

Ryerson University
Department of Philosophy
Winter 2016
PH8123 Major Figures (John Rawls)

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Office Hours:

Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00; Fridays from 1:00-3:00; appointments can be made for other times and days; and you are always welcome to catch me in my office by happenstance.

Course Description:

This course will be conducted in the typical Socratic fashion with the aim of understanding, explicating, and evaluating the fundamental ideas, principles, and reasons for John Rawls' political conception of justice as fairness, as he presents them in *Political Liberalism*. At the same time as we explicate Rawls in his own terms, we will consider some basic charges made against him from several quarters of the public political culture, including libertarianism, the politics of difference, communitarianism, feminism, and post-modern critical theory.

My current interests in Rawls include the following: (1) What does Rawls mean by the fair terms of social cooperation between free, equal, rational, and reasonable moral persons, given what he calls the fact of reasonable pluralism and the fact of oppression? (2) What does Rawls mean by the idea that justice is prior to the good? Has Rawls addressed the challenge of what Kant characterizes as "the paradox of method"? How does Rawls address Kant's question from the second critique: "How is the highest good possible?" (3) As a device, what does the original position do? How do the parties in the original position model the normative demands of the rational and the reasonable? (4) How does the formal and abstract reasoning of political liberalism get its normative content and force? Is procedural liberalism an empty formalism? (5) What distinguishes Rawls' political conception of justice as fairness from the metaphysical conception of justice as fairness? What difference does the distinction make? (6) What is the metaphysics, moral psychology, and moral identity of the self presupposed by the moral reasoning of procedural liberalism? Does procedural liberalism presuppose a disembodied or unencumbered self, perhaps in the form of the possessive self or the possessive individualist, as some Hegelian critics charge? (7) Does Rawls have a politics of recognition, or merely a politics of distribution? What does it mean to recognize one another as moral persons according to Rawls? Does Rawls' conception of the recognition of one another as persons ground a conception of the group-differentiated recognition? (8) Or does political liberalism harbor

sectarian threats of assimilation, misrecognition, maldistribution, disrespect, and oppression in its practical implications, as charged by some representatives of the politics of difference, recognition, identity, confrontation, feminism, and post-modern critical theory? (9) Where and why, from the history and figures of philosophy, does Rawls borrow and incorporate the ideas of others? What difference does this make when it comes to understanding Rawls and his critics?

Tentative Schedule:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Discussion and readings:</u>
1. Jan. 15	Some background to <i>Political Liberalism</i>
2. Jan. 22	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture I, pp. 3-46
3. Jan. 29	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture I, pp. 3-46
4. Feb. 5	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture II, pp. 47-88
5. Feb. 12	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture III, pp. 89-129
6. Feb. 15-19	Study Week
7. Feb. 26	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture IV, pp. 133-172
8. March 4	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture V, pp. 173-211
9. March 11	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture VI, pp. 212-254
10. March 18	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture VII, pp. 257-288
11. March 25	Holiday
12. April 1	<i>Political Liberalism</i> , Lecture VIII, pp. 289-371
13. April 8	Selected criticisms, discussion, presentations
14. April 15	Selected criticisms, discussion, presentations
15. April 25	Major essays due anytime by email

Help:

I invite you to visit me during office with any concerns you might have with the course readings, your presentations, essay proposal, final essay, issues of course management, grading assessments, instructor feedback, classroom climate, or anything else that might come up.

Course Requirements:

In this course you are to demonstrate a reasonable understanding of Rawls, whether critical or supportive, through the following: three five-ten minute presentations (roughly 1-2 pages and to be handed in the day of the presentation) or one minor essay (roughly ten pages), or some combination thereof (worth 30%), a major essay proposal of SSHRC, OGS, or equivalent format (worth 10%), and a major essay of fifteen to twenty-five pages (worth 60%) due on April 25 anytime. Your essay outline and essay is to be clear, complete, concise, organized, thoughtful, connected to the course content, interesting, and submitted in a timely fashion in accordance with deadlines. For those electing to do a minor essay instead of presentations the deadline will depend on your topic.

Penalties and Policies:

Without due cause, your essay will lose one percentage point for every day it is late. Plagiarism will mean a 0 for the essay and a failure in the course.

The following policies might be useful for reference:

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf>

Religious Observances: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf>

Official University communications via e-mail:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol157.pdf>

Academic Appeals: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol152.pdf>

Student Code of Academic Conduct <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>

Discrimination and Harassment:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/irm/pdfs/VHP/DHPS%20Policy2011.pdf>

Student Code of Non-academic Conduct:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol61.pdf>

Required Readings:

- (1) Rawls, John. (2005). *Political Liberalism* expanded edition. Columbia Press, New York.
- (2) ____ (1999). "Justice as Reciprocity." In *Collected Papers*. Ed. Samuel Freeman. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Selected secondary literature, but not required reading:

1. Sandel, Michael. (1998). *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, New York.
2. Kymlicka, Will. (1989). *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. Clarendon Press, Oxford. See especially pp. 47-73.

3. Carse, Alisa L. (1994). "The Liberal Individual: A Metaphysical or Moral Embarrassment?" *Nous*. Vol. 28.
4. Hekman, Susan. (1992). "The Embodiment of the Subject: Feminism and the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 54.
5. Walzer, Michael. (1990). "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *Political Theory*. Vol. 18.
6. Buchanan, Allen E. (1989). "Assessing the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *Ethics*. Vol. 99.
7. Smith, Steven B. (1989). *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism: Rights in Context*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. See especially chapter three: "The Critique of the Liberal Theory of Rights."
8. Schwarzenbach, Sibyl A. (1991). "Rawls, Hegel, and Communitarianism" *Political Theory*. Vol. 19.
9. Houlgate, Stephen. (2001). "Hegel, Rawls, and the Rational State" in *Beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism*. Ed. Robert R. Williams. State University of New York Press, Albany.
10. Banerjee, Kiran, and Bercuson, Jeffrey. (2015). "Rawls on the embedded self: Liberalism as an affective regime." *European Journal of Political Theory*. Vol. 14.
11. Schwarzenbach, Sibyl A. (1987). "Rawls and Ownership: The Forgotten Category of Reproductive Labor." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. Supplementary Volume 13.
12. Okin, Susan Moller. (2005). "'Forty acres and a mule' for women: Rawls and feminism." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*. Vol. 4.
13. Okin, Susan Moller. (1989). "Reason and Feeling in Thinking about Justice." *Ethics*. Vol. 99.
14. Jaggard, Alison M. (2015). "On Susan Moller Okin's 'Reason and Feeling in Thinking about Justice.'" *Ethics*. Vol. 125.
15. Okin, Susan Moller. (1994). "Political Liberalism, Justice, and Gender." *Ethics*. Vol. 105.
16. Nussbaum, Martha. (2003). "Rawls and Feminism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*. Ed. Samuel Freeman. Cambridge University Press, New York.
17. Young, Iris Marion. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. See especially chapter one: "Displacing the Distributive Paradigm."
18. Taylor, Charles. (1994). "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Ed. Amy Gutman. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
19. Patten, Alan. (2001). "Social Contract Theory and the Politics of Recognition in Hegel's Political Philosophy." In *Beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism*. Ed. Robert R. Williams. State University of New York, Albany.
20. Fraser, Nancy and Honneth, Alex. (2003). *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. Verso, London.
21. Forst, Rainer. (2007). "First Things First: Redistribution, Recognition and Justification." *European Journal of Political Theory*. Vol. 6.
22. Bankovsky, Miriam. (2011). "Social Justice: Defending Rawls' theory of justice against Honneth's objections." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Vol. 37.