

# The Ethics of War & Conflict

Spring 2021

(1:730:330:01)

Meeting Times (via Zoom): Tue./Thur. 1:10 – 2:30pm

Instructor: Danny Underwood

Email: [danny.underwood2@rutgers.edu](mailto:danny.underwood2@rutgers.edu)

This is a course on moral questions that arise when thinking about wars and other forms of large-scale violence. We'll start with a doctrine called 'Just War Theory'. Just War Theory is an influential set of moral principles that serves as the foundations for much of international law. However, it's not immediately obvious why the principles of Just War Theory are good moral principles. This course will therefore examine various criticisms, defenses, and reformulation of the traditional Just War Doctrine. Our aim in doing so will be to think clearly about the moral issues which arise in war and to equip ourselves with the conceptual resources necessary to responsibly think about various future armed conflicts which may arise in our own lifetimes.

[NOTE: This is a tentative syllabus for Spring 2021. Various aspects of this syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.]

## 1 Course Materials

No materials will need to be purchased for this course. All essays, book chapters, and articles will be uploaded to this course's *Canvas* page.

## 2 Homework/Attendance

- On a normal week, we will meet twice a week. Each week you are expected to submit one homework assignment for that week. You can either respond to the first reading for that week (due Monday before midnight) or the second reading for that week (due Wednesday before midnight).
- For homework, send me two response questions, objections, or comments based on the reading for the following class period. **The two responses should together be between ½ to 1 single-spaced page.** And I will also ask that you present your homework responses in class discussion from time to time.

- Homework is **due before midnight (11:59pm) the night before the class** in which we discuss the readings you comment on. Due to my relaxed policy on the number of homework assignments you owe, **NO late homework will be accepted.**
- **Attendance Policy:** I will take attendance for each class by taking a screenshot of the Zoom participants list; this means you must stay throughout the class meeting. Be sure that your Zoom id is the same as your full name when you are attending class. If you are unable to attend class, email me before class with an explanation.

### 3 Final Essay

- **Abstract:** 200 words and Outline (1 double-spaced page) Due: March 13th
- **Rough Draft** (1200-1500 words) Due: April 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - o I will make time to meet with you to discuss your rough draft and what needs to be done for the final draft. Be sure to email me to set up a meeting time.
- **Final Essay** (2500-3000 words) Due: April 17th
- **Optional Re-write** Due: May 1st

Send *all* coursework through the designated assignments in Canvas. They will be run through the anti-plagiarism service Turnitin.com.

### 4 Grading

I will assign a percentage grade for your work in the course. The maximum grade you can receive is 100% and the minimum grade you can receive is 0%. These percentages will be converted to letter grades as follows:

- A: 100-90
- B+: 89-85
- B: 84-80
- C+: 79-75
- C: 74-70
- D: 69-60
- F: 59-0

Here is a percentage breakdown of your grades for this course :

- Final Essay: Your final essay will be worth 40% of your grade. If you choose to resubmit a revised version, I will average the scores of the two papers.
- Abstract, Outline, and Rough Draft: The abstract and outline for your final paper will be worth 10% in total. The rough draft will be worth 20% of your grade. [Note: In total, all the assignments related to the final draft and including the final draft is 70% of your final grade.]
- Homework: Your weekly homework assignments are worth a total of 15% of your grade.
- Attendance/Participation: Your class attendance and participation are worth a total of 15% of your grade.
- Note on the Late Work Policy: Late homework will not be accepted. For every day that your Abstract, Outline, Rough Draft or Final Paper is late, I will take a half-letter grade off of that assignment's grade.

## 5 Academic Integrity

All students are beholden to the standards of Academic Integrity set forth by Rutgers. This means that all plagiarism or failures to properly attribute the ideas, opinions, or words of others will be reported to Rutgers. For more information on the standards, visit here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

## 6 Zoom Etiquette

For each class meeting, I will send/post a Zoom link on Canvas. Since the entirety of the course will be through Zoom and Canvas, it is important that you have a working computer (with webcam and microphone) during class meeting times. When in class and small group discussion, you should have your camera on. When others are speaking, you should mute your microphone and avoid talking over one another. You also must arrive on time and stay the entirety of class (unless otherwise excused).

## 7 Schedule

1/19 An Introduction to Just War Theory

“Rethinking the Just War: Part 1 and 2” (NYT) by Jeff McMahan

1/21 War and Self-Defense

“War as Self-Defense” by Jeff McMahan; and

“Collectivist War and Individualistic Ethics” by Noam Zohar

1/26 Self-Defense

“Self-Defense” by Judith Jarvis Thomson

1/28 Self-Defense

“The Basis of Moral Liability to Defensive Killing” by Jeff McMahan

2/2 Self-Defense

“A Practical Account of Self-Defense” by Helen Frowe

2/4 Just Cause

“Just Cause for War” by Jeff McMahan

2/9 The Moral Equality of Combatants

“The Difference Uniforms Make” by Christopher Kutz

2/11 Proportionality

“Proportionality in the Morality of War” by Thomas Hurka

2/16 Necessity

“Necessity in Self-Defense and War” by Seth Lazar

2/18 Non-Combatant Immunity

“Guns, Food, and Liability to Attack in War” by Cécile Fabre

2/23 Non-Combatant Immunity

“Non-Combatant Immunity and War-Profiteering” by Saba Bazargan-Forward

2/25 Legitimate Authority

“Following Orders in an Unjust War” by David Estlund

3/2 The Success Condition

“On the Success Condition for Legitimate Self-Defense” by Daniel Statman

3/4 Contingent Pacifism

“Varieties of Contingent Pacifism in War” by Saba Bazargan-Forward

3/9 Contingent Pacifism

“War and Poverty” by Kieran Oberman

3/11 Resource Wars

“Resource War” by Victor Tadros

3/16 Spring Break!

3/19 Spring Break!

3/23 Armed Humanitarian Intervention

“Defensive Harm, Consent and Intervention” by Jonathan Parry

3/25 Resisting the State

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King Jr.; and

“When May We Kill Government Agents” by Jason Brennan

3/30 Revolutionary War

“Civil War and Revolution” by Jonathan Parry

4/1 Mercenaries

“In Defense of Mercenarism” by Cécile Fabre

4/6 Espionage

“The Morality of Treason” by Cécile Fabre

4/8 Terrorism

“Is Terrorism Morally Distinctive?” by Samuel Scheffler

4/13 Human Shields

“Moral Coercion” by Saba Bazargan-Forward

4/15 Torture

“Torture: The Case for Dirty Harry and Against Alan Dershowitz” by Uwe Steinhoff

4/20 Drones

“Just War and Robots’ Killings” by Thomas Simpson et al.

4/22 Economic Sanctions

“The Morality of Sanctions” by James Pattison

4/27 Jus Post Bellum

“Jus Post Bellum and Political Reconciliation” by Colleen Murphy & Linda Radzik

4/29 Jus Post Bellum

“The Trouble with Truth Conditions” by Margaret Urban Walker

[NOTE: These dates are tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion. As the semester progresses, we may fall behind and need to make adjustments.]