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**PHILOSOPHY 3510—HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**Winter 2006**  
**(schedule begins on page 5)**

**Course Description:** We take for granted our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But what is a right? What is a *human* right? What is the relation between rights and justice? What constitutes social justice and what steps should we take to secure it? These questions are central to political philosophy. In this course we will reflect critically on contributions by, as well as forms of discrimination against, members of specific groups in the United States. In particular, we will examine the experience and writings of African Americans, women, and lesbians and gays through the prism of philosophical questions pertaining to rights and justice. For example, do individuals have rights to be protected from the injuries associated with racism, sexism, and heterosexism? A primary emphasis in this course will be on contemporary debates between those who think racism and sexism are no longer serious problems and those who do. The philosophical stance one takes on these issues has important ramifications for how one understands the need to protect the rights of members of these groups (i.e., public policy questions). Although our readings are not representative of the entire spectrum of human rights discourse, you will come away from this course with a much better understanding of what is at stake when we talk about human rights and social justice as it pertains to groups in the United States.

*In Germany, the Nazis first came for the communists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak up, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I did not speak up, because I was not a Catholic. Then they came for me... and by that time, there was no one to speak up for anyone.*

-- Martin Niemoeller, Pastor,  
German Evangelical (Lutheran) Church

**Course Objectives:**

1. To introduce you to the concepts of rights and their relation to notions of social justice as these concepts apply to cultural groups in American society, focusing specifically on the groups mentioned above.
2. To introduce you to some major thinkers on these topics.
3. To become acquainted with philosophical questioning and argumentation, which is useful for work in any major.
4. Develop your ability to express abstract ideas in written and oral modes. Learning to think involves continuing to develop your ability to write—a skill that is helpful for any future endeavor.

**Texts: Reader, at Copymat at the corner of Foothill and A Street in Hayward.**

**Attendance & Classroom Etiquette:**

- Please be sure you have read the assignment before attending class—I emphasize discussion and so it is vital that you keep up with the readings. If you do not, you

will not be able to participate. Your attendance is required, and roll will be taken at each class meeting. Excess absences, chronic tardiness, and early departures will adversely affect your grade. You are responsible for what goes on in class even if you are not there.

- If for some reason you must arrive late (e.g., accident on the freeway), come in quietly and sit near the door.
- If you develop a long-term illness or other problem, please contact me immediately. I will make evaluations on a case-by-case basis. It is not OK to simply disappear for two or three weeks and expect to make up missed assignments. It is also not OK to fail to show up for a test—assuming you have a severe medical problem—without contacting me first.
- All cell phones and pagers must be turned off. If your cell phone rings, you must bring a treat (snack) for the entire class at the next meeting.

**Peer Contact Information:**

Take down the names and phone numbers of at least three classmates in case you need information about assignments or material covered in class that you missed. In addition, this is a good way to make new friends.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
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**Late Work, Make-Ups, and Evaluation:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. There will be a penalty for assignments turned in after this time. You will lose 15% of your grade if the assignment is turned in one class meeting late and 25% if it is turned in two class meetings late. Assignments will be not be accepted after the second class meeting following the due date. I generally do not give make-up tests unless you supply a written doctor’s excuse. Make-ups will be arranged only in cases of verifiable emergencies. **If you develop a long-term illness or some other problem, contact me immediately.** You have my email address and phone number.

- More than three absences without a written doctor’s excuse will affect your grade--likewise for habitual late arrivals.

**Evaluation:** Your grade will be based on tests, written assignments, Blackboard assignments, and an oral report. There may be additional short writing assignments not listed in the syllabus.

**Class Format:** The class will be a mixture of short lecture, class discussion, and group work. Be prepared. I will present material that is not covered in the readings. Take notes!

Your grade will be based on the following breakdown:

90 - 100% of the points = A  
80 - 89% “ = B  
70 - 79% “ = C

60 - 69% “ = D  
below 60% “ = F

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“**A**”=uniform excellence: the student follows directions, exercises his or her imagination, writes with clarity and precision (as far as possible), and does a bang up job!

“**B**”=a superior paper: the student follows directions, exercises his or her imagination, writes with clarity and precision (as far as possible), but the paper does not go the extra mile characteristic of an A paper.

“**C**”=the student follows directions, and does what is minimally necessary to address the assignment; the paper is a bit sloppy and the writing careless.

“**D**”=the student does not really follow directions and barely addresses the assignment; the paper is sloppy and careless.

“**F**”=beyond the pale.

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Constructive participation in class can help your grade.

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**Plagiarism:** Using other people’s work without proper documentation is plagiarism. Copying other students’ work is also plagiarism. Ideas and text must be documented. If you use someone else’s words, put quote marks around the passage. If you paraphrase someone else’s ideas and words, indicate the source. If you plagiarize, I will file an Academic Dishonesty Report that will reside in your permanent record, and you will most likely fail the course. At the very least, you will lose all credit for that particular assignment.

**Incompletes:** These are given only for last-minute emergencies and only for students who have completed all the requirements except the final assignment.

**Special Needs:** If you have any special needs or problems, please don’t hesitate to tell me so we can address them. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss your approved academic accommodations, please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible.

**Withdrawal from class:** Withdrawing from the class is entirely the responsibility of the student. I will not drop you. You must officially withdraw by contacting the registrar. Failure to do so will result in an F in the course.

**Written Assignment Format on next page:**

- All take-home assignments must be neatly typed, double-spaced (or 1.5), have a title, be stapled in the upper left corner, and have a one-inch margin on all four sides.
- **I do not accept written assignments via email.**
- Use a type font of 12 points for every assignment.
- **Please do not use plastic binders**—it is too difficult for me to make comments. Just staple your papers in the upper left hand corner.
- You will be graded on the quality of your reasoning, but if I can’t understand what you are saying I can’t give you full credit. This means that your papers should be well-organized and attentive to grammar and spelling. The keenest insight remains stillborn if it is not clearly, concisely, and carefully expressed. Your goal when writing is to communicate effectively. You will receive a style and grammar handout. Please use a dictionary when in doubt about the spelling and meaning of a word.

- You must proofread and edit your work. Do not turn in rough drafts. I will know if you do! Always read your essays OUT LOUD (yes!) to yourself after you write them. If you stumble over a phrase or sentence, you should rewrite it to remove the problem. Pay attention to your computer’s “spell check” option: it will not catch everything, but it is a good start. Don’t hand in papers filled with words underlined by squiggly red and green lines (the spell check clue that something is amiss).
- **Please read and use the writing and grammar guidelines in the Appendix of your reader. It contains the most common grammar errors plus advice on how to write concisely and clearly.**
- **Always keep a copy of assignments that you turn in and a file of all graded work in case of a grade dispute.**

**Writing Assistance:** The university provides free services to help you with your writing. You can contact the Learning Resource Center at 885-2953 on the Hayward campus. You can also come to my office with paper drafts.

**Human Rights Documents:** You are expected to read the Declaration of Independence, the United States Bill of Rights, and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights—all are available on the Internet. See schedule for references.

**Contemporary Issues:** Pay attention to the popular media (e.g., newspapers, radio, television, internet, etc.) for current events that raise issues of rights and justice as they apply to groups and individuals in the United States. **Start by browsing [www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org): click on “rights and liberties”**

**\*\*\*\*Weekly Blackboard Assignments:** Most weeks I will post a question or two on blackboard that pertains to our readings and/or class discussions. You will be required to post an answer the question(s), read the posts of other students, and to post a response to at least one of the other students’ posts. Directions will accompany my questions. Please attend the videos, because some of the blackboard posts will relate to them. We’ll discuss this in class **(10 points for each combination of post and response. In some rare instances, if a student writes a super post and response—one that shows depth, careful writing, and thoughtfulness—I may add between 1 and 5 points extra credit.)**

**\*\*\*\*Oral Reports:** You will form groups for the purpose of researching a topic for a group oral report. This will take place at the end of the term. This should be about a particular contemporary issue that affects groups in the United States. It may or may not be related to an issue we covered in class, but it must raise human rights/justice issues. See description of assignment in syllabus (following the schedule below).

**SCHEDULE—subject to minor changes in assignments and readings.**

**NOTE #1: a few readings are posted on Blackboard.**

**NOTE #2: There is no final exam in this course. You will have two in-class tests. See syllabus for dates.**

**Week 1**

## Conceptual Foundations

1/4: Introduction—**What are Rights?**

1/6: Video: *A Class Divided* ; view chart, “The Cycle of Socialization” by Bobby Harro.

- **Read the syllabus carefully so that you know what is expected of you and when—you are responsible for knowing these requirements. Examine the assignments and attendance and evaluation policies. Use the guidelines for thinking found at the beginning of the reader and the material in the Appendix, which includes information about paper structure, writing, and grammar. You will find them invaluable.**

Read Orend, from *Human Rights: Concept and Context*, 15-35.

### **Week 2**

1/9: Orend, 62-75; 111-27; the Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10), the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (available on line—use google);

1/11: Orend, cont., Sunstein, “Rights From Wrongs”

1/13: Krugman, “For Richer,” video.

### **Week 3**

1/16: Holiday.

1/18: Read Ehrenreich, excerpt from *Nickel and Dimed*; short video.

1/20: Pincus, “Discrimination Comes in Many Forms”

## Race and Gender: Contemporary Debates/Issues Note film/paper assignment due next week.

### **Week 4**

1/23: Read short articles: Hutchinson, “The Two Black Americas” “For Blacks, Progress Without Parity” (from *BusinessWeek online*, article posted on Blackboard); Marin, “Virginia’s Trap.”

1/25: McWhorter, excerpt from *Losing the Race*;

1/27: selection from *Whitewashing Race*

### **Week 5**

1/30: Read hooks, “Refusing to be a Victim: Accountability and Responsibility” from *Rock My Soul*

**Film Assignment due today (100 points):** View the film *Crash* (the recent film, which was just released to video outlets, not the older film—they are not the same). **Write (type) a 2 \_ to 3 page response to one of the following three questions (make sure your paper is double or 1.5 spaced with normal margins and type size):**

- **How does the film illustrate Harro’s “cycle of socialization”? Use some details from the film to illustrate your point.**
- **How does the film illustrate at least one of the types of discrimination that Pincus refers to? Of course, you must define (briefly) what Pincus means by the type(s) you choose in order to answer this. Use some details from the film to illustrate your point.**
- **How does the film illustrate violations of third generation rights? Use some details in the film to illustrate your point.**
- The paper should be neat and organized. Be sure you proofread your paper before you give it to me or it will be returned ungraded. Do not exceed the page limit. If you have written more, you must edit to appropriate length.

**\*\*Form into Oral Report groups.**

2/1: Review for test.

2/3: **Test #1 (100 points).**

**Week 5**

2/6: Read short piece on hip-hop and image: Cepeda, "Money, Power, Elect: Where's the Hip Hop Agenda?" Bynoe, "The White Boy Shuffle"

2/8: Lecture: "waves" and types of feminism. Read Lorber, "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender"; Zimmerman, "Where are the Women" (posted on Blackboard)

2/10: Read Sommers, excerpt from *Who Stole Feminism?*

**Week 6**

2/13: Read Crittendon, "Sixty Cents to a Man's Dollar" and Hays, "The 'Success' of Welfare"

2/15: Read Figueira-McDonough and Sarri's "Increasing Inequality"

2/17: Read Louie, excerpt from *Sweatshop Warriors*.

**Note: oral report proposals are due next Monday! Read the instructions on the next page.**

**Week 7**

2/20: Read Shapiro, "A Makeover for the Cosmetics Industry," view film *Still Killing Us Softly*.

**Oral report proposals due today (20 points).**

- **Proposals must be typed, have a title, and begin with a paragraph that describes the project. Turn in one proposal for each group—not one per person.**
- **Provide annotated bibliography of at least four sources.** "Annotated" means that you list the sources and after each source provide a brief description of the material you will use from it (e.g., a particular website, book, or journal).
- I realize you may not have all your sources or even have an entirely clear sense of the direction yet, but I need some information in order to evaluate the sources and make recommendations (**instructions continue on next page**).
- **List all the names of those in your group, and provide contact information (emails, if they differ from the horizon addresses, and phones of group members).**

2/22: Read Enloe, "Wielding Masculinity Inside Abu Ghraib: Making Feminist Sense of an American Scandal"

2/24: Film.

**Week 8**

2/27: Calhoun, "Sexuality Injustice"; video *Out of the Past* (**your attendance is required; there will be a Blackboard posting about this film**).

3/1: Discuss Calhoun article.

3/3: Review for test; work on oral reports.

## Week 9

2/27: Test#2 (100 points)—This is not a final exam—it emphasizes the material covered in the second half of the course, with possible reference to human rights concepts we addressed in the first half (e.g., generations of rights, types of discrimination).

3/1: Oral Reports. (Oral report paper and evaluation of group members due the day of your presentation—no exceptions)—see instructions for papers, reports, and evaluations that follow this schedule. Your attendance is required whether or not you are giving your report—failure to show up for other presentations will result in a 15 point loss from your grade unless you have a written excuse from a physician.

3/3: Oral Reports.

## Week 10:

3/6: Oral Reports

3/8: Oral Reports.

3/10: Oral Reports.

## Week 11:

Finals Day: Remaining oral reports if we are not finished.

## Oral report: General Information: PLEASE FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS

### Grading:

50 points group paper grade—note requirements for paper below. Be sure to follow them closely.

10 points for your individual oral presentation—it should be concise, organized, to the point, and integrated into the overall presentation.

10 points individual grade for being a team player, i.e., communicating and doing your share to make the project work.

\*\*\*Each member of the group must turn in a confidential evaluation to me of the members of the group on the day of the report. Rate everyone, including yourself, on a scale of 1 to 10—10 is highest—in terms of effort, willingness, initiative, etc. Give a brief (sentence or two) explanation of each rating. This must be turned in to me separately from the paper on the day of your report or you will not receive your portion of the team player grade.

- Be sure to exchange email and telephone information with other group members—do not wait for someone to call you—take the initiative—this is part of what it means to be a team member (instructions continue on next page).

### I. Oral Portion of Report:

- Each person should speak for 5-7 minutes. The groups should be between 2 or 4 members and work on the same general topic. Each person will report on an aspect of the chosen topic. You will share the work and any anxiety you may

have. You are responsible for organizing how you will divvy up the work. Keep in mind that the larger the group gets the more difficult it may be to coordinate everything.

## **II. Written Portion of Report: Read these directions carefully and if you have questions, please ask:**

- You will hand in a written summary of your findings [*approximately 2* pages per person, plus introduction, conclusion, and documentation].
- **If this report is not written and documented as described immediately below, you cannot receive a grade higher than the equivalent of a C (35 points) and could receive something lower.**
- Each of you will write a portion of this document, but you must work together to put it into one coherent and stylistically consistent paper, complete with documentation of sources and correction of grammar, and spelling. Do not hand in papers that have not been proofread.
- **Indicate who was responsible for which parts of the written portion. For example: who wrote the introduction? Who wrote the first segment? Who wrote the second segment? Etc.**
- Keep in mind that all of you are responsible for proofreading the entire document.
- **You must document your sources as you use them in the body of the paper, either in the text or in footnotes, and you must include a bibliography at the end. If you fail to do either, you cannot receive higher than a C and could receive something lower. Ideas taken from the Internet must be documented (just like books and journals) and any passages that are directly quoted must be in quote marks. Do not just copy material from the Internet—this is plagiarism.**
- **Failure to use quote marks around quoted material and failure to document the sources of ideas is plagiarism. If your paper is plagiarized, you will not receive credit for the oral report.**
- This report is designed to introduce the class to perspectives of human rights issues we have not covered in class, or perhaps not covered thoroughly. The project can be about groups we have not covered. Alternative media sources available on the Internet and traditional library research are fine. We'll discuss use of the Internet in class.
- At the end, be sure to indicate what information you would still need to be able to take an informed position on this issue. That is, what do you know and what do you still need to know? What are some implications of the issue you dealt with?

**Sample Assignment:** A group is interested in learning more about race and the death penalty. Reports can be purely informational or they can be pro and con arguments. In any case, you should introduce the topic to the class and then go into the details. Indicate your main sources, and keep in mind it will be necessary to evaluate the claims and evidence. Indicate whether you need more evidence and what kind. Your particular topic

can be a way to go more deeply into issues raised in class or it can be on something we did not have time to cover.

**Some possible issues and topics (you are not restricted to these topics—these are just suggestions):** recent abortion legislation (does this interfere with women’s rights?); prostitution; violence against women; pornography; gay marriage and/or adoption; unfair labor practices (e.g., sweatshop labor as it intersects with race and gender—you can select a particular issue for focus such as Chinese workers in American sweatshops, Latinos in meatpacking plants and in agribusiness; juvenile justice as it intersects with race; trafficking in women (this is more than just prostitution—people are trafficked to become maids, nannies, agricultural workers too); lack of regulation of the cosmetics industry; homelessness as it intersects with race; representations of minorities in the media—advertising, art, music, film, video games, etc. (Asian-Americans, African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, Native Americans); women in the military; feminization of poverty; history of women’s, African American’s, Native American’s, gay’s and lesbian’s achievements. We’ll discuss other possible topics in class.

### **Some Useful Websites:**

[www.hrweb.org/](http://www.hrweb.org/) (click on “Human Rights Resources”)

[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org) (devoted to lesbian and gay issues)

[www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/diana/](http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/diana/) (women’s issues—resources)

<http://human-rights.net/> (has many links to different kinds of human rights work)

<http://www.whrnet.org/> (women’s and gender issues—interesting article on the usefulness of a human rights framework for dealing with gender-based violence, and much more)

<http://www.hrcr.org/>

<http://www.hrusa.org/> (resource center on many different aspects—browse “education materials”).

<http://www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/> (poverty, consumerism, racism, the effects of the media on our perception of events, and much more)

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/humanrights/bibliographies/> (UC Berkeley website with lots of resources)

This is just a small sample of what is available on the Internet. You can go to google and type “human rights” + whatever issue you are interested in and get information that way. Keep in mind that not everything on the Internet is worthwhile. We will discuss how to evaluate websites when you prepare your preliminary bibliography.

More websites that are not specifically about human rights, but which are likely to be concerned with issues that raise problems associated with rights and justice.

<http://www.sonoma.edu/ProjectCensored/> [underreported news stories---recommended; however the stories on the website are often shorter versions so you might need the book to get complete references, etc.]

<http://www.aclu.org> [issues of civil liberties, free speech]

<http://www.fair.org> [media criticism; has many, many different types of well-researched articles—recommended]

<http://www.inthesetimes.com> [independent news and views—recommended]

<http://www.motherjones.com>\* [investigative journalism]

<http://www.progressive.org>\* [progressive reporting and political analysis]

<http://www.thenation.com>\* [similar to above]

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/> [watchdog group]

[www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org) [watchdog group on corporate schenanigans—material related to classism]

[www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org) [watchdog group on sweatshops and other things]

