

Notes to Guide Reading

Week 5, Section 1: Just and Unjust Wars

Walzer, “[...] Fighting Well” (chapter 8) and “Noncombatant Immunity [...]” (chapter 9) (1977)

- Focus on chapter 9: skim chapter 8 to understand the broad notion of just war and the principle of proportionality.
- The two conventions of war Walzer defends include (1) once war has begun, soldiers are subject to attack at any time, unless wounded or captured, and (2) non-combatants cannot be attacked at any time.
 - Walzer shows that the first convention of war is true by demonstrating that the moral equality of combatants generally holds true.
 - He denies or qualifies the second convention of war by defending the doctrine of double effect.
 - Be able to explain the idea of the moral equality of combatants, as well as the notion of the doctrine of double effect.
- Considering that Walzer’s central claim in chapter 9 is that the moral equality of combatants generally holds true, be prepared to answer the following.
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Walzer uses to support the truth of his central claim?
 - What might the warrant for his argument be? That is, you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Walzer could rest his argument on.
- Finally, referencing components of the rhetorical situation and our working list of principles of good writing, be able to explain two characteristics of good or bad writing you see in Walzer’s book chapters.