Course Description
In this class we will consider several pressing ethical issues that contemporary democracies face. We will think about what (if anything) justifies democracy, civil disobedience and defensive action against the state, the morality of immigration restrictions, whether we have a duty to vote, the permissibility of buying and selling votes, money in politics, the morality of wealth inequality and limits on wealth, gun rights, voter ignorance and political irrationality, and contemporary alternatives to democracy.

Learning Goals
There are three main goals for this course. First, we will learn about some important issues that face contemporary democracies. Second, we will learn how to extract and critically evaluate arguments from texts. Third, we will learn how to write clear, well-structured papers.

Requirements
Attendance and participation (15%)
In-class exam (40%)
5-7 page paper (1st draft, 5%; final draft, 40%)
- You will receive feedback on the first draft. The second draft will be graded partly on responsiveness to the feedback.

Readings
No textbooks are required for this course. All readings will be uploaded to Sakai.

Schedule
23rd Jan: Introduction
25th Jan: Amy Gutmann, ‘Democracy’
30th Jan: Richard Arneson, ‘Democracy is not Intrinsically Just’
1st Feb: Thomas Christiano, ‘Knowledge and Power in the Justification of Democracy’
6th Feb: Martin Luther King Jr., ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’; Candice Delmas, ‘Civil Disobedience’
8th Feb: Plato, ‘Crito’, Peter C. Myers, ‘The Limits and Dangers of Civil Disobedience’
13th Feb: Jason Brennan, ‘When May We Kill Government Agents?’
20th Feb: Hrishikesh Joshi, ‘For (Some) Immigration Restrictions’
22nd Feb: Loren Lomasky & Geoffrey Brennan, ‘Is There a Duty to Vote?’
27th Feb: Julia Maskivker, ‘Being a Good Samaritan Requires You to Vote’
1st March: Richard Hasen, ‘Vote Buying (1-17)’; Debra Satz and Michael Sandel (excerpts)
6th March: Jason Brennan, ‘Buying and Selling Votes’
8th March: Christopher Freiman, ‘Vote Markets’
13th March: Catch-up
15th March: In-class exam
27th March: Thomas Christiano, ‘Money in Politics’
29th March: Ingrid Robeyns, ‘Having Too Much’
3rd Apr: Mike Huemer, ‘Is Wealth Redistribution a Rights Violation?’
5th Apr: Peter Singer, ‘Famine, Affluence, and Morality’
10th Apr: Mike Huemer, ‘Is There a Right to Own a Gun?’
17th Apr: Mike Huemer, ‘Gun Rights as Deontic Constraints’
19th Apr: Thomas Metcalf, ‘Gun Violence as Industrial Pollution’/ First draft due
24th Apr: Ilya Somin, ‘Knowledge About Ignorance’
26th Apr: Jason Brennan, ‘The Right to a Competent Electorate’
1st May: Alex Guerrero, ‘Against Elections’
3rd May: Catch-up
10th May: Final draft due