

FNDL 24500/RSLT 24110

The Ethics of War: Reading *Just and Unjust Wars*

M/W 1:50-3:10pm

Autumn 2020

Professor Richard B. Miller

Office: Swift 202

Office Hours: T/TH 1:00-2:20pm

Please contact Julia Woods at

jlwoods1@uchicago.edu to sign up

for office hours. She will schedule

you and will have my Zoom link

Description

Questions about war, the taking of human life, the obligations of citizenship, the role of state power, and international justice are among the most pressing topics in ethics and political life. This class will examine these matters through a close reading of Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, first published in 1977 and now in its 5th edition. Widely heralded as a classic in the ethics of war and political thought more generally, *JUW* develops a theory for evaluating whether to enter war as well as decisions within war—what are known as the *jus ad bellum* and the *jus in bello*. Walzer applies his theory to a number of actual cases, ranging from military interventions to reprisals to terrorism to insurgencies to nuclear policy, all informed by the history of warfare and arguments in the history of Western thought. We will critically examine Walzer's theory, his use of cases, and the conclusions to which his arguments lead. Along the way, we'll examine core ideas in political morality, e.g., human rights; state sovereignty; morality, necessity, and extremity; liability and punishment; nonviolence; and killing and murder.

Format

Class meets twice a week in a mini-lecture and discussion format. **I expect students to be actively engaged and on camera while on Zoom.** If you require an exception, please reach out to me directly to discuss accommodations. We'll learn a lot as an interactive group. Walzer's book invites a careful reading, and we'll benefit from attending closely to his ideas, his choice of terms, and his historical examples by engaging in dialogue with each other.

As you think about the reading material in advance of each class session, please consider the following:

- Walzer's argument relies on illustrative cases lifted from the history of war. What is the "moral" of each case? What ideas or concepts is he trying to illustrate?
- What tensions exist in the case under consideration? How are these tensions related to the more general theoretical ideas in Walzer's argument?
- How would you compare one case with another, either by way of similarity or contrast? What concepts shape your comparison? Why are these comparisons important?
- What merits and weaknesses in Walzer's argument(s) can you identify? Explain.
- Walzer's book has a structure, made plain in the book's Table of Contents. Where does each case fall within that structure, and what light does that shed on the case?

Text

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* 5th ed. **Please be sure to acquire this edition!** Previous editions have different pagination, and the 5th addition has new

material that we will read and discuss. The book is available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, among other venues.

Format

I will begin each class by making some introductory comments, accompanied by a brief handout. Then we'll have a class discussion of that material and the assigned reading. Please bring your book to each class meeting and be prepared to discuss the text through a close and careful examination of the material. With a few exceptions, each class meeting will focus on one chapter in *JUW*.

Online materials. The course website is accessible on Canvas at <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>. From our course page you can access the syllabus and other readings that I have posted on Files. You will use our Canvas course page to Zoom for our synchronous meetings.

Office Hours: T/TH 1:00-2:20pm (20 minute slots)

Please contact Julia Woods at jlwoods1@uchicago.edu to sign up for office hours. She will schedule you and will have my Zoom link for you to use. If this window of time does not work for you, please reach out to me and we'll find an alternative.

Requirements

- 1. Regular attendance and class participation:** 20%. In a class such as ours, interaction with the text as a group is an essential part of learning. I assess quality of engagement using the following questions: Is good preparation for class evident in your remarks and questions? Are you clearly engaging with the assigned text, paying close attention to its arguments and details? Are you paying careful attention to your classmates' contributions and advancing the discussion on that basis? Are you offering thoughtful answers to the questions being discussed? How well are you helping to create and sustain a community of open, inclusive, and respectful discussion? If you have questions about your participation, please do reach out to me.
- 2. Case Analysis:** 2-3 page, 12pt font, single-spaced. 40%. You are to critically analyze one case from Walzer's book through Week 5. The Case Analysis is to critically examine (a) the concepts he aims to illustrate with the case, (b) his aims in using the case, and (c) the merits of his argument about the case. Submit your Case Analysis to me via an email attachment in Word. Please put your last name along with the prompt you chose in the subject heading of the email, e.g., S. Williams Case Analysis. My email is: rhm1@uchicago.edu.

Your Case Analysis is due **Friday, Nov. 6 at 5pm**. Late papers will not be accepted without proper excuse.

It is necessary, of course, to cite sentences or passages from the work(s) under consideration. Do so economically, as a way of focusing your discussion. When quoting, provide page references in parentheses, in an abbreviated way, e.g., (*JUW*, 14). Attach a bibliography that provides the full publication information of your source(s). You will find tips for writing your papers on Canvas>Files. Summary or expositional papers are not acceptable and will be returned for revision.

3. **Final Exam.** 40%. Comprehensive. Your Final Exam will take place on **Wednesday, December 9.** Details TBA.

Calendar

Wk 1

- Sept. 30 Introduction: The Just-War Tradition: its structure, core ideas, and foils.
Read: *JUW*, Preface to the 1st edition, and Chap. 1: Against “Realism.”
Oct. 5 Continue with Chap. 1, and Chap. 2: The Crime of War

Wk 2

- Oct. 7 Chap. 3: The Rules of War
Oct. 12 Chap. 4: Law and Order in International Society

Wk 3

- Oct 14 Chap. 5: Anticipations
Oct 19 Chap. 6: Interventions

Wk 4

- Oct. 21 Chap. 7: War’s Ends, and the Importance of Winning
Oct. 26 Chap. 8: War’s Means, and the Importance of Fighting Well

Wk 5

- Oct. 28 Chap. 9: Noncombatant Immunity and Military Necessity
Nov. 2 Chap. 10: War Against Civilians: Sieges and Blockades

Wk 6

- Nov. 4 Chap. 11: Guerilla War

Friday, Nov. 6: Case Analysis as a Word attachment via email due at 5pm.

- Nov. 9 Chap. 12: Terrorism, **and** Preface to the 5th edition, *JUW* (pp. xiii-xxii).

Wk 7

- Nov. 11 Chap. 13: Reprisals **and** Chap. 14: Winning and Fighting Well
Nov. 16 Chap. 15: Aggression and Neutrality

Wk 8

- Nov. 18 Chap. 16: Supreme Emergency **and**
Chap. 17: Nuclear Deterrence

November 23-27 Study Week/Thanksgiving Break

Wk 9

- Nov. 30 Chap. 18: The Crime of Aggression: Political Leaders and Citizens **and**
Chap. 19: War Crimes: Soldiers and Their Officers

Dec. 2 Afterword: Nonviolence and the Theory of War, **and**
 Postscript: A Defense of Just War Theory

Wk 10

Wednesday, December 9: Final Examination (comprehensive)

Although this class will be taught remotely, please keep in mind the following campus policies and resources regarding remote as well as in-person instruction:

1. The Recording and Deletion Policies for the current academic year can be found in the Student Manual under Petitions, Audio & Video Recording on Campus. Please note:

- Do not record, share, or disseminate any course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats.
- Do not share links for the course to those not currently enrolled.
- Any Zoom cloud recordings will be automatically deleted 90 days after the completion of the recording.

2. UChicago Health Pact. All students on campus are required to adhere to the guidelines in the UChicago HealthPact in order to promote a safe environment in the classroom. Please note:

- Secure face coverings must be worn appropriately at all times at all times while in University buildings.
- Maintain a distance of 6 feet from others.
- Do not attend and in-person class if you feel unwell or are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms.

3. Students who have been exposed to or who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should contact UChicago Student Wellness immediately to be tested, and reach out to their area Dean of Students to request accommodations for classes until: ● At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and; ● At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery- defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough shortness of breath).

4. Reporting COVID-19 Exposure or a Confirmed Case: If you were potentially exposed to COVID-19 or your COVID-19 test results come back positive, please reach out immediately to c19HealthReport@uchicago.edu.

5. Reporting COVID-19 Related Concerns: Any concerns over inappropriate PPE usage, physical distancing, cleaning/disinfection, or other COVID-19 related public health concerns should be directed to UCAIR.10. If there is an emergency, please call 773-702-8181 or dial 123 on any campus phone.

6. Accessibility: The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required in order to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with me to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations. Phone: (773) 702-6000. Email: disabilities@uchicago.edu.

7. Resources for Writing: The Writing Program is available to help students develop academic writing skills through courses, seminars, and workshops. Students can learn more at: <https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/>.

8. Academic Honesty: Students must adhere to all of the University of Chicago's Academic Honesty & Plagiarism and Academic Fraud policies as outlined in the Student Manual. Violations of academic integrity guidelines can result in failure of a class and may ultimately lead to dismissal from the University. For additional information, refer to: <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic-policies/academic-honesty-plagiarism>.

9. Religious Accommodations: University policy allows students to miss class and related assignments to observe a religious holiday. Students must inform instructors in writing in advance of an absence that a religious accommodation is required. Instructors are required to give reasonable extensions without academic penalty; Instructors may not drop students from a course or assess academic penalties to students requesting religious accommodations. For more information, please visit: <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/policy-on-religious-accommodation-for-missed-classes-assignments-and-exams/>.

10. Missing class: While I hope that we can all be present for synchronous discussions, I know that technology is imperfect and that there are personal reasons why you might not be able to participate in a synchronous class meeting. When that is the case, there are two options. You should do ONE of the following if you are unable to participate in a synchronous discussion:

- a. Watch the video of the class discussion and write a 1-2 page single-spaced response to a theme discussed. If you refer to something that someone in class said, please also note their name, and if possible, the time of the video in which they made their comment. If you cite the text(s), please provide the page(s) referenced.
- b. If you cannot watch the video, then write a 1-2 page single-spaced paper on a theme from the readings for the day. In the course of your paper, pose a question about the author's ideas. Please reference page numbers when you cite the text(s) under review.

Please submit your paper to me at rbm1@uchicago.edu in a Word document, making note that it is a replacement for class participation.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions about any of these matters, please feel free to reach out to me.