Are the outcomes of capitalist exchanges fair or unfair? Is capitalism supportive or detrimental to democratic virtues? Does the welfare state rectify the problems of capitalism or exacerbate them? John Rawls’ work *A Theory of Justice* has greatly shaped these considerations of the welfare state. His theory refined many of the debates concerning the fairness of capitalist economic outcomes and the effects capital accumulation has on democratic virtues. According to Rawls, the welfare state in some form was necessary for capitalism to have morally acceptable outcomes. But, critics of Rawls have called into question welfare state interventions, many finding them economically inefficient and detrimental to democratic virtues. Other critics have found Rawls’ theory to be too limited in its impact, thereby supporting more extensive interventions into capital accumulation. In this course we will try to answer questions about the morality of capitalist accumulation by studying theoretical conceptions of Rawls’ work and the responses of his critics. The main texts of Rawls’ critics we will consider are Nozick’s *Distributive Justice* and Cohen’s *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. These theoretical conceptions will be contrasted with the case studies contained in Esping-Andersen’s *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

**Course Objective:** The objective of this course is to introduce to students the history and theory of welfare state, philosophic notions of distributive justice, and contemporary ideas about how to improve the well-being of individuals.

**Required Readings**


* Note: All texts have been ordered at the New York University bookstore. Students should use the editions cited above.

(1) Note: These readings are on reserve at the library.

(j) Note: These readings are available on JSTOR.

(c) Note: These readings are available on the course's classes site.

(e) Note: These readings have an electronic version available at NYU.

**Course Requirements:**

1) Attendance: Attendance is mandatory.

2) Papers: Your written work should be a genuine attempt to fulfill the paper topics. If I find your paper not to be a genuine attempt I will tell you. All papers must be handed in. No late papers are accepted. There are no extensions for papers. Papers must be typed and double-spaced. See paper requirement options below.

3) Class Participation: This class is a seminar so regular participation is required. A seminar class won’t work if you don’t
participate in discussions. Each day of class students will come prepared to discuss the text assigned to be read by that day.

4) Being prepared to discuss the text entails bringing questions about the text to class. Students are required to bring two questions to class every day. These questions are to be written down and handed in at the beginning of class.

**Paper Requirement**

There are two options that fulfill the paper requirement. You can choose either one. All papers are to be submitted in pdf format.

**Paper requirement option A: one term paper**

Requirement A is a 4000- to 5000-word term paper on a topic of your choice relevant to the course. All papers must be handed in by Saturday, May 14th by noon. Papers are due by email. A 300-word description of your topic is due no later than Saturday, April 9 by noon. Please send your topic descriptions to my email address.

**Paper requirement option B: two papers**

Requirement B is two papers each 2000- to 2500-words in length. Your papers should be a genuine attempt to address the paper topics.

Paper 1 is due on Saturday, April 2 by noon. Papers are due by email.

Paper 2 is due on Saturday, May 14 by noon. Papers are due by email.

**Topic for paper 1 requirement B**

1. Argue for or against Rawls conclusions established within the original position. In your paper discuss the notions of the veil of ignorance, principles of justice, the difference principle, primary goods, the Aristotelian Principle, utilitarianism, and self-esteem.

**Topic for paper 2 requirement B**

Select one:

1. Discuss the critiques of Rawls made by (pick two) Nozick, Cohen, Sen, Okin, Daniels, Dworkin, Gomberg, Miller, Hart, Sandel, Van Parijs, and Nagel. Argue why their positions concerning justice are superior or inferior to Rawls’. You can supplement your argument with your own research.

2. Compare the ideas of welfare discussed by Esping-Andersen, Garfinkel et al., and/or Rawls with any of the authors of the course. Argue for a theory of welfare based on your review of the literature. You can supplement your argument with your own research.

**Grade Weights:**

- Papers: 75%
- Participation: 25%

**Gallatin Statement on Academic Integrity:**

“As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating.”

The above statement and additional information can be found at the following link:

http://gallatin.nyu.edu/gateways/faculty/plagiarism.html

**Schedule of Readings:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Esping-Andersen, <em>Three Worlds</em>, ch. 1 and 2 and Garfinkel et al., pp 1-101</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Garfinkel et al., pp 102-209</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Rawls, sections 1-5, 11-17, 24-27</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Rawls, sections 41-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>Rawls, sections 60-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Rawls, sections 78-87</td>
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<td>Nozick</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Dworkin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>Cohen, pp. 1-115</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/15</td>
<td>Cohen, pp. 116-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/22</td>
<td>Sen, pp. 3-159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/29</td>
<td>Sen, pp. 160-298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>Papers by Van Parijs and Mitchell and Watts</td>
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