

**JUSTICE AND EQUALITY
HISTORY 102**

MW, 10:25-11:40
Fall Semester 2014
Meliora Hall 209

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the definition of justice? Is it possible for a country to achieve true equality among its citizens? What steps must we take to become more just and more egalitarian?

These questions have been posed in virtually all cultures and in virtually all historical periods by some of the world's most powerful minds. "Justice and Equality" will be an interdisciplinary exploration of different conceptions of justice and equality, with special attention to their relevance to our contemporary world. Beginning with Plato's Republic, students and faculty will address works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Franz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, Martin Luther King, and many others. This course is taught by faculty from multiple departments and disciplines and consists of small seminar discussions as well as group meetings of all students and faculty to discuss and debate justice and equality from varying perspectives. The other sections are REL 112, taught by Prof. Aaron Hughes, and PHIL 105, taught by Prof. Richard Dees.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has three main goals:

First, it will serve as an introduction to many of the ways in which past and contemporary thinkers have understood concepts of justice and equality and have attempted to put them into practice.

Second, in this course, you will encounter the approaches and methods of multiple disciplines. By the end of the semester, you will have an understanding of how to analyze primary sources (i.e., original texts) and connect them to larger interpretive frameworks.

Finally, this course will develop writing and critical thinking skills. In the writing component of our class, we will stress the idea that a good paper involves reading closely, developing ideas and arguments on controversial topics, and then conveying those ideas to the reader effectively. By engaging with a variety of perspectives, you will be challenged to draw and defend meaningful comparisons between different societies and moments in time and to relate knowledge of the past to contemporary issues.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Website: Please check our course's Blackboard site as I will post some course readings and details about upcoming assignments.

Communication: Please come speak with me if you have any questions or concerns about the class. I can be more understanding of your needs if you bring them to my attention before they become a serious problem. I am available during regular office hours without an appointment. If you cannot make posted hours, please contact me to schedule a better time. You may also speak to me by e-mail or phone.

Attendance: Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences will lower your grade for the course by ½ letter grade (e.g. from a B to a B-); each further absence will result in an additional ½ grade deduction. I reserve the right to withdraw students who have missed six or more meetings from the class. If you must miss class for an unavoidable reason, please let me know in advance.

Accommodations: I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring classroom accommodations should contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, 1-154 Dewey Hall, 275-9049. You can learn more about the accommodation process at: www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/undergraduate/disability.

Academic Honesty: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/. You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another.

Writing Help: We will discuss each writing assignment in detail during class. I am also always willing to talk about writing assignments individually: to help you plan an essay, work through the process, or go over a past paper. I strongly encourage all students to take advantage of this by coming to office hours. Another very useful resource is the U of R Writing and Speaking Center, which is dedicated to helping writers at all skill levels to improve. You can reach them at 273-3577, by stopping by Rush Rhees G-121, or by scheduling an appointment at <http://writing.rochester.edu/help/index.html>.

READINGS

The course texts (listed below) are available for purchase at the bookstore or online. We will also read several additional texts not on this list. These will be available on the Blackboard site and are marked accordingly in this syllabus.

Our discussions in class will focus on these readings. You should approach them critically; that is, by considering the different historical contexts in which each source was written, the social

identity (including gender) of both the author and the people s/he writes about, and the author's purposes in writing.

Required books

- Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 1992) ISBN 978-0872201361
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Penguin, 1968) ISBN 978-0140442014
- Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (Grove Press, 2004) ISBN 978-0802141323
- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Anchor, 1994) ISBN 978-0385474542
- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Dover, 1995) ISBN 978-0486284996
- Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence* (University of California, 2004) ISBN 978-0520244955
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Bantam, 1992) ISBN 978-0553214062

ASSIGNMENTS

The writing component of this course consists of daily short responses to readings (I/Q), two short papers (5-8 double-spaced pages), and one longer (7-10 double-spaced pages) paper.

Papers: These will each consist of an analysis of a text (or group of texts) that we have already read and discussed with an emphasis on developing an argument and demonstrating your ability to read, think, and write clearly. For each paper, I will post a list of possible topics in advance. All papers must be double-spaced in 12 point type, have 1 inch margins on all sides, and have page numbers. Make sure to proofread your papers yourself for grammatical and spelling errors. Don't rely on spell-check; it misses far too many common errors.

Reading responses: I/Q = idea and question. Each class you are required to bring in a detailed and informed question and an idea about the reading (a paragraph of moderate length for each is a good basic guideline). These will be the basis of our conversation that day. Your I/Q should be typed and double-spaced as I will collect them at the end of each class. Both the idea and the question should emerge from the particular text we are reading that day and should be able to be defended upon closer group examination.

Class Participation: All students are expected to attend all class meetings and to notify me in advance if you must miss a class. Excessive unexcused absences will affect your grade. You should come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them. Simple attendance is not enough; there is no such thing as passive participation. I expect and encourage a diversity of perspectives, as well as honest and respectful disagreement. If you are having difficulties speaking up in class, please come see me and we will develop some strategies together.

What does effective class participation look like? In terms of the class participation grade, the following rubric roughly outlines my expectations:

- A: regular class attendance, always fully prepared (= having completed *and* thought about the readings), regularly contributes positive, thoughtful comments
- B: regular class attendance, usually prepared, makes a sincere effort to contribute often
- C/D: several absences, inconsistent preparation, occasional contributions to discussion
- F: many absences, usually unprepared, vague or rare contributions

GRADING

Participation and IQ responses:	35%
Short papers	40% (20% each)
Final paper:	25%

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND READINGS

W Sept 3: Introductions: to the course, to each other.

M Sep 8: Case Study: Rwanda

Film:

- *In the Tall Grass* (in LeChase 163 at regular class time)

W Sep 10: Case Study: Rwanda

Readings:

- Jean Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak*, 3-29 (on BlackBoard)
- Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*, 10-16, 71-87, 157-164, 202-207 (on BlackBoard)

M Sep 15: The Biblical Tradition

Readings:

- Book of Job (available on BlackBoard, online, or print. Any version is acceptable.)

W Sep 17: Plenary 1: Justice and Equality in Greek Philosophy (Guest Speaker, Randall Curren, Department of Philosophy)

M Sep 22: Plato

Readings:

- *Republic*, Book I, all; Book II to 377d; Book III, 412b to end

W Sep 24: Plato

Readings:

- *Republic*, Book IV, all; Book V, to 474d

M Sep 29: Plato

Readings:

- *Republic*, Book VII, to 521c; Book VIII, all

W Oct 1: Medieval Islamic Attitudes

Readings:

- Alfarabi, "The Political Regime," in *Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (Cornell UP, 1963), 31-57 (**on BlackBoard**)

M Oct 6: Plenary 2: The Renaissance (speaker to be announced)

W Oct 8: Renaissance

Readings:

- *Giovanni and Lusanna*, chaps 1-3
- Christine de Pisan, *Book of the City of Ladies* (short excerpt) (**on BlackBoard**)

F Oct 10: First paper due

M Oct 13: Fall break (no class)

W Oct 15: Renaissance

Readings:

- *Giovanni and Lusanna*, chaps 4-5
- Laura Cereta, *Letters* (excerpts) (**on BlackBoard**)

M Oct 20: The Encounter in the Americas

Readings:

- Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short History of the Destruction of the Indies* (excerpts) (**on BlackBoard**)
- Michel de Montaigne, "On Cannibals" and "On Vehicles" (**on BlackBoard**)

W Oct 22: Plenary 3: Enlightenment (Speaker, Richard Dees, Department of Philosophy)

M Oct 27: Rousseau

Readings:

- *Social Contract*, Books I-II (pp 49-100)

W Oct 29: Rousseau

Readings:

- *Social Contract*, Book III, chapters 1-2, 4, 12-18; Book IV, chapters 1-3, 8 (pp. 101-10, 112-14, 136-57, 176-87)

M Nov 3: Enlightenment and Judaism

Readings:

- Moses Mendelssohn, Letter to Johann Caspar Lavater; Johann David Michaelis and Mendelssohn, Debate over Dohn (**on BlackBoard**)

W Nov 5: The Communist Challenge

Readings:

- *The Communist Manifesto* (all)

M Nov 10: Slavery and Abolition

Readings:

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (all)

W Nov 12: The Women's Rights Movement

Readings:

- Declaration of Sentiments from the Seneca Falls Convention (**on BlackBoard**)
- Douglas Linder, Account of the trial of Susan B. Anthony (**on BlackBoard**)
- Susan B Anthony, "Is it a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?" (**on BlackBoard**)
- Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman" (**on BlackBoard**)

F Nov 14: Second paper due

M Nov 17: Civil Rights

Readings:

- Martin Luther King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail (**on BlackBoard**)
- Martin Luther King, "I have a Dream" (**on BlackBoard**)

W Nov 19: Plenary 4: Twentieth-Century Africa (speaker to be announced)

M Nov 24: Colonization and Race

Readings:

- *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1-63.

W Nov 26: Thanksgiving break (no class)

M Dec 1: Colonization and Race

Readings:

- *Things Fall Apart*, Part One (pp. 3-125)

W Dec 3: Colonization and Race

Readings:

- *Things Fall Apart*, Part Two (pp. 129-209)

M Dec 8: TBA

W Dec 10: Conclusions

F Dec 12: Final paper due