

## INTRODUCTORY UNDERGRADUATE CLASS: ETHICS, JUSTICE AND ACTIVISM

To what extent, if at all, are we responsible to injustice in our society and in the world in general? What is the appropriate response to injustice? These questions about the intersection of individual moral responsibility and social-political justice will be the guiding thread of this course. We will first introduce several approaches to fundamental questions in moral and political philosophy such as: ‘What is the right thing to do? What is a just society?’ We will then turn to several contemporary philosophical discussions of social issues and types of injustice such as economic inequality, racial and gendered oppression, privilege and ignorance. Following this we will consider what can be required for alleviating injustice, both in term of personal actions and political activism, leading to questions such as: ‘is there an obligation to donate money? Can disobedience or even violence be justified?’ We will conclude by discussing the relations between personal attitudes, morality and political activity, examining concepts such as integrity, responsibility, anger, hope and forgiveness.

### Course readings

1. Moral theory  
Julia Driver, “Utilitarianism”, “Kantian ethics”, “Virtue ethics”, “Feminist ethics”
2. Theories of justice  
Rawls, “Justice as fairness” (excerpts)  
Nozick, “Anarchy, State, and Utopia” (excerpts)  
G.A. Cohen, “Why Not Socialism?”
3. Varieties of injustice  
T.M. Scanlon “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality”  
Iris M. Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”  
Miranda Fricker, “Epistemic Injustice and the Role of Virtue in the Politics of Knowing”  
Charles W. Mills, “White Ignorance”  
Rachel McKinnon, “On the Nature of the Political Concept of Privilege”  
Ayelet Shachar, “The Puzzle of Birthright Citizenship”
4. Moral demandingness, integrity, respect  
Peter Singer, “Famine, affluence, and morality”  
Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints”  
Cheshire Calhoun, “Standing for Something”  
Bernard Boxill, “Self Respect and Protest”
5. Charity and Activism  
William MacAskill, “Hard trade-offs,” “Poverty versus climate change versus...”  
Michael Maniates, “Individualization: plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?”
6. Forms of resistance  
A. John Simmons, “Civil disobedience and the duty to obey the law”  
Iris M. Young, “Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy”  
Annette Baier, “Violent demonstrations”  
Virginia Held, “Terrorism, rights, and political goals”
7. Responsibility and injustice  
Hana Arendt, “Collective Responsibility”  
G.A. Cohen, “If You’re an Egalitarian, How Come You’re so Rich?”  
Iris M. Young, “Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model”  
Lisa Tessman, “On (not) Living the Good Life, Reflections on Oppression, Virtue and Flourishing”  
Carol Hay, “The Obligation to Resist Oppression”

8. Political emotions and attitudes

Samantha Vice, "How Do I Live in This Strange Place"

Charles W. Mills, "Vice's Vicious Virtues: The Supererogatory as Obligatory"

Katie Stockdale, "Losing Hope: Injustice and Moral Bitterness"

Martha Nussbaum, "How Love Matters for Justice"

Alice MacLachlan, "The Philosophical Controversy over Political Forgiveness"