

Fall 2019

Tuesdays 3.30pm, Marx Hall 301

**Graduate Seminar Pol518/ Phi529**

Title: **Respect, Equality and Justice**

Instructor: Philip Pettit

How to build a theory of justice, in particular a theory of what justice requires of the state, on an ecumenical rather than an inherently controversial basis? The response on which this series of seminars will be based is: by taking the state to be required to respect people as equals with one another. The early seminars will be devoted to explicating the concept of respect and looking, on the basis of a plausible account of human nature, for a form of treatment with which plausibly to identify respect. The following seminars will then address the issues of what that ideal of respect requires of the state on three fronts, related to political, social and global justice. The issue in political (or democratic) justice presupposes that the state imposes law coercively and territorially on its subjects, and bears on how it can do so in a manner that gives them respect as equals. The issue in social justice presupposes that the law imposed by the state must shape the status of its subjects vis-à-vis one another and bears on what sort of status it should give them, if it is to respect them as equals on this front too: in effect, if it is to enable them to enjoy one another's respect as equals. The issue in global justice presupposes that states can respect people elsewhere as equals, not just its own subjects, and bears on what states should individually and collectively do if they are to display such respect.

The seminars cover topics in Part 2 of a typescript on *Statehood and Statecraft: What the Polity is and How to Make it Just*. They will cover 4 topics, each with roughly the number of seminars indicated in brackets: Respect (2 or 3), Political Justice (4), Social Justice (4), Global Justice (1 or 2). The discussion of each topic will be guided by the questions it raises, with readings prescribed as background, mainly from contemporary literature. Those readings will be made available on Blackboard, as they become relevant. As each topic is presented, the corresponding chapter or chapters from the typescript will also be made available on Blackboard.

Just to give an indication of the direction of the discussion planned, here are some questions that will certainly be addressed.

### **1. Respect as the Basic Value**

Why should we be political realists and take the existence of the state as granted?

Should we focus on human individuals primarily in thinking about issues of justice?

Why should respect count as an ecumenical base on which to raise those issues?

Does taking respect as equals for all commit us to a non-consequentialist viewpoint?

Why opt for a relational conception of equality, as under the ideal of respect-as-equals?

What are the common assumptions that any account of respect should satisfy?

If respect requires robustly respectful action, does it require freedom as non-domination?

What is it about human beings that makes them equally deserving of respect?

What sort of treatment is best taken to constitute giving respect?

Can a corporate agent like the state give people respect as equals?

## ***2. Political Justice***

Can political justice and social justice come apart, so that they raise distinct issues?  
If the state has to impose law, what room is there for requiring it to do so respectfully?  
Is the political justice of a regime a precondition of political obligation? And what is that?  
Who are the agents who are to give political respect: officials or the state or both?  
To give respect is to act out of an apt disposition, so how can law enforce respect?  
If the state and its officials are the agents of political respect, who are the addressees?  
If citizens are the addressees, as it seems, are they addressed severally or collectively?  
What is the best sort of theory of political justice: consent-, benefit-, or will-based?  
How do no-will, shared-will and controlled-will theories compare?  
What are the institutional measures whereby the will of the state might be controlled?  
How far do these include or extend familiar demands of democracy?  
Is there a plausible test for whether those measures are sufficient for political justice?  
Is the controlled-will theory an updated version of the classic republican view?

## ***3. Social Justice***

What are the demands of social justice as distinct from those of political justice?  
How do these sets of demands compare with one another? Is one prior in any sense?  
Is the state both the addressee and the agent of social justice?  
If so, why is the situation different, as it seems to be, from that with political justice?  
What are the basic liberties that social justice, plausibly, requires all subjects to enjoy?  
How ought the state to protect these equally in criminal and civil law?  
Does social justice require workplace, domestic, judicial & other forms of security?  
Is there a plausible test for whether people in a society enjoy social justice?  
If the state is to pursue social justice as an end, does that entail consequentialism?  
How far does social justice entail the promotion of values like utility, equality or liberty?  
Is there any other goal that the socially just state pursues under the respect constraint?  
Is this respect-based account of social justice an updated version of republican demands?

## ***4. Global Justice***

How do demands of global justice compare with the two demands of domestic justice?  
Are the addressees of global justice states or individuals? Do they include all states?  
Can we ask the state to respect non-subjects as equals without being consequentialists?  
What does global justice, understood in a respect-based way, require of states?  
What does it require of states in the general organization of international relations?  
Does it require too much, in requiring them to be robustly respectful of all people?  
What does it require of states in regard to the subjects of oppressive regimes?  
And what does it require of them in regard to the subjects of impoverished regimes?  
Or indeed in regard to those who seek asylum as refugees, perhaps at their borders?