

# Political Ethics: Justice [Phil 114E] Tom Huff

## Class hours and Contact information:

- 11:00-12:20, Tuesday and Thursday in JRH 202
- Office Hours in Law 150: 10:00-10:45 TR and 12:30-1:00 TR
- Office Hours by appointment: [tom.huff@umontana.edu](mailto:tom.huff@umontana.edu)

## Introduction:

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).

## Course Overview:

In order to check your understanding of these matters, as we develop them in class lecture and discussion, I will ask you do this sort of reasoning yourself, in a series of exams, roughly every three weeks during the term. These exams 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 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.

## Exams:

Three exams, thirty points each, drop the lowest, 60% of your grade, no make-up exams. All exams will be taken on Thursday and returned the following Tuesday.

Exam Month	Exam Day
September	21
October	19
November	16

## Paper:

Final Paper: 6 pages, 40 points, 40% of your grade, due the last day of class: Tuesday, December 12

## 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](https://www.umt.edu/dss/default.php): (<https://www.umt.edu/dss/default.php>), 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 action by the university. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/Dean%20of%20Students/default.php): (<http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/Dean%20of%20Students/default.php>).