

Deliberative Justice: the theory and practice of good citizenship

Fall Semester 2021

Instructor

Dr. Sergio Imparato

Course Description

The course is an introduction to the theory, methods and practice of deliberative moral reasoning. Students will learn how to effectively identify and analyze ethical dilemmas relevant to their communities, how to constructively engage in civic debates, and how to present persuasive moral arguments in public settings. Class meetings feature presentations that address the students' topics of interest, discussions on methods of moral deliberation, and assignments that bolster written and oral communication. Emphasis will be placed on the development of the written and rhetorical skills needed to advance moral arguments of a political nature. Examples include issues of social, political, and economic inequalities, environment, healthcare and bio-medical issues, migration, civic membership, and issues of privacy, technology, and dignity of work.

Class meeting time

Thursdays 5:10 PM-7:10 PM (EST)

Section times

TBA

Technical Assistance

DCE Academic Technology Support

Time Sensitive: (617) 998-8571

Non-Time Sensitive: academictechnology@dce.harvard.edu

Web-Conference Info:

<https://www.extension.harvard.edu/academics/courses/types-courses/web-conference-course-guidelines>Links to an external site.

Course requirements

IMPORTANT LINKS

[Final Paper Prompts](#)

[Final Paper Guidelines, Structure, Grading Rubric and Annotated Samples](#)

[Class Participation Expectations](#)

All assignments are due on the course dropbox.

(Please note: all times are in Eastern Standard Time)

10% - Discussion Forum Participation

30% - Section Participation

15% - 3 Short Moral Arguments

15% - Midterm Essay

30% - Final Essay

Assignment	Description	Deadline	Percentage of course grade
Discussion Forum Participation	The discussion forum is a venue to practice writing moral arguments in preparation for the essays. Students may reply to a discussion prompt directly or respond to an argument that another student has	Every other Sunday starting on the first Sunday of the month.	10%

	made in the discussion thread. Discussion prompts are graded upon completion. The discussion prompts minimum word count is 200/250 words.		
Section Participation	Regular attendance and engaged participation in section.		30%
3 Short Moral Arguments	Three 400-words arguments on moral dilemmas assigned by the instructor.	Moral Argument 1 - September 12 Moral Argument 2 - October 10 Moral Argument 3 - November 21	15%
Midterm Essay	The Midterm essay is a philosophical paper (1,000 word-limit) on a choice of assigned topics, offering a clear, persuasive argument on an ethical question.	November 14	15%
Final Essay	Two 1000-word philosophical papers on a prompt to be assigned by the instructor.	December 12	30%

Grading policies

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. Extensions can only be granted for the most compelling reasons (e.g. a family emergency, religious

exemptions, or a documented major illness). A heavy workload is not sufficient. Late submissions are penalized with the subtraction of a quarter of a grade for each day a paper is late (from A to A-; from A- to B+ etc.) and a point for each day a discussion prompt is late.

Please note that the grades assigned by the teaching staff are final. The teaching staff is not allowed to implement grade changes or to entertain discussions or negotiations on grades with students. The teaching staff is available to provide feedback on students' assignments; however, students must be careful not to harass the teaching staff about their grades.

As per the student expectations set by the Extension School, "repeatedly calling or e-mailing about a grade, haggling over a few points on an exam, or telling an instructor that a certain grade is needed can be considered harassment, which may result in a case being brought before the Administrative Board for possible disciplinary action." (<https://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/expectations>Links to an external site.)

Please, make sure to review the grading policies set by Harvard Extension School, available here: <https://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/exams-grades-transcripts/grades>Links to an external site..

And the student expectations policies available

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Grading Scheme

The class adopts the following grading scheme:

POINTS GRADE HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL RUBRIC

93-100	A	"Earned by work whose superior quality indicates a full mastery of the subject, and in the case of A, work of extraordinary distinction."
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	"Earned by work that indicates a strong comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course materials, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities."
83-86	B	
80-82	B-	

77-79	C+	“Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course materials, and that indicates that the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.”
73-76	C	
70-72	C-	
67-69	D+	“Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit.”
63-66	D	
60-62	D-	
0-59	E	“Earned by work that is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit. This grade may also be assigned to students who do not submit required work in courses from which they have not officially withdrawn by the withdrawal deadline. Zero or E grades are assigned to students for missing work. These grades are included in the calculation of the final grade.”

Assignment Extension policy

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. Extensions will be granted only for the most compelling reasons (e.g. a family emergency, religious exemptions, or a documented major illness). A heavy workload is not sufficient.

Collaboration policy

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers or teaching staff, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. Feedback on your writing (such as feedback on drafts from

peers or instructors) is not permitted before a submission is due. If you have any doubts about the collaboration policy, please inquire with the teaching staff.

Academic integrity

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity[Links to an external site.](#)) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism[Links to an external site.](#)), where you will find links to the Harvard Guide to Using Sources and two free online 15-minute tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

Accessible Education Policies

The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Accessibility Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit <https://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility>[Links to an external site.](#) for more information.

Course Schedule

The course schedule will also be available in the modules section.

There you can find the links to all the course readings and assignments.

1. Introduction to the course – Ethics, Democracy and the Polis (September 2)

Readings:

- Plato, *The Republic*, book 1
- Plato, *The Apology*
- Plato, *The Republic*, book 7 (excerpts)
- Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Moral Disagreement in a Democracy*, *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 12:1, 1995: pp. 87-110.
- Donald Searing et. Al, *Public Discussion in the Deliberative System: Does It Make Better Citizens?*, *British Journal of Political Science*, 37:4, 2007: pp. 587-618 [Optional]

2. Plato, On Justice and the Education of Guardians

(September 9)

Readings:

- Plato, *The Republic*, book 2
- Plato, *The Republic*, book 3 (excerpts)

3. Civil rights and social justice (I): Should We Abolish or Defund the Police?

(September 16)

Readings:

- Jack Herrera, *The Defunding Debate*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, Summer 2020.
- David Roth, “*Twilight of the Cop Consensus*”, *The New Republic*, June 11, 2020.
- Mariame Kaba, “*Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police*”, *The New York Times*, June 12, 2020.
- Matthew Yglesias, “*The Case for Hiring More Police Officers*”, *Vox*, February 13, 2020.
- Eric Levitz, “*Defunding the Police is Not Nearly Enough*”, *New York Magazine*, June 12, 2020.
- Charles Ramsey and Laurie Robinson, “*The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Police Reforming*”, 2015.

4. Civil rights and social justice (II): What Should We Do with Confederate Monuments?

(September 23)

Readings:

- Phillip Morris, “As Monuments Fall, How Does the World Reckon with a Racist Past?”, National Geographic, June 29, 2020.
- “Shall the Rebel Barbarities be Remembered or Forgotten”, The New York Times, August 16, 1865.
- Sarah Mervosh, Simon Romero and Lucy Tompkins, “Reconsidering the Past, One Statue at a Time”, The New York Times, June 17, 2020.
- [Tyler Zimmer, “Tear Down the Confederates’ Symbols”, Jacobin, August 16, 2017](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- Kevin D. Williamson, “Let it Be”, The National Review, August 17, 2017.
- Gracy Olmstead, “There Are Good Reasons to Consider Removing Confederate Memorials from Our Public Squares”, The Federalist, August 17, 2017.
- Yasmeen Serhan, “The Case for a Statue of Limitations”, The Atlantic, June 25, 2020.

5. Pandemic Ethics I: on Liberty and Equality During a Global Health Crisis

(September 30)

Readings:

- Mona Loutfy, *Changing the Rules in Times of Crisis: Do Desperate Times Allow Desperate Measures?*, Ama Journal of Ethics, April 2006.
- Julia Marcus, “The Dudes Who Don’t Wear Masks”, The Atlantic, June 23, 2020.
- Jennifer Brown, Briefing Paper for the House of Commons Library: “Coronavirus, the Lockdown Laws”, July 24, 2020.
- Pandemics: The Ethics of Mandatory and Voluntary Interventions, The Hastings Center Bioethics Briefing, 2020.

6. Kant, what is liberty?

(October 7)

Readings:

- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Sections 1 and 2

7. Kant, on moral duty

(October 14)

Readings:

- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section 3
- Immanuel Kant, *On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy*

8. Review Session and Midterm Exam

(October 21)

9. Pandemic Ethics II: on Vaccines and Scientific Research

(October 28)

Readings:

- World Health Organization, *Ethical Standards for Research During Public Health Emergencies: Distilling Existing Guidance to Support COVID-19*, R&D 2020: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/331507> (Links to an external site.)
- Jon Cohen, *Infect Volunteers to Speed a Coronavirus Vaccine?* *Science* 368 (6486): 16, April 3, 2020: <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6486/16.abstract> (Links to an external site.)
- Nir Eyal, Marc Lipsitch, and Peter G. Smith, *Human Challenge Studies to Accelerate Coronavirus Vaccine Licensure*, *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, March 31 2020: <https://academic.oup.com/jid/advance-article/doi/10.1093/infdis/jiaa152/5814216> (Links to an external site.)

- Nicole Lurie, Melanie Saville, Richard Hatchett, and Jane Halton. Developing Covid-19 Vaccines at Pandemic Speed. *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 30, 2020: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2005630> (Links to an external site.)

10. On Technology and the Future of Democracy (November 4)

Readings:

- Thomas Friedman “Social media: destroyer or creator?” *New York Times*, Feb. 3, 2016.
- Simina Mistreanu, [“Life Inside China’s Social Credit Laboratory,”](#) (Links to an external site.) *Foreign Policy*, April 3, 2018.
- Adam Greenfield, [“China’s Dystopian Tech Could Be Contagious,”](#) (Links to an external site.) *The Atlantic*, Feb. 14, 2018.
- Christina Larson, “Who needs democracy when you have data?,” *MIT Technology Review*, Sept/Oct. 2018.
- Yuval Noah Harari, “Why Technology Favors Tyranny,” *The Atlantic*, October 2018.

11. On Reparations and systemic injustice (November 11)

Readings:

TBA

12. Aristotle, on Civic Virtue and Good Citizenship (November 18)

Readings:

- [Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book I \(ch. 1-2\); Book III \(ch. 1-13\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II \(ch. 1-3\), X \(ch. 1-3\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

-- No class on November 25, in observance of Thanksgiving recess --

13. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent and the Limits of Liberalism*
(December 2)

Readings:

- Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, Harvard University Press, 1998 (excerpts).
- Michael Sandel, "Morality and the Liberal Ideal", in M. Sandel eds. *Public Philosophy: essays on Morality and Politics*, Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Michael Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self", in M. Sandel eds. *Public Philosophy: essays on Morality and Politics*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

14. Class Townhall Meeting
(December 9)