

University of Guelph
Department of Philosophy
Winter 2018
PHIL*3230 Theories of Justice (0.5 cr)

Instructor: Prof. K. Wendling

Extension: 53229

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Office: MacKinnon 359 (in the office tower)

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-5 p.m., and by appointment

Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m., MacKinnon 116

TA: Quinn McGlade-Ferentzy, qmcglade@uoguelph.ca

Office: MacKinnon 333

Course Website: Access via [CourseLink](#) using your central login and password.

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Objectives: To get an overview of capabilities theory.

Learning Outcomes: This course contributes to critical and creative thinking, literacy, global understanding, communicating, and professional and ethical behaviour.

Prerequisites: 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits.

Required Texts:

- ▷ Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities* (Harvard U Press, 2011);
- ▷ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Harvard U Press, 2009).

Method of Presentation: Lecture and discussion.

Method of Evaluation

- ▷ 2 essays, worth 35% each, due February 13 and March 13;
- ▷ a take-home final exam, worth 30%, due Monday, April 09 by 11 a.m.

Notes: I do not post lecture notes.

Description

Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have pioneered the discussion of capabilities in political philosophy. The capabilities approach has two components. First, it defines well-being in terms of capabilities, which are people's real-life opportunities to do and be things that they value. Second, it claims that the most important aspect of political freedom is individuals' freedom to develop their capabilities. In this course, we will discuss how Sen and Nussbaum work out the theory in their two recent books, *Creating Capabilities* and *The Idea of Justice*.

Information about the Course and Assignments

I am a tough professor. This is a reading-intensive course. I will work with you to help you understand the material. If you are not prepared to work hard, however, you should not take this course.

Laptops may **not** be used in class unless (1) you are registered with Student Accessibility Services, or (2) you have documentation indicating that you are taking notes for SAS. **Anyone using a laptop must have a sticker from SAS on the outside of their laptop.** No other electronic devices, including but not limited to cellphones, may be used without my permission.

If you are on Academic Probation, you have until **Friday, January 19** to tell me, so we can work together to help you do well in this course.

The essays and final exam will be 1200-1400 words each, 1600 words maximum, on assigned topics. You will have some choice of topics.

Essays are due at the beginning of class.

Course readings and discussions must be central to your analysis in your essays. Work in which the relevant course readings and discussions are not central may be assigned a grade of zero.

I reserve the right to require an oral examination as part of any written piece of work. In that case, the oral examination counts for 75% of your grade on that assignment.

All assignments must be spell-checked. We will take 10% off your grade on the assignment for the kinds of mistakes that spell-check would have caught.

I give a two-day, no-questions-asked extension on the essays (note: **not the final exam**). For longer extensions, I may require a note from your Program Counsellor or a medical note.

All extensions on compassionate grounds must go through your Program Counsellor.

Normally, essays that arrive by the **scheduled** due date, with no extension, will be returned by the Thursday of the following week. Essays that arrive by the no-questions-asked extension will be returned in two weeks. Essays that arrive later will be returned when we get to them.

Late penalties on the essays (note: ***not the final exam***) are 2% per day, to a maximum of 15%. Saturday and Sunday count 2% each. Essays that come in after the first batch have been returned will be graded by higher standards.

My late penalties are minor, but my penalties for sloppy work are major. If you write your essay at the last minute, take an extra day or two to polish it. The 2-4% you lose will be less than the 10% or more that you will lose if you turn in an essay that has not been polished and proofread.

Late penalties on the final exam are 7% per day. Final exams will not be accepted after Wednesday, April 11 at 11 a.m.

College of Arts Standard Statement of Expectations

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. [See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.](#)

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day (**Friday, 09 March 2018**); two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. [The regulations and procedures for dropping courses are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.](#)

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance, and not later than the 40th Class Day. [For more information see the SAS web site.](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. [The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.](#)

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. [The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.](#)

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work – including lectures – cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Course Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

[H] = on Content page of CourseLink, under Handouts

Jan. 09: Introduction

Jan. 11: Nussbaum, ch. 1; Handouts 1 [H]

Jan. 16: [class cancelled]

Jan. 18: Nussbaum, ch. 2; Handouts 2 [H]

Jan. 23: Nussbaum, chs. 3-4

Jan. 25: Nussbaum, chs. 3-4, cont.

Jan. 30: Nussbaum, chs. 5-7

Feb. 01: Nussbaum, chs. 5-7, cont.

Feb. 06: Nussbaum, ch. 8, Conclusion, Postscript

Feb. 08: Nussbaum, ch. 8, Conclusion, Postscript, cont.

Feb. 13: Sen, Introduction; **Essay 1 due**

Feb. 15: Sen, ch. 1

Feb. 19-23: Reading Week

Feb. 27: Sen, chs. 4-5 (skip p. 123) & 7

Mar. 01: Sen, chs. 4-5 & 7, cont.

Mar. 06: Sen, chs. 8-10

Mar. 08: Sen, chs. 8-10, cont.

Mar. 13: Sen, chs. 11-12; **Essay 2 due**

Mar. 15: Sen, chs. 11-12, cont.

Mar. 20: Sen, chs. 13-14 (skip pp. 299-300, 309-317)

Mar. 22: Sen, chs. 13-14, cont.

Mar. 27: Sen, chs. 15-16

Mar. 29: Sen, chs. 15-16, cont.

Apr. 03: Sen, chs. 17-18

Apr. 05: Sen, chs. 17-18, cont.; wrap-up

Monday, April 09: Take-home final exam due by 11 a.m.