Sample Syllabus – Intro to Political Theory: Justice, Legitimacy, and Politics

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2020

Summary: This module of study involves two 1 hour lectures every week for 10 weeks at an undergraduate level on topics in contemporary political theory.

Week 1: What is the Problem of Justice?

Lecture 1: Ancients (Reading: Plato, The Republic, Books 1–2.)

Lecture 2: Early Modern Thinkers (Reading: Hobbes, Leviathan Chapters 12–15, 17–21. Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Book III, Part II, "Of Justice and Injustice," and Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Section III, "Of Justice.")

Week 2: Theories of Justice

Lecture 1: Right-libertarianism (Reading: Nozick, Anarchy State and Utopia pp. 149–182.)

Lecture 2: Left-libertarianism (Reading: Michael Otsuka, Libertarianism without Inequality, Chapter 1.)

Week 3: Theories of Justice Cont'd

Lecture 1: Liberalism (Reading: Mill, On Liberty, Ch. 1. Arthur Ripstein, "Kant on Law and Justice", in The Blackwell Guide to Kant's Ethics.)

Lecture 2: Rule Utilitarianism (Reading: Robert Goodin, Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy, Sections II–V of Chapter 1.)

Week 4: Theories of Justice Cont'd

Lecture 1: Liberal-Egalitarianism (Reading: John Rawls, Theory of Justice, Chapter 2 and 3.)

Lecture 2: Luck-Egalitarinaism (Reading: Dworkin, Soveriegn Virtue Introduction and Chpater 2. Gerald Cohen "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice." Ethics 99 (1989): 906–44.)

Week 5: Theories of Justice Cont'd

Lecture 1: Relational Egalitarianism (Reading: Elizabeth Anderson "What is the point of equality?", Ethics, Vol. 109, No. 2 (January 1999), pp. 287-337.)

Lecture 2: Socialism (Reading: David Miller, "Socialism and the Market" Political Theory, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Nov., 1977), pp. 473-490. Gerald Cohen, 'Why Not Socialism?'.)

Week 6: Problem of Reasonable Disagreement and Legitimacy

Lecture 1: Problem of Reasonable Disagreement and Normative Stability (Reading: Charles Larmore, "What is Political Philosophy?" Journal of Moral Philosophy 10 (2013) 276–306. John Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement, Section 1.)

Lecture 2: Political Legitimacy and Authority (Reading: Thomas Christiano, The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and its Limits, Chapter 6. Fabienne Peter, Political Legitimacy, SEP https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/legitimacy/ Sections 1–2.)

Week 7: Political Liberalism

Lecture 1: Consensus Conception (Reading: John Rawls, Political Liberalism, Introduction to Paperback Edition.)

Lecture 2: Convergence Conception (Reading: Gerald Gaus and Kevin Vallier The roles of religious conviction in a publicly justified polity: The implications of convergence, asymmetry and political institutions, Philosophy Social Criticism 2009; 35; 51 2009.)

Week 8: Political Realism

Lecture 1: Non-Domination Conception (Reading: Bernard Williams, In the Beginning was the Deed, "Realism and Moral in Political Theory".)

Lecture 2: Restrained Domination Conception (Reading: Matt Sleat, Liberal Realism, Chapter 6 and 7.)

Week 9: Metanormative Issues

Lecture 1: Autonomy of Politics (Reading: William Galston, "Realism in political theory" in European Journal of Political Theory 9(4) 385–411.)

Lecture 2: Non-Autonomy (Reading: Jonathan Leader Maynard and Alex Worsnip "Is There a Distinctively Political Normativity?" Ethics 128 (July 2018): 756–787.)

Week 10: Methodological Issues

Lecture 1: Non-Ideal Theory (Reading: Andrea Sangiovanni, "Justice and the Priority of Politics to Morality", in The Journal of Political Philosophy: Volume 16, Number 2, 2008, pp. 137–164)

Lecture 2: Ideal Theory (Reading: David Estlund (2017) "Methodological moralism in political philosophy", Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, 20:3, 385-402.)