Distributive Justice

1. Inequality of Distribution: Our country has slowly been moving toward a very unbalanced distribution of wealth. In addition to this, it has also become more and more difficult for citizens of the U.S. to move upward, OUT of a lower class and INTO a higher one. The textbook cites a prominent banking president as claiming that, “You can’t take solace anymore in the American dream of working hard and migrating up through society.” (93) Consider just a few of the statistics given there:

- The top 1% of U.S. households owns more than the bottom 90% of U.S. households combined.

- The top 1% of U.S. citizens own about 40% of the nation’s worth. Meanwhile, the lowest 60% of U.S. citizens owns only 5% of its worth.

- The average CEO of a major corporation makes about $6 million each year—which is about 160 times what the average worker in the U.S. makes each year (only about $36 thousand).

- Since 1990, the average CEO pay has gone up by 571%, while the average worker’s pay has only gone up 37%. (For perspective: If a school teacher making $31,000 in 1990 had their pay increased by 571%, they would now be making $177,000 each year)

- Warren Buffett, our nation’s second richest citizen, claims to have paid only 18% of his income in taxes on the $46 million he made in 2006. Meanwhile, the average tax rate of his employees (who typically made about 1/500th of what Buffett made) was a much higher 33%.

In light of facts such as these, the question becomes, “Do we have any moral obligations to DO anything about this?” Should we allow the disparity between the rich and the poor to continue to increase? Should we allow the class system to continue to solidify, so that it becomes continually more and more difficult for the poor to ever succeed? There are various answers to this question. We will look at three. But they all begin with a study of the nature of Justice.
2. The Nature of Justice: “Justice” is a difficult term to define. But, we typically think that there are four concepts associated with the definition of justice. These are:

1. **Fairness**: We must treat similar cases in the same way. For instance, it would be unfair if we were to respond to one murderer by putting him in jail, and then respond to another murderer by giving him an ice cream cone. Similar situations must be treated in similar ways.

2. **Equality**: Our treatment of people ought to reflect the fact that we are all morally equal. There are no morally relevant differences between human beings which make it permissible to treat them differently. For instance, there is not one race or gender that is “better” than the others. To act otherwise is to engage in immoral discrimination.

3. **Desert**: People ought to get what they deserve (i.e., good deeds should be rewarded, and bad deeds should be punished). For instance, when a criminal gets away with their deed and goes unpunished, we typically think that an “injustice” has occurred.

4. **Rights**: There are certain moral claims that everyone ought to be able to exercise against others. For instance, we commonly think that everyone has a right to life, a right to the freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. When we say that we ought to “be able to exercise these claims against others” we mean that, if someone tries to VIOLATE one of your rights (for instance by trying to kill you), you have a legitimate CLAIM against them, since they have an obligation NOT to violate your right (i.e., they are doing something morally wrong by violating your right).

Given these four features of justice, we might now be able to answer a closely related question: “What is the just **distribution**?“ Or, in other words, “How much wealth/how many goods should each person have?” Here are some common answers to that question:

- Each person should receive an **equal** share.
- Each person should receive a share, according to how much they **need**.
- Each person should receive a share, according to how much they **contribute** (e.g., to a business, or to society as a whole).
- Each person should receive a share, according to how much they **merit** it.
3. A Puzzle About Justice: Given the various concepts associated with justice (fairness, equality, and so on), in the real world there are many cases where these conflict—that is, scenarios where one of the features of justice dictates that we do ONE thing, while another feature dictates that we do ANOTHER; especially when it comes to the question of how big of a share each person should receive. Consider:

- **Star Employee:** Imagine that one worker has superior abilities than everyone else (for instance, she is faster, makes fewer mistakes, and generally out-performs every co-worker). Should this employee receive more pay than all of the other employees who have the same job?

There are two ways we might answer this question:

(a) **NO:** This person clearly ALREADY enjoys certain advantages over everyone else. To give them more money than everyone else would only FURTHER increase the disparity between this star employee and everyone else even MORE. So, in the interest of discouraging inequality, she should receive the same as everyone else.

Furthermore, perhaps the other employees are doing their absolute best, and trying as hard as they possibly can—so it is really through no fault of their own that they are not performing as well as the star employee. Insofar as they all tried just as hard, they all MERIT the same amount. So, it would be an injustice to pay them less, because it would be unfair to give unequal pay to 2 people who are trying equally hard.

(b) **YES:** Anyone who contributes MORE than everyone else to society, or to a company, deserves a bigger share than everyone else. If we were to require that the star employee get paid the same as everyone else, then she should only be required to DO as well/as much as everyone else. But, insofar as she CONTRIBUTES more, she deserves more.

How do we decide what the right answer is? Should our star employee receive MORE than everyone else, or should she receive the SAME as everyone else? Concerns of fairness and equality suggest one answer; desert suggests another.

We will now examine three theories that attempt to provide us with a framework which will answer this question: (1) John Stuary Mills’ Utilitarianism, (2) Robert Nozick’s Libertarian Entitlement Theory, and (3) John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” Approach.
Three Theories of Distributive Justice

1. Utilitarianism (Mill): Recall that utilitarians believe that our only moral obligation is to maximize the total amount of happiness in the world. As such, they do not recognize any specific duties to give more goods or income to those who NEED it most, or to those who MERIT it most, etc. The right thing to do will just depend upon whatever generates the most happiness.

However, in general, the utilitarian WILL (as it turns out) be in favor of a certain kind of distributive activity: that is, they will be in favor of taking money AWAY from the rich in order to help the poor (this practice is sometimes called the “re-distribution of wealth”). Within the context of business, for instance, they might be in favor of reducing the income of CEO’s while increasing the income of the regular workers. Why would the utilitarian be in favor of this? The answer has to do with a phenomenon known as the “diminishing marginal utility” of money. Consider:

- The $100 Gift: Imagine that you have $100 to spare, and you would like to do something good with it. You head down the street, and consider giving it to a friend of yours, Bill Gates, the richest person in the United States (he has about $66,000,000,000.00). But, on the way there, you pass a street where a large family lives, crowded into a very tiny, dilapidated home with barely a penny to their names. Now you consider instead giving the money to the poor family instead. Ask: Where would the $100 do more good? In the hands of the poor family, or in the hands of Bill Gates? The answer should be obvious: The money would do more good if you gave it to the poor family. The reason for this is that, the more money a person has, the less happiness each additional dollar brings them.

The most important things we need in life are those things that meet our basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter, etc.). So, having a LITTLE money to meet your basic needs is EXTREMELY important to your well-being. (We can imagine the impoverished family jumping for joy after receiving $100) But each additional dollar one has after that is much less important to one’s well-being. All of that additional money will only be spent on luxury items, which are not as important to our overall happiness. (We can imagine Bill Gates responding after receiving $100: “Oh... Yay... I make this much money every 5 minutes...”) This effect—that the more money you have, the less happiness each additional dollar brings you—is known as the “diminishing marginal utility” of money.
**Conclusion:** Due to the diminishing marginal utility of money, the utilitarian will therefore conclude that the rich are obligated to take some of their money to help the poor—for that money will bring the poor MUCH more happiness than it will bring to the rich; and our moral obligation is to increase the amount of happiness in the world as much as we can.

2. **Justice as Fairness (Rawls):** John Rawls proposed a very different view of justice, but one which also endorses the re-distribution of wealth. He proposed that we interpret justice as "fairness". To get a general understanding of how his proposal works, consider the following scenario:

- **Cutting the Pie:** Imagine that you have a pie to divide among eight people, including yourself. Assume that they are all very hungry, and all love pie very much. How do you divide it among them in a way that is fair? If you cut a larger slice for yourself, people may complain or feel cheated.
  You decide to elect one person to cut the pie into several slices, and then have everyone else pick their slice first (the pie-cutter picks last).

Assuming that the pie-cutter is very hungry and definitely wants some pie, how do you think the elected pie-cutter will divide the pie? Very likely, they will cut the pie into eight **equal slices**, so that the distribution is FAIR.

Ultimately, Rawls thought that the wealth of SOCIETY should be roughly distributed in much this same way. He came to this conclusion by considering what would happen in a hypothetical situation in which "no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance."

1. **The Veil of Ignorance:** In the passage above, Rawls describes a hypothetical scenario. He then asks, “What would the people in this scenario decide about the principles of justice?” Now, try to imagine **yourself** in that hypothetical scenario, where you are behind what Rawls calls a “veil of ignorance”:

- **The Veil of Ignorance:** Imagine that you and a large group of people are trying to decide what society will be like (i.e., what is just and what is unjust). You know that, once your group decides what society will be like, you will immediately be placed somewhere within this society at random, as a member of it. But that is ALL you know. **You do not know what race**
you will be, or what gender, or how intelligent you will be, or what your religious affiliation will be, or your social status, or wealth, or occupation, etc. You are behind a “veil”, so to speak, and behind that veil, everyone is completely “ignorant” of who they are. ALL you know is that you will be SOMEONE in this society.

Now ask: What sort of society would you design from behind this “veil of ignorance”? How would you want wealth to be distributed among the people of this society? What principles of justice would you attempt to establish?

Rawls states that the people behind the veil of ignorance will almost certainly agree on the following 2 things:

1. Everyone will be equally free (freedom of religion, speech, etc.).
2. All inequalities within society must: (a) benefit EVERYONE in the society, and (b) result from opportunities that were available to everyone (i.e., all people have an equal opportunity).

Rawls believes that these two principles are the ones that people would agree on from behind that veil. Furthermore, because he believes that whatever principles would be chosen from behind such a veil would be just, he concludes that these two principles are the correct principles of justice.

2. The Difference Principle: Principle (2a) is known as The Difference Principle. This states that any inequalities must always benefit everyone in society. Rawls writes, “Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all.”

But, how could an inequality among people lead to the benefit of EVERYONE? Here is an example: Imagine that the people behind the veil agreed to let doctors make a lot more than everyone else. They might justify this decision as follows: If doctors are paid higher wages, EVERYONE is likely to be better off (including those who earn very little), because everyone is more likely to receive better medical care in that case. So, EVEN THOUGH this would result in an inequality of wealth (since doctors would have more money than everyone else), allowing doctors to be paid more is to EVERYONE’S advantage.

The following is an illustration of this idea:
In the first pie chart, all 8 individuals have exactly equal shares. In the SECOND pie chart the person represented by the BLUE slice has a GREATER share than everyone else. However, this causes the ENTIRE PIE to become larger such that EVERYONE has more. In other words, even though the blue share is bigger than all the others, EVERYONE has a larger share than they did in the first place. (For instance, in the pie chart on the left, the red slice is 1/8th of the pie. In the pie chart on the right, the red slice is LESS than 1/8th of the pie. HOWEVER, the red slice on the right is still BIGGER than the red slice on the left—because the WHOLE PIE IS BIGGER.)

Or, it might help to consider it numerically:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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Imagine that well-being can be quantified, and that everyone in Scenario 1 has “5 units” of well-being, while in Scenario 2, half of the people have “10 units” of well-being, and the other half has “6 units” of well-being. So, scenario 1 represents a society where everyone has the same amount of wealth, while scenario 2 is one where the wealth is distributed unequally.
The decision of whether or not to pay doctors more than everyone else is probably like the decision of whether to make society like Scenario 1, or to make it like Scenario 2. Scenario 1 represents a world where doctors get paid the same as everyone else. Scenario 2 represents a world where doctors get paid twice as much as everyone else (i.e., they are the ones with 10 units of happiness). An inequality arises in scenario 2 due to unequal pay. But, notice that, BECAUSE of this inequality, EVERYONE ELSE is made better off as well! (That is, the people who WOULD HAVE had only 5 units of well-being if doctors received equal pay are brought up to 6 units in scenario 2 because they are getting better medical care).

**Inequalities Sometimes Benefit Everyone:** The bottom line is that giving some people more than others is sometimes to EVERYONE’S advantage (for instance, as we have described, giving doctors a higher salary promotes better medical treatment for EVERYONE). In these cases, people behind the veil of ignorance WOULD prefer inequality to equality (because it is to EVERYONE’s benefit).

**3. The Basis For Choosing Rawlsian Principles:** We can still ask, “But WHY would the people behind the veil of ignorance choose the two principles that Rawls proposes?” Rawls gives us an answer: They would base their choices on a strategy called “The Maximin Strategy”.

**The “Maximin” Strategy:** A decision-making strategy where, given a variety of options, the chooser will try to MAXIMIZE their worst possible outcome.

Note: The worst possible outcome in Scenario 1 is **5 units** of happiness. Meanwhile, the worst possible outcome in Scenario 2 is **6 units** of happiness. Since people do not know what part of the population they will end up in, they will try to maximize the situation of those who are the worst-off in society.

For instance, from behind the veil, you will probably want to ensure that there are no starving or homeless people—for what if YOU end up as one of these starving people when you step out from behind the veil! Therefore, to ensure that the worst possible outcome is as bearable as possible, people behind the veil of ignorance will try to improve the lives of the worst off as much as they can. This strategy is often called the “Maximin” strategy by game-theorists and economists, because it “maximizes the minimum” result.
Conclusion: Notice what the Maximin Strategy implies about our obligations to society, and what is just. Rawls would very likely be in favor of re-distributing wealth from the rich to the poor. After all, the most just scenario is one where the worst off members of society are made as well-off as we possibly can. This means that, if the rich are able to do so, they should probably take some of their earnings and put it toward improving the lives of the homeless, and the disabled, the impoverished, and those who are discriminated against. So, on a Rawlsian approach, those who are well-off DO have social obligations to take some of their wealth (of time, money, food, etc.) and improve the lives of others with it.

4. Objection to Rawls: The Source of Justice is Mis-Placed: An objection to Rawls is that it seems like Rawls is grounding justice in SELF-INTEREST. Consider: What really motivates the people behind the veil to make the decisions that they do? What seems to motivate them is the fact that THEY do not want to end up as the homeless person, or the person who is discriminated against, etc. So, the real reason that people behind the veil would work to end things like poverty and discrimination, then, is not really an altruistic one. Rather, it is only that THEY do not want to be in poverty, or be discriminated against. So, on Rawls's view, the principles of justice are ultimately grounded in our individual self-interest. But, should selfishness be the thing that grounds our sense of justice?

3. Entitlement Theory (Nozick): We have seen that both utilitarianism and Rawls’s idea of justice as fairness would be in favor of practices such as taxing the rich in order to promote other public goods, and the good of the lower classes (such as welfare, medicare, subsidizing loans for poor college students, and other public goods that provide services to ALL citizens, including the poor, such as public education, roads, police and military protection, clean water, and parks). The utilitarian claims that these sorts of things will increase the total amount of happiness in the world; and Rawls claims that these things will maximize the well-being of the worst off.

On the other hand, philosophers such as Robert Nozick propose a very different kind of justice. This view is founded on one principle: Liberty.

**Liberty:** The freedom of choice; or, the state of being free from the interference of others, to do and live as one pleases.

Nozick’s view is that it is always unjust to interfere with someone else’s freedom. He believes that, so long as you are not hurting anyone, society is obligated to leave you alone, to live your life as you please. You are “entitled” to everything that is yours—your life, your property, your wealth, your body, and so on—and
no one has a right to take these things away from you, or tell you what you can and cannot do with them. (Thus, this view is often called “Entitlement Theory”)

But, notice that entitlement theory would conclude that several of our current practices are unjust: For instance, the government currently taxes its citizens to fund public goods. It has also made certain activities illegal, such as the use or ownership of certain illegal substances (e.g., drugs). It also reserves the right to force its citizens to do public service (e.g., jury duty, or military draft). But ALL of these things infringe upon our freedom. Since they interfere with our liberty, the entitlement theorist would conclude that the government is doing something UNJUST by enforcing any of these things.

Therefore, the entitlement theorist is AGAINST re-distributive taxation of the rich in order to help the poor, since this interferes with rich people’s right to say what happens to their own money that they rightfully earned.

Three Principles of Justice: Nozick believes that, so long as we follow these three principles, the distribution of wealth among individuals will ALWAYS remain just:

1. Justice of Acquisition: If you originally acquire some previously unowned good or property in a just way, then it is just for you to own it, and you are entitled to it (e.g., if you find something that is unowned, it is permissible for you to take it, if doing so does not leave others worse off).

   Note: As an example of finding something unowned and claiming it for one’s self which is NOT just, we might imagine a group of settlers arriving at their destination, and one person finding and claiming the unowned water source as their own. This sort of acquisition is NOT just because it leaves everyone else worse off (for instance, because the other settlers will all now die of thirst).

2. Justice of Transfer: If you acquire something that is owned by someone else in a just way, then it is just for you to own it, and you are entitled to it (e.g., if someone takes something they own and freely transfers that property to you as a gift, then it is permissible for you to own it). Other common forms of just transfer are trading and buying/selling based on the mutual agreement of both parties involved.

   Note: As an example of obtaining something by a transfer which is NOT just, we might imagine that someone STEALS some money from someone else. This transfer of money is not just because both parties did not freely AGREE to the transfer.
3. Rectification of Injustices: If someone UNjustly “owns” something (by unjust acquisition or transfer), then the situation ought to be rectified (e.g., by restoring the property to its rightful owner).

All Other Principles of Justice Violate Our Liberty: Nozick believes that liberty is the most important thing. Our freedom should be preserved at all costs. BUT, he points, ANY other pattern of justice is one that would continuously interfere with people, and their freedom to say what their possessions/wealth will be used for. Consider an example (the famous “Wilt Chamberlain” example):

- **Wilt Chamberlain:** Imagine a society that begins in a perfectly just state (for instance, perhaps everyone in that society has the same amount of money—i.e., equality—or WHATEVER your idea of a just distribution is: THAT is how the wealth and goods are distributed there).

  In that society, Wilt Chamberlain is a very talented basketball player. People love to watch him on the court. Wilt offers to tour around the country and play basketball in front of crowds. He does so, and charges $5 admission per person. One million people go to see him. At the end of the tour, Wilt has $5,000,000.00

  **Question:** Does the result (where 1 million people have $5 less and Wilt Chamberlain has $5 million more) seem just to you? Nozick observes that this is CLEARLY just. The people freely gave their $5 to Wilt, so the result is just.

  Nozick claims that the distribution is just because it is the result of a just transfer. After all, the people FREELY AGREED to give their money to Wilt in order to watch him.
However, now consider what Rawls’s view would imply about the situation: Even if, in the beginning of that story, the distribution exemplified Rawls’s proposed pattern of justice, at the END of the story, the pattern has now been upset. For, once Wilt has $5 million, he is now no longer equal with everyone else. A radical inequality has been brought about. Has this inequality benefited EVERYONE (including the people who did not even attend his tour)? Certainly not. Rawls, therefore, must say that this end-result is unjust. The transfer of $5 bills to Wilt has upset Rawls’s idea of a just distribution—i.e., the new distribution is one that people behind the veil of ignorance would NOT choose. In short, a great inequality is brought about—where the worst off are NOT made better—so the distribution is unjust.

According to Nozick, since the new distribution is unjust according to Rawls, Rawls would suggest that we must RESTORE JUSTICE. This means that we must restore the situation to something like its original state in order to restore justice. But, how would we do this? Should we take Wilt’s money away and re-distribute it? It seems like that would be WRONG. Therefore, it is clear that the correct answer to the question, “How shall we distribute the wealth/goods of society?” is, “According to whatever best preserves the FREEDOM of the individuals in that society.”

Conclusion Re-Cap: Nozick’s point with this example was that any proposal for a pattern of the distribution of wealth will be nearly impossible to maintain without constantly violating people’s liberties (because people will be constantly freely giving/trading/selling their goods in a way that disrupts the proposed pattern for a just distribution). Therefore, in order to maintain any of the sorts of patterns of just distribution that theories like utilitarianism or Rawls’s “justice as fairness” propose, we would need to either:

(a) Make it very HARD to upset the pattern; e.g., by introducing very strict regulations of the sorts of activities that upset the pattern.
(b) Constantly intervene in order to adjust the system; e.g., by continually re-distributing goods via taxation.

But neither of these options, Nozick says, are just. Each is a violation of our liberty. Nozick believes that, on Rawls’s view, in order to preserve justice, we must constantly commit injustices.

This is a very bad outcome of Rawls’s view. So, Nozick proposes instead that we should be free to do whatever we want with our goods (even if this means that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer). He would conclude that we do NOT
have a duty to help the poor, we do NOT have a duty to do anything about the ever increasing disparity between the rich and the poor, and we do NOT have any obligations to, for instance, lower or tax the pay of CEO’s in order to increase the income of the regular workers.

Objections to Nozick: Here are some objections to entitlement theory:

1. Freedom is Necessarily Restricted: Nozick claims that, regarding the preservation of justice, the preservation of freedom is the most important thing. But, in the system he proposes, some people’s freedoms will NECESSARILY be restricted. For instance, if I purchase a plot of land that you enjoy walking around on, I will now be entitled to that land—and if I do not want you to walk around on it, I have a right to RESTRICT your ability to walk on it (for instance, I can have you arrested for trespassing if you step foot on my land). The point is that, in ANY system where people are allowed to own or be entitled to anything, SOMEONE’S FREEDOM WILL BE RESTRICTED.

2. We Do Have Positive Obligations: According to Nozick, the only rights we have are entitlements to what is justly OURS. Similarly, the only obligations we have are to not interfere with what is justly SOMEONE ELSE’S. But, then, while this entails that I have a duty not to RESTRICT someone else’s freedom, it does NOT entail that I have a duty to PROMOTE someone else’s freedom. (Or, in simpler terms, Nozick would say that I have a duty not to HURT others, but I do NOT have a duty to HELP others if I don’t want to).

But, surely we have obligations above and beyond merely not hurting others. Right? For instance, imagine that you see a small child drowning in a pond, and no one else is around. “Help!” she screams to you. “I’m drowning!” Now, according to Nozick, I do NOT have a duty to help this child. In that case, if I stand by and watch the child drown, I have done nothing morally wrong. But, this is absurd. Most of us think that we ARE morally OBLIGATED to jump in and save the child (even though this places a restriction on our freedom by dictating what we can and cannot permissibly do with our own body, and our own time).

Furthermore, ask the question: Should we be able to do WHATEVER we want with our property? What if I discover the cure for cancer, or how to turn deserts into workable farmland? Do I have an obligation to share this information even if I don’t want to? Or, imagine that I am in my remote cabin and someone comes to my door, starving and in need of shelter. Do
I have an obligation to feed and clothe them even if I don’t want to share my food and clothing? If I AM obligated to share with the less fortunate in the cabin case, am I also obligated to share in other, broader contexts (e.g., where there are starving people in the world that I could easily help by giving away my extra money)? If we DO have such obligations to others, then perhaps those who have more are obligated to take some of their wealth and spread it among the less fortunate.

3. Many Are Not Presently Free: Furthermore, Nozick’s OWN view may actually imply that the rich DO have an obligation to help the poor. For, he seems to think that FREEDOM is the most important thing. But, then what do we do in cases where people are too poor to even BE free (e.g., starving children)? Arguably, people that are below the minimum level required for subsistence (i.e., having food, shelter, clothing, and perhaps some education) are not actually free. They are unable to do anything other than suffer, or live in poverty, or die, etc. In light of this, could we justify some SMALL violation of the freedom of the well-off to give a LOT of freedom to the worst off (e.g., by giving them enough resources to get onto their feet)? What would Nozick say?

4. All Present Acquisitions Are Unjust: Nozick’s theory only applies if the original acquisition was just (and the transfer of it is then just). But, much of what we currently own was transferred unjustly to the original settlers (e.g., by theft, fraud, etc.), and has therefore been transferred to us unjustly as well. So, in light of these past injustices, what should we do now? What does Nozick’s theory say about the rectification of injustices?

**Topic Suggestion: Distributive Justice #1:** Consider the “$100 Gift” case, described above. First ask: (1) If you had $100 to give away, should you give it to a very rich person, or a very poor person? Briefly, say why. Then ask: (2) If you said that one ought to give the $100 to a poor person, do you think that this gives the rich any obligation to take some of their money and help the poor with it—or at least, a willingness to be taxed by the government in order to fund programs that help the less fortunate? Why or why not?

**Topic Suggestion: Distributive Justice #2:** Consider several of the cases discussed here: (a) The case of whether or not to save a drowning child in a shallow pond, (b) the case of whether or not to share some food with a starving camper who stumbles to the door of your cabin in the woods, or (c) the question of whether you have a duty to share your discovery if you discover the cure for cancer. In each of these cases, we have a choice of
whether or not to share some of our time, our money, or our property with others in order to save their lives. Nozick would say that we are NEVER morally obligated to give up something that is rightfully OURS in order to help others—even if doing so saves a life!

What do you think? Is our ONLY moral duty to refrain from hurting others, or do we ALSO have a duty to (at least sometimes) HELP others?

**Topic Suggestion: Distributive Justice #3:** Imagine that YOU are behind the veil of ignorance (you do not know what race, or gender, or age, or religion you are; you do not know if you are rich or poor, intelligent or unintelligent, athletic or lethargic, and so on). How would YOU want to divide the wealth of society up among the citizens. What rules for how we ought to treat others would YOU suggest from behind this veil? Explain.

*Note: Please complete “Reading Quiz for Week 8” at this time if you have not already done so.*

**Reminder: The reading quiz is due on WEDNESDAY at 5pm this week.**