

Justice and Civil Society, Fall 2022

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Jepson Hall 134

Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond

Office Hours: Mondays: 3:15 – 4:15, or by appointment.

Aims of the Course

Justice and Civil Society engages fundamental questions of social justice at both the theoretical and practical level, taking as our context the present-day United States.

This semester, our focus will be fourfold:

- Examination of various theoretical perspectives on justice and what a just society entails, drawing on both historical and contemporary texts;
- Examination of the socio-economic structure of the present-day United States, including economic inequality, poverty, racial disparities, and systems of power;
- Consideration of how both theories of justice and examination of socio-economic structures relate to present-day conditions in Richmond, Virginia;
- Consideration of our shared moral responsibility to advance justice as well as specific efforts to do so in Richmond and elsewhere

We engage these questions against a backdrop of profound crisis: an unprecedented public health crisis; climate change and its consequences; a resurgence of ideologies of white supremacy in response to widespread protests against racial disparities and racism; and major questions about the present and future of democratic institutions in the United States. The readings and associated material are intended to provide students with a rich theoretical lens for understanding current events; but equally important, help students develop a sense of individual and collective agency in responding to these events in constructive ways. Creative response to profound crisis, in turn, exemplifies the positive ideal of *leadership*.

Community engagement is a major part of this course. This semester, this section will partner with Overby-Sheppard Elementary School on the Northside of Richmond to provide academic and mentoring support to the school's 5th grade cohort. Justice and Civil Society students are required to spend a minimum of 20 hours on-site at Overby-Sheppard (approximately two hours per week) and to participate in planning and hosting a field trip of Overby-Sheppard students to UR Campus in October or November. (This will involve approximately three hours of planning and three hours for the actual visit.) Students are expected to approach this engagement in a spirit of respect and professionalism.

This class asks a lot of students: Academically, it involves a lot of thoughtful reading, a willingness to consider challenging perspectives, debate between distinct points of view, and intelligent writing. Personally, it means taking the risk of becoming invested in the serious problems of our society and taking responsibility for your own agency: as a member of this society, and as a person who by virtue of being part of this university community has privilege relative to many or most others in our society. Interpersonally, it means being committed to listening to, respecting, learning from, and sometimes allowing yourself to be changed by the

viewpoints and experiences of others (be it an author, a character in a reading, a classmate, or a community member).

You will get as much out of this course as you put into it. Because the issues being discussed are so serious—life and death, justice and injustice—my expectation is that if you are enrolled in the course, you are taking the course seriously and committing to an appropriate level of effort.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance** at every class session. No unexcused absences are acceptable. Two unexcused absences will lead to a one-third deduction on your final grade (plus an additional one-third deduction for every additional absence during the semester).
2. Attend **office hours** with the instructor at least once prior to November 1.
3. **Complete** reading and come to class prepared to participate; actively participate in class.
4. **Complete** 20 hours or more of engagement on-site at Overby-Sheppard Elementary School (transportation time does not count) and participate in hosting a field trip with Overby-Sheppard students. You will sign in at the school to document your hours.
5. Complete **ungraded, short reaction paper** (2 pages) to Stephanie Land's *Maid*.
6. Write **three analytical papers** based on the course reading, length **5-6 pages** each.
7. Keep a semester-long notebook concerning observations about your community engagement experiences as they relate to the course material. The notebook is to be turned in at the end of the semester and will contribute to your participation and engagement grade. (I will return all notebooks after final course grades are submitted.)
8. Write a final **Reflection Paper**, length **10-12 pages**, focused on educational and economic inequalities in Richmond drawing on class readings as well as your experience working with Overby-Sheppard students. You are expected to draw on your notebook in writing this paper. More specific instructions for this paper will be sent approximately one month prior to the end of the course.

Grade Calculation

Analytical Papers (3): 50%

Final Research Paper: 30%

In-class Participation and Engagement (including Notebook): 20%

Key Dates:

Ungraded Short Response Paper Due: September 2

Analytical Paper Due Dates: September 23, October 21, November 11

Final Paper Due: December 12

General grading standards:

- A range grades are given for truly outstanding written work that not only meets the basic requirements of the given assignment but also demonstrates exceptional insight, clarity, and depth of thought. For instance, an A-range paper will not simply forward a coherent argument, but also anticipate and attempt to answer likely objections to the argument,

and/or acknowledge points at which one's argument might be vulnerable. Such papers will also be very well-organized and well-written, and gracefully presented.

- B range grades are given for good and very good written work which amply meets all the basic requirements of the given assignment and reflects substantial effort and engagement with the material. Such work is generally well-written and well-organized, shows good understanding of the course material, and avoids major substantive or logical errors. *B is a good grade for any assignment in this course, and B+ is a very good grade.*
- C range grades are given for work which attempts to fulfill the requirements of the assignment but which falls short in some substantial way, with respect to organization, writing quality, understanding of the material, or argumentative logic.
- D and F grades are reserved for work which comes nowhere close to meeting the requirements of the assignment.

Criteria for assessing class participation (courtesy Peter Levine, Tufts University)

1. Attendance.
2. Engaging in a discussion that is informed by the assigned texts.
3. Focusing on the topic and the texts, which does not preclude drawing connections beyond them.
4. Being responsive to other students. Responsiveness needn't always be immediate, verbal, or occur within the class discussion itself.
5. Building on others' contributions, and sometimes making links among different people's contributions or between what they have said and the text.
6. Demonstrating genuine respect for the others, where respect does not require agreement. In fact, sometimes respect requires explicit *disagreement* because you take the other person's ideas seriously.
7. Taking risks, trying out ideas that you don't necessarily endorse, and asking questions that might be perceived as naive or uninformed.
8. Seeking truth or clarity or insight (instead of other objectives).
9. Exercising freedom of speech along with a degree of tact and concern for the other people.
10. Demonstrating responsibility for the other students' learning in what you say (and occasionally by a decision not to speak).

Other Classroom Guidelines

1. Arrive 5 minutes early so we can start on time. Do not pack up until the end of class.
2. Use the bathroom prior to class. Do not excuse yourself during class unless it is an emergency.
3. Beverages consumed quietly are permitted in class, food is not.
4. Power off mobile devices upon entering the classroom and keep them off for the duration of class.
5. Use of laptops in class is not permitted unless necessitated by an academic accommodation. Use a notebook to take written notes.
6. Maintain eye contact with the instructor and with other students when they are speaking. Your sole focus during class should be on what is being said in class.

Jepson School of Leadership Studies--Common Syllabus Insert

COVID-19 Compliance

Students are expected to follow the university's Green Zone COVID-19 protocols (or other applicable protocols if campus health conditions worsen). If you are symptomatic or are a close contact of a positive case, get tested and mask while indoors for ten days. If you test positive you must report the case to the university and refrain from coming to class. For further details, see

<https://www.richmond.edu/coronavirus/isolation-quarantine/index.html>

Integrity with Class Recordings

Students shall not:

- Disclose, share, trade, or sell class recordings with/to any other person, organization, business, or institution;
- Post/store these recordings in a location accessible by anyone other than the student, including but not limited to social media accounts.

Students must also comply with any instructions or directions from their faculty regarding the use of such recordings. Students are required to destroy any recordings that were made when they are no longer needed for the student's academic work. Failure to abide by this policy will be a violation of the Standards of Student Conduct; such issues will be sent to the appropriate University Conduct Officer.

Awarding of Credit

To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html

Disability Accommodations

Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.

disability.richmond.edu/

Honor System

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: "I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work."

studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

Religious Observance

Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.

registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

Note on Class Evaluations

All students are requested to complete the evaluation, after the final day of class. Your participation is helpful in improving pedagogy and effective learning in the Jepson School.

Course of Study

Primary Course Texts

Stephanie Land, *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive*

Plato, *The Republic*

Eyal Press, *Dirty Work: Essential Jobs and the Hidden Toll of Inequality in America*

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, The Subjection of Women*

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*

Andrea Elliott, *Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival, and Hope in an American City*

Course Plan

Week 1, August 22-24

Stephanie Land, *Maid*, read Part One for August 24

Week 2, August 29-31

Stephanie Land, *Maid*; read Part Two for August 29 and Part Three for August 31

Ungraded short response paper to Maid due Friday September 2, 6 pm, by email.

Week 3, September 5-7

Plato, *Republic*, Books 1-3; read Book 1 for September 5 and Books 2-3 for September 7

Week 4, September 12-14

Plato, *Republic*, Books 4-6; read Books 4-5 for September 16 and Book 6 for September 14

Week 5. September 19 -21

Plato, *Republic*, Books 7-9; read Books 7- for September 19 and Book 9 for September 21. (Recommended but not required: Book 10.) Recommended supplemental reading: Thad Williamson, "The Good Society and the Good Soul: Plato's *Republic* on Leadership," *Leadership Quarterly* 19 (2008).

Analytical Essay #1 on Plato Due Friday September 23, 6 pm, by email (bring hard copy to class Monday September 26).

Week 6. September 26-28

Eyal Press, *Dirty Work*, Parts 1-2; Read Part One for September 26 and Part Two for September 28

Week 7. October 3-5

Press, *Dirty Work*, Parts 3-4; Read Part Three for October 3 and Part Four for October 5

Fall Break—No class October 10

Week 8. October 12

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (entire)

Week 9. October 17-19

J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (October 17, Chapters 1, 2 & 5) and *Subjection of Women* (October 19, Chapters 1 and 4)

Analytical Essay #2 on Eyal Press and J.S. Mill due Friday October 21 at 6 pm via email (bring hard copy to class October 24)

Week 10. October 24-26

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapters 1-2; Read Chapter 1 for October 24 and Chapter 2 for October 26

Week 11. October 31-November 2

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapters 3-4; Read Chapter 3 for October 31 and Chapter 4 for November 2. Required supplemental reading: Martin O’Neill and Thad Williamson, “Beyond the Welfare State,” (*Boston Review*, 2012); Martha Nussbaum, “Human Rights and Human Capabilities”

Week 12. November 7-November 9

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Read pp. 1-81 for November 7 and pp. 81-135 for November 9.

Analytical Essay #3 on Rawls and Mills, due Friday November 11 at 6 pm by email (bring hard copy to class November 14)

Week 13/14. November 14-16, November 21

Andrea Elliott, *Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival and Hope in an American City*, Read Parts One and Two for November 14, Parts Three for November 16, Parts Four and Five for November 21

Week 15. November 28-November 30

Andrea Elliott, *Invisible Child*, Part Six for November 28; Part Seven and Afterword for November 30; Thad Williamson, “The Almost Inevitable Failure of Justice,” *Boston Review* (2018).

Final Paper drawing on Elliott, Invisible Child and community engagement experiences due Monday December 12, 6 pm; submit by email and hard copy (include engagement notebook).