

Justice & International Affairs— Just War Theory

Phil 3730
Spring 2020

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Course description: The course will mainly examine warfare—as a distinctive form of international affairs—from a philosophical perspective. On the one hand, we will focus on some of the most influential philosophical perspectives that come from different historical periods and cultural traditions. We will discuss and examine how warfare has reflected in different periods of western philosophy (ancient Greek philosophy, Medieval philosophy, and contemporary philosophy). We will also explore how ancient Chinese philosophers (Mencius, Xunzi, Mozi, etc.) pondered on this issue. On the other hand, we will pay attention to some of the most famous wars or conflicts of our modern world (for example, World War II, Vietnam War, the Rwandan genocide, etc.) and see how these perspectives examined would help us analyze and evaluate these incidents. As a class, we investigate a series of philosophical questions. For example, is there such a thing as a just war? What makes a war unjust, when and if it is? What are the ethical costs associated with war? How should soldiers and other people involved conduct during warfare?

Theoretical goals:

Students will understand:

- Historically and culturally significant theories of just and unjust war.
- Ethical dilemmas faced by soldiers in warzones

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Practical goals:

Students will improve their ability...

- to read and interpret philosophical & literary texts.
- to recognize and evaluate arguments
- to communicate ideas clearly in speech and writing
- to engage respectfully with conflicting points of view

Required texts: No text is required to buy, and all texts are available through Marriot Library and/or Canvas.

Further information on assignments, etc., will be posted on Canvas in the future.