

HONR 2047.80/PSC 2994.80  
Spring 2015  
Tuesday 12:45-2:45  
1957 E St. Room 310

Professor Martha Finnemore  
[finnemor@gwu.edu](mailto:finnemor@gwu.edu)  
Office hours in Monroe 414  
Tuesday 3:00-4:30pm or by  
appointment

## **Ethics and World Politics**

### **Course Description**

This seminar will explore whether and how ethical concerns shape world politics. Thinkers going back to ancient Greece have argued that, in fact, ethics have no place in world affairs. Understanding how this could be so is our starting point. Not surprisingly, this amoral view of the world has been challenged on many grounds over the past two millennia but figuring out exactly how and why ethical concerns can exert force and which ethical positions we should champion requires thought. To explore the role of ethics in global affairs we consider contrasting arguments by philosophers and social thinkers including Thucydides, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, Mohandas Gandhi, Michael Walzer, Henry Shue, Amartya Sen, Peter Singer, and Martha Nussbaum. As we consider these arguments we will apply them to real-world political problems including war, poverty, genocide, immigration, human rights, gender issues, and climate change. Our goal will be to use these classic philosophic arguments to explore ethical problems in contemporary politics and to think about politically successful routes to ethically desirable outcomes.

### **Readings**

Large portions of the following books are required readings and can be purchased at the bookstore or through your favorite online bookseller. Used copies are fine. Articles and other shorter readings are posted in Blackboard.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. New York: Penguin 1977.

Bondurant, Joan. *The Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Kristoff, Nicholas D. and Sheryl Wu Dunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. Vintage, 2009.

Nussbaum, Martha (ed.). *For Love of Country*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

Shue, Henry. *Basic Rights*, 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save*. New York: Random House 2010.

Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

1) Three short papers (7-8 pages) each 25% of grade (=100 points each). Three times during the semester each student must write a short essay about the readings for that week. Paper copies of essays are due at the beginning of the class at which we discuss those readings. Electronic copies should be submitted simultaneously through SafeAssign. Students may choose which weeks they write. Essays should probe issues raised by the readings in some way, critiquing, extending, contrasting, or applying them. If you have questions or concerns about whether your planned essay is appropriate, let me know. I am always happy to discuss potential paper topics.

**The title page of all papers must include the following statement and be signed by you:** *"I understand the GW Code of Academic Integrity and have completed this paper according to its guidelines. The work herein is mine alone."* More information about GW's Code of Academic Integrity can be found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>. Failure to comply with the code will be heavily penalized.

2) Discussion questions for each class session. (10% of grade, 40 points total.) Each student is responsible for writing three discussion questions related to the week's readings and emailing them to the professor by 7am the morning of class. **Be sure to note in the subject line that these are for Ethics and World Politics.**

3) Class participation (15% of grade, 60 points total.) This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Students are expected to come to class well prepared and to contribute to each week's discussion of ideas and readings.

**Late assignments, medical excuses:** The purpose of writing discussion questions and papers before class is to prompt informed conversation when we meet. If you cannot finish a paper before class, pick another week to write. Just be sure to plan your time: you need three on-time papers before the course ends. Late discussion questions are not accepted. Each time you fail to submit questions, you lose 5 of the 40 points on offer. Students requesting medical accommodations are expected to contact the professor as soon as health allows and provide documentation promptly.

**Technology policy:** Use of laptops to take notes in class is fine. Other online activities should be done outside the classroom. Violators will be asked to stow all electronics and use pen and paper for the rest of the semester.

## **Learning Objectives**

As a result of completing this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain different traditions of thought concerning global ethics;
2. Understand the conflicts among these traditions;
3. Understand the ethical conflicts and dilemmas inherent in important international problems;
4. Evaluate and discuss critically the likely effects of applying different ethical frameworks to various political problems;
5. Analyze and write competently at the undergraduate level.

## **Course Schedule**

### **1/13: Introduction and course mechanics**

**No reading.**

### **1/20: Foundational Arguments: do ethics matter, why, how, how would we know?**

*Remember: discussion questions due by 7am the day class meets.*

#### **Read:**

Thucydides, "Melian Dialogue" from *The Peloponnesian War*. Available at:  
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/melian.htm>

Immanuel Kant, *To Perpetual Peace*. Available at  
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>.

E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis* chapter 9, "Morality in International Politics."

George Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy" *Foreign Affairs* 64, 2 (1985): 205-18.

Mervyn Frost, "Ethical Competence in International Relations" *Ethics in International Affairs* (2009):91-100.

### **1/27: National Patriotism and International Morality**

#### **Read:**

Martha Nussbaum, ed., *For Love of Country* (entire).  
*Controversy: the ethics of leaks & whistleblowing*

John Cassidy, "Why Edward Snowden is a Hero" *New Yorker online*. Jun 10, 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/johncassidy/2013/06/why-edward-snowden-is-a-hero.html>

Jeffrey Toobin, "Edward Snowden is no hero" *New Yorker online*. June 10, 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2013/06/edward-snowden-nsa-leaker-is-no-hero.html>

### **2/3: Migration and Immigration**

John Ibister, "Are Immigration Controls Ethical" *Social Justice* 23, 3(fall 1996): 54-67.

Mathias Risse, "On the morality of immigration," *Ethics and International Affairs* Issue 22, 1 (Spring 2008): 25-33.

Joseph E. Caren, "The rights of irregular migrants," *Ethics and International Affairs* Issue 22, 2 (Summer 2008): 163-183.

Ayalet Shachar and Ran Hirschl, "Citizenship as inherited property" *Political Theory* Issue 35, 3 (June 2007): 253-287.

Rogers M. Smith, "Living in a Promiseland? Mexican Immigration and American Obligations." *Perspectives on Politics* Issue 9,3 (2011): 545-557.

"Migration after the crash: moving on, out and back" *The Economist*. August 27, 2011. <http://www.economist.com/node/21526777>

## **2/10: Just and Unjust Wars**

### **Read:**

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, chapters 1-6, 8, 11-12, 14-15, 18-19.

## **2/17: Targeted Killing and Drones**

John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, "The Ethics of Drone Warfare" (ch.5 in *Drone Warfare*) Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2014.

Uri Friedman, "Targeted Killings: A Short History," *Foreign Policy* (Sept/Oct. 2012).

Michael Walzer, "Targeted Killing and Drone Warfare," *Dissent Magazine online*, January 11, 2013 at

[http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/targeted-killing-and-drone-warfare](http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/targeted-killing-and-drone-warfare)

Peter W. Singer, "The Drone Dilemma," *The New York Times Upfront*, May 14, 2012.

Daniel L. Byman, "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice," *Brookings Institute*, July/August 2013.

Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Why Drones Fail." *Foreign Affairs* July/Aug 2013.

Steve Coll, "Kill or Capture?" *The New Yorker* online. August 2, 2012.

Daniel Brunstetter and Megan Braun, "The implications of drones for the just war tradition," *Ethics & International Affairs*, Issue 25, 3 (Nov. 2011): 337- 358.

Peter W. Singer, "The Predator Comes Home: A Primer on Domestic Drones" *Brookings Institute*, March 8, 2013.

Jo Becker and Scott Shane, "Secret Kill List Proves a Test of Obama's Principles and Will" *New York Times*, May 29, 2012.

## **2/24: The Morality of Non-Violence**

### **Read:**

Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, chs 1-3, 6.

Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* "Afterward: Nonviolence and the Theory of War."

Erica Chenoweth, "Drop Your Weapons: Why Civil Resistance Works" *Foreign Affairs* 93 (2014): 94-106.

## **3/3: Genocide and the "banality of evil"**

### **Read:**

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* chs 1-3, 8, 15.

Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism* ch.5, "Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe."

### **SOMETHING ON ICC**

*Optional: film "Hannah Arendt" available on Blackboard.*

## **3/10: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

### 3/17: Humanitarian Intervention

#### **Skim:**

*Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* at <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/R2PSummary.pdf>

#### **Read:**

Michael Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed" *Perspectives on Politics* Issue 3, 4 (December 2005).

Martha Finnemore, "Paradoxes in Humanitarian Intervention" in Richard Price, ed., *Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2008): 197-224.

Alexander Bellamy, "The Responsibility to Protect Five Years On" *Ethics and International Affairs* (2010) 143-69.

David Reiff, "R2P, RIP: *New York Times* Nov. 7, 2011.

David Reiff, "Save us from the liberal hawks" *Foreign Policy* 13 February 2012

Thomas Weiss, "Military Humanitarianism: Syria hasn't killed it." *The Washington Quarterly* Spring 2014.

### 3/24: Human Rights

#### **Skim:**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/b3ccpr.htm>

International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (OHCHR)

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

#### **Read:**

Henry Shue, *Basic Rights* (entire).

Michael Ignatieff, "Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry". Tanner lectures at Princeton University, April 2000.

Beth Simmons, "The Future of the Human Rights Movement" *Ethics and International Affairs* (2014).

### 3/31: Are Women Human? Gender, ethics, and globalization

#### **Read:**

Catherine MacKinnon, *Are Women Human?*, "Introduction: Women's Status, Men's States," "Are Women Human?" and "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights" in *Are Women Human?* (Boston: Belknap Press, 2007). (on Blackboard).

Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, Introduction, Chapters 2, 6, 8-11.

#### **4/7: Development as Freedom and the Capabilities Approach**

##### **Read:**

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Introduction, Chs 1-7, 10.

Martha Nussbaum, "Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice" *Feminist Economics* 9, 2-3, (2003).

Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Capabilities" *J. of Human Development* 6,2(July 2005): 151-166.

#### **4/14: Global Poverty**

##### **Read:**

Thomas Pogge, "World poverty and human rights." *Ethics and International Affairs*. 19,1 (2005).

Mathias Risse, "How does the global order harm the poor." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 33,4 (2005): 349-76.

Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save*. Chapters 1-5.

#### **4/21: Environmental justice, climate change, and sustainability**

Paul Wapner, "Ethical Enhancement in an Age of Climate Change" *Ethics and International Affairs* Sept. 4, 2014.

Steve Vanderheiden, "Globalizing Responsibility for Climate Change" *Ethics and International Affairs* 25,1 (2011): 65-84.

Paul Wapner and John Willoughby, "The Irony of Environmentalism" *Ethics and International Affairs* 19 (2005) 77.

Robyn Eckersley, "Ecological Intervention: Prospects and Limits" *Ethics & International Affairs*, Volume 21, 3 (Fall 2007).

Sujatha Byravan and Subhir Chella Rajan, "The Ethical Implications of sea-level rise due to climate change." *Ethics and Int'l Affairs*, 24,3(2010).

Nicholas Lemann "When the Earth Moved: What happened to the environmental movement" *New Yorker* April 15, 2013.