

**Term:** Spring 2020  
**Day/time:** M W 2:30pm-3:45pm  
**Location:** Science Hall 180  
**Email:** [mschwarze@wisc.edu](mailto:mschwarze@wisc.edu)

**Instructor:** Prof. Michelle Schwarze  
**Office:** 201C North Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
**Office hours:** W 11am-noon  
and by appointment until W, 3/11

**Lead Teaching Assistant:** Philip Bunn  
**Office:** Rathskellar/Memorial Union  
**Office hours:** Th 11:00am-1:00pm  
**Email:** [pbunn@wisc.edu](mailto:pbunn@wisc.edu)

**Teaching Assistant:** Tim Tennyson  
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**Office hours:** Th 5:00-6:30pm  
**Email:** [ttennyson@wisc.edu](mailto:ttennyson@wisc.edu)

**Teaching Assistant:** Elizabeth Sawyer  
**Office:** North Hall TA Offices, Room 121  
**Office hours:** M F 11:00am-12:00pm  
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**Canvas site:** <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/187912>

## **PS 160: Introduction to Political Theory**

[Course #15442; 4 Credits]

Syllabus

### **Welcome!**

#### ***Course Description***

What is injustice and why should we care about it? We often take for granted the answers to those two questions, whether by assuming that injustice is simply the negative of justice or that we avoid injustice because we fear punishment. But questions about injustice — and justice — and what makes them obligatory are often not as straightforward as they might seem at first. Is economic inequality unjust if it results from the respect of private property rights and fair competition? Does it matter if our fellow citizens have their civil rights denied or not fully recognized? Why should we prefer a just life over an unjust one? When is a misfortune an injustice?

This course will grapple with these questions and others central to Western political thought. As an introductory course, its purpose is to familiarize you with the basic concepts and approaches of political theory, including the normative and conceptual analyses of politics. We will use the two aforementioned questions — *what is injustice and why should we care about it?* — to guide us through a survey of the history of political thought. Along the way, we will discuss other complex but relevant topics like freedom, rights, legitimacy, human nature, inequality, dissent, democracy, and republican government.

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times listed above, reading, writing, discussion section, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

## ***Learning Outcomes***

Students who closely and carefully engage course readings, attend and participate in class discussion, and complete course assignments will be able to:

- Explain arguments for and against justice and injustice according to core thinkers in the history of political thought
- Examine political and ethical theories, both historical and contemporary
- Assess political and ethical theories in the history of political thought
- Apply course concepts to contemporary political and ethical debates
- Dissent respectfully

## ***Course Materials***

### *Required Texts*

- Plato, *Republic* (Basic Books) [ISBN 0465094082]
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Chicago) [ISBN 0226500438]
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett) [ISBN 0872201775]
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ed. John T. Scott, *The Major Political Writings* (Chicago) [ISBN 022615131X]
- Frederick Douglass, ed. Nicholas Buccola, *The Essential Douglass* (Hackett) [ISBN 1624664539]

### *Recommended Text*

- E.B. White and William Strunk, *The Elements of Style* (Pearson) [ISBN 020530902X]

## ***Course Expectations & Policies***

Consider this syllabus a mutual agreement: each party to it (student, teaching assistant, professor) has a set of expectations, and all are governed by a set of rules. These rules help facilitate a positive learning environment for all students by making those expectations clear upfront, so you know how to do well in the class.

### ***What is expected of you?***

I expect you to **complete the readings** assigned for each week **prior to our class** meeting, **take notes** on your readings, and **actively participate** in our class discussion and activities, as well as your weekly discussion sections. Active participation requires you **bring the relevant readings to class** each day (which may mean printing them beforehand) and that you **respectfully engage** with both the course content and your peers' contributions. I agree entirely with the University's institutional statement on inclusion and diversity, and value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich our intellectual community (<https://diversity.wisc.edu/>).

I also expect you to **complete your assignments on time**, as I will accept **no late work** without an approved accommodation prior to the due date. Accommodations will be made for those students who have documented proof of an emergency or those students who have documented

evidence of learning disabilities. I am firmly committed to ensuring equal learning access for all and therefore encourage individuals to participate in the McBurney Center's available programs and activities (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/students/howto.php#contentanchor4> ). If you need an accommodation, you must contact the center at (608) 263-2741 or [mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu](mailto:mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu) to obtain documentation for your specific needs. I ask that you seek accommodation as soon as possible and contact me in advance to make appropriate arrangements for papers, etc.

### ***What can you expect of your professor and teaching assistants?***

You can expect certain things from me and from your teaching assistants, too. You can expect us to be prepared for each class and discussion section, and to respectfully engage with each of your contributions as well as the course material.

If you have questions about the subject, material, or assignments during the semester, your TAs will be available during their weekly office hours, by personal appointment, and through email to answer them, as will I until Wednesday, March 11. If you email any of us, however, be sure to 1) address us like someone whom you may ask for a letter of recommendation someday rather than someone to whom you are sending a text message, 2) expect no less than a 24-hour response time, and 3) restrict your questions to only those regarding format or logistics. I believe it is far more valuable for you to ask substantive questions in person—whether in class or during office hours—so you can get a comprehensive response and ensure you understand what we have discussed.

Finally, I strictly adhere to the UW Academic Misconduct Process and will report all incidents of academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office, as it is a prerequisite for maintaining academic integrity in our course. To avoid plagiarism, be sure to cite your sources using either text-specific (e.g., citations to part, section, chapter and paragraph number of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*) or APSA-style citations unless otherwise stated (<https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/>).

### ***Assignments & Grading***

Your grade will be calculated according to your score(s) on assignments in the following categories. More detail on each of these requirements is provided below. Incompletes will only be assigned under extraordinary circumstances.

	<b>Short paper [&amp; optional rewrite] (15%)</b>
	<b>Discussion section (20%)</b>
	<b>Lecture attendance and participation (10%)</b>
	<b>Flipped classroom activities (15%)</b>
	<b>Midterm exam (15%)</b>
+	<b>Final exam (25%)</b>
	<b>= Final Grade (100%)</b>

Your final grade will be assigned according to the following grading scale:

<b>A</b>	$\geq 93.5$
<b>AB</b>	$= 87.5-93.4$

**B** = 82.5-87.4  
**BC** = 77.5-82.4  
**C** = 69.5-77.4  
**D** = 60-69.4  
**F** ≤ 59.9

**Short paper:** You will be required to write one (1) one-page single-spaced response paper (12 pt. Times New Roman font) designed to allow you to critically engage with primary texts **by the beginning of Week 5 (2/17)**. You will receive a short paper prompt **by the beginning of Week 3**.

I want to give you the opportunity to improve your writing, too. The philosopher David Hume, when reflecting on the quality of his own work, emphasized a particularly important part of the learning process: “a man who corrects his mistakes shows at once the justness of his understanding and the candour and ingenuity of his temper. (T App.1). To reward those of you interested in exercising your candor and ingenuity and to encourage you to start to look at your writing as an iterated process, I allow all students the option to resubmit one-page papers. Your **optional rewrite is due Week 8 (3/11)**. I will *only* include the higher score of the two submitted papers in your grade, so you will not be penalized for resubmission.

**Discussion section:** You must attend and participate in a pre-selected discussion section. TAs will hand out a detailed syllabus for each of these sections by the end of Week 1.

**Lecture attendance and participation:** You must attend and actively participate in lecture. You will often work in groups and be expected to share your insights in class.

**Flipped classroom activities:** During **Weeks 11-14**, our class lectures will be “flipped”—podcast lectures and video intros will be available online via Canvas. In class, **you will receive credit for** participating in different **classroom assessments**, which your TAs will walk you through each day.

**Midterm exam:** Your midterm exam will be held **Thursday, 3/25 (Week 10)**. The exam will cover all material assigned and discussed in lecture from Weeks 1-8. It will likely consist of multiple choice, passage interpretation, and a short essay.

**Final exam:** Your final exam will be held **Monday, 5/4, 5:05-7:05pm** (Location TBA). The exam will cover material assigned and discussed in flipped lectures from Weeks 11-14 and will consist of multiple choice, identification questions (IDs), passage interpretation, and long essays.

## ***Schedule\****

### **Section 1: Why Should We Care About Injustice?**

#### ***Week 1***

Wednesday, January 22: Course introduction + group syllabus quiz

#### ***Week 2***

Monday, January 27: Shklar, *The Faces of Injustice*, selections from the Introduction, and Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-9 (first paragraph); pgs. 15-28, 40-46 (second paragraph); Judith Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear" [available on Canvas]

#### **DUE: Syllabus agreement**

Wednesday, January 29: Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (pgs. 3-34)

#### ***Week 3***

Monday, February 3: Plato, *Republic*, Books 2-3 (pgs. 35-56 [until 379a]; 63-96)

#### **Short paper 1 prompt given**

Wednesday, February 5: Plato, *Republic*, Books 4-5 (pgs. 97-113 [until 435a2]; 127-154 [until 474c4])

#### ***Week 4***

Monday, February 10: Plato, *Republic*, Books 7 (through 520d), 9-10 (pgs. 193-199, 251-275, 287 [beginning at 603c]-303)

Wednesday, February 12: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, Chapters 1-7 (pgs. 3-33)

#### ***Week 5***

Monday, February 17: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters 8-13, 15-21, 23-26 (pgs. 34-57, 61-91, 93-105)

#### **DUE: Short Paper 1**

### **Section 2: Injustice as Breach of Contract**

Wednesday, February 19: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Frontispiece, Epistle Dedicatory, Introduction, Chapters 6, 11 (pgs. 1-5, 27-35, 57-62)

#### ***Week 6***

Monday, February 24: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 13-15 (pgs. 74-100)

Wednesday, February 26: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17-19 (pgs. 100-127)

#### ***Week 7***

Monday, March 2: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 21, 30 (pgs. 136-145, 219-233)

Wednesday, March 4: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I, Chapters 1-8 (pgs. 163-176)

#### ***Week 8***

Monday, March 9: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II, Chapters 1-6 (pgs. 179-190)

Wednesday, March 11: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II, Chapters 7-12 (pgs. 190-203);

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book III, Chapters 1-7 (pgs. 205-222)

#### **DUE: Optional Rewrite 1**

***Have a good spring break!***

**Week 10**

Monday, March 23: **Midterm review session**

Wednesday, March 25: **Midterm Exam**

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**FLIPPED CLASSROOM BEGINS**

**\*\*\*Podcast lectures and video intros available online\*\*\***

**Week 11**

Monday, March 30: John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical" [available on Canvas]

**Section 3: Injustice as Political Inequality**

Wednesday, April 1: Shklar, *Faces of Injustice*, selections from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 (pgs. 51-67, 83-87, 107 (last paragraph)-109 (first paragraph) [available on Canvas]

**Week 12**

Monday, April 6: John Stuart Mill, "On the Subjection of Women," Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-54) [available on Canvas]

Wednesday, April 8: Harriet Taylor Mill, "Enfranchisement of Women" [available on Canvas]

**Week 13**

Monday, April 13: Frederick Douglass, *The Essential Douglass*, "The Constitution and Slavery"; "What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?" (pgs. 37-42, 50-71)

Wednesday, April 15: Frederick Douglass, *The Essential Douglass*, "What the Black Man Wants"; "Sources of Danger to the Republic" (pgs. 191-215)

**Week 14**

Monday, April 20: James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, "My Dungeon Shook" and "Down at the Cross" [available on Canvas];

Wednesday, April 22: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" [available on Canvas]

**FLIPPED CLASSROOM ENDS**

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**Week 15**

Monday, April 27: Course wrap-up

Wednesday, April 29: **Final review session**

**Final Exam**

Monday, May 4, 5:05pm-7:05pm Room TBA