

2011-2012 Executive Precepts Program

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Justice

Justice is humanity's collective response to evil. Our various ideas related to justice are personified and symbolized in the ancient Greco-Roman statues of Justice. These always included a sword, symbolizing coercive power, a blindfold symbolizing impartiality and a set of scales symbolizing honest human judgment. Nature, society, and individuals can be improved, if not perfected, and justice aims to recreate the world abolishing as many evils as possible and mitigating as much as possible that cannot be abolished. Justice is multifarious and controversial. We will examine various manifestations: natural justice, distributive justice, poetic justice, divine justice, retributive justice, social justice, obstruction of justice. Our discussions of justice will also include coercion, consent, freedom, fairness, and the inevitable limitations caused by the conflict between justice and other values.

Reading List

- *Ecclesiastes*
- Aeschylus, *The Eumenides* (third play of the trilogy)
- Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 3, 70-85, Revolution in Corcyra
- Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- Melville, *Billy Budd*
- Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 2nd ed. pp. 175-217
- Howard, *The Death of Common Sense*, Ch. 1
- Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, Chapter 1, pp. 3-24
- Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*, Ch. 1 through 6 and Epilogue