

**Liberalism and Global Justice**  
**Phil 3476/Poli 3476**  
**Fall 2019**

Time: Tuesday and Thursday: 13:05 – 14:25  
Place: McCain 1102

Instructor: Greg Scherkoske  
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Most of the world's affluent countries are liberal democratic states, and these affluent states exist in a world suffering massive poverty, inequality and social injustice. But for the numerous links of interdependency and reciprocal responsibility, it would be tempting to describe these states as *islands* of affluence. And it is typically to these affluent states the world looks for humanitarian assistance. In seeking such aid, it is natural to use the language of *justice*. Of course, loose talk of 'justice' obscures the many different sorts of justice that may (or may not) be at stake.

Given the core liberal commitment to the moral equality of human beings – to the idea that simply *in virtue of being human beings*, people are owed equality of concern and respect – it would be natural to suppose that liberal political theory should be comfortable with the language of justice in international contexts. If humanity demands equal concern and respect, then the fact a person falls outside the borders of affluent liberal states is truly a morally arbitrary, indeed irrelevant, fact from the standpoint of justice. The liberal commitment to equal concern should, it seems, know no borders: global inequality and political injustice is just as intolerable outside the affluent liberal state as within.

Perhaps to its embarrassment, most normative liberal political theory fails to follow through on this logic. Liberal principles of justice DO typically stop at the border; that is, such principles are only thought to apply within the context of existing territorial states. Allowing such historically accidental borders to determine the distribution of political rights and economic resources would, in the words of one theorist, put an almost feudal notion of birthright privilege back in the centre of liberal political theory. If the liberal drops or hedges this commitment to moral equality in the face of massive global inequality and social injustice, then liberalism looks both bankrupt and irrelevant. Liberal theorists are aware of this difficulty, and have responded. This course assesses the prospects for a liberal theory of global justice

Format: Lecture/Discussion

**Required Text:**

- All readings to be made available on the Brightspace page for this course.

**Attendance is mandatory.** I do not email class handouts to people who miss lecture and I do not post these to the Brightspace page. Make a 'note buddy' early on in class!

## Evaluation

### Undergraduates:

- **One (1) paper (8-10 pages) worth 40% of final mark (due November 21<sup>st</sup>)**
- **In-class midterm exam worth 35% of final mark (October 8<sup>th</sup>)**
- **Comprehensive in-class exam worth 25% (November 28<sup>th</sup>)**

**Graduates: 3 page term paper prospectus, one 20 to 25 page term paper, additional readings (TBD).**

### Grading Scale:

**Grade Scale A+ 90-100 / A 85-89 / A- 80-84 / B+ 77-79 / B 73-76 / B- 70-72 / C+ 65-69 / C 60-64 C- 55-59 / D 50-54 / F Below 50**

**Lateness Penalty:** Medical and life crisis excuses accepted (but there is a strong presumption that *IF such crisis was foreseeable or unfolding* prior to the due date, *THEN arrangements should if possible be made in advance.*) All other late papers immediately lose ½ grade, and will further lose ½ grade per week after the first week. **Late papers will not receive comments.** *No late papers will be accepted after the deadline for the following paper (or, in the case of the final paper, 1 week after the last class meeting).* Penalty scheme for take home exam will be announced.

## Student Absence and Self-Declaration Forms

In keeping with the University Regulations on Student Absences, passed by Senate, which states (in part):

*Under this regulation, the [student declaration of absence form](#) replaces sick notes for absences of three days or fewer that result in missed or late academic requirements. Each student will be allowed to use the Student Declaration of Absence form **a maximum of two times per course in any given term** (or less, if a professor decides that this is more appropriate).*

*The submission of the form does not provide an automatic exemption from any academic requirements that were missed or late during an absence.*

The specific policy regarding self-declarations of absence **for this course** is as follows:

- Students are permitted **one (1)** self-declared absence form per term. Additional absences will require medical notes. (In essence, I have decided that one is more appropriate, as per the regulation.)
- Student declaration of absence ('SDA') forms must be emailed to me BEFORE the exam (or paper deadline). Late, 'after the fact,' SDA forms will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to ensure that the SDA form has been**

**sent and received before the class or deadline.** I will not accept the 'I sent it to you...you mean you didn't receive it?!' excuse.

- iii. For students who miss an in-class assignment or exam – with an SDA or with a medical note – there will be one and only one sitting for the make-up exam or assignment. I will announce this make-up exam time and location.
- iv. In the interest of fairness, students who elect to use an SDA on an exam or in-class assignment may be responsible for additional possible exam questions. (I give out sets of exam questions in advance, so there is no issue of being surprised by an exam question.)
- v. Students who elect to use an SDA on a paper will gain an extension of three days beyond the deadline. After that, the late paper penalty policy will apply.

This policy only applies to SDA forms. Proper documented medical conditions are handled separately.

#### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work in a way that gives the impression that it is one's own. Any ideas or information that are not the student's own should be properly cited. Self-plagiarism is the submission of work by a student in a class that is substantially similar to work that the student has already done for another class. Any students who would like to work on a topic that is substantially similar to work they have already done, should contact the professor and discuss the situation. **All cases of plagiarism or self-plagiarism are serious and will be taken to a Student-Discipline Officer. All students in this class are to read and understand the attached statement regarding plagiarism and academic integrity. Ignorance of this statement is no excuse for violations.**

Dalhousie University subscribes to Urkund, a computer-based service which checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Dalhousie website. **The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by Urkund. As a student in this class, you are required to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit.**

#### **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

##### **I. The Realist Challenge to Liberal Global Justice (Week 1)**

- Hobbes - from 'Leviathan'
- Kukathas 'The Mirage of Global Justice'
- II. Liberal Justice in Bounded States (Weeks 2 - 3)
  - Rawls: Theory of Justice
- III. The Liberal Cosmopolitan Challenge (Weeks 3 - 5)
  - Kantian Challenges: Beitz; Pogge
  - Utilitarian Cosmopolitans: Singer
- IV. Illiberal Patriotic Responses (Weeks 5-6)
  - MacIntyre; In-class exam: October 8, 2019
- V. Liberal Nationalist Responses I (Week 7)
  - Nagel
- VI. Liberal Nationalist Responses II: Rawls' Law of Peoples (Week 8)
  - Rawls – from *The Law of Peoples*
- VII. Global *Political* Justice: Human Rights Boosters, Realists and Skeptics (Weeks 9 & 10)
  - United Nations, *UNDHR* ; Beitz; O'Neill
  - James
- VIII. Global *Economic* Justice and Gender (Week 10-12 – study break is Week 11)
  - Nussbaum; Okin; Jaggar
- IX. CLASS CHOICE (to be settled by week 2) Readings to follow class choice!  
TOPIC A: Immigration  
TOPIC B: Intergenerational Justice

Final Exam in class on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Paper due for undergraduates: November 21<sup>st</sup> 5pm.