



# Social Justice

**GVPT 449A**  
Fall 2022

## Description

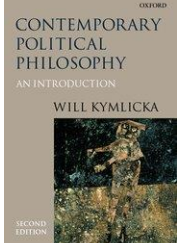
Despite the constant appeal to facts and statistics that politicians make, the root of much political disagreement over law and policy turns on differing conceptions of justice. The Question, “what does justice demand” has been asked ever since humans began cooperating with each other in order to survive, and will continue to be asked. It is not that the question cannot be answered, rather, it is that the people of every generation must answer the question for themselves. Primitive nomads would abandon their sick and old to die alone, because it was too burdensome to care for them. Today, our society spends billions of dollars to keep the sick and old alive for a few more days. Debates surrounding practices like these are about what society owes individuals, and what individuals owe society, and so comprise the sphere of *social justice* (as opposed to criminal justice). For the most part, we will be focusing on the obligations that are enforced by the state.

GVPT 449A is a survey of the major theories of social justice in the Anglo-American tradition since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The course will begin by examining Utilitarianism, a theory that has dominated political and economic thinking since the turn of Century. We will then move on to examine John Rawls' critique of utilitarianism, and his alternative, justice as fairness. Rawls revolutionized the field of political theory and philosophy, and in a way, has placed equality at its center. Rawls' influence is not based on unanimous agreement with his theory, but instead because of the pervasive debate his theory has stimulated. From there, we will examine several competing conceptions of justice that aim either to reform liberal democracy, or replace it. Finally, we examine how the traditional practice of liberal democracy has effected historically marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, and members of LGBTQ+ community.

## Learning Outcomes and Goals

- To learn the ideas and arguments of the major contemporary conceptions of justice.
- To critically assess these conceptions of justice and to apply them to the practice of politics.
- To practice working collaboratively, and communicating your perspective on the material.

## Required Resources

	<p>Will Kymlicka, <i>Contemporary Political Philosophy, An Introduction</i> ISBN: 9780198782742</p> <p>And other writings made available through ELMS</p>
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**Dr Sujith Kumar**

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### Class Meetings

Mondays  
3:15 – 6:00 PM  
Tydings 1101

Office Hours  
Mon./Thurs.  
Noon – 1PM  
And by appointment

### Teaching Assistant

Heather Ward  
[hward123@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:hward123@terpmail.umd.edu)

Office Hours

## Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- [Academic integrity](#)
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- [Grades and appeals](#)
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

- Students are required to attend all class meetings with the reading assignment completed, which will range from 40 – 80 pages per week.
- Students will engage with lectures, discussions and activities.
- Students are required to participate in weekly on-line discussions.
- Students will be assessed by 5 quizzes throughout the semester, with the lowest score being dropped
- The two major assessments will be a midterm essay, and final essay.

## Course-Specific Policies

All assignments and discussions must be turned in on time; only medical or legal emergencies will excuse late submissions. **If a religious commitment will prevent you turning in an assignment on times, you must negotiate alternative arrangements in advance.** Remember: discussion sections are mandatory. Every student is granted one unexcused absence for the Semester. After that, further unexcused absences may impinge upon your final grade for the course.

**The lateness penalty:** 10% of assignment grade after 1 day late, 5% after second day, 2% after third day, and then 1% of assignment grade for each additional day.

**Communication Policy:** Your TA is the first point of contact for course-related queries. They will also be keeping weekly office hours. Students may also contact me directly for whatever reason. Your TAs will be keeping TBD regular office hours for online chatting or Zooming. Professor Kumar will meet with any student by appointment. For all email communications, please allow 24 hours for a reply, and up to 48 hours over the weekend.

## Policy on Excused Absences related to COVID-19

In light of the COVID-19 epidemic, self-certified notes will serve as documentation for COVID-19 related absences or missed course expectations. This means that students do not need a note signed by a doctor or other health professional for COVID-19 related absences.

In the event that students cannot complete the regular course assessments due to COVID-19 related absences, faculty can suggest alternative assignments for students to make up missing work and complete the course. According to university policy, these alternative assignments are permitted and cannot be the basis for an Arbitrary and Capricious grading claim.

***If I fall ill or am travelling, then lectures or Discussion Sections will be conducted on Zoom.***

## Get Some Help!

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [tutoring.umd.edu](http://tutoring.umd.edu) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [ter.ps/writing](http://ter.ps/writing) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (see [go.umd.edu/assistance](http://go.umd.edu/assistance)), and if you just need someone to talk to, visit [counseling.umd.edu](http://counseling.umd.edu) or [one of the many other resources on campus](#).



Most services free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help**... all you have to do is ask for it.

## Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect your performance in this course, please visit [go.umd.edu/basic-needs](http://go.umd.edu/basic-needs) for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

## Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [trans.umd.edu](http://trans.umd.edu) to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

## Grades

Students will be assessed using the following assignments:

Learning Assessments	Points Each	Category Weight
Participation	15	10%
Online Discussion	100	25%
Quizzes	100	25%
Essay 1	100	15%
Essay 2	100	25%

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

## PROVISIONAL Class Schedule

<u>Week 1</u> Aug. 29	<p><b>Utilitarianism</b> <b>Introductory Class</b></p> <p>Utilitarianism Chapters I, II (27)</p> <p>Chapter V (29)</p>
Sept. 5	<b>Labor Day – No class</b>
<u>Week 2</u>	<p><b>Utilitarianism Continued</b></p> <p>1. Introduction pp. 1 – 9 (9)</p> <p>2. Utilitarianism pp. 10 - 32 (22) pp. 32 - 52</p>
Sept. 12	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 3</u>	<p><b>Liberal Equality</b></p> <p>3. Liberal Equality pp. 53 – 75 (23)</p> <p>3. Liberal Equality, pp. 75 – 101 (26)</p>
Sept. 19	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 4</u>	<p><b>Egalitarianism</b></p> <p>Ronald Dworkin, “What is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare” <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Summer, 1981), pp. 185-196, 228 - 246 (29)</p> <p>Ronald Dworkin, “What is Equality? Part 2: Equality of Resources” <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn, 1981), pp. 284 - 314 (30)</p>
Sept. 26	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 5</u>	<p><b>Communitarianism</b></p> <p>6. Communitarianism pp. 208 – 228, (20)</p>

	244 – 261, 270 – 283 (30)
Oct. 3	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 6</u>	<b>More Communitarianism???</b> Charles Taylor, Chapter 7: Atomism, <i>Philosophy and the Human Science</i> (24)
	Beitz, Charles R. “Justice and International Relations.” <i>Philosophy &amp; Public Affairs</i> , vol. 4, no. 4, 1975, pp. 360–389. JSTOR, <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265079">www.jstor.org/stable/2265079</a> . Accessed 20 Jan. 2021. (19)
Oct. 10	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 7</u>	<b>Political Liberalism</b> 6. Communitarianism pp. 228 – 244 (16)
	John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical, <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> , Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1985), pp. 223-251. (28)
Oct. 17	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 8</u>	<b>Libertarianism</b> 4. Libertarianism pp. 102 – 138 (36)
	pp. 138 – 160 (22)
Oct. 24	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 9</u>	<b>Perfectionism</b> Richard Arneson, “Perfectionism and Politics”, <i>Ethics</i> , Vol. 111, No. 1 (Oct., 2000), pp. 37-63. (26)
	Joseph Raz, Chapter 5: Neutral Political Concern, <i>Morality of Freedom</i> (24)
Oct. 31	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week10</u>	<b>Multiculturalism</b> 8. Multiculturalism pp. 327 – 347 (20)
	pp. 348 – 370 (22)
Nov. 7	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 12</u>	<b>Racial Justice</b> TBD
Nov. 14	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 13</u>	<b>Citizenship Theory</b> 7. Citizenship Theory pp. 284 – 302 (18)

	pp. 302 – 319 (17)
Nov. 21	<b>Class Meeting</b>
Nov. 23	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
<u>Week 14</u>	<b>Marxism</b> pp. 166 – 195 (29)  pp. 195 – 201 (6) <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (online)
Nov. 28	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 15</u>	<b>Feminism</b> pp. 377 – 398 (21)  pp. 398 – 420 (22)
Dec. 5	<b>Class Meeting</b>
<u>Week 16</u>	<b>LBTGQ</b> TBD
Dec 12	<b>Class Meeting</b>
Dec. 14	<b>Final Exams Begin</b>