

Political Ethics: Justice [Phil 114E]

Tom Huff

Office hours and Contact information

- Class in 11:00-12:20 in JRH 202
- Office Hours in Law 150: 10:00-10:45 TR
- 12:30-1:00 TR
- Or by appointment: tom.huff@umontana.edu

This is a General Education Requirement course. Its purpose is to help you understand and appreciate the sources, the premises, and the forms of reasoning that have shaped Western thinking about the nature and justifications for our political institutions. To that end, we will study three works, representative of three great Western traditions of thought about politics. Our focus will be on the justifications which can be offered for, and the reasoning which is characteristically used in, modern, liberal, constitutional democracies of the sort familiar in modern industrial states (represented by John Rawls), and the ways in which those justifications draw upon, and contrast with, early modern political thought (represented by John Locke), and classical political thought (represented by Plato).

In order to check your understanding of these matters, as we develop them in class lecture and discussion, I will ask you to begin doing this sort of reasoning yourself, in a series of quizzes, roughly every two weeks during the term. These quizzes will allow you to discover whether you have grasped the basic concepts of political thought and their distinctive role in political reasoning of different kinds. A four page midterm paper will allow you to demonstrate that you understand more broadly the scope and nature of the problems which characterize Western political thought. A five page paper, in lieu of the final exam, will require that you both synthesize the main themes of Western political thought and apply those themes to "real world" political problems.

Quizzes:

- Seven quizzes, ten points each, drop two lowest, 50% of your grade, no make-up quizzes. All quizzes will be taken on Thursday and returned the following Tuesday. The quiz dates are:
 - September 8, 22**
 - October 6, 20**
 - November 3, 17**
 - December 8**

Papers:

- Midterm: Date announced later, 25 points, 25% of your grade.
- Final Paper: 5 pages, 25 points, 25% of your grade. Due at time assigned for the final exam; **Wednesday, December 14th 10:10 a.m**

Reading Assignments: Announced as needed.

Books:

Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito
Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration;
Rawls, A Theory of Justice. revised edition

Two Important Notices:

1. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or at 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

2. All students must practice academic honesty, e.g., by avoiding plagiarism. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary by the university. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code: (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).