadter, "A Person Paper on Purity in Language"

Thursday, February 1: Gender and philosophy
Reading: Tuana, "Woman and the History of Philosophy"

Monday, February 5: Contractualist justice
Reading: Rawls, sections 1-4

Thursday, February 8: Contractualist justice
Reading: Freeman pp. 44-59
Take-home exam 1 assigned Thursday

Monday, February 12: Contractualist justice
Reading: Freeman pp. 86-115

Thursday, February 15: Contractualist justice
Reading: Rawls, sections 70-72

Monday, February 19: Contractualist justice: Okin's response
Reading: JGF ch. 5

Thursday, February 22: Contractualist justice: Okin's response
Reading: None
Take-home exam 1 due Thursday

Monday, February 26: Libertarian justice
Reading: "State of Nature: The Game"

Thursday, March 1: Libertarian justice
Reading: Nozick, chs. 2 and 5
Take-home exam 2 assigned Thursday

Monday, March 5: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 8: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 12: Libertarian justice
Reading: Nozick, ch. 7 part 1

Thursday, March 15: Libertarian justice
Reading: Nozick, ch. 7 part 2
Take-home exam 2 due Thursday
Final paper draft assigned Thursday

Monday, March 19: Libertarian justice: Okin's response
Reading: JGF ch. 4

Thursday, March 22: Libertarian justice: Okin's response
Reading: None

Monday, March 26: Conservative justice
Reading: Sandel, Bloom

Thursday, March 29: Conservative justice: Okin's response
Reading: JGF ch. 2
Final paper draft due Thursday

Monday, April 2: Communitarian justice
Reading: MacIntyre

Thursday, April 5: Communitarian justice: Okin's response

Reading: JGF ch. 3 (beginning-p. 62)

Monday, April 9: Multiculturalism and justice

Reading: Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"

Thursday, April 12: Multiculturalism and justice

Reading: Al-Hibri, "Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/Minority Women?"; Nussbaum, "A Plea for Difficulty"

Final paper comments due Tuesday

Monday, April 16: Marriage and justice

Reading: JGF ch. 7

Thursday, April 19: Marriage and justice

Reading: Brake, "Is Divorce Promise-Breaking?"

Monday, April 23: Marriage and justice

Reading: Brake, *Minimizing Marriage* ch. 7

Thursday, April 26: Course wrap-up

Reading: JGF ch. 8

Monday, April 30: Course wrap-up

Reading: None

Finals week

Final paper due (time and date TBA)