

Politics 100-1: Is Global Justice Possible?

Spring 2003, M-W, 5-6:45, Merrill 2

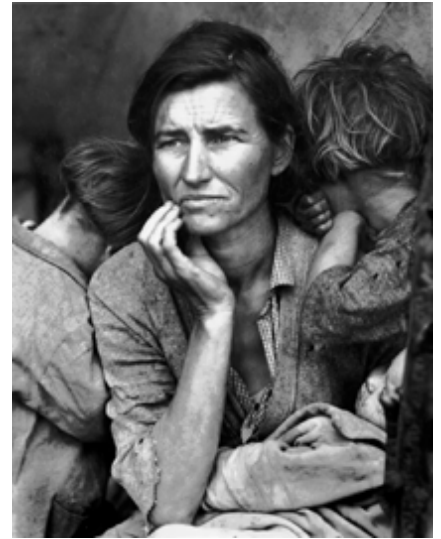
Instructor: Ronnie Lipschutz

Office hours: Monday, 2-3, Tuesday, 2-3, or by appt.

Office: 260 Stevenson College

Phone: 459-3275

e-mail: rlipsch@cats.ucsc.edu



The course web site is at: <http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/pol100/Pol100.pdf>

In October, 1999, the world's population passed six billion. Of those, about 80% are considered to be "poor," that is, they have an annual income of less than \$500-1,000 per year. Each year, millions of people die from treatable diseases; each day, millions of people go to sleep without adequate food or access to clean water; each hour millions of dollars flow among the financial centers of the world. According to the World Watch Institute, the income of the world's 225 richest individuals is equal to that of the 2.5 billion poorest: \$1 trillion. That gap is only likely to get larger during the 21st century. Are such disparities fair and just? Why do they exist?

Our objective in this seminar is not to solve the world's problems but to understand how some of them have come into being. We begin with the question: What *is* justice? Does it involve equal access to opportunity, or equitable distribution of resources? Should we seek it within communities, countries or the planet? We next ask: How is it that the distribution of wealth across the planet is so uneven? Is it a result of "natural" processes, or is it somehow inherent in our social and economic systems? Finally, we consider: What is to be done? Can capitalism provide the answers, or do we need to find political solutions?

There are five required texts for the course, plus a number of copied excerpts from various books and journals. You will be expected to have completed the reading assigned for each week and to have written a two-page, 500 word essay, in answer to the questions posed on the course schedule below, for the first class meeting of the week in which it is assigned. You will also be required to write a 5 page research paper on a topic to be assigned. The paper will be due at the end of the quarter. This is meant to be a writing-intensive course and you may be asked to revise a poorly-written or argued essay (be sure to read the Writing/Reading/Speaking handout). You are also expected to attend every class; missing more than two meetings during the quarter without a valid excuse is grounds for an "F" or "NP."

Required texts (available at Slug Books and on reserve at McHenry; other readings will be made available during the quarter)

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Penguin, 1992

Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Anchor, 2000

John Isbister, *Capitalism and Justice*, Kumarian, 2001

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Anchor, 2000

Carol Robb, *Equal Value*, Beacon, 1997

Course schedule

Part I: What is justice?

Weeks #1-2: Defining Justice and Injustice

4/2: The Veil of Ignorance--An in-class exercise

4/7 What is justice?

4/9 Do we owe anyone anything?

Read: Singer, "[Famine, Affluence, & Morality](http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/pol100/singer.htm)" at:

<http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/pol100/singer.htm>;

Hardin, "[The Case Against Helping the Poor](http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/pol100/Hardin)" at:

<http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/pol100/Hardin>

Paper #1 (due on April 9th): What are Singer's and Hardin's conceptions of justice? What are the bases for their arguments?

Part II: Distributive justice

Week #3: Defining justice and injustice?

4/14: What causes injustice?

4/16: Justice and recognition

Read: *The Grapes of Wrath*; Nancy Fraser, "[Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation](http://www.newschool.edu/gf/polsci/faculty/excerpts/nfexcp.htm),"

at: <http://www.newschool.edu/gf/polsci/faculty/excerpts/nfexcp.htm>

Paper #2: Discuss the nature of (in)justice in *The Grapes of Wrath* and its relationship to "recognition" as defined by Fraser.

Week #4: Global distribution

4/21: Why are some people rich and others poor?

4/23: What is neo-liberalism?

Read: *Capitalism and Justice*

Paper #3: What is required to achieve economic justice, according to John Isbister? What must the rich of the world do?

Week #5: Pie in the sky by and by?

4/28: You may not know about globalization, but globalization certainly knows about you.

4/30: How much is enough?

Read *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*

Paper #4: How will globalization address the problem of distributive justice, according to T. Friedman? Does Friedman care about justice?

Part III: Social justice

Week #6: Can development bring justice?

5/5: Is freedom a sufficient condition for justice?

5/7: Do markets require politics?

Read *Development as Freedom*

Paper #5: What is the relationship, according to Sen, between "freedom," "development," and "justice" (or is there any)?

Week #7: Justice and Gender

5/12: How do justice and gender intersect?

5/14: The value of women

Read: *Equal Value*

Paper #6: Is distributive justice for women sufficient to accomplish social justice for them? If not, what else is required?

Research paper: for the remainder of the quarter, you will prepare a 5 page research paper on some topic related to global justice. The details will be provided in class and, eventually, added to this syllabus.

Week #8: Human rights & social justice

5/19: What are the origins of human rights?

5/21: Are human rights sufficient for social justice?

Read: [Andrew Heard, "Human Rights: Chimeras in Sheep's Clothing?"](http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/intro.html) at: <http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/intro.html>

Week 9: no classes (Monday is a holiday; Wednesday, instructor will be away).

Week 10: Is global justice possible?

6/2: Are human rights sufficient for social justice?

6/4: From social analysis to social action

Read: To be assigned