

TOPICS IN ETHICS: ETHICS OF WAR

PHILOSOPHY 430

FALL 2010

Course Description: There has been a long, intellectual tradition in thinking about the moral justification of war, ranging at least from Thomas Aquinas's writings in the 13th century to Michael Walzer's instant classic, *Just and Unjust Wars*. The contemporary advent of terrorism arguably challenges central tenets of the just war tradition, replacing the doctrine of preemption with that of prevention, blurring the distinction between civilians and combatants, accelerating both the speed and potential damage of attacks, and so on. How, if at all, should these features of terrorism lead to a revision of just war principles?

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Seminar: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:00, 2271 Angell Hall

Texts: Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York: Basic Books, [1977] 2006).
Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
Michael L. Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War: Torture, Assassination and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
Fritz Allhoff, [*Terrorism, Ticking Time-Bombs, and Torture*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

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| Grading: | Attendance/participation | 20% |
| | Presentations | 20% |
| | Annotated research bibliography (November 30) | 10% |
| | Research paper (December 17) | 50% |

Attendance/Participation: You are required to attend each class and to participate. If you miss a seminar, you may turn in a 1000-word reaction to the assigned readings (half exegetical, half critical) at the beginning of the following class to avoid a zero for the previous one. You may do this, at most, three times.

Presentations: This will very much be a student-led seminar with some number of students being responsible for presentations each session. I expect *very good* preparation for these presentations, which we will talk more about. In particular, presentations should *not* simply trace through the text with a bunch of quotations (though these should be there as appropriate), but should rather seek to explicate the project in some integrative manner and to provide substantive questions for discussion. PowerPoint is strongly encouraged.

Annotated research bibliography: Before writing your research paper, you will compile a research bibliography which will support the research for that project. There should be at least twenty sources in this bibliography, at least half of which should be from after 2000. For each source, you should provide full bibliographic information as well as a 100-word précis. Comments will be offered on the bibliography as will be useful for developing the research paper.

Research paper: Students will incorporate the annotated research bibliography into a research paper, which will be in the 6000-9000 word range. My preference would be for something approximately in the middle of this range as I suspect shorter papers will lack some of the depth of longer ones and that longer ones will lack some of the focus of more intermediate ones. Nevertheless, you have some flexibility on this length. Paper submissions should: include a 150-word abstract and word count; have justified margins, Calibri 11 pt. font, and page numbers; and have a full bibliography—style of your choosing—for all referenced sources.

SEMINAR AND READING SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|------------|------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| W1a | 9/7 | Introduction | Aquinas |
| W1b | 9/9 | The Moral Reality of War | Walzer, chs. 1-3 |
| W2a | 9/14 | The Theory of Aggression | Walzer, chs. 4-7 |
| W2b | 9/16 | No Class | |
| W3a | 9/21 | The War Convention | Walzer, chs. 8-13 |
| W3b | 9/23 | Dilemmas of War | Walzer, chs. 14-17 |

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| W4a | 9/28 | The Question of Responsibility | Walzer, chs. 18-19 |
| W4b | 9/30 | Morality of Participation in an Unjust War | McMahan, ch. 1 |
| W5a | 10/5 | Arguments for the Moral Equality of Combatants | McMahan, ch. 2 |
| W5b | 10/7 | Excuses | McMahan, ch. 3 |
| W6a | 10/12 | Liability and the Limits of Self-Defense | McMahan, ch. 4 |
| W6b | 10/14 | Civilian Immunity and Civilian Liability | McMahan, ch. 5 |
| W7a | 10/19 | No Class: Fall Break | |
| W7b | 10/21 | Guest Lecture: David Charlton (Western Michigan University), "Ignorance, Coercion, and the Moral Blameworthiness of Unjust Combatants" | |
| W8a | 10/26 | Asymmetric Conflict and Combatant Equality | Gross, chs. 1-2 |
| W8b | 10/28 | Combatants in Asymmetric War | Gross, chs. 3-4 |
| W9a | 11/2 | Combatants in Asymmetric War (cont.) | Gross, chs. 5-6 |
| W9b | 11/4 | Noncombatants in Asymmetric War | Gross, chs. 7-9 |
| W10a | 11/9 | Conclusion and Afterword | Gross, chs. 10-11 |
| W10b | 11/11 | What Is Terrorism and Why Is It Wrong? | Allhoff, chs. 1-2 |
| W11a | 11/16 | Conceptual and Moral Foundations of Torture | Allhoff, ch. 4 |
| W11b | 11/18 | Ticking Time-Bomb Methodology | Allhoff, ch. 5 |
| W12a | 11/23 | Should We Torture in Ticking Time-Bomb Cases? | Allhoff, ch. 6 |
| W12b | 11/25 | No Class: Thanksgiving Break | |
| W13a | 11/30 | Torture and the Real World Research Bibliography Due | Allhoff, chs. 7-8 |
| W13b | 12/2 | Catch-up/Student Presentations | |
| W14a | 12/7 | Catch-up/Student Presentations | |
| W14b | 12/9 | Catch-up/Student Presentations | |