

Equality in Political Philosophy
2020-21
The Buchmann Faculty of Law
Tel Aviv University

Instructor:

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Office hours: Mondays, 10:00-11:30 (via Zoom).

Link to Zoom meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89197880941?pwd=RUNIZG5ndEdHUTBoaXkwd09ocTk5QT09>

Course Description and Objectives:

Egalitarianism—the view that justice requires equality, that equality is good, that we should strive to achieve greater equality—has been a central part of the political landscape in modern times. Egalitarianism has also been described as the most controversial of the central political ideals. In this seminar, we will try to better understand what the controversy is about. Is equality a goal worth pursuing? If so, what kind of equality, and among whom? Are all human beings equal? What makes discriminations wrong? Must every citizen have an equal vote? Throughout the year, we will encounter some thought-provoking answers philosophers offer to these thorny questions.

This is a seminar in political philosophy for Law students. It does not require prior knowledge of philosophy, but it does require willingness to engage with challenging texts that employ methodologies that may not be familiar to you. As we go along, we will highlight certain strategies that philosophers use to motivate the claims they make. Hopefully, these strategies will enrich your intellectual toolkit.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Use contemporary philosophical terminology to distinguish between various egalitarian positions and to articulate the difference between egalitarianism and competing theories of justice
- 2) Evaluate arguments for and against egalitarianism
- 3) Apply egalitarian and non-egalitarian perspectives to current social debates
- 4) Incorporate philosophical methodology into future scholarship

Course website: the course has a Moodle website, where you can find all the reading material, as well as the course's PowerPoint presentations.

Zoom: Due to COVID-19, all our meetings will be online. A link to Zoom can be found above and in the Moodle website.

Grade:

Seminar paper: 65%

Class participation: 10%

Reading responses: 16%

In-class presentation: 9%

Seminar paper: For some of you, this may be your first seminar paper. We will discuss in class how seminar papers differ from other papers you have written, and some strategies for choosing a topic, finding relevant literature, developing an argument, and writing a paper. A draft of your paper should be submitted by September 5. The final paper is due by September 30, 2021.

Class participation: Come to each meeting after you have read the assigned text and reflected on it. During class, I want to hear what's on your mind. Ask questions, reply to questions, raise objections, share a thought. I know that this does not come easy to some students, so there is no pressure to speak up, only encouragement.

Reading responses: You are asked to write 8 response papers during the academic year, each up to 2-pages long (double-space, font 12). Each response paper should be emailed to me by Saturday (23:59) before class. It should offer your reflection on the text assigned for that class. Don't just summarize a text, but also offer a critical perspective on it. Each paper will get either 0, 1 or 2 points, up to a total of 16 points. You may submit more than 8 papers, in which case the top 8 papers will count toward your final grade.

In-class presentation: You are asked to do this once throughout the academic year. 10-15 minutes. In your presentation, make sure to offer a critical perspective on the text, and raise some questions for the group to discuss. In the session in which there is a presentation, we will start the session with the presentation. I will distribute a sign-up sheet after the first class.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Class Schedule and Readings

Fall:

Date	Text	Theme
18.10.2020	Introduction. No assigned reading.	<p>Is equality valuable?</p> <p>Is it a worthy goal for us to pursue?</p>
25.10.2020	Frankfurt, Harry. 1987. "Equality as a Moral Ideal," <i>Ethics</i> 98(1): 21–43.	
1.11.2020	<p><i>Required:</i></p> <p>Parfit, Derek. 1997. "Equality and Priority," <i>Ratio</i> 10(3): 202–21.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <p>Nagel, Thomas. 1979. "Equality," in <i>Mortal Questions</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 106–27.</p>	
8.11.2020	Westen, Peter. 1982. "The Empty Idea of Equality." <i>Harvard Law Review</i> 95(3): 537-96.	
15.11.2020	Nozick, Robert. 1974. <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> (New York: Basic Books), 149–164.	
22.11.2020	Cohen, Gerry. A. 1977. "Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty." <i>Erkenntnis</i> 11(1): 5-23.	
29.11.2020	Casal, Paula. 2007. "Why Sufficiency Is Not Enough." <i>Ethics</i> 117(2): 296-326.	
6.12.2020	Temkin, Larry. 2002. "Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection," in Clayton and Williams (eds.), <i>The Ideal of Equality</i> (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 126-161.	
13.12.2020 <i>Hannukah</i>	No class	

20.12.2020	Sen, Amartya. 1979. "Equality of What?" The Tanner Lecture on Human Values. (Available online)	What, exactly, should be equal?
27.12.2020	Dworkin, Ronald. 1981. "What Is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 10(3): 185-246.	
3.1.2021	Dworkin, Ronald. 1981. "What Is Equality? Part 2: Equality of Resources." <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 10(4): 283-345.	
10.1.2021	Anderson, Elizabeth. 1999. "What Is the Point of Equality?" <i>Ethics</i> 109(2): 287-337.	
17.1.2021	Phillips, Anne. 2004. "Defending Equality of Outcome." <i>Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 12: 1-19.	

Spring:

Date	Text	Theme
7.3.2021	Williams, Bernard. 1973. "The Idea of Equality." In <i>Problems of the Self</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 230-49.	Are all human beings equal?
14.3.2021	Carter, Ian. 2011. "Respect and the Basis of Equality," <i>Ethics</i> 121 (3): 538-71.	
21.3.2021	Steinhoff, Uwe. 2015. "Against Equal Respect and Concern, Equal Rights, and Egalitarian Impartiality." In Uwe Steinhoff (ed.), <i>Do All Persons Have Equal Moral Worth? On 'Basic Equality' and Equal Respect and Concern</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 142-72.	
24.3.2021	Part 1: Nussbaum, Martha C. 2015. "Political Equality." In Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Gideon Rosen and Seana Shiffrin (eds.), <i>The Norton Introduction to Philosophy</i> (New York: Norton & Company), 1037-45. Part 2: Discussion of strategies for writing seminar papers	
<i>Passover</i>	No classes	

11.4.2021	Hellman, Deborah. 2013. "Equality and Unconstitutional Discrimination." In <i>Philosophical Foundations of Discrimination Law</i> , Deborah Hellman and Sophia Moreau (eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 51-70.	Equality and discrimination
18.4.2021	Moreau, Sophia. 2010. "What Is Discrimination?" <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 38(2): 143-79.	
25.4.2021	Sunstein, Cass R. 1994. "The Anticaste Principle." <i>Michigan Law Review</i> 92(8): 2410-455.	
2.5.2021	Holmes, Elisa. 2005. "Anti-Discrimination Rights without Equality." <i>The Modern Law Review</i> 68(2): 175-94.	
9.5.2021	Réaume, Denise. 2013. "Dignity, Equality, and Comparison." In Deborah Hellman and Sophia Moreau (eds.), <i>Philosophical Foundations of Discrimination Law</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 7-27.	
16.5.2021	No class <i>Shavuot</i>	
23.5.2021	Mill, John Stuart, <i>Considerations on Representative Government</i> , Ch. 8	Equality and Democracy
30.5.2021	Christiano, Thomas. 2004. "The Authority of Democracy." <i>Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 12: 266-290.	
6.6.2021	Arneson, Richard J. 2009. "The Supposed Right to a Democratic Say." In Thomas Christiano and John Christman (eds.), <i>Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy</i> (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), 197-212.	
13.6.2021	Satz, Debra. 2007. "Equality, Adequacy, and Education for Citizenship." <i>Ethics</i> 117(4): 623-48.	
5.9.2021	First draft of your seminar paper due	
30.9.2021	Seminar paper due	