

THEORIES OF JUSTICE

University of Bayreuth
Summer Semester 2012/13
Thursdays, once per week

Target group: BA2, BA4

Course overview

This is a moral philosophy course that focuses on one particular subject area: theories of distributive justice. Arguably, the dominant such contemporary theory is John Rawls' justice as fairness. However, Rawls' theory was, in part, a response to utilitarianism and was influenced by contractualism, whereas the critical examination of justice as fairness gave rise to a whole range alternative accounts of justice (communitarianism, perfectionism, libertarianism etc.). The course discusses these theories one by one.

Hence, we will begin with utilitarianism and contractualism, before moving on to a longer treatment of Rawls' theory as it was expressed in his book *A Theory of Justice*. The rest of the course will be spent on critical responses: libertarianism (Nozick), egalitarianism (Dworkin), communitarianism (Sandel), desert, feminism. We will end the course with a discussion of the empirical study of justice.

Course requirements and evaluation

The course can be taken either for 2 ungraded credits, or for 6 graded credits. In the former case, students will be required to give a presentation that will be based on a short position paper (2-3 pages long, 12 points, Times New Roman, double spaced, default margins). In the latter case, in addition to the presentation and the position paper, students will be required to submit a final paper for the course (10-20 pages long, formal requirements as above). In each case, attendance as well as active participation in seminars are required. The final grade will be composed of three parts: seminar participation and attendance (15%), seminar presentation and position paper (25%), final paper (60%).

Registration and course materials

Registration for the course will be done using Google Forms.