

POL 469F: ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Fall 2025, Tuesdays 11-1

Instructor: Professor Nancy Bertoldi

Phone: 416-946-0181. Email: nancy.bertoldi@chass.utoronto.ca

You can also always email me via Quercus.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30-12 on zoom by Quercus appointment only

Zoom link for office hours appointments is available on Quercus under announcements.

Please book your office hours appointment in advance on the Quercus calendar.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores the possibilities for ethical action in international affairs. It is common to theorize international relations in terms of interests and power, but this fails to account for the frequent invocation of the language of justice and fairness in actual international interactions. Drawing on readings from political philosophy, normative international relations theory, feminist theory, critical theory, and post-colonial theory, the course addresses ethical dilemmas encountered in world affairs.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe various ethical approaches to central problems of world affairs.
2. Identify areas of convergence in scholarly literatures on political theory and international relations.
3. Define core concepts that are commonly used in the study of ethics and international relations.
4. Discuss limitations of mainstream approaches to ethics and international relations.
5. Develop a critical awareness of the normative dimensions of current controversies in world affairs.
6. Write effective essays that apply ethical concepts to contemporary international problems.
7. Improve oral and written communication skills.
8. Work cooperatively with peers to respectfully address controversial topics about international ethics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will meet for 2 hours of in-person seminar discussion per week. Attendance and informed participation in seminar discussions is mandatory and is assessed every week. Students who register late or who have other acceptable reasons for being absent should arrange to make up the required attendance and participation for missed weeks. Successful seminar participation presupposes familiarity with assigned readings, so students should complete readings before the start of each class. All assigned readings are available online, either as online resources from U of T libraries or in pdf form under the library reading list in Quercus.

Performance in the course will be evaluated based on the following components:

Worksheet	10%	due on Quercus on <u>October 14</u> at 11:59 pm
Response paper	30%	due on Quercus on <u>November 11</u> at 11:59 pm
Term test	25%	in class time (11-1) on <u>November 25</u> , room TBA
Participation	35%	required in class and graded every week

Detailed instructions for each required course component are available on Quercus under assignments. A completed and approved worksheet is a prerequisite for the response paper (without which response papers will not be accepted). No changes are permitted from worksheet to paper without instructor

permission. The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for any assignment in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and/or any other AI writing or coding assistants, is prohibited.

The University of Toronto grading scale is used in the marking of all required course components. The Faculty of Arts and Science specification of the meaning of grades should be used as a rubric of expectations:

- A range: 80-100. Excellent. Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
- B range: 70-79. Good. Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
- C range: 60-69. Adequate. Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
- D range: 50-59. Marginal. Some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
- F: 0-49. Inadequate. Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.
- Credit/No Credit: CR/NCR is not in general use in the Faculty.

More information on the University of Toronto grading scale is available at:

- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>
- <https://registrar.utoronto.ca/transcripts/transcript-grading-scales-notations/>
- <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-1-2020>

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

There is no class on October 28 (due to the fall reading week). Drop deadline is November 11.

Sep 2	Week 1	Overview
	Part I	Ethics of International Relations
Sep 9	Week 2	Realist ethics
Sep 16	Week 3	Liberal ethics
Sep 23	Week 4	Rawlsian ideal ethics
Sep 30	Week 5	Rawlsian non-ideal ethics
Oct 7	Week 6	Cosmopolitan ethics
	Part II	International Relations of Ethics
Oct 14	Week 7	Anarchy
Oct 21	Week 8	Nation-States
Nov 4	Week 9	Gender
Nov 11	Week 10	Race and empire
Nov 18	Week 11	Humanity
Nov 25	Week 12	Term test (room TBA)

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Overview

- No reading assignment.

Week 2: Realist ethics

- Terry Nardin, "Ethical traditions in international affairs," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 1.
- Steven Forde, "Classical realism," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 4.
- Jack Donnelly, "Twentieth century realism," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 5.
- Duncan Bell, "Political Realism and the Limits of Ethics," in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Ethics and World Politics*, (Oxford, 2010), ch. 5.

Week 3: Liberal ethics

- Thomas Donaldson, "Kant's global rationalism," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 7.
- Anthony Ellis, "Utilitarianism and international ethics," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 8.
- David Mapel, "The contractarian tradition and international ethics," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 9.
- Michael Joseph Smith, "Liberalism and international reform," in Terry Nardin & David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 10.

Week 4: Rawlsian ideal ethics

- John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, (Harvard, 1999), preface, introduction, parts I, II, and IV.
- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, (Harvard, 2001), part I.

Week 5: Rawlsian non-ideal ethics

- John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, (Harvard, 1999), part III.
- Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, (Princeton, 1999), part III and afterword.

Week 6: Cosmopolitan ethics

- Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 2nd edition, (Polity, 2008), ch. 6, 7, 8.
- Monique Deveaux, "The Global Poor as Agents of Justice," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 12 2 (2015): 125-150.

Week 7: Anarchy

- Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and John Hobson, "The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919." *Millennium* 39 3 (2011): 735-758.
- Hedley Bull, "Does order exist in World politics?" in Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, (Macmillan, 1977), ch. 2.

- Nancy Bertoldi, “Property and International Relations,” *International Theory* 16 1 (2024): pp. 1-25.
- Sheryl Lightfoot, “Decolonizing Self-Determination: Haudenosaunee Passports and Negotiated Sovereignty,” *European Journal of International Relations* 27 4 (2021): pp. 971-994.

Week 8: Nation-States

- Emanuel Adler, “Changing Identities: The Road to Peace” in Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations*, (Routledge, 2005), ch. 10.
- Edward Said, “A Method for Thinking About Just Peace,” in Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller (eds.), *What is a Just Peace?* (Oxford, 2006), ch. 7.
- Iris Marion Young, “Self-Determination as Non-Domination: Ideals Applied to Palestine/Israel,” in Iris Marion Young, *Global Challenges*, (Polity, 2007), ch. 3.
- Farid Abdelnour, “Irreconcilable Narratives and Overlapping Consensus: The Jewish State and the Palestinian Right of Return,” *Political Research Quarterly* 68 1 (2015), pp. 117-127.

Week 9: Gender

- Jacqui True, “Anarchy and Patriarchy in World Politics,” in Hidemi Suganami, Madeline Carr, and Adam Humphreys (eds), *The Anarchical Society at 40: Contemporary Challenges and Prospects*, (Oxford, 2017), ch. 14
- Carol Cohn, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 12 4 (1987), pp. 687-718.
- Iris Marion Young, “The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State,” in Iris Marion Young, *Global Challenges*, (Polity, 2007), ch. 6.
- Fiona Robinson, “Feminist foreign policy as ethical foreign policy? A care ethics perspective,” *Journal of International Political Theory*, 17 1 (2021), pp. 20-37.

Week 10: Race and empire

- Charles Mills, “Race and Global Justice,” in Duncan Bell (ed.) *Empire, Race, and Global Justice*, (Cambridge, 2019), ch. 4.
- Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World*, (Princeton, 2016), ch. 4.
- Margaret Kohn, “Globalizing Global Justice,” in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Empire, Race, and Global Justice*, (Cambridge, 2019), ch. 7.
- Thomas Piketty, *A Brief History of Equality*, (Harvard, 2022), ch. 4.

Week 11: Humanity

- Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, (Cornell University Press, 2013), introduction.
- Fernando Teson, “The moral basis of armed humanitarian intervention revisited” in Don Scheid (ed.), *The Ethics of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, (Cambridge, 2014), ch. 4.
- Stephen Zunes, “Complicating the Moral Case of Responsibility to Protect,” in C. A. J. Coady, Ned Dobos, and Sagar Sanyal (editors), *Challenges for Humanitarian Intervention*, (Oxford, 2018), ch. 1.
- Sinja Graf, *The Humanity of Universal Crime*, (Oxford, 2021), conclusion.

Week 12: Term test

- No reading assignment.

COURSE POLICIES

Assignment submission: All written assignments must be submitted online on Quercus by the due date.

Late penalties: Late assignments will be penalized by **2% per late day**, weekends included. The number of late days will be determined by submission times on Quercus. In general, late assignments will not be accepted after marked assignments have been returned to the class.

Length penalties: Students should include word counts in all written assignments. Assignments that are more than 10% longer or shorter than the assigned word count will be penalized by **5%**.

Grading scheme: The University of Toronto grading scale is used in the marking of all required course components. More information about the meaning of grades is available at:

- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>
- <https://registrar.utoronto.ca/transcripts/transcript-grading-scales-notations/>
- <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-1-2020>

Grade appeals: Students who have concerns about the mark they received can request that their work be remarked within two weeks after their marked assignments have been returned. Appeal requests must be submitted in writing to the instructor and must include a statement of what students feel was overlooked in the marking of their work. In accordance with University of Toronto policies, grades may go up, stay the same, or go down in the appeals process.

Extensions and make-ups: No extensions or make-ups will be granted on any course requirement, unless students have acceptable reasons that are documented, such as illness or unexpected personal circumstances beyond the student's control that interfere with the completion of academic obligations. Appropriate documentation must be submitted within one week of missed work. Assignments and tests from other courses scheduled for the same day, work or co-curricular commitments, or transportation problems do not constitute acceptable reasons, so students should plan accordingly in advance. No extensions will be granted after marked assignments have been returned to the class.

Absences or missed work due to illness: Students must contact the instructor immediately in cases of illness and must submit appropriate documentation to support accommodation. This documentation can be an absence declaration (via ACORN) or the University's verification of student illness or injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting student privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. Students can also submit a letter from a doctor in lieu of a VOI, as long as it is an original medical document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). More information on the VOI is available at <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For more information on the absence declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. Students who suffer from concussion, fracture, or another injury or condition with ongoing impact should also register with accessibility services.

Academic integrity:

- Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).
- All sources used in written assignments must be properly cited. Failure to acknowledge sources constitutes plagiarism which is a serious academic offense. Students should review “How Not to Plagiarize” and other advice on using sources at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.
- The University of Toronto expects students to complete assignments on their own, without any outside assistance, unless otherwise specified. No outside assistance is permitted on any assignment for this course. The use of AI tools or any other outside assistance on course assignments will be considered an “unauthorized aid” under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* and will be treated as “any other form of cheating”.

Code of conduct: The University of Toronto expects all its members to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and voice different views. Students should make sure to read the University’s Student Code of Conduct <<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>> and the University’s policy on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology <<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/information-communication-technology-appropriate-use/>>.

RESOURCES

Accessibility services: Students with special needs or disabilities should register with accessibility services to arrange appropriate accommodations for their needs.

Registrar support: Students should contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodation.

Writing support:

- Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for information on all aspects of academic writing. Advice files are available at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs>. The advice files on how not to plagiarize and on standard documentation formats are particularly important and are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources>.
- Writing centers offer individualized consultations on written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments early, as they fill up fast. More information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>.
- For group instruction on writing and study skills, students can take advantage of the “Writing Plus” workshop series. More information is available at <https://uoft.me/writingplus>.
- International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) at <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language->

learning. For more information, contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca.

- Recognized Study Groups (RSG) are student-led study groups of up to 8 students enrolled in the same A&S course: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/recognized-study-groups/>
- The Meet to Complete (MTC) program helps students stay focused by working alongside a small group of students: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/meet-to-complete/>

Health and wellness: The University's mental health portal <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/> lists a wide range of available resources that support student wellbeing. Students can also consult the programs that are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

Crisis support: If you're experiencing distress, you are not alone! Please reach out for help!

Many free crisis lines and support services are available at U of T and the City of Toronto including:

- U of T Telus Health Student Support (formerly My SSP) available 24/7. Call 1-844-451-9700. Outside of North America, call 001-416-380-6578. Online information: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/>
- University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- City of Toronto crisis services: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/311-toronto-at-your-service/find-service-information/?ctx=homepage&keywords=crisis>
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357), <https://www.dcoft.com>
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

Many of these services are available 24 hours a day every day and some have expertise in addressing specific problems that students may be experiencing. It is always a good idea to also inform your registrar of your circumstances as soon as you are able.