This course is an introduction to contemporary theories of justice by way of examination of the views of John Rawls and Robert Nozick. The texts will be *A Theory of Justice* (1971) and *Political Liberalism* (1993) by Rawls and *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) by Nozick. Both authors are concerned to develop a theory of justice that can stand as a rival to utilitarianism. Both develop theories of individual rights of a broadly Kantian inspiration. Rawls elaborates left-wing strands in Kantianism and Nozick develops a right-wing Kantianism that emphasizes its affinities with the doctrines of John Locke. Rawls aims to provide a rational reconstruction and defense of principles he finds to be latent in constitutional democracy. Nozick is less concerned to interpret the ideal of democracy than to articulate moral limits on what any government including a democratic government may legitimately do to its citizens and subjects. Many developments in contemporary theories of justice have emerged as responses and reactions to Rawls—Nozick’s work also falls in this category—so we survey some of these responses and reactions. But our focus will be on the interpretation and assessment of the main arguments advanced by Rawls and Nozick.

Course Requirements: Each enrolled student is to give two brief seminar presentations, about 15 minutes in length, introducing some aspect of that week’s readings. Auditors are welcome, and encouraged to give a presentation. For enrolled students, a term paper of about 15-20 pages is due at the end of the quarter.

I will put copies of required readings (and some recommended readings) other than course texts in the Philosophy Library. If this mode of access is inconvenient for you, we can make another arrangement.

Week 1.

Week 2.
Two principles of justice.

Week 3.
The original position argument.

Week 4.
Basic liberties.
Reading: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* chapter 4 (especially sections 31-35 and 39-40); along with chapter 9, section 82; also Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Lecture VIII, “The Basic Liberties and Their Priority.”

Week 5.
Distributive Shares.

Week 6.
Nozick versus Rawls.
Week 7.
Rawls Revised.

Week 8.
Lockean individual rights.

Week 9.
Nozick versus anarchism; the argument for the minimal state.
Reading: Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapters 2, 4, and 5.

Week 10.
Against equality and egalitarianism.
Reading: Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapter 8; also Harry Frankfurt, "Equality as a Moral Ideal."

Alternate week 10.
Self-ownership and world ownership; left-wing and right-wing libertarianism.

Short list of further readings
Reviews of *a Theory of Justice*
R.M. Hare, "Rawls’ Theory of Justice," reprinted in Norman Daniels, *Reading Rawls*.

The original position.

Primary goods as the basis of interpersonal comparison for the theory of justice.

The basic liberties.
Neutrality on the good.  

Communitarian critiques.  
Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.  

The basic structure of society as the primary subject of justice.  
John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Lecture VII.  

Individual responsibility, brute versus option luck, and egalitarian justice.  

International justice.  

Reviews of *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.  

The nature of rights.  

Lockean property rights.  
The “principle of fairness.”
Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pages 93-98 and 293-308.

Infringements and violations of rights; rights not to be harmed versus rights not to be harmed without compensation.

Egalitarianism.
Thomas Nagel, Equality and Partiality.
Larry Temkin, Inequality.

Left Libertarianism.