Introduction:

In the canonical works of political thought (i.e. Plato to Marx) justice is taken to be a requirement that applies between citizen and citizen and between citizen and state: that is to say, it is taken to be something that comes into play only within the borders of political societies. In terms of the long history of political thought, the emergence of the idea of global obligations is very recent – we may date it to the path-breaking work of Peter Singer and Charles Beitz (both of whom we read, in weeks 2 and 4). As one might expect, basic approaches are highly contested, and in the first part of this course we critically review five influential positions: Singer’s humanitarian rescue thesis, Pogge’s “harm principle” approach, Beitz’s liberal cosmopolitanism, Nagel’s statism, Miller’s nationalism: in each case we examine their views in light of a critical response. In the second part of the course we move on to discuss six of the issues that have divided global-justice theorists: the nature of imperialism, immigration policy, exploitation, crimes against humanity, collective punishment, and climate justice.

Evaluation:

Major essay (70%), due on last day of classes. Normally, an essay on one of the week’s topics, Each week, two required sources are listed. A third source is also listed as “supplementary,” and your essay must take account of that reading as well as the two required readings. I am very open to essay topics that depart from this model, by drawing on readings from different weeks, but you must discuss any such proposal with me.

Minor essay (15%), due in week 6. Email to me on Feb 26 before 6 p.m., and bring a paper copy to class on Feb 27. 5 pages double-spaced: two pages summarizing two of the general approaches that we have discussed, three pages explaining why you prefer one of the two. These short essays will form the basis of our open discussion of approaches in week 7.

Participation, (15%) which means (i) showing up every week with a 1-page (single-spaced – normal margins!) commentary on the readings that encapsulates their main points and raises a question for discussion, and (ii) contributing helpfully to the work of the seminar. Both (i) and (ii) are subject to qualitative assessment, but any week in which you fail to attend with an acceptable written commentary will result in the loss of one full percentage point from the 15 available.

Week 1 (Jan 09): Introduction to the course

Part One: Big theories
Week 2 (Jan 16): Humanitarianism


Week 3 (Jan 23): A global harm principle?

Mathias Risse, “Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?” *Ethics & International Affairs* 19 (2005) 9-18.


Week 4 (Jan 30): Liberal cosmopolitanism


Week 5 (Feb 6): Statism


Week 6 (Feb 13): Nationalism

Robert Goodin, “What is so Special about our Fellow-Countrymen?” *Ethics* 98 (1988), 663-86

[Feb 20 – reading week]

Week 7 (Feb 27): An open discussion of approaches.

Week 8 (Mar 5): What’s wrong with Colonialism?


Week 9 (Mar 12): Opening and closing borders


Supplementary: Joseph Carens, The Ethics of Immigration, Oxford University Press 2013, chapter 2.

Week 10 (Mar 19): What (if anything) is wrong with exploitation?


Week 11 (Mar 26): Can individuals be held responsible for global crimes?


Week 12 (April 2): Can collectives be held responsible for global crimes?


Week 13 (April 9): Responsibility for climate justice
