

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Entitlement & Just Holdings

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Nozick, R. (1974). [Chapter 7, section I, first half]. In *Anarchy, state, and utopia* (pp. 149–164). Blackwell.

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. What are the three major elements of Robert Nozick's entitlement theory of justice? What seems to justify this view?
2. According to Nozick, what is the difference between historical principles and end-result principles? What are current-time slice principles, and are these an example of historical principles or end-result principles? Of all these principles, which sort does Nozick's entitlement theory of justice rely upon?
3. What does Nozick mean by a patterned theory of justice? In what ways is Nozick's entitlement theory different from patterned theories?
4. Finally, Nozick presents his famous "Wilt Chamberlain" example, which is supposed to illustrate problems with patterned and end-result theories of justice. (Chamberlain was a famous basketball player. If you prefer, think about another famous athlete like Serena Williams, LeBron James, or Josh Allen.)

What problems is Nozick's example supposed to reveal about patterned theories?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.