What, if any, duties do we have to aid ‘distant others’ — those living beyond our political borders? And are these duties of justice — incurred as the result of direct harms that global economic and political structures impose — or supererogatory duties of charity, generated by the fact of suffering? Social and political philosophers have given very mixed answers to the controversial questions surrounding global justice. While conventional wisdom holds that duties of assistance are owed first and foremost to co-nationals or fellow citizens, and to ‘particular’ others and loved ones, cosmopolitan thinkers point at that this cannot be sustained in the face of globalization. With ushers greater social, economic, and environmental interdependence, many of our usual assumptions about what duties we have to distant others are now questionable at best.

This course examines recent theorizing about the ethical and political challenges and implications of economic globalization. As the gap between rich and poor nations increases and the changes associated with globalization render states’ borders increasingly ineffectual, philosophers can arguably no longer confine their theories of justice to the safe space of single liberal democratic polities. Looming human and environmental crises underscore the need to look beyond one’s borders when thinking about the goals of equality and well-being or flourishing, and the duties we owe to others. We will read the main works in normative political philosophy reflecting global justice, with a particular focus on problems of poverty and global inequality. Key thinkers as John Rawls, Thomas Pogge, Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Charles Beitz, Onora O’Neill, Peter Singer, Iris Young, and Thomas Nagel.

Among the questions to be explored are: Should there be some global redistribution of resources – what some thinkers call an ‘ethic of global distributive justice’? Who are members of the ‘moral community’ in our globalized world fellow citizens, or all of humanity? Do we have equal duties to ‘distant others’ and to our compatriots, given the increasingly otiose character of national boundaries? What duties or responsibilities do the citizens of affluent states, and states themselves, have towards impoverished nations, given economic globalization and economic interdependence? What are these duties (if any) grounded in?: our participation in shared economic structures, the fact of grave human suffering, or a moral and/or legal commitment to human rights? And who are the putative recipients — the ‘subjects’ — of global justice?

Class expectations and format: This course is run as a seminar; it is not a lecture course. Generally I will set out some of the main themes at the outset of class, supplying necessary background and explaining the context of the texts. Soon thereafter, however, we will move to a discussion of the texts, connecting these with the important problems and issues in the global justice debate. During our classes, I will direct discussion where it seems necessary and appropriate, but my hope — and expectation — is that you will be fully engaged participants, helping to set the agenda for and direction of our conversation.
**Class presentation:** For one of the classes, you will be the ‘point person,’ setting up our discussion with a short presentation and thoughtful questions about the reading (circulated in advance), and facilitating discussion for the first half of that class.

**Final paper:** One final paper of about 20-25 pages. During the last class of the semester, you’ll be asked to say a bit about the focus of your essay.

**Course readings:**

The following **required books** are available from the bookstore for purchase (in most cases, both used and new); they are also easily available for purchase online:


+ course reader (2 parts), available in the Guelph University bookstore. *All readings listed below, except for the 3 course books, are included in the photocopied reader. Sorry it is so pricey!*

**Sept. 13: Framing the problem of global justice**

*Themes/questions:* what are the some of the negative consequences of globalization? Is poverty the problem, or inequality (economic and political inequality)? What are the ethical and political challenges raised by globalization and the increasing economic interconnectedness of states and people?

**Readings:**


**Sept. 20: The moral problem of distance**


**Sept. 27: Economic globalization and responsibility**


**Oct. 4: Liberal statist (anti-cosmopolitan) approaches: John Rawls**

**Readings:**


**Oct. 11 Thanksgiving, no class**

**Oct. 18: Liberal cosmopolitan approaches to global justice**

**Readings:**


Oct. 25: Human rights approaches to global justice, part 1: Thomas Pogge

Readings:
1. Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, chapters 1-4 and 6

Nov. 1: Human rights approaches to global justice, part 2: Pogge and critics

1. Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, chapters 7 & 8 (and if you have the 2nd edition of the book, also chapter 9).


Nov. 8: A capabilities approach to global justice: Amartya Sen

Readings:

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (1999), chapters 1-6

Nov. 15: Capabilities approach continued

Readings:

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (1999), chapters 7-9 and 12


Nov. 22: Martha Nussbaum’s moral cosmopolitanism
Readings:


Nov. 29: Critical perspectives/meta-critiques of global justice

Readings:


Dec. 2: Development Ethics

Readings:

