

Course Goals. Some of the big questions this course explores include:

1. What can **literature** teach us about **injustice** in today's world? Specifically, what can we learn from the experience of injustice by victims whose **narratives** take the form of autobiography, memoir, fiction, journalism, and philosophical essays?
2. What can **political philosophy** teach us about **global ethics** and the possibilities for global **theories of justice**? How can we adjust our own **personal worldviews**, and worldviews we share with others, to accommodate a global perspective?
3. How much should the world's diverse **cultures and religions** influence our ethical criteria for a global perspective on justice? For example, should we embrace **human rights theory** as indispensable—or is it too specific to western cultures?
4. Should theories of justice be fundamentally **distributive** (concerned with a more equal distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities)? How important is **retributive** justice and the process of **reconciliation** and compensation for past wrongs?
5. Or can we base a theory of justice on the need that all individuals and peoples have for **recognition** from others of their intrinsic worth and contribution to society?

Course Materials. What kinds of conflicts will we explore? In which cultures and texts? Whose voices will we hear?

1. As **causes of injustice**, we'll confront: poverty, racism, sexism, genocide, war and terrorism, immigration and political asylum. Michael Boylan's *Morality and Global Justice* (2011) will be our methodological guide on ethical questions these causes raise.
2. The **war in Iraq**: a wide spectrum of Iraqis describe their experience of the American invasion of 2003 to an American journalist (Mark Kukis, *Voices from Iraq* [2011]); a francophone novelist from Algeria tells the story of an Iraqi teenager's development into an "insurgent" (Yasmina Khadra's *The Sirens of Baghdad* (2006).
3. **Islam, women, and human rights**: a Somali woman's memoir traces her development from a victim of Islamic attitudes towards women into a political refugee and international human rights activist (Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel* [2007]).

4. **Afghanistan under the Taliban:** What experiences did women in Kabul have under the first wave of Taliban control (1995)? How have their lives changed since? We'll examine Yasmina Khadra's novel *The Swallows of Kabul* (2001), Hafizullah Emadi's *Repression, Resistance and Women in Afghanistan*, and Rosemarie Skaine's *Women of Afghanistan in the Post-Taliban Era* (2008).
5. **The European Holocaust:** How do the lives of its victims emerge from the genres of fiction, memoir, and the video interview? We'll compare: (1) Aharon Appelfeld's fictional *Tzili: A Life* (1983); (2) his own memoir, *The Story of A Life*; (3) Primo Levi's classic memoir, *Survival in Auschwitz (= If This Is a Man)* (1949); and (4) video interviews in the archives of USC's Shoah Foundation Institute.
6. **The Palestinian Question:** How were the Zionist movement and establishment of the state of Israel attempts to correct the injustice of the Holocaust? How did these acts of justice-as-compensation initiate a new injustice, this time against the Palestinian people? We'll read: (1) founding documents of Zionism; (2) Edward Said's Palestinian rebuttal; (3) interviews with Palestinians during the second intifada (Pearlman's *Occupied Voices* [2004]); and a novel about a marriage torn apart by the ethical struggles Palestinians experience in their response to life in contemporary Israel and the occupied territories (Khadra's *The Attack* [2006]).
7. **Latin America's New Literature of Injustice:** How does narrating injustice lead to new literary genres? We'll examine the origins of the "testimonial novel" as a response to racism, genocide, and poverty in Latin America. but also its hybrid use of autobiography, biography, history, and its problematizing of the idea of authorship. The most famous testimonial novel, Rigoberta Menchu's *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (1983), will open up not only the problematic of authorship but the troubled line in this genre separating fact from fiction.
8. **South Africa and the Justice of Reconciliation and Retribution:** With the ending of apartheid and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, how does the need for justice create complex relations of oppression, guilt, and victimization—and complex ethical questions about how to punish perpetrators and compensate victims? We'll use John Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (1999) to explore these questions.

Course Requirements

1. **Class participation:** you should be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each of our 28 class meetings. You should set aside 6-7 hours per week for reading these assignments (= an average of about 140 pages). **Note:** this is not a grade for attendance but for participation, which includes: (a) answering & asking questions; (b) expressing your opinions; (d) giving a presentation on

your research into the Shoah Foundation Institute archives (see below) [15% of final grade]

2. Written assignments: (1) several short (1-1 1/2 pp.) position papers on theoretical readings (10 %); (2) a paper of 5 pp. [20%]; take-home midterm exam [25%]; and final exam [30%]. Note Policy on Written Assignments.

Required Readings [available at the University Bookstore]

Ali, Ayaan Hirsi. *Infidel*. New York: Free Press. 2007. ISBN 0743289684.

Appelfeld, Aharon. *The Story of A Life*. Trans. A. Halter. Schocken: New York.

0805241787.

_____. *Tzili: Story of A Life*. Trans. D. Belu. New York: Schocken. 1996. 0805212495.

Boylan, Michael. *Morality and Global Justice: Justification and Applications*. Boulder:

Westview P. 2011. 0813344324.

Coetzee, John. *Disgrace*. Viking: New York. 0143115286.

Khadra, Yasmina. *The Swallows of Kabul*. Trans. J. Cullen. New York: Random. 2004.

1400033764.

_____. *The Attack*. Trans. J. Cullen. New York: Random. 2006. 0307275701.

_____. *The Sirens of Baghdad*. Trans. J. Cullen. New York: Anchor. 2008.

0307386163.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz [If This is a Man]*. Trans. S. Woolf. New York:

Touchstone. 1996. 0684826801.

Menchú, Rigoberta (E. Burgos-Debray, ed.). *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in*

Guatemala. Trans. A. Wright. London: Verso. 1984. 0860917886.

*Other required readings will take the form of selections from works on theories of justice or literary and cultural background on the readings. These will be available electronically through Ares Reserve (www.usc.ares.atlas-sys.com) or on our course's Blackboard site.

Study and Research Aids: To help with assigned readings, “focus questions” will be provided for certain texts. These highlight the key information and developments you should look for and key concepts you should recognize. You’ll find these on Blackboard.

Course Policies

Policy on written assignments: Assignments are due at the times and days indicated in the syllabus. **Late assignments will not be accepted** unless approved for reasons of illness or personal/family emergency. There will be no exceptions. NB. Electronic submissions are NOT accepted—hard copy only.

Policy on academic integrity: We will adhere rigorously to the university's policies on academic integrity as described at www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf. Violations, during exams or through plagiarism in written work, will be reported to the Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS).

Policy on Grade of "Incomplete": A grade of IN can only be assigned if you do not complete work after the end of the 12th week because of illness or personal emergency. Prof. Farenga must, however, approve assignment of this grade. The missed work must be completed within one academic year.

Statement on Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Center for Testing and Assessment (STU 301; 213 740 7166) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from this Center. Please have the letter delivered to Prof. Farenga ASAP.

Instructor: Vincent Farenga, Assoc. Prof., Classics & Comparative Lit, THH 256-R, x00106, farenga@usc.edu. Office hours for Fall: Tu 3:30 – 4:30 pm and Th 12 – 1 pm, and by appointment.

Weekly Readings and Assignments

Week 1

Aug 28 Course introduction: goals, requirements, policies.

Aug 30 J. Shklar, "Introduction," *Frames of Injustice* 1-14 [on ARES];
M. Kukis, *Voices from Iraq* 51-53 (Abu); 54-55 (Azhar); 56-58 (Ahmed);
58-61 (Ka'ab); 61-63 (Saman); 63-65 (Mohammed); 71-74 (Adel), 100-
103 (Ibrahim), 104-107 (Yousef), 143-147 (Zahra and Fackria);
[photocopy]
Y. Khadra, *Sirens of Bagdad* 1-46.

Week 2

Sep 4 M. Boylan *Morality and Global Justice* 5-28 "The Way People Think
about Ethics and Social/Political Philosophy");
Khadra *Sirens* 47-151.

Sep 6 Boylan 33-44 ("The Foundation of Global Justice");
Khadra *Sirens* 152-93.

Week 3

Sep 11 Kukis, *Voices* 177-79 (Ali'a), 179-83 ((Rana), 183-88 (Maysoon), 191-92
(Rajiha);
Boylan 47-55 ("Human Rights");
Khadra, *Sirens* 194-307.

Sep 13 Hirsi Ali, *Infidel* 3-54.

Week 4

Sep 18 Boylan 57-64 (“Culture and Religion”);
Hirsi Ali 55-144.

Sep 20 L. Hunt, “Introduction,” *Inventing Human Rights* 15-34 [ARES];
Hirsi Ali, 145-80.

Week 5

Sep 25 L. Hunt, “Torrents of Emotion,” *Inventing Human Rights* 35-69
[Blackboard];
Hirsi Ali 183-282.

Sep 27 Hirsi Ali 283-350;
In-class viewing of *Submission*.

Week 6

Oct 2 **PAPER OF 5 pp. DUE TODAY** [See policy on written assignments]

Y. Khadra, *Swallows of Kabul*, 1-141;
Boylan 119-131 (“Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation”).

Recommended: H. Emadi, “Gender Polity: The Status of Women,”
Repression, Resistance and Women in Afghanistan, 29-58 [Blackboard].

Oct 4 Khadra, *Swallows* 141-95.

Recommended: R. Skaine, “Voices and Images of Afghan People,”
Women of Afghanistan in the Post-Taliban Era, 123-50 [Blackboard]

Week 7

Oct 9 A. Appelfeld, *Tzili: Story of a Life* 1-99.

Oct 11 T. Herzl, “The Jewish State,” *The Zionist Idea* 201-226 [ARES];
A. D. Gordon in *The Zionist Idea*, 371-83 (Blackboard);
Appelfeld, *Tzili* 101-85.

Week 8

Oct 16 Appelfeld’s autobiography, *The Story of a Life*, 3-117.

Oct 18 P. Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (= *If This Is a Man*), 13-86.

Week 9

- Oct 23 Levi 87-173;
Recommended: J. Rose, "The Nazi Holocaust Proved the Urgency for a Jewish State," *The Myths of Zionism*, 135-53 [ARES].
- Oct 25 E. Said, "The Question of Palestine" *The Question of Palestine* 3-37 & 46-55 [ARES]; and
_____, "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," *The Question of Palestine* 56-82 [Blackboard];
W. Pearlman, *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada*, 3-13 (Samia), 47-57 (Suzanne), 91-105 (Mohammed), 111-117 (Issam).

Week 10

- Oct 30 **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE TODAY**
- Pearlman 119-132 (Mohammed *et al.*), 148-53 (Azza), 191-201 (Ahmed);
Khadra, *The Attack*, 1-108;
Boylan 177-93 ("War and Terrorism").
- Nov 1 Khadra, *The Attack*, 109-62.
Boylan 67-85.

Week 11

- Nov 6 Khadra, *The Attack*, 163-257.
- Nov 8 R. Menchu, *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* 1-58;
Boylan 135-44 and 147-55.

Week 12

- Nov 13 Menchu 59-187;
- Nov 15 Menchu 188-247.

Week 13 NO CLASS THIS WEEK: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 14

- Nov 27 K. Nance, "The Capacities and Constraints of *Testimonio*'s Speakers and Experiencing Writers," in *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio*, 100-118 [Blackboard];

_____. “The Capacities and Constraints of Collaborating Writers, Translators, Editors, and Publishers,” in *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio* 119-136 [ARES];

D. Stoll, “The Death of Petrocinio” and “Rigoberta’s Secret” in *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* [photocopy];

_____. “The Construction of *I, Rigoberta Menchu*,” in *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* 177-200 [ARES].

Nov 29 K. Shaffer and S. Smith, “Truth, Reconciliation, and the Traumatic Past of South Africa,” in *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition* 53-84 [ARES];
J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* 1-46.

Week 15

Dec 4 Coetzee, *Disgrace* 47-146.

Dec 6 Coetzee 147-220;
A. van Heerden, “Disgrace, Desire and the Dark Side of the New South Africa,” in *J. M. Coetzee and Ethics: Philosophical Perspective on Literature* 43-60 [Blackboard].

Dec 13 Thursday, 2 – 4 pm: FINAL EXAM. It is the university and the course policy that all students must take the final exam at this date and time.