

PHIL 608D: Moral Disagreement & Politics

Fall 2018

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Office Hours: 2:30 – 4:30 PM Wednesday, and by appointment

Course Description

Political decision-making is (at least in part) about how to forcefully arrange the social world in the presence of disagreement about the acceptable, just, or otherwise right way to do so. This course is concerned with the significance of that fact for political justification and the responsibilities of those who wield political power. Slightly differently, we will consider the nature of specifically political right. Some questions to be considered include: What does toleration require, and why is it valuable? What standards should we use to assess political institutions in the midst of plural views about morality, religion, metaphysics, knowledge, and the good? In what sense must political institutions and policies be justifiable to their subjects? In what sense must political justifications be public? How is the moral truth related to political justification, and how far can wielders of political power rely on their considered moral (or other controversial) judgments in exercising political power? Is there a cogent and adequately determinate conception of public reason?

Objectives

Students will:

- Be familiar with some of the central philosophical work on toleration, public reason, political liberalism, perfectionism, and political right
- Be able to explicate the basic concerns that have driven theorists to write on problems of disagreement and politics
- Develop and be able to articulate cogent and defensible views on these topics
- Improve ability to write analytical papers
- Develop an ability to read and critically consider difficult texts
- Improve ability to reason through and intelligently discuss complex philosophical problems generally

Readings

As a graduate seminar, there will be a focus on in-class discussion rather than lecture. Careful and reflective reading of the texts prior to our meetings, then, is

essential. Most of readings will be available on electronic reserves. The only exceptions are those from the one text for purchase:

John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Paperback Edition, 1996)

Requirements

Grade Breakdown:

Paper	60%
Participation	20%
Presentation	20%

Participation: Regular and informed participation on the part of everyone is essential. A part of your grade will be based on your contributions in seminar: the grade will be based on the frequency and quality of your verbal contributions to the class. Such contributions include informed responses to my questions, participation in classroom discussions, responding to your peers, and raising relevant and cogent questions.

Presentation: Each student will present on some aspect of an assigned reading for the course. The presentation should contextualize some important line of reasoning (what is the theoretical point of the argument, and how does it relate to other related positions), explicate the line of reasoning, offer a critical assessment of some aspect of the author's position, and coordinate the in class discussion surrounding the presentation. The presentation should take between fifteen and twenty five minutes.

Paper: The paper assignment is a two stage process. Stage One is writing the best 15 to 20 page draft you are able. I will then provide you with feedback on your draft. Stage Two is revising the draft to produce the best final draft you are able.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory. Each unexcused absence beyond one will result in a 1/3 letter grade reduction in the final grade.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with harshly in accordance with SPEL policies. At minimum, the student will fail the course. See the SPEL Handbook for a description of official policy.

Papers Drafts: Drafts are to be submitted electronically, by email. When I receive a paper draft, I will confirm with an email.

Schedule of Readings

The following plan is subject to revision – I will let you know of any changes as we go. Listed on the left are the dates of the meetings, on the right are the readings that will be discussed on those dates. Items marked [ER] are available on Blackboard.

Date	Reading
Aug. 27	Introductory Meeting 1. Istvan Beiczy, “Toleration: A Medieval Concept” <i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i> 58,3 (1997), 365-384 [ER]
Sep. 5	1. John Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> [ER] 2. Jonas Proast, <i>The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider’d and Answer’d</i> [ER] 3. Jeremy Waldron, “Locke, Toleration and the Rationality of Persecution” in <i>Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives</i> , ed. Susan Mendus (Cambridge, 1988), 61-86 [ER]
Sep. 17	1. Barbara Herman, “Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment” in <i>Toleration: An Elusive Virtue</i> , ed. David Heyd (Princeton, 1996), 60-80 [ER] 2. Thomas Nagel, “Toleration” in <i>Equality and Partiality</i> (Oxford, 1991), 154-168 [ER] 3. T.M. Scanlon, “The Difficulty of Tolerance” in <i>The Difficulty of Tolerance</i> (Cambridge, 2003), 187-201 [ER] 4. Rainer Forst, “The Justification of Tolerance” in <i>Toleration in Conflict: Past and Present</i> (Cambridge, 2013), 449-479 [ER]
Sep. 24	1. John Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i> , Introductions, Lectures 1 & 2 2. Optional: Charles Larmore, “Political Liberalism” in <i>The Morals of Modernity</i> , 121-151 [ER]
Oct. 1	1. Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lectures 3 – 5 2. Susan Moller Okin, “ <i>Political Liberalism, Justice, and Gender</i> ” <i>Ethics</i> 105,1 (1994), 23-43 [ER]
Oct. 8	1. Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture 6 2. Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited” [ER] 3. David Estlund, “The Insularity of the Reasonable: Why Political Liberalism Must Admit the Truth” <i>Ethics</i> 108 (1998), 252-275 [ER]
Oct. 15	1. Joseph Raz, “Autonomy, Toleration, and the Harm Principle” [ER] 2. Raz, “Disagreement in Politics” <i>American Journal of Jurisprudence</i> 43 (1998), 25-52 [ER]
Oct. 22	1. Jonathan Quong, “The Argument from Autonomy” in <i>Liberalism Without Perfection</i> (2011) [Available online through library] 2. Erin Kelly, “The Historical Injustice Problem for Political Liberalism” <i>Ethics</i> 128, 1 (2017), 75-94 [ER] 3. Stephen Macedo, “In Defense of Liberal Public Reason: Are Slavery and Abortion Hard Cases?” in <i>Natural Law and Public Reason</i> , ed. Robert P. George and Christopher Wolfe (Georgetown, 2000), 11-49 [ER]
Oct. 29	1. Elizabeth Brake, “Minimal Marriage: What Political Liberalism Implies for Marriage Law” <i>Ethics</i> 120, 2 (2010), 302-337 [ER]

	2. Christie Hartley and Lori Watson, "Political Liberalism, Marriage and the Family" <i>Law and Philosophy</i> 2012 31,2, 185-212 [ER]
Nov. 5	1. Simon Caney, "Liberal Legitimacy, Reasonable Disagreement and Justice" in <i>Pluralism and Liberal Neutrality</i> , ed. Richard Bellamy and Martin Hollis (Cass, 1999) [ER] 2. Quong, "Disagreement, Asymmetry, and Liberal Legitimacy" <i>Politics, Philosophy & Economics</i> 4 (2005), 301-330 [ER] 3. Andrew Lister, "Public Justification and the Limits of State Action" <i>Politics, Philosophy & Economics</i> 9 (2010), 151-175 [ER]
Nov. 12	1. Kyla Ebels-Duggan, "The Beginning of Community: Politics in the Face of Disagreement" <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 60 (2010), 50-71 [ER] 2. Thomas Christiano, "Equality and Public Deliberation" in <i>The Constitution of Equality</i> (2008), 190-230 [ER] 3. James Bohman and Henry Richardson, "Liberalism, Deliberative Democracy, and "Reasons that All Can Accept"" <i>The Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 17,3 (2009), 253-274 [ER]
Nov. 19	1. Quong, "Justification and Legitimacy" in <i>Liberalism Without Perfection</i> [Available online through library] 2. R.J. Leland and Han van Wietmarschen, "Reasonableness, Intellectual Modesty, and Reciprocity in Political Justification" <i>Ethics</i> 122,4, 721-747 [ER] 3. Kevin Vallier, "In Defence of Intelligible Reasons in Public Justification" <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 66 (2016), 596-616 [ER] Initial Paper Draft Due
Nov. 26	1. David Enoch, "Against Public Reason" <i>Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy</i> , Vol. 1 (2015), 112-142 [ER] 2. Enoch, "Political Philosophy and Epistemology: The Case of Public Reason" <i>Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy</i> , Vol. 3 (2017), 132-165 [ER] Paper Draft Returned w/ Comments
Dec. 3	1. Andrew Lister, "Public Reason and Reciprocity" <i>The Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 25,2 (2017), 155-172 [ER] 2. Lister, "The Coherence of Public Reason" <i>Journal of Moral Philosophy</i> 15,1 (2018), 64-84 [ER]

Final papers due at 5 PM, Thursday, December 13