American political philosophy underwent an enormous revival beginning in 1971 with the publication of John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice*, which articulated the philosophical foundations for liberalism in a new and vigorous manner. In 1993, in *Political Liberalism*, Rawls presented a major revision to his theory that dramatically affects the character of the liberalism he defends. Since the publication of Rawls’s first book, four sometimes-overlapping strands of thought have surfaced that have challenged the basic tenets of liberalism: communitarianism (of both the left and right), multiculturalism, feminism, and deliberative democracy. In the course of this semester, we will examine these movements, with an eye to the larger moral, political, and methodological issues that lie behind these debates.

**Required texts**

______, *Political Liberalism*, paper ed. (Columbia, 1995)

**Course requirements**

There are basically four requirements for this course:

1. **Participation.** This is a seminar. I will rarely, if ever, lecture. I expect each of you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to ask questions both of me and of the other participants in the seminar.

2. **Reaction papers.** Every week, I expect you to e-mail me a 1-2 pages on some aspect of the reading. You can write on anything you choose, big or small. I will not grade these papers and I do not expect them to be profound, but I do require that you turn them in. I want you to think about the readings and to articulate some thoughts about them. You can also use them to raise
questions you would like me or the seminar to address. Please turn them in by 9 a.m. every Tuesday.

3. Leading discussion. Once or twice during the term, I expect each of you to lead the class discussions. Your job is not to present a thesis about the work or to lecture the class, but to present questions and prompt discussion. (Don’t worry; I will always assist you.) You should try to talk to me before class, either by calling me at home or by scheduling a meeting with me. (When you lead discussion, you do not need to turn in a reaction paper.)

Class participation, reaction papers, and leading discussion together are worth 15 percent of your grade.

4. Paper. The major assignment for this course will be a term paper of 18-25 pages. You can write on any topic you wish as long as it concerns the issues of this course. Please consult both the bibliography and the list of suggested readings for each topic in the course for ideas.

The paper will be written in four stages:
(a) Before the end of October, you should schedule a meeting with me and present a 1-2 page proposal that outlines a thesis and the general outline of an argument. You might come talk to me soon about some ideas that you have, so I can help you explore them.
(b) A first draft of the paper is due November 16 at 4:00 p.m. I will read them, comment on them, and return them to you. Please turn in your proposal with the first draft. The first draft is worth 25 percent of your grade.
(c) Each student is also required to comment on a paper by another student in the class. So you will give a copy of your first draft to the person who has been designated to comment on your paper on November 16. Comments should be returned to the author by November 30, and you should also give me a copy of the comments. The comments are worth 10 percent of your grade.
(d) The final draft of the paper is due December 14 (though I would welcome them before that date and I should be able to offer extensions). Please turn in the first draft and both sets of comments with the completed paper. The final draft is worth 50 percent of your grade.

Schedule of readings

The schedule is (of course) tentative.

1. Sep 7. Introduction

2. Sept 14. Rawls’s Liberalism 1
   John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, sections 1-6, 10-14, 17, 22-29, 40 (pp 3-30, 47-78, 86-93, 109-60, 221-27)

   Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, lectures I-III (pp 1-129)
   Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, lectures IV, VI (pp 131-72, 212-54)
   Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John

5 . Oct 5. Rawls on international justice

6. Oct 12. MacIntyre’s Communitarianism 1
   Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, chs. 1-9 (1-120)

7. Oct 19. MacIntyre’s Communitarianism 2 (109)
   MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, chs. 14-18 (146-255)

   Jürgen Habermas, "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State," in
   Gutmann, *Multiculturalism*, 107-48
   K. Anthony Appiah, "Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social
   • Paper topic due

9. Nov 2. Women and Multiculturalism
   Susan Moller Okin, “Is Multicultaralism Bad for Women?” in Okin, *Is Multiculturalism
   Bad for Women?*, 7-24.
   Responses by Katha Pollitt, Will Kymlicka, Bonnie Honig, Azizah al-Hibri, Yael Tamir,
   Sander Gilman, Abdullah An-Na’im, Robert Post, Bhiku Parekh, Saskia Sassen, Homi
   Bhabha, Cass Sunstein, Joseph Raz, Janet Halley, and Martha Nussbaum, in Okin, *Is
   Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, 27-114.

    Catharine MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, chapters 5-8 (pp 81-170)

11. Nov. 16. • First drafts due (No class)

12. Nov 23. MacKinnon's Radical Feminism 2 (78)
  and Rehg, 3-34
  Jürgen Habermas, “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” in Bohman and Rehg, 35-66
  Joshua Cohen, “Deliberative Democracy and Democratic Legitimacy,” in Bohman and
  Rehg, 67-92.
  • Comments due

  David Estlund, “Beyond Fairness and Deliberation: The Epistemic Dimension of
  Democratic Authority,” in Bohman and Rehg, 173-204
  Jack Knight and James Johnson, “What Sort of Equality Does Deliberative Democracy
  Require?,” in Bohman and Rehg, 279-320
  Henry Richardson, “Democratic Intentions,” in Bohman and Rehg, 349-82

15. Dec 14. • Final draft of papers due, 5 p.m.
Annotated bibliography

The bibliography is intended to give us a sense of the works in the Anglo-American tradition in the past 30 years that are of some importance to political philosophy. The annotations are my own, and therefore contain my biases.


Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1987. [A best seller that was little understood by the people who bought it, this book is really Straussian form of Aristotelianism that attacks liberalism because it goes against nature.]


Dees, Richard. *Trust and Toleration*. London: Routledge, 2004. [OK, hopeless self-promotion, but if you want to know my general views on these issues, this is the best place.]


Dworkin’s book on constitutional law that contends that judges must make decisions in light of moral philosophy and not simply use a narrow reading of the law.]

Dworkin’s latest book on the foundations of equality.]

Dees, Richard. *Trust and Toleration*. London: Routledge, 2004. [OK, hopeless self-promotion, but if you want to know my general views on these issues, this is the best place.]


Dworkin’s book on constitutional law that contends that judges must make decisions in light of moral philosophy and not simply use a narrow reading of the law.]

Dworkin’s latest book on the foundations of equality.]


Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. [The classic book in which Gilligan finds a “different voice” of morality in the reasoning of women.]


MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988. [MacIntyre tries to make good on the promissory notes of *After Virtue*, but the account is unsatisfactory, both historically and conceptually.]

_____. *Dependent Rational Animals*. Chicago: Open Court, 1999. [MacIntyre’s latest, but not especially successful, attempt to think about the virtues for humans.]


Nagel, Thomas. *Equality and Partiality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. [Nagel’s often insightful and often confused foray into political thought, with special emphasis on the extent to which the demands of the less fortunate can have on the wealthy.]

Neuhaus, Richard John. *The Naked Public Square*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984. [Now classic statement of the view that public life in America has suffered because it has been stripped of religious language.]


Sandel, Michael. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. [A now-classic critique of *A Theory of Justice* from a communitarian point of view, it is also highly flawed.]

_____. *Democracy’s Discontent*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. [Sandel attempts to spell out his positive view of political philosophy with an account of the development of American democracy; the book is historically dubious and theoretically unsatisfying.]


Walzer, Michael. *Spheres of Justice*. New York: Basic Books 1983. [Walzer defends a view of justice in which each sphere of human life has its own rules. Widely attacked for its relativist implications, it contains many deep insights because it pays attention to the demands of particular practices.]

_____. *On Toleration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. [Walzer’s latest, it adds little new to his view, but he does provide a useful typology of the different degrees of toleration.]

[A feminist argument that justice requires that each group has a voice in the political decisions that affect it.]