

**FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT  
WINTER, 2005**

**PHILOSOPHY 162**

Professor Richard Arneson

This assignment is due in class on Friday, February 4. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty.

Write an essay of about five to seven pages on one of the following topics. Please indicate which topic you have selected on the title page of your essay. Your essays will be evaluated according to the cogency of your arguments, the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you display, and the clarity of your prose.

1. In *Just and Unjust Wars* Walzer holds that morality requires that when one is engaged in warfare one should aim to harm only combatants who have not surrendered. Besides insisting that one refrain from intending harm to noncombatants, morality according to Walzer also permits knowingly bringing about harm to noncombatants but only provided that a due proportionality condition is satisfied. These requirements are relaxed just in case one encounters what Walzer calls "supreme emergency" (chapter 16). Is Walzer's supreme emergency doctrine coherent? Is it plausible? Consider both the objection that the supreme emergency doctrine is too lax (allows too many exceptions to the war convention) and the objection that the doctrine is too restrictive (allows too few exceptions).
2. State the account of just war (conditions that justify fighting a war) as Walzer presents it in chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6 of *Just and Unjust Wars*. Attack or defend Walzer's just war doctrine and the arguments he advances to support it.
3. Jeff McMahan writes, "The traditional theory of the just war comprises two sets of principles, one governing the recourse to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the other governing the conduct of war (*jus in bello*)." According to the tradition and Michael Walzer, the two sets of principles are logically independent, in such a way that "it makes no difference to the permissibility of an unjust combatant's conduct in war that he fights without a just cause. Unjust combatants do not do wrong merely by participating in an unjust war." The justice or injustice of the cause for which they fight makes no difference to the question, what moral constraints apply to those engaged in warfare. McMahan proceeds to attack the tradition, and Walzer's defense of it, on this point. --Explain what is at stake in this dispute and state and assess the main arguments on each side. Defend Walzer's position or McMahan's or some third alternative.
4. Let us stipulate that a *terrorist* is one who deliberately attacks noncombatants in violation of what Walzer calls the "war convention" in order to advance military

or political objectives. Is terrorism so conceived always morally wrong? Why or why not? Your discussion should consider some pertinent arguments by Walzer, Anscombe, Brandt, and Fullinwider (you need not discuss all four authors).

5. In chapter 11 of *Just and Unjust Wars* Walzer applies his account of just war and warfare to the problem of guerrilla war and develops an account of the moral rights and duties of combatants and noncombatants in such conflicts. For example, regarding the potato field incident he describes on pp. 176-177, he concludes that "resistance is legitimate, and the punishment of resistance is legitimate" (so it could be right both for the partisans to attack and for the Germans to shoot any of them whom they capture). State and assess Walzer's account of guerrilla war morality.

When doing this assignment, as always, you should observe the university rules on plagiarism.

Arneson's office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 and Thursdays 12-2 in H and SS 8057.  
Email [rarneson@ucsd.edu](mailto:rarneson@ucsd.edu) Office phone 534 6810