

Questions in International Thought

Thursdays 12:00-14:00, Seminarhaus 4.104

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The Main Idea

This proseminar will provide an introduction to some key questions and debates in international political theory. Can we speak of "laws," "justice," or "morality" beyond the sovereign state? Do states and their citizens have obligations to foreigners, other societies, or even the world as a whole? Do they have the right to unilaterally control their borders? Is talk of "human rights" or "universal morality" ever anything more than an extension of Western imperialism? In this seminar, we will examine various aspects of debates in four key topics: human rights, postcolonialism, global inequality, and migration.

Progress and Assessment

Attendance: Everyone is responsible for attending all classes, keeping up with the weekly readings, and participating actively in our discussions. It is expected that you will not miss more than 2 sessions during the semester.

Weekly Readings: As you look over the syllabus, you will notice a list of readings for each week. Don't get nervous—you will not be asked to read all of them! The readings for each week are divided into several categories:

- *Primary readings:* The "primary reading" will be the main focus of that week's lecture and discussion. Each week's primary reading will typically be 25-40 pages long in total, though not always. It is expected that everyone will have read and will arrive to class ready to discuss the primary reading for each session. Primary readings will also be the focus of writing assignments for

the class. I have marked these readings in the syllabus with two stars (★★) so that they can be found easily.

- *Secondary readings:* The sheer volume of what has been written in international political theory is unimaginably vast, and we can only cover an infinitesimal sliver of it in the course of a single semester. But it is worth getting a sense of what is out there. This is why, for a number of our sessions, you can expect to find a handful of “secondary readings” listed after that week’s primary reading, which may be relevant to the issues raised or offer a differing perspective. These readings will be marked in the syllabus with one star (★). They are not required reading, but you may find some of them interesting or of use in your own research.
- *Supplementary readings:* Finally, for those of you who find a particular week’s reading compelling, most weeks will also include recommendations for further reading. These may include other works by the author of the primary reading, in-depth interpretations of the author’s work, philosophical works by others that are often studied alongside the author, or contemporary attempts to grapple with issues related to the ones the author raises. Again, these lists will cover but a snippet of what is really out there, but these should help you begin your journey.
- *Additional topics:* Because the field of international political theory is so vast, there will be many topics we don’t cover at all in class, but which may be of interest to you, either for your research or your own curiosity. Some examples include:
 - just war theory
 - humanitarian intervention
 - global governance
 - the European Union
 - climate change
 - the nation-state and nationalism

...and many more. At the very end of the syllabus, there will be included a sampling of books and articles on some of these topics, which you are invited to ask me about. This list will be updated throughout the semester; feel free to let me know if there is a particular topic you would like to see added.

Solo Points: Over the course of the semester you will be required to write a number of brief critical reflections or “solos” on a given week’s reading. Precisely how many of these you will need to write will depend on how thoroughly you’ve done the readings and how well you’ve paid attention in class. *READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.*

- For each solo, you are asked to bring to light *one critical question or issue* that is raised by the week’s primary reading. This may be a philosophical quandary, a broader implication, an objection, an example of real-world relevance—the choice is yours. However, it should meet the following minimal guidelines:

- The solo must be written on a given week's primary reading (marked with "★★") or, *with the instructor's permission*, a week's secondary reading (marked with "★").
- It should be between 300 and 500 words (not including title, headings, and bibliography); it should be emailed to me by noon on the Monday following the relevant class session.
- The paper should demonstrate that you have read and understood the text—*the entire text*. Though you are asked to focus on a single point, you should be able to relate that point to the author's overall argument.
- It should *not* be a mere summary.
- You should *not* rely on large quotes.
- It should strive to make *a clear and concise point*.
- Your point should be backed up by *citing page numbers in the text*.
 - A bibliography at the end of the paper is not sufficient; use proper in-text citation format.
 - *Do not* simply repeat what you heard in class or saw on a PowerPoint slide: show that you can defend your points on your own terms.
- The solos will be marked on a scale of 0 to 3 points.
 - A solo earns **3 points** if it demonstrates a strong understanding of the reading and makes a clear and thoughtful point, which is backed by solid reasoning and evidence from the text.
 - A solo earns **2 points** if it is clear that the author has carefully read the reading and can show a good grasp of its major arguments.
 - A solo earns **1 point** if it displays some or partial understanding of the reading and its major arguments.
 - A solo earns **0 points** if it gets key arguments wrong, lacks understanding of the reading, or otherwise fails to meet the minimum requirements of the assignment.
 - Intermediate marks such as 1½, 2¾, etc., are also possible.
 - *Should you receive a mark of 1,499 or less on a solo, you are permitted to write the solo again for a better score.*
- **Students pursuing a *Teilnahmeschein* are required to earn at least 8 solo points over the course of the semester.**
- **Students pursuing a *Leistungsschein* are required to earn at least 11 solo points over the course of the semester.**

Final research paper: At the conclusion of the semester, students pursuing a *Leistungsschein* will write a research paper of 3500-4500 words (about 12-15 pages), which will be due **no later than 22 September, 2019**. Those pursuing a *Teilnahmeschein* are not required to submit a final paper.

- You are free to write the paper on any topic you wish, so long as your topic is based on the central themes of the course. *You are strongly encouraged to*

meet with me at least once to discuss your paper. When writing, you should approach your final paper as a serious piece of scholarly research, complete with citations and bibliography: you should develop a clear central thesis; you should demonstrate knowledge of your topic; you should engage the material in a critical and thoughtful manner; you should be able to back up your arguments with reasons, evidence, and examples; and you should strive to show readers what conclusions they can draw from your efforts.

- The final research paper will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - *Comprehension of material* (≈25%). Ability to make use of class readings and other research materials and display an understanding of the relevant ideas, themes, and arguments.
 - *Formulation and defense of argument* (≈30%). Presentation of a clear thesis and ability to defend that thesis in an organized way, using solid reasoning and evidence.
 - *Clear, concise, and well-organized writing* (≈20%). You should strive to organize your paper into well-structured paragraphs, write in clear sentences, use clear phrasing, avoid errors in spelling and grammar, and use proper and sufficient citation.*
 - *Critical thinking* (≈25%). Ability to identify the strengths, weaknesses, usefulness, and limits of the ideas and arguments presented by the authors covered by your research, and to think creatively and offer original perspectives on the relevant issues and problems.

Class participation: In addition to written assignments, *additional credit* may be awarded based on active and thoughtful class participation.

••• IMPORTANT •••

All papers must be double-spaced, in 12-point type, with one-inch margins, using a normal-sized font, and must be submitted to me via email as either a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe PDF (.pdf) file at **brian.m.milstein@gmail.com**.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to accept papers not written in English.

For all papers, you will be expected to adhere to proper conventions of scholarly attribution. Any work quoted or otherwise referenced must be appropriately and fully cited. Any idea, argument, information, or quotation that you might employ from an external source must likewise be accompanied by full citation. You are free to use any standard bibliographic citation style you wish, but you should apply it consistently. **Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may result in automatic failure of the course.**

* See the weekly readings below for examples of a common style of bibliographic citation.

Weekly Readings

All required readings for the course will be made available on OLAT, as well as at least some of the suggested supplementary readings (which will be indicated with an  icon).

••• **PLEASE NOTE:** The readings listed may be subject to change, and additional supplementary readings may be added or made available over the course of the term.

Check OLAT periodically for updated versions of this syllabus. •••

Week 1 (18 April) / Human Rights I

(NOTE: Unfortunately, it is not permitted to submit a solo for this first week's reading.)

Strongly recommended reading:

- Eric Posner (2014) "The Case against Human Rights," *The Guardian*, 4 December (<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2014/dec/04/-sp-case-against-human-rights>). 

Secondary reading:

- *The Declaration of Independence* (1776), accessible at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp
- *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789), accessible at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp
- *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), accessible at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/unrights.asp

Supplementary reading:

- Samuel Moyn (2010) *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Week 2 (25 April) / Human Rights II

★★ Primary reading:

- Hannah Arendt (1968 [1951]) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new ed. (New York: Harcourt). Pp267–302. 

★ Secondary reading:

- Seyla Benhabib (1999) "Hannah Arendt and the 'Right to Have Rights,'" *Hannah Arendt Newsletter* 2(1): 5–14. 
- Jacques Rancière (2004) "Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103(2/3): 297–310. 

Supplementary reading:

- Ayten Gündoğdu (2015) *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Struggles of Migrants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Week 3 (2 May) / Human Rights III

★★ Primary reading:

- Michael Ignatieff (2014 [2000]) *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, in Mark Matheson (ed), *The Tanner Lectures in Human Values* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press). Pp285–349. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- Joshua Cohen (2006) “Is There a Human Right to Democracy?” in Christine Sydnovich (ed), *The Egalitarian Conscience: Essays in Honour of G.A. Cohen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp226–48. [OLAT](#)
- Kenneth Baynes (2009) “Toward a Political Conception of Human Rights,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 35(4): 371–90. [OLAT](#)

Supplementary reading:

- Charles R. Beitz (2009) *The Idea of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Week 4 (9 May) / Human Rights IV

★★ Primary reading:

- James D. Ingram (2013) *Radical Cosmopolitics: The Ethics and Politics of Democratic Universalism* (New York: Columbia University Press). Pp225–62. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- Seyla Behnabib (2011) “Is There a Human Right to Democracy? Beyond Interventionism and Indifference” in *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press). Pp77–93.
- Rainer Forst (2014) “The Justification of Human Rights and the Basic Right to Justification: A Reflexive Approach” in *Justification and Critique* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press). Pp38–48. [OLAT](#)
- Sofia Näsström (2014) “The Right to Have Rights: Democratic, Not Political,” *Political Theory* 42(5): 543–68. [OLAT](#)

Week 5 (16 May) / The Postcolonial Condition I

★★ Primary reading:

- Franz Fanon (2004 [1961]) *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press). Pp145–80 [Chapter IV, “On National Culture”]. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- Achille Mbembé (1992) "Provisional Notes on the Postcolony," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 62(1): 3–37. OLAT
- Partha Chatterjee (1993) "Whose Imagined Community?" [from *The Nation and Its Fragments*] in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso). Pp214–25. OLAT

Supplementary reading:

- Ania Loomba (1998) *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge).
- Partha Chatterjee (1993) *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
- Edward W. Said (1993) *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage).
- Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Week 6 (23 May) / The Postcolonial Condition II

★★ Primary reading:

- Uma Narayan (1997) *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third-World Feminism* (New York: Routledge). Pp1–41. OLAT

Supplementary reading:

- Susan Moller Okin et al (1999) *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Seyla Benhabib (2002) *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

30 May / PUBLIC HOLIDAY**Week 7 (6 June) / The Postcolonial Condition III**

★★ Primary reading:

- Achille Mbembé (2003) "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15(1): 11–40. OLAT

★ Secondary reading:

- Richard Adams and Chris Barrie (2013) "The Bureaucratization of War: Moral Challenges Exemplified by the Covert Lethal Drone," *Ethics & Global Politics* 6(4): 245–60. OLAT

Supplementary reading:

- Giorgio Agamben (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

- Banu Bargu (2014) *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Week 8 (13 June) / Distributive Justice I

★★ Primary reading:

- Darrel Moellendorf (2002) *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder: Westview Press). Pp7–29, 78–100. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- John Rawls (2015 [1971, 1999]) *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., in Steven M. Cahn (ed), *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp917–32. [OLAT](#)

Supplementary reading:

- John Rawls (1999) *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- Gillian Brock (2013) *Cosmopolitanism versus Non-Cosmopolitanism: Critiques, Defenses, Reconceptualizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

20 June / PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Week 9 (27 June) / Distributive Justice II

★★ Primary reading:

- David Miller (2007) *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp51–80. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- Thomas Nagel (2005) “The Problem of Global Justice,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33(2): 113–47. [OLAT](#)

Week 10 (4 July) / Migration I

★★ Primary reading:

- Michael Blake (2013) “Immigration, Jurisdiction, and Exclusion,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 41(2): 103–30. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- David Miller (2007) *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp51–80.

Supplementary reading:

- Sarah Fine and Lea Ypi (eds) (2016) *Migration in Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- David Miller (2016) *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Week 11 (11 July) / Migration II

★★ Primary reading:

- Joseph Carens (2013) *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp. 225–52 [Chapter 11, “The Case for Open Borders”]. [OLAT](#)

★ Secondary reading:

- Arash Abizadeh (2008) “Democratic Theory and Border Coercion: No Right to Unilaterally Control Your Own Borders,” *Political Theory* 36(1): 37–65. [OLAT](#)
- Dimitrios Efthymiou (2019) “EU Migration, Out-of-Work Benefits, and Reciprocity: Are Member States Justified in Restricting Access to Welfare Rights?” *European Journal of Political Theory* (published online ahead of print <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885118825360>). [OLAT](#)

••• Final paper due Monday, 22 September, at 12 noon •••

Additional topics

(Check OLAT periodically for updates to this list)

War and Intervention

- Seth Lazar (2016) “War,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/>).
- Gillian Brock (2015) “Global Justice” [§3, “The Proper Use of Force, Military Intervention, and Its Aftermath”], *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-global/#ProUseForMilIntAft>).
- Michael Walzer (2015 [1977]) *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 5th edition (New York: Basic Books).
- Darrel Moellendorf (2008) “Jus Ex Bello,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16(2): 123–36.
- Cécile Fabre (2012) *Cosmopolitan War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Mary Kaldor (2007) *Human Security: Reflections on Globalization and Intervention* (Cambridge, UK: Polity).

Ecology and Climate Change

- Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo (2015) “Environmental Ethics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>).
- Wendy Parker (2015) “Climate Science,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/climate-science/>).
- Stephen M. Gardiner et al (ed) (2010) *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Dale Jamieson (2017) *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed—and What It Means for Our Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Darrel Moellendorf (2014) *The Moral Challenge of Dangerous Climate Change: Values, Poverty, and Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- Jason W. Moore (2017) “The Capitalocene, Part I: On the Nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(3): 594–630.

European Union

- Richard Bellamy (2019) *A Republican Europe of States: Cosmopolitanism, Intergovernmentalism, and Democracy in the EU* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- Miriam Ronzoni and Juri Viehoff (eds) (2017) *The Normative Dimensions of the European Crisis* (Special Issue), *European Journal of Political Theory* 16(2): 139–260.
- Kalypso Nicolaïdis (2012) “The Idea of European Democracy” in *Philosophical Foundations of European Union Law*, ed. Julie Dickson and Pavlos Eleftheriadis (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Pp247–74.
- Jürgen Habermas (2012) *The Crisis of the European Union*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, UK: Polity).