

**PSC 6875**

## **Justice: an introduction to political theory**

Dr. Peter Busch

Spring 2010

Meeting times: 10:30-11:20, MWF SAC 210

In this course we will ask the most enduring question in politics: What is justice?

Our road map will be Plato's *Republic*, the best book ever written on the subject. Each unit of the course will start with one of the major views of justice offered by the men with whom the philosopher Socrates converses in the dialogue. Our focus will be on the beginning (Book I and the start of Book II), leaving later sections of the *Republic* for PSC 6000 (Early Political Theories).

Foundational though the Socratic conversation is, we won't be taking it for granted. Instead, we will illustrate, complicate, and challenge it with texts by William Shakespeare, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sophocles, and Frederick Douglass, among others. The course ends with a perspective perhaps very different from the Socratic one: the view of justice taken by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his last speech, "I've been to the Moutaintop."

This course is intended for political science majors as well as students who would like to fulfill their social science requirement in the A & S core curriculum. It is writing-intensive and discussion-based, and it gives students the chance to talk with faculty in political science and other disciplines that have something to say about justice.

The Department of Political Science and the Center for Liberal Education are sponsoring this course with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are receiving funds to help pay for reading materials and a class trip.

### **Evaluation**

*Class participation (20%)*

This means not only attendance, but active conversation about the texts on a regular basis. I will be evaluating the quality as well as the quantity of your participation throughout the semester. You will need to do the reading assignments, think about them, and contribute your ideas to our discussion.

*Formal essays (50%)*

You will be writing four essays, one on each of the major sections of the class (see below). The essays will be approximately five pages in length.

### *Final project (30%)*

Political theory stands where the Arts and Sciences at large intersect with political science in particular; it is the gateway to the discipline. Throughout the semester, we will be joined by faculty both from PSC and from the elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences, and they will converse with us about the ideas in our course as well as in their own disciplines.

In your final project for this course, you will explore this intersection by considering how the question of justice integrates more specialized studies in political science with the concerns of courses in the core curriculum. Details for this assignment will come in the next week.

### **Academic Integrity**

I expect all my students to adhere to the most rigorous standards of academic integrity. Please be familiar with the Arts and Sciences academic integrity policy, which is available online. Be advised that any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any assignment will receive either an F for the assignment or an F for the course (depending on the seriousness), and a letter will be filed with the student's dean and with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A second offense either in this course or in any other course at Villanova will result in dismissal from the university with a permanent indication of the reason for dismissal on the student's transcript.

### **Attendance**

Villanova policy requires that anyone who misses more than five class sessions will fail the course.

### **Texts**

1. For purchase
  - a. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* (Oxford University Press, ISBN 0199536120)
  - b. Gilman, *Herland* (Signet, ISBN 0451525620)
  - c. Plato, *Republic* (Trans. Bloom; Basic Books, ISBN 0465069347)
  - d. Sophocles, *Antigone* (Trans. Blondell; Focus, 0941051250)
2. Free, from me
  - a. Coursepack, which includes texts ranging from the Bible to Martin Luther King
  - b. Other texts posted online on WebCT

## Schedule of the Course

### Introduction: investigating justice

M 1/11	What is justice?	
W 1/13	Opening of the <i>Republic</i>	Rep. 327a-328b

### Part I

F 1/15	Cephalus: honesty (and piety)	Rep. 328c-331d
M 1/18	MLK day – no class	
W 1/20	Exodus: Biblical justice	Exodus chapters 1-9
F 1/22	Exodus	Exodus 10-19
M 1/25	Exodus	Exodus 20-31
W 1/27	Exodus	Exodus 32-40
F 1/29	The Law	Deuteronomy 1-4

### Part II

M 2/1	Polemarchus: helping friends, harming enemies	Rep. 331d-332c
W 2/3	Polemarchus	Rep. 332c-334b
F 2/5	Polemarchus	Rep. 334c-336a
M 2/8	Julius Caesar: my friend or my country?	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act I
W 2/10	Julius Caesar	Act II
F 2/12	Julius Caesar	Act III
M 2/15	Julius Caesar	Act IV
W 2/17	Julius Caesar	Act V
F 2/19	Herland: a republic of women?	<i>Herland</i> , chapters 1-3
M 2/22	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 4-6
W 2/24	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 7-9
F 2/26	Herland	<i>Herland</i> 10-12
3/1-3/5	No class: spring break	

### Part III

M 3/8	Thrasymachus: the advantage of the stronger	<i>Republic</i> 336b-339a
W 3/10	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 339a-344c
F 3/12	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 344c-350d
M 3/15	Thrasymachus	<i>Republic</i> 350d-354c
W 3/17	Antigone: disobeying the laws of Creon	
F 3/19	Antigone	
M 3/22	Antigone	
W 3/24	Antigone	
F 3/26	No class: to be rescheduled as dinner at Dr. Busch's	

M 3/29	Abraham Lincoln: the case for obeying the law	“Lyceum Speech”
W 3/31	When “the stronger” are the people	Lincoln / Douglas debates
4/2 – 4/5	No class: Easter	
W 4/7	Frederick Douglass, 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Speech	
F 4/9	Martin Luther King, “Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience”	
M 4/12	Our own debate	

Part IV

W 4/14	Glaucon: Is justice good when it demands sacrifice?	
F 4/16	Glaucon	
M 4/19	The case of Socrates	Plato, <i>Apology</i> excerpt
W 4/21	Sermon on the Mount	Matt. 5-7
F 4/23	Guest lecturer	
4/26	MLK, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”	
4/27 (a “Friday”)	No class: conferences for final project	
4/28	Wrap-up	