

POSC 2801: Justice and Power

Professor Darrell Dobbs
Office Hours: by appointment
Office: 421 Wehr Physics

Marquette University, Fall Term 2022
Class Times: 9:30-10:45; 11:00-12:15 T TH
Classroom: Olin Engineering 272

Course Rationale

Think of justice, power, and authority as the ABCs of politics. Without a firm grip on these elementary principles, you can no more expect to discern the true significance of political events than an illiterate can expect to read *Hamlet*. Yet many journalists, academics, and government officials believe that justice is nothing more than a social construct, that power is measured not by the good it can achieve but merely by its forcefulness, and that authority exists only when someone with whom *they* agree possesses power. Our task in this introductory course in political philosophy is to question these beliefs and to explore an alternative possibility: viz., that there exists an objective, natural and rationally accessible standard in accordance with which we may learn to distinguish justice and genuine authority from injustice and brute force.

Policies, Expectations, and Grading

You are expected to attend every meeting of this class, to arrive on time and to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. As you prepare for class, remember that wisdom awaits the diligent seeker. So, read carefully! Grades will be based on: a) numerous unscheduled quizzes given at the beginning of class to encourage your preparation for class discussion (80 points); b) your classroom citizenship, including your punctuality and attendance, your contribution to class discussion, and your general deportment (10 points); and c) a comprehensive final essay or exam (10 points). There are no makeup quizzes without a doctor's note. Absences are excusable by emailed request, time-stamped prior to class time on the day of your absence. Count on spending *an average* of five hours per week outside of class preparing for discussion and preparing your assignments.

Class Schedule

I. Introductions

Week 1 Introductions and discussion of course goals, our syllabus, and ourselves

II. Pedagogical Groundwork

Week 2 Learning to Discuss Questions of Justice, Equality, and Liberty
Week 3 Fr. Guido, *5-Minute University* & William Burroughs, *The Discipline of DE*;
Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*
Week 4 Plato, *Meno* 80d-86c; Plato, *Republic* 514a1-519b6

III. The Fundamental Principles of Justice: Natural Right and Natural Law

Weeks 5-7 Plato, *Republic* 327a1-331d7; 331d8-336a8; 336a9-343a2; 343a3-347e7;
Plato, *Republic* 348a1-350d5; 350d6-354c3
Week 8 Review; Fall Break
Weeks 9-10 Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Law* Q. 91 a.2; Q.95. a.1; Q.95 a.2
Week 10-12 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* chs.1-2; chs.3-4; ch.5; chs.9 & 15; chs.17-19

IV. Justice & Power in Political Practice

Weeks 13-15 Abraham Lincoln, *Lyceum Address*, *Temperance Address*;
Abraham Lincoln, *On the Kansas-Nebraska Act*; *First Inaugural Address* & *Gettysburg Address*;
Abraham Lincoln, *Second Inaugural Address*; Review