

Crime, Punishment, Protest, Revolution (introductory level)

The society we live in is rife with injustice, both at the hands of individuals and of the state. How should we respond when people flout our political ideals? This is a class about what justice demands when justice is violated.

To build our understanding of what's at stake, we begin, in Unit 1, by considering why it's wrong to break the law. In Unit 2 we ask how a just state should respond to legal violations, asking what, if anything, justifies punishment, and whether imprisonment is a just form of punishment. The second half of the course examines what recourse we have when the state is itself complicit in injustice. In Unit 3 we ask what makes something an act of protest and think about whether and when it's permissible for protest to break the law or to be violent. In Unit 4 we consider when it's permissible to overturn a legal regime altogether.

This introductory-level course highlights the relevance of philosophy to our contemporary political discourse. It emphasizes the value of both "ideal" and "non-ideal" philosophical theorizing (asking questions about a state imagined as less and less just as the course progresses). Connections to current events are made explicit through assigned content: In addition to philosophical texts, course materials also include news media such as newspaper articles, podcasts, video and radio clips.

Crime	Huemer, M. (2012) <i>The Problem of Political Authority</i> , Ch. 1 Locke, J. <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> , Chs. 2, 3, 7, 9, excerpts Simmons, A.J. and C. Wellman (2005) <i>Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?</i> , Chs. 2, 7 Dworkin, R. (1986) <i>Law's Empire</i> , Ch. 6
Punishment	Bentham, J. (1897) An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, as excerpted in <i>Why Punish? How Much?</i> edited by M. Tonry Hampton, J. (1984) The Moral Education Theory of Punishment Feinberg, J. (1965) The Expressive Function of Punishment Davis, A. (2003) <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> , Ch. 1 Mariame Kaba on Moving Past Punishment, <i>For the Wild</i> podcast, 12/27/19
Protest	Boxill, B. (1976) Self-Respect and Protest Rawls, J. (1971) <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , Ch. 6, excerpts King, Jr., M.L. (1963) Letter from a Birmingham Jail Lyons, D. (1998) Moral Judgment, Historical Reality, and Civil Disobedience Kelley, R. (2020) What Kind of Society Values Property Over Black Lives?
Revolution	"The Ballot or the Bullet," (1964), recording of Malcolm X Korsgaard, C. (2008) Taking the Law into our own Hands: Kant on the Right to Revolution Fanon, F. (1963) <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> , Ch. 1 Buchanan, A. (2013) The Ethics of Revolution and Its Implications for the Ethics of Intervention