

Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond

Spring 2007

LDST 205: Justice and Civil Society

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Office hours: Fridays, 2:15-4 p.m.. or by appointment.

The purpose of this course is to enable students to think about contemporary social problems in systemic terms, both with respect to normative theories of justice and with respect to the organization of our social, economic, and political institutions.

Thinking systemically about social justice involves (at least) four central components, each of which will be addressed in some depth in this course.

The first component is *normative*. What is justice? Should we regard justice as a personal virtue, an attribute of an entire society, or both? What specific qualities characterize a just society? What do terms like “fairness,” “equal opportunity,” and “liberty” mean? What (if anything) does society owe its citizens? How do our conceptions of justice relate to our conceptions of the good life?

The second component is *cognitive* and *empirical*. What are the causes of observed instances of social dysfunction, poverty, and suffering? To what extent are such problems products of individual choices and behavior, and to what extent are they products of larger social forces, or larger political-economic trends? How do multiple social stressors interact with one another to produce social pain? To what degree are our perceptions of poverty and of the excluded informed by our own social locations and assumptions?

The third component is *experiential*. What is the day-to-day reality of life in deprived communities, or on society’s margins? How can efforts to ameliorate social pain be most effective? What can one learn from spending time in poor communities?

The fourth component is *ethical*. What does it mean to try to “do justice” in a society such as the United States? Do we have a responsibility to make “doing justice” a central part of our daily lives? How should I personally come to terms with the inequities and injustices characteristic of contemporary American. society?

All four of these components are connected with one another; while some parts of the course will emphasize one component more than others, each set of questions will remain “on the table” throughout the course. As we go along, we will want to constantly re-evaluate our assumptions and provisional judgments in light of new information or new perspectives.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance at each class session and active participation.
2. Completion of 24 hours of service in an approved site within the city of Richmond or the immediate surroundings. Failure to complete this service by Friday May 4 will result in a failing grade for the course; no excuses. It is *highly* recommended that you complete your service by Monday April 23. Additionally, at least 8 hours of service should be completed by Friday February 23 and 16 hours completed by Monday March 26, so plan accordingly. On Monday January 29, you should turn in a brief (150-200 words) synopsis describing your site location, your supervisor, what your role will be, and any initial impressions. This is an important check-in as if there are substantial problems or obstacles we would like to identify them as soon as possible. Periodically throughout the semester we will set aside time in class to discuss your experiences at the sites.
3. Four additional hours of social observation. The recommended activity is participation in the Richmond police department's citizen ride-along program. To sign up, please notify Cassie King (cking@richmond.edu) of your intention to participate by Friday January 26, along with a list of times during the week you will be available. The ride-along will take place in March or April; we will discuss the ride-along experience in class in April. You will be required to sign a consent form prior to your ride-along.

Important note: during the police ride-along there is a possibility you may be exposed to volatile and potentially dangerous situations. Students in previous classes who have been on a ride-along often describe the experience as one of the most intense and interesting they have had since being in college, but you should be aware of the possibility that a dangerous situation may emerge. If you are uncomfortable with this, you can participate in the alternative social observation activity, attendance at a session of juvenile court. If you choose this option, you should notify Cassie King by email, also by January 26, so that we can work on making arrangements for you.

Whether you go on the police ride-along or to juvenile court, you should compile and submit a brief write-up of your experience (this is a required but not graded exercise).

4. Attendance at three course-related events. The first is the Poverty Simulation exercise, to be held at a date TBA, after spring break. The second is the guest lecture of Dr. Andrew Bacevich on the military and democracy, on Tuesday January 30 at 7 p.m. The third are the ongoing discussions of the book "Class Matters," part of the One Campus, One Book program this spring. You are required to attend one of those sessions.

You also required to write a short response paper (totaling 1000 words) describing your reaction to **one** of these events and describing how the event related to the relevant class reading and class discussions. These papers should be turned in within one week of each event.

5. Completion of **four** additional short response papers, totaling roughly 1000 words

reflecting on the substance of the course readings assigned for the week you turn your paper in. Response papers should take the following form: answer one of these questions: “What did I learn from this set of readings?” or “What did this reading cause me to think about?” Alternatively, you may pose and answer your own specific question. You are free to draw upon class discussions and your own service experiences, or to relate the reading to those experiences. (Keeping a journal or diary of your experiences in the field is highly recommended for this purpose.) These papers are due at the beginning of class each Friday. The ideal response paper will consist of three or four well-thought out paragraphs expressing one or two trains of thought. Do not attempt to summarize the readings or content yourself with bland, generalized rehashing of the main points, but try to develop and express your own response and point of view in a way that shows you have engaged seriously with the readings.

There are 12 weeks during the semester; it is up to you to ensure that you complete all four response papers. At least one of the papers must be submitted by Friday Feb. 16. Response papers will generally be returned the Monday after they are submitted.

You are allowed (but not required) to substitute the following exercise for **one** of the response papers: going through a weekend on-campus while only spending a very limited amount of cash, or attempting to carry out a set of errands in the city of Richmond with limited cash using only public transportation. (Details on this will be announced later.) In addition, from time to time I will make you aware of lectures or other events on campus of direct relevance to the course; if you attend such an event, you will be permitted to discuss the event in **one** response paper, provided you relate the event in a substantial way to our course reading or discussions.

To sum up: of the five response papers, at least two and as many as four must be about the course readings alone; one should be about one of the required class events; one can be about the \$9.99 weekend or bus trip exercise; and one can be about a course-relevant event you attend.

6. Two quizzes. These quizzes will be focused on basic comprehension of the assigned readings, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer and true/false questions. No additional preparation beyond having done the reading will be necessary. The first quiz will be in class on February 23. The second quiz will be a closed book take-home quiz ; it will be handed out Friday April 6 and will be due Monday April 9 in class.
7. Completion of two longer papers.

The first paper (5-6 double-spaced, 1” margin pages), due by 5 p.m. on Friday March 1, will focus on a normative question raised during the first half of the course; you will be asked to make an argument or take a position drawing on both the reading and your own experience and thinking. The paper topic will be assigned on Friday February 23.

The second paper (9-11 double-spaced, 1” margin pages), due Friday May 4 at 5 p.m.,

will be more empirical: you will be asked to develop a systemic analysis of the specific social problem your service work has been addressing. For sources, you should draw on your own experience (including journals); an interview (when possible) with your site supervisor; the assigned course reading; and at least four additional published sources (either books or periodicals) of direct relevance to your specific topic. We will discuss the mechanics of this paper in more detail in class in mid-April.

It is also highly recommended (but not required) that you submit an outline of this final paper by April 27. I will schedule appointments during reading period with those students who've submitted outlines to go over your paper plans. You are of course welcome (indeed, encouraged) to submit an outline and meet with me earlier.

Late papers are penalized one-third of a grade for each day they are late. Barring exceptional circumstances, there are no paper extensions. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you simply cannot complete the assignment in an acceptable manner on time, you should notify me *before* turning in an incomplete or plainly substandard paper so that we can discuss the situation. Usually you will be better off turning in a decent paper a little late (and accepting a grade penalty) than turning in mush (pardon the phrase) just to have it in on time.

Course Grading

Completion of the 24 hours of service + 4 hours of social observation + attendance at the special events is a requirement of any passing grade in the course.

Beyond this requirement, students will be graded as follows:

15% Participation in Class

25% Response Papers

10% Quiz Grades

50% Longer Analytical Papers (20% first paper, 30% second paper)

There is no final exam for this class.

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.

Your class participation grade is based on attendance, attentiveness, evidence of preparation (i.e. doing the readings), making the effort to verbally participate, and quality of such participation. If you attend every class and pay attention to what is going on but rarely say anything unless called upon, your participation grade will be at best a B-/C+ (12/15). However, talking a lot does not necessarily guarantee you a very high participation grade; contributions to class that advance the class discussion are valued more than sheer quantity of participation. Advancing the class discussion can take several forms, from calling attention to something important in the reading we haven't talked about yet, to answering a question posed by the instructor, to asking a factual or interpretive question of relevance to the discussion, to stating (and giving reasons) why you think you disagree with another student or the instructor.

Attendance: Please let me know if you need to miss a class for any reason. If you miss more than one class without a valid excuse, it will negatively affect your participation grade. Multiple unexcused absences will have increasingly severe negative consequences. I will not pass anyone in the course who misses more than five classes without permission.

Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

Required books, available at the University Bookstore

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*

Tamara Draut, *Strapped*

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor*

The New York Times, *Class Matters*

* Readings available online via the library reserve system, on e-reserve.

I. Sources of the Idea of Justice

Monday January 15. Overview of the Course

Introduction; review of syllabus and requirements; overview of site selection process with Cassie King. Guest visit of James Lawson.

Wednesday January 17. A Why Injustice is Difficult to Confront; The Circumstances of Justice

Melvin Lerner, *Just World Thinking*, 9-30 *

David Hume, "Of Justice," in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 15-25 *

Friday January 19. Is Justice Just a Word We Use to Justify the Status Quo?

Plato, *The Republic*, Book I, Thrasymachus's opening speech, 17-28*

C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*, 9-22.*

Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," 172-174 (To be handed out in class)

Recommended: Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, 67-94.*

Monday January 22. The Biblical Tradition, I

Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*; ix-xv; 198-221*

Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* 1-22

Wednesday January 24. The Origins of Inequality

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, Prologue, Excerpt of Part I and all of Part II; 131-133, 157-188*

Friday January 26. The Impartial Spectator

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 9-16, 50-66, 82-91, 179-193.*

II. Contemporary Conceptions of Social Justice

Friday January 29. Justice as a Balance of Power

Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 23-73

Initial short discussion of service site experiences.

Wednesday January 31. Obligations to Serve? War and Justice

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 86-108
Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 205-226

Guest speaker: Dr. Andrew Bacevich, Boston University

Friday February 2. Justice as Utility Maximization

J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter Five

Monday February 5. Utilitarianism Applied, I: The Utilitarian Case for Liberty

Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter III, "On Individuality"
Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, 482-488, 661-665.*
Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, 94-101 *

Wednesday February 7. Utilitarianism Applied, II: Redistribution and Global Poverty

Peter Singer, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty," *New York Times Magazine*, Sep. 5, 1999
* (article to be emailed)
Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, 288-328*

Friday February 9. The Limits of Utilitarianism; Justice as Fairness

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, Part I

Monday February 12. The Original Position; Two Principles of Justice

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, Part II; 120-132

Wednesday February 14. Institutional Implications of Rawls and Libertarian Critiques

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 135-139; 176-179
Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 7-21, 161-169, 190-195.*
Robert Nozick, "The Wilt Chamberlain Example," excerpted from *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 115-118*

Friday February 16: Meritocracy, Pro and Con

David Brooks, "Learning," from *On Paradise Drive*, 153-185
Jonathan Kozol, "Still Separate, Still Unequal," *Harper's*, September 2005, 41-54 *
Juliette Landphair, "The Slings and Arrows of Perfectionism"

Monday February 19 Communitarian and Civic Republican Critiques of Rawls

Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 133-147 *
Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 3-13; 95-123; *

Wednesday February 21. Liberal Egalitarianism, Revised: The Social Insurance Model

Ronald Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?*, 90-126

Friday February 23. Capitalism, Inequality, and Exploitation; In-Class Quiz

Robin Hahnel, "Exploitation: A Modern Approach," 175-192
Quiz #1

Monday February 26. . Equality of What? The Capabilities Approach

Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, 59-96

Wednesday February 28. Global Justice, II: Class Discussion

Thomas Pogge, "World Poverty and Human Rights," *Ethics and International Affairs*, 1-8.
Douglas Hicks, "Bono Made Me Do It: Global Poverty and Christian Response", *The Christian Century* (article to be emailed)

Discussion of service experiences

FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY MARCH 1 at 5 p.m.

Friday March 2: Class as Lived Experience

Class Matters, Chapters Three and Ten
David Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 39-76

III. Class, Work, Insecurity and Poverty in the United States

Monday March 12. Inequality in the United States: An Overview

Class Matters, Chapter One.
Samuel Bowles, Richard Edwards & Frank Roosevelt, *Understanding Capitalism*, 343-374 *

Wednesday March 14: The Organization of Work and the Labor Market

Samuel Bowles, Richard Edwards, & Frank Roosevelt, *Understanding Capitalism*, 183-212 *
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Friday March 16: Community Inheritance and Desert

Gar Alperovitz and Lew Daly, *The Gift of the Past*, excerpt TBA

In-class guest: Dr. Gar Alperovitz, University of Maryland

Monday March 19: The Experience of Work, I

Ehrenreich, Chapter 2

Katherine Newman, *Chutes and Ladders: Navigating the Low-Wage Labor Market*, 309-320
(Appendix B)*

Class Matters, Chapter 8

Wednesday March 21: The Experience of Work, II

Ehrenreich, Chapter 3

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 121-141

Friday March 23. Poverty: An Overview

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 1-38

Sudhir Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the New Urban Poor*, 1-20*

Monday March 26: The Role of Parenting

Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, & Family Life*, 107-164;*

Shipler, 142-173

Wednesday March 28. Poverty and Place: Concentrated Poverty and Its Effects

Sudhir Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the New Urban Poor*, 214-277

Friday March 30: Concluding Discussion on Poverty and Social Policy

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 201-253

Katherine Newman, *Chutes and Ladders: Navigating the Low-Wage Labor Market*, 273-288 *
Handouts on Swedish social policy

Monday April 2: Reacting to Injustice: Constructive Anger

Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, pages TBA

In-class guest, Dr. Robert Solomon, University of Texas

Wednesday April 4. Middle Class Insecurity, I

Tamara Draut, *Strapped*, Chapters 1 and 2

Friday April 6. Middle Class Insecurity

Draut, *Strapped*, Chapter 3 and either Chapter 4 or Chapter 5 (half the class will read one chapter and half the other)

Take-home Quiz on Class, Economic Insecurity and Poverty Handed Out; Due in Class April 9

Monday April 9: Discussion of Police Ridealongs

Take-home quiz due; No reading

IV. Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Wednesday April 11: Racial Stigma in the United States: Analysis

Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege," 147-159 *

Glenn Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*; 1-53; statistical appendix to be distributed in class.

Friday April 13: Racial Stigma in the United States: Experience

Nathan McCall, *Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*, 3-49, 60-88*

Cornel West, "Nihilism in Black America," in *Race Matters*, 17-31*

Monday April 16: Justice and the Family Structure

Susan M. Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, 125-186*

Wednesday April 18: Sexuality, Marriage, and Fairness

Warren J. Blumenfeld, "How Homophobia Hurts Everyone," 267-275 *

Josh C. Meiner, "Reflections of a Gay Fraternity Brother," 299-301 *

Robin West, "Universalism and Gay Marriage," *Florida State University Law Review*, 705-711, 726-730 *

Friday April 20: Domestic Violence

Guest speaker, Dr. Glyn Hughes, Center for Common Ground
Readings TBA

V. Justice, Politics, and Power

Monday April 23. Does Democracy Promote Justice?

Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 16-36 *

David Cay Johnston, *Perfectly Legal*, 5-19, 117-144*

Wednesday April 25. Prospects for Advancing Justice in the 21st Century

Edward Chambers, *Roots for Radicals*; 21-44 *

Gar Alperovitz, “The Wealth of Neighborhoods” *

Friday April 27: Conclusion

No readings. Final thoughts and wrap-up; course evaluations.

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY MAY 4, 5 p.m.

Turn hard copies of your final paper into my office, Jepson Hall 135.