

Responsibility, Justice, and Social Connections

The moral and political philosophy of Iris M. Young

Advanced seminar and essay course
Winter term 2015/16
Mondays, 2–4 pm in M210 (Center for Ethics)

LMU Munich, Department of Philosophy
Center for Ethics

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Iris M. Young (1949–2006) was an influential scholar in political, social and moral theory – as well as an engaged citizen and activist. In her writings she suggests an innovative political conception of responsibility for social justice, both on a domestic and the global level. Young develops her own view departing from a critical analysis of persisting structural injustice and different forms of oppression and exclusion. She offers innovative views about the moral demand for impartiality, individual and collective responsibility and spells out an important alternative to prevailing theories of procedural and distributive justice.

In this seminar (advanced seminar + essay course) we will read and critically discuss Young's main contributions to moral and political philosophy as well as recent literature that takes up insights from Young's writings. We will contrast her views with the positions she objects against, and locate her position in the contemporary debate about (global) ethics and justice.

Readings

A 'reader' with all the texts will be available at the beginning of the semester. We will be reading chapters from Young's books "Justice and the Politics of Difference" (Princeton 1990), "Inclusion and Democracy" (Oxford 2000), "Global Challenges" (Polity 2007) and "Responsibility for Justice" (Oxford 2011).

Objectives

By the end of this course you should be familiar with the views of Iris Young and you should be able to relate them to other positions in the contemporary debate; you will have practiced to present, develop and defend an argument both orally and in writing.

Course requirements

Students are expected to come prepared to each class, to participate actively and to give a brief presentation of one of the readings.

Students may either write four short essays (ca. 2.000 words each) during the term or a “Hausarbeit” (ca. 7.500 words) during the term break.

The essays are due on the following dates:

Essay 1: Nov 23

Essay 2: Dec 21

Essay 3: Jan 25

Essay 4: Feb 15

The “Hausarbeit” is due on: Mar 21

Preparation

If you want to prepare for the seminar, you might want to read a review of her last book “Responsibility for Justice” by Mathias Risse that can be found here:

<https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24620-responsibility-for-justice/>

Reading list

Justice and Equality: Distribution vs. Relations

1. 1990: **Displacing the Distributive Paradigm.** In: Iris M. Young: Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 15–38.
2. 1990: **Five Faces of Oppression.** In: Iris M. Young: Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 39–65.
3. Anderson 1999: Elizabeth Anderson: **What is the Point of Equality?** In: *Ethics* 109.2, 287–337.
4. Dotson 2012: Kristie Dotson: **How is this Paper Philosophy?** In: *Comparative Philosophy* 3.1, 03-29.

Citizenship, Difference and Policy

5. 1990: **Polity and Group Difference. A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship.** In: *Ethics* 99: 250-274.
6. 1990: **The Idea of Impartiality and the Civic Public.** In: Iris M. Young: Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 96–121.
7. 2000: **Inclusive Political Communication.** In: Iris M. Young: Inclusion and Democracy. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 52–80.

Affirmative Action

8. 1990: **Affirmative Action and the Myth of Merit.** In: Iris M. Young: Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 192–225.

9. Anderson 2013: Elizabeth Anderson: **On Affirmative Action.** In: The Imperative of Integration. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 135–154.

Responsibility for Justice

10. 2011: **From Personal to Political Responsibility.** In: Iris M. Young: Responsibility for Justice. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 3–42.

11. 2011: **Structure as the Subject of Justice.** In: Iris M. Young: Responsibility for Justice. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 43–74.

12. 2011: **A Social Connection Model.** In: Iris M. Young: Responsibility for Justice. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 95–122.

13. 2011: **Responsibility across Borders.** In: Iris M. Young: Responsibility for Justice. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 123–152.

Preliminary schedule of readings

Oct 19 Introduction: Theory and activism

Oct 26 Text 1 and 2

Nov 2 Text 1 and 2

Nov 9 Text 3

Nov 16 Text 3 (cont.)

Nov 23 Text 4

Nov 30 Text 5

Dec 7 Texts 6 and 7

Dec 14 Texts 8 and 9

*** happy holidays! ***

Jan 11 Text 10

Jan 18 Texts 11 and 12

Jan 25 Text 13

Feb 1 Conclusion

Assessment criteria for written assignments

Standardly, written assignments will be graded according to the following criteria.

1. Structure and organisation

- Is the assignment well organised?
- Does it have a clear introductory paragraph, thesis statement, and concluding paragraph?
- Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?

2. Exposition and interpretation

- Do you give a clear and charitable interpretation of the view(s) under consideration?
- Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) as well as their implications?
- Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations from the text?

3. Argument and critical evaluation

- Do you provide good arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
- When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
- Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?

4. Writing style

- Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
- Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
- Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?