



# KS Intergenerational Justice

University of Graz | Department of Philosophy | Spring Term 2019

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<b>Time:</b>	Thursday, 15:15 – 16:45 / 18:15 (May and June)
<b>Venue:</b>	SR 34.K1, Attemsgasse 25/K, 8010 Graz
<b>Lecturer:</b>	Mag. Dr. Thomas Pözlner, MA
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<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment

## Description

Intergenerational justice addresses relations of justice between non-contemporaries. Most importantly, it asks whether we owe compensation to currently living ancestors of victims of historical injustices (historical justice), and what we owe to those who will live in the (distant) future (justice to future generations). This course discusses these questions as well as a number of answers to them, in the sense of theories of (the possibility of) intergenerational justice. We will also investigate widely shared assumptions about procreation and population size. For example, is it wrong to bring people into existence? May historical injustices be superseded? Do we first and foremost owe future generations that they have enough? Under what circumstances, if any, may future generations' interests be discounted?

## Aims

Having completed the course, students should be able to:

- name the most important features of questions of intergenerational justice;
- name and reflect on objections against the possibility of intergenerational duties of justice;
- discuss normative assumptions about procreation and population size;
- explain the main elements of theories of intergenerational justice;
- name, analyze, evaluate and compare theories of intergenerational justice;
- reflect on applied ethical questions in intergenerational contexts (such as questions about climate change).

## Schedule and Topics

04/11/2019, 15:15 – 16:45: **Preliminary Discussion**

05/02/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Introduction**

- Axel Gosseries: Theories of Intergenerational Justice: A Synopsis
- David Benatar: Why It Is Better Never to Come into Existence

05/09/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Historical Justice**

- George Sher: Transgenerational Compensation
- Jeremy Waldron: Superseding Historic Injustice

05/16/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Justice to Future Generations 1**

- Lukas Meyer and Dominic Roser: Enough for the Future
- Edward Page: Intergenerational Justice of What: Welfare, Resources or Capabilities?

05/23/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Justice to Future Generations 2**

- Janna Thompson: Identity and Obligation in a Transgenerational Polity
- Discussion Seminar Paper Proposals

06/06/2019, 15:15 – 18:15: **Justice to Future Generations 3**

- Stephen Gardiner: The Pure Intergenerational Problem
- Simon Caney: Climate Change, Intergenerational Equity and the Social Discount Rate

06/13/2019, 15:15 – 16:45: **Applied Intergenerational Ethics**

- Clare Heyward: A Growing Problem? Dealing with Population Increases in Climate Justice

06/27/2019, 15:15 – 16:45: **Final Discussion**

All texts can be downloaded at the course's Moodle page ([moodle.uni-graz.at](https://moodle.uni-graz.at)).

## Assessment

### Seminar Paper

Your seminar paper should answer a specific and interesting research question in the area of intergenerational justice. For example, you may compare the arguments of two or more authors, criticize an argument by a particular author, or defend a thesis of your own. You can choose your research question freely. Make sure that your paper involves sound arguments that support your answer to this question.

The language of your seminar paper should be clear, succinct and intelligible. Its structure should be logical and aid understanding. In particular, you should motivate and explicitly

state your research question in an introductory section, and summarize your thesis and most important arguments in a concluding section.

Your seminar paper should be between 2.500 and 4.000 words (excluding title page, contents, footnotes, bibliography, etc.), and refer to at least three relevant sources. These sources can be texts that we discussed in class, additional texts provided on the course's Moodle page or texts that you researched yourself.

Your seminar paper must be submitted via Moodle by September 30, 2019. Moreover, I invite you to submit a one-page proposal (specifying and motivating your research question, approach, potential outcomes, etc.) by May 22, 2019. Other students will then read your proposal and provide feedback on it.

Your seminar paper grade will be primarily based on the following criteria: (1) the adequacy of your research question, (2) the soundness and relevance of your arguments, (3) your compliance with the rules of academic writing (citation, style, etc.), (4) the clarity, succinctness and intelligibility of your language, and (5) the adequacy of your paper's structure.

Further recommendations for writing a philosophy seminar paper can be found at: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>.

### **Comments/Questions**

In our course we will discuss ten texts. For at least eight of these texts you should formulate a comment or question that we may then consider in class. Your contributions may address how to understand certain aspects of the text or critically assess it. For example, you may ask how an author uses a certain key concept (sketching possible interpretations), or whether a particular argument is based on a problematic tacit assumption (explaining this assumption). Your comments/questions should be somewhere between three to ten sentences. For each session they should be submitted via Moodle by Wednesday, 23:55.

### **Class Participation**

Please do all readings and actively participate in our discussions; for example, ask questions, raise objections or point out interconnections.

## **General Policies**

### **Attendance**

In order to complete the course in a regular way you must not be absent from more than three of our thirteen sessions (one session = 1.5 hrs). In case you miss four or five sessions I ask for an explanation (e.g., doctor's confirmation) and some compensatory task (e.g., a longer seminar paper). In case you miss six or more sessions you cannot successfully complete the course.

### **Deadlines**

Late submissions of seminar papers and comments/questions will not be considered.

### **Academic Honesty**

Violations of academic honesty (e.g., using others' ideas without citing them) will automatically lead to a negative assessment of the seminar paper or comment/question in which they occur.

**Discussion Rules**

For our course to succeed it is essential that we treat each other politely and with respect (even when our opinions on some matter diverge).

**Laptops, Smartphones, etc.**

Please limit the use of electronic devices as much as possible (except for note-taking).