

**POLI 5450/4450 – Special Topics in Political Science**  
*Political Theories of International Ethics and Global Justice*

Department of Political Science  
Dalhousie University  
Winter 2021

**Instructor:**

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Office hours: Fri 15:00-16:30, or by appointment

**Course Overview:**

What duties do states, and their members, have beyond their borders? Are obligations of justice global in scope? Or, alternatively, are they constrained by national borders? What is the moral standing of states? This advanced undergraduate-level seminar course will focus on contemporary debates in international political theory. In this course we will discuss liberal, republican and discursive democratic perspectives on issues of global justice, particularly in light of global social structures and international inequalities. Major themes include: the historical roots of international relations theory; global distributive justice; republicanism and the ideal of non-domination; the possibility of global discursive democracy; cosmopolitanism; the moral relevance of borders; nationalism, patriotism and special duties; sovereignty, international law and the international order. Major thinkers include: Immanuel Kant, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Phillip Pettit, Charles Beitz, Thomas Pogge, Iris Marion Young and Seyla Benhabib, among others. Students should therefore have a background in political theory. The course will consist of seminar discussions, framed by short presentations by students that draw on their critical reflection papers.

**Learning Objectives and Outcomes:**

The main objective of the course is to enable students to understand and seek solutions to pressing problems in the domain of global justice. By the end of the term, students are expected to have become familiar with the multiple dimensions of the theoretical literature and be able to critically evaluate the liberal, republican and discursive democratic attempts to make sense of, and to ameliorate, prevailing instances of injustice in the world. This will be accomplished by the turn a set of thematic issues central to claims of global justice.

**Course Prerequisites and Requirements:**

Permission of the Instructor is needed. Some background in political theory and political philosophy is necessary, with PHIL 2475 highly recommended as background. Lectures and

readings assume an understanding of the theoretical debates and concepts in contemporary political theory, as well as a basic familiarity with world history and engagement with current events.

### CLASS MATERIALS

#### Readings/Textbooks:

John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* Harvard UP, 1999  
Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others* Cambridge UP, 2004  
Seyla Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism* Oxford UP, 2006

Textbooks are available from the Dalhousie University Bookstore.

#### Electronic Resources:

Readings mentioned in the course outline will be either available for download from Dalhousie Libraries via Proxy links or posted online on the course website — see the ‘Course Readings’ module on Bright Space for details and links to journal articles. It should be noted that any required texts for the class not included in the online ‘course packet’ have been ordered through the University Bookstore.

### EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Grading Scheme:

<i>Evaluation Component:</i>		<i>Percent:</i>
Participation		25%
Critical Reflection/ Discussion Lead		35%
Short paper topic proposal		5%
Final Paper		35%
Total		100%

N.B. If you are a Dalhousie student, and would like to review the *full* syllabus for this course, please contact Dr. Kiran Banerjee directly (kr561466@dal.ca).