Justice, says Socrates, is no ordinary topic—it concerns nothing less than the way we ought to live. But even if there is widespread agreement that justice is of fundamental importance, there is little consensus on what, exactly, constitutes justice. Claims of injustice are raised to object to a variety of ills, including poverty, racial, gender, and sexual discrimination, animal cruelty, military actions, etc. On the other hand, the concept of justice is used so frequently and so indiscriminately that many question its value, or even object to adopting “social justice” as a goal; as one Amazon.com reviewer says: “If you ever hear the phrase ‘Social Justice’, reach for your wallets, because they are just trying to tax you to pay for some government program.” What are we to make of this? The aim of this class is to expose you to various ways in which philosophers have attempted to answer the question “What is justice?” The first part of the course will cover a variety of (primarily contemporary) theories of justice, including utilitarian, Rawlsian, libertarian, socialist, meritocratic, and other accounts of justice. The second part of the course will focus on the application of justice—specifically on cases that are commonly viewed as instances of injustice, including claims of injustice based on gender, issues of race and affirmative action, global poverty, and treatment of animals and the environment. When analyzing these cases of injustice, we will draw on our theoretical work in the first part of the class to help us determine whether these cases properly fall under the purview of the concept of justice, and if so, what should be done to remedy the injustice. Justice is a famously difficult concept to define and to apply; as such, the course is designed to push you to think through these tricky and complex issues and to decide what you think justice requires—of you, of your society, and of your government.
All of your work in this class must comply with the UNC Honor Code, which can be accessed at http://honor.unc.edu.

There is only one required book for the course, Vonnegut’s Hocus Pocus. All other readings are available on the Sakai course site.

Course Expectations and Information

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Your grade will be determined by:

- **Reading quizzes:** Because the success of our class depends on your advance preparation, I use reading quizzes to provide you an incentive for coming to class prepared. There will be four scheduled quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will cover that day's readings and the two previous session's readings. These short quizzes will be factual and textual, rather than interpretive or analytical. You must take these quizzes online before class on the scheduled day. I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes in class, as well. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. Quizzes are worth **20%** of your final grade.

- **Short papers:** There will be two 3-4 page papers. I will hand out questions/topics at least a week in advance. Expectations for papers will be discussed in class. Together, the papers are worth **25%** of your final grade.

- **Exams:** There are two in-class exams addressing large, interpretive and thematic questions addressed in the readings, lectures, and in-class discussion. They are long-form essay format. The exams ask you to make connections between authors, analyze conceptual changes, and synthesize and apply what you have learned. The first exam is worth **20%** of your grade, and the final, cumulative exam is worth **25%**. You will receive instructions for each exam at least one week in advance.

- **Participation:** As noted above, the reading quizzes are intended to insure high quality participation in our classroom discussions. The participation grade will be based on attendance, participation in class discussions, and participation during in-class group work. Classroom participation comprises **10%** of your final grade.

**Attendance policy:** Attendance will be taken each class. You have two free absences; each absence after that will result in one letter grade deduction from your participation grade. This means you need to use your absences wisely, as no exceptions will be made (e.g. for sickness) unless you have an officially documented medical or family emergency. So you should plan to save your absences for sicknesses; failure to do so means you will lose points. If you fall asleep in class, you will be counted as absent.
Classroom policies: Turn your phone to silent before class starts. No texting in class (and it is, in fact, obvious when you do it under the desk). I find that laptops inhibit student interaction and diminish engagement, so please do not use them in class. This means you’ll need to print out hard copies of all articles on Sakai, and there are a lot of them, so budget accordingly.

Guidelines for discussion and participation: It is important that our class discussions are marked by mutual respect. Remember that good participation in a class discussion requires active and open-minded listening in addition to talking. This means that students who are hesitant to talk will need to work on formulating their thoughts and speaking up and that students who are prone to over-talking will need to work on selectively holding back and bringing up only relevant points or questions. You will need to back up your arguments with evidence from the readings, so bring the texts to class with you. Never hesitate to ask a question if you are unclear about a point made in lecture or in our class discussion.

Grading policies: Late papers will be graded with a deduction of five points for every 24 hours late unless you provide documentation of medical or family emergency. After graded papers are handed back, there will be a 48-hour "cooling off" period during which you cannot approach me about your grade. At that point, I will entertain questions about grades. Since I will be looking at your paper with fresh eyes, I reserve the right to give you a new grade that is lower than your original grade if that is appropriate. That said, if you believe you received an unfair grade, do not hesitate to bring it to my attention—but the burden of proof is on you. If at any point in the semester you are unsure how you are doing in the class, I will be happy to let you know where you stand and what improvements can be made in your performance.

Paper submission policy: All papers must be turned in as a hard copy in class. If there is an emergency that renders you unable to do so, you can submit your paper over email. If you are emailing your paper, you must send it as a .doc (or .docx) or .pdf file. You should not consider your paper submitted until you receive an email reply from me saying that I received the paper. Electronic submissions must be sent by the start of the class in which the paper is due, and if there is a problem (e.g. I can’t open the file), the paper will be considered late—so if you are submitting electronically, you should turn it in with sufficient time to receive confirmation from me before it is due. If submitting your paper electronically, the burden is on you to make sure that I have received your paper.
Readings Schedule

Section I: Introduction

Tu Jan 10   Introduction. Course requirements, procedures, and expectations will be reviewed. All students are responsible for having the information given during the first day of class.

Th Jan 12   No class—Southern Political Science Association Conference

Tu Jan 17   Plato, *The Republic*, Book 1

Section II: Conceptualizing Justice

1. Utilitarianism

Th Jan 19   Utilitarianism handout

2. Rawlsian Liberalism

Tu Jan 24   Rawls, “From A Theory of Justice” (you can skip “5: Classical Utilitarianism” and “6: Some Related Contrasts”)

Th Jan 26   Rawls, “The Overlapping Consensus”; Norton and Ariely, “Building a Better America”

Quiz 1

3. Two Opposing Views: Libertarianism and Socialism

Tu Jan 31   Hayek, “Social or Distributive Justice”

Th Feb 2    Nozick, “From Anarchy, State, and Utopia”

Tu Feb 7    Cohen, “Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty”

Quiz 2

Th Feb 9    Cohen, “Why Not Socialism?”

4. Questioning Distributive Justice

Tu Feb 14   Walzer, “Complex Equality”

Th Feb 16   Young, “Displacing the Distributive Paradigm”

Skip “Defining Injustice as Domination and Oppression” on page 228

Tu Feb 21   First paper due

5. Desert and Meritocracy

Th Feb 23   Young, “The Myth of Merit”

Tu Feb 28   David Miller, “Two Cheers for Meritocracy”
Section III: Cases and Questions of Social Injustice

1. Gender
   
   Tu Mar 13  Rhode, "The ‘No Problem’ Problem"
   
   Th Mar 15  Okin, “Justice as Fairness: For Whom?”
   
   Tu Mar 20  Shanley, "Just Marriage"
               Quiz 3

2. Race
   
   Th Mar 22  McGary, “Racism, Social Justice, and Interracial Coalitions”
   
   Tu Mar 27  Alexander, “The New Jim Crow”

3. Global Poverty
   
   Th Mar 29  Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
   
   Tu Apr 3   Second paper due
   
   Th Apr 5   Pogge, “Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty”

4. Expanding the Scope of Justice
   
   Tu Apr 10  Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Non-Human Animals"
   
   Th Apr 12  Wenz, “Principles of Environmental Justice”
               Quiz 4

5. Reflections
   
   Tu Apr 17  Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience,” MLK Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
   
   Th Apr 19  Vonnegut, Hocus Pocus, 1-149
   
   Tu Apr 24  Vonnegut, Hocus Pocus, 150-end
   
   Tu May 1   Final Exam in our regular classroom at 12pm