



PHIL3057

Theories of Justice

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

PHIX3057

Unit description

What is justice? What is fairness? This unit explores these important questions by examining leading philosophical theories of justice, including John Rawls's influential model, as well as the main political approaches that are associated with them, such as liberalism, libertarianism, republicanism, and socialism. We assess the capacity of these theories and approaches to respond to pressing social justice issues. We focus on issues of inequality and diversity in society by asking: what degree of inequality, if any, can be justified? We also examine broader questions around social and retributive justice, such as: How can we justify punishing those who violate justice? What are the obligations of democratic citizenship? Is our society and its political institutions racist, sexist, or unfairly biased against cultural minorities? What do we owe the poor in other countries? And is our treatment of animals and the environment a matter of justice?

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: understand some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary political philosophy

ULO2: analyse arguments in the relevant literature

ULO3: evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically

ULO4: communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

General Assessment Information

Detailed assessment information and rubrics

Detailed information about each of the assessments, including rubrics and submission instructions will be available in the Assessment block in iLearn. Please make sure you read the assessment information carefully. Assessment forums for each assessment will be available on the unit iLearn – if you have an assessment question please check the assessment information and the relevant assessment forum to see if your question has already been answered. If not, please post your question on the assessment forum where it will usually be answered within 1-2 days (weekdays). Please do not email your tutor unless you have tried all the above sources and cannot find an answer to your question.

Late submission

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is taken very seriously, and a range of methods, including but not restricted to the use of Turnitin, are used to detect plagiarism. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own may be grounds for referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions

about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please ask the convenor for help and see also the Academic Integrity Policy <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity>

Note: All assignments in this unit are individual assignments. Collusion (unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments) is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. If in doubt, contact a member of teaching staff.

A helpful resource if you would like to know more about referencing and avoiding plagiarism is Macquarie's Academic Integrity Module, available here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills-development>. You will need to complete this Module before accessing the unit content, if you have not already done so. More information is available in iLearn.

GenAI/ChatGPT

In this unit, unless notified otherwise in writing by the Unit Convenor, it is expected that the work you submit demonstrates your own understanding, analysis, research, reflection, critical thinking, and writing, and you will be marked on the basis of your demonstrated understanding of and engagement with the unit content and activities. This applies to all assessments, including online forums. If your teachers have concerns about whether a submission is your own work in a meaningful sense, you may be required to attend an interview with the Unit Convenor or other academic staff to discuss your work and demonstrate your attainment of unit and task learning outcomes. Further information and advice about policies and expectations around the use of Generative AI will be given in iLearn.

Academic Writing and Study Support

Macquarie University offers a number of services to help with academic writing, referencing and study skills. For details, see: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills/assignments>

For information about policies related to Assessment, see *Policies and Procedures* section below.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Essay Plan and literature review	30%	No	20/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Philosophical essay	40%	No	25/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Viva/oral	30%	No	Weeks 12-13	Individual	No	Observed

Essay Plan and literature review

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **20/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Essay plan and review/justification of relevant selected literature

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary political philosophy
- analyse arguments in the relevant literature

Philosophical essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **25/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Philosophical essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary political philosophy
- analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

Viva/oral

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **Weeks 12-13**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

10 minute viva with unit staff reviewing student's engagement with assessment and unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand some of the major theories and current debates in contemporary political philosophy
- analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- evaluate relevant theories and arguments critically
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Participants in this unit are expected to

- attend online lectures - these are available live or on demand via Echo360
- participate in online moderated weekly forums
- read required readings each week
- read recommended readings as needed to supplement learning, especially for topics chosen for essays and viva voce assessment
- stay up-to-date with announcements using the iLearn site
- regularly check Macquarie University student email account for email notifications relating to the unit

Details of required and recommended readings for each week can be found on the unit iLearn under the weekly blocks, and in the unit Leganto site.

Access to Leganto (unit readings) and Echo360 (lecture recordings) are both available on the iLearn site.

Unit Schedule

Weekly topics.

NOTE - All lectures will be available via Echo360 otherwise indicated. Any changes to delivery

of lectures or other classes will be notified via the unit iLearn site and by email to your Macquarie University student email address.

Online moderated weekly forums will run in weeks 1-12 inclusive, and focus on the same topic as the weekly lecture. There is no online moderated weekly forum in week 13.

Week 1: Introduction – What is 'justice'? Foundations of the concept (A/Prof Mianna Lotz)

Week 2: RECORDED LECTURE – Liberal egalitarian distributive justice – Rawls and Dworkin (A/Prof Mianna Lotz)

Week 3: Libertarianism's 'entitlement' challenge to liberal egalitarianism (A/Prof Mianna Lotz)

Week 4: Justice in the 'private spheres' of family and marriage? (A/Prof Mianna Lotz)

Week 5: What does justice require after transgression? Retributive, consequentialist, and restorative conceptions (A/Prof Mianna Lotz)

Week 6: Justice and Socialism (Prof Jean-Philippe Deranty)

Week 7: Justice and Republicanism (Prof Jean-Philippe Deranty)

Week 8: Justice and Democracy (Prof Jean-Philippe Deranty)

MID-SESSION BREAK: Sept 21 – Oct 5

Week 9: Global Justice (Dr Katrina Hutchison)

Week 10: Justice and the Politics of Difference (Dr Katrina Hutchison)

Week 11: Oppression and Structural Injustice (Dr Katrina Hutchison)

Week 12: Critiques of Social Contract Theory - The Sexual Contract and The Racial Contract (Dr Katrina Hutchison)

Week 13: Applied Case Study - Health Technology Justice (Dr Katrina Hutchison)

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.s.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.s.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)

- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.04 of the [Handbook](#)