

**LDST 205: Justice and Civil Society**  
**Sections 01**

Spring 2009  
MW 4:15-5:30, Jepson 102

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**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to enable students to think critically about what it means to live justly as a person *and* as a member of community and what is required of us to fulfill the ideal of justice by introducing to them the theoretical, empirical, and experiential dimensions of justice in *our* democratic civil society. The course starts with a Socratic method of the examination of life—a method that critically examines the conventional life and question whether the way it is understood and practiced is just or justifiable. Over the course students will wrestle with the question of whether *I* as an individual can live justly in an unjust *society*. They will learn (1) that a just “I” (individual) and a just “We” (society) are not only inextricably intertwined but also mutually enhancing and therefore (2) that it is critical for us both as a person *and* as a member of society to investigate what problems (social, economic, political, and even cultural) we collectively suffer and how they can be dealt with effectively.

More specifically, after understanding the Socratic notion of citizenship (i.e., critical citizenship), students will explore what it means to live “together” and “democratically” and what kinds of injustice are posed to our common democratic living and what should be done collectively to rectify those problems of injustice. Over the semester, students will make a theoretical exploration of the foundation of the modern/contemporary civil society from different perspectives (ethical, economic, and gender/sexual) and investigate whether or not the concept of “civility” on which the modern civil society is predicated is politically, economically, or sexually neutral and fair to individuals and groups comprising *our* democratic civil society. Toward the end of the course, then, students will read various contemporary, more empirically oriented, readings that directly address issues of social injustice and (attempt to) offer some practical solutions for them. In doing so, students will invite themselves to apply theories of justice and civil society they have learned to the betterment of our society and at the same time to critically reevaluate them against the backdrop of the empirical problems that we are actually confronted with. In short, this course is committed to inculcate the democratic values of (1) the mutual enhancement of I and We and (2) the dialectical interplay between theory and practice.

Justice and Civil Society is divided between 45 hours of class time and 30 hours of community-based learning, including 4 hours of social observation (see below) and 26 hours of service: As a service-learning course, Justice and Civil Society requires the students to engage in service with members of communities in need. Students will sign up for a specific task that allows them to apply what they have learned in class through an active engagement

– e.g., tutoring children, assisting refugees, visiting the elderly, or working with the incarcerated – in local communities in Richmond area under the supervision and auspices of a non-profit or public organization. In class, students are strongly encouraged to share their service experiences with other students and discuss what impacts their direct involvement in local communities has brought to their understanding of justice and of the social systems of justice. Therefore, this course aims not only to foster active citizenship to commit oneself to the democratic justice but also reflective leadership to critically reexamine the established norms of justice and its underlying systems.

**Required Readings** (Available for purchase at the UR bookstore)

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*. New York: Owl Book, 2002.
- Low, Setha and Smith, Neil (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space*. New York and London, 2006.
- Mill, J. S. *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*. New York: Modern Liberty, 2002.
- Morrison, Toni, *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Vintage, 2007.
- Plato. *The Last Days of Socrates*. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001.
- Shipler, David K. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005.

® Readings available online via the library reserve system, on both e-reserve and paper reserves.

**Course Requirements**

**1. Class Participation: 15%**

The success of this “seminar-like” class hinges on the active participation of each member of the class. By “active participation,” I mean that students are not only to attend all class meetings but also to engage fully in them: reading the required reading materials in advance and carefully; thinking reflectively about the readings in relation to the key issues of the week; raising thoughtful and interesting questions regarding the readings and/or the service experiences; critically and yet respectfully arguing with another student or the instructor. If you attend every class and pay attention to what is going on but rarely say anything during the class, your participation grade will be roughly C+/B- (11-12). Note that one unexcused absence is understandable, but your final grade will be lowered by two percentage points for each additional unexcused absence. If you need to miss a class, please let me know in advance (via email). More than five absences (without permission) will amount to the failing grade.

**2. Three Short Reaction Papers (5-6 double-spaced pages): 45%**

Paper #1 on a Critique of Lockean (Possessive Individualistic) Modern Civil Society from Rousseauian or Marxian or Feminist Viewpoint (15%) Due Monday, February 16, 3:00 p.m.

Paper # 2 on a Critical Reaction Paper on Toni Morrison's *Bluest Eye* from a Justice Perspective (15%) Due Wednesday, March 18, 3:00 p.m.

Paper # 3 on a Critical Essay on either Poverty or Shrunk Public Space in America (15%), Due Monday, April 20, 3:00 p.m.

Late papers are penalized one-third of a grade for each day they are late. Barring exceptional circumstances, there are no paper extensions.

### **3. In-Class Midterm Examination: 20% (Wednesday, March 4)**

The exam will be comprised of 10 identification questions (each 10 %). Note that this format can be changed.

### **4. Final Paper (9-11 double-spaced pages): 20% (Due Wednesday, April 29)**

In this final course paper, you will be asked to integrate what you've learned in class into your service experiences, or vice versa. For instance, you might want to apply the contemporary theories on justice and civil society to an understanding and/or a solving of particular problems of the community (or work site) in which you have been engaged. Or, you might want to attempt to criticize, supplement, or ameliorate the theories that you've learned in light of your own site experiences. Either way, you should draw on your own experience (including journals); an interview (when possible) with your site supervisor; the assigned course reading; and at least three additional published sources (either books or periodicals) of direct relevance to your specific topic.

It is highly recommended (but not required) that you submit an outline for this final paper by **April 22**. I will schedule appointments during the study period with those students who've submitted outlines to go over your paper plans.

Again, a late paper is penalized one-third of a grade for each day they are late. Barring exceptional circumstances, there are no paper extensions.

### **5. Community-Based Learning Component**

#### **Site Approval Form and Brief Synopsis (Due Friday, January 30, 5:00pm)**

On Friday, January 30, you should turn in to the instructor and Dr. Teresa Williams ([twillia8@richmond.edu](mailto:twillia8@richmond.edu)), Associate Dean in the Jepson School, a brief (200-250 words) synopsis describing your site location, your supervisor, what your roll 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. In addition, your site supervisor should submit the site approval form to Dr. Teresa Williams.

#### **Planning Your Community Service**

You should complete 24 hours of service in an approved site within the city of Richmond or the immediate surroundings. Failure to complete this service by Wednesday, April 29 will result in a failing grade for the course. It is highly recommended that you complete your service by Friday, April 24. Additionally, at least 8 hours of service should be completed by

Friday, February 13 and 16 hours completed by Friday, March 21. Periodically throughout the semester we will set aside time in class to discuss your experiences at the sites.

(\* Keeping a journal or diary of your experience in the field is highly recommended for this purpose and for your final course paper.)

**Field Supervisor Evaluation (sent to Jepson School by Supervisor by Friday, April 24)**

The field supervisor's evaluation will be used to assess the quality of service hours, responsibility, and initiative shown at the site of service.

**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 Dr. Teresa Williams ([twillia8@richmond.edu](mailto:twillia8@richmond.edu)) of your intention to participate by **Friday, January 23**, along with a list of times during the week you will be available. We will discuss the experience in class once the ride-alongs are completed. 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 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 Dr. Williams by email, also by September 5, so that we can work on making arrangements for you.

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

**UniverCity Day Participation (required)**

The Center for Civic Engagement is hosting UniverCity Day on Saturday, January 24, a 3-hour experience in the city that familiarizes students a little bit with the history, layout, and social issues of Richmond. There are three buses; all buses will get a basic tour of the city. You will hear a talk from a city expert (such as Rachel Flynn, the current City Planner); you will get to visit U.R. Downtown; and you will get a free meal. The CCE pays about \$30 per student to make this all work. Each bus will have a different "theme" based on the expert: public education, civil rights, and redevelopment. The buses depart at different times on January 24—9:30, 10:30, and noon. You can register by clicking [https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?key=p7BJxkgpr\\_qt0WzUXHsstYg](https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?key=p7BJxkgpr_qt0WzUXHsstYg)

**\* Notes on Grading Standards and the Honor System**

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 and defend an argument, but also anticipate and attempt to answer likely objections to the argument, and/or acknowledges 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.

The Jepson School supports and adheres to the provisions of the Honor Systems as sanctioned by the School of Arts and Sciences. Every piece of written work in this course must have the word, “**Pledged,**” along with the student’s signature, signifying the following: “I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.” In the context of this course, the pledge also signifies that you are accurately reporting your experiences and hours worked at the service site.

#### **\* Notes on Disabilities**

If you are having any physical or mental disabilities that require a special assistance in class or in fulfilling course assignments (including an in-class examination), please contact the instructor after the end of the first class on August 25.

#### **Class Schedule**

### **I. SOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP**

#### **January 12 (M): Introduction to the Course and Community-Service Orientation**

No readings; review of syllabus and course requirements

Overview of site selection process with Dr. Teresa Williams.

#### **January 14 (W): What is Justice?**

-- Plato, *The Republic*, Book I and the early part of Book II, pp. 16-46. ®

-- Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, chapter 7 (“The Simile of the Cave”), pp. 255-264 ®

#### **January 19 (M): Critical Citizenship**

-- Plato, *Apology*, pp. 39-70 (in *The Last Days of Socrates*).

### **II. EXAMINING THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN CIVIL SOCIETY**

## **Part I: The Politico-Economic Foundation**

### **January 21 (W): Possessive Individualism I: The Economic Purpose of Civil Society**

-- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, paragraphs 1-51, 123-131. ®

### **January 26 (M): Possessive Individualism II: Class Distinction and Differentiated Rationality**

-- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, paragraphs 211-243. ®

-- C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 226-238. ®

### **January 28 (W): The (Un)civil Origin of Inequality**

-- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Preface and all of part II, pp. 81-85, pp. 113-138. ®

### **February 2 (M): The Alienation of Humanity and of Self**

-- Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 70-93. ®

-- Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, pp. 42-46. ®

[All in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978)]

## **Part II: The Sexual Foundation**

### **February 4 (W): The Subjection of Women I**

-- J. S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, in *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*, chapter 1.

Initial short discussion of service site experiences

### **February 9 (M): The Subjection of Women II**

-- J. S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, chapter 2.

## **III. CONTEMPORARY DEBATES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **Part I: Rawls' Theory of Justice**

#### **February 11 (W): Justice as Fairness**

-- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 1-32.

#### **February 16 (M): Two Principles of Justice**

-- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, pp. 39-79.

\* *First Short Essay is Due.*

## **Part 2: Rawls' Critics**

### **February 18 (W): Libertarian Critiques of Rawls**

-- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 10-17, 149-164. ®

-- Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 7-21, 119-136, 177-189. ®

### **February 23 (M): Communitarian Critiques of Rawls**

-- Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), pp. 3-24. ®

-- Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 3-30 ®

### **February 25 (W): Feminist Critiques of Rawls**

-- Susan M. Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), pp. 3-24, 89-109. ®

### **March 2 (M): Capabilities Approach**

-- Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 56-101. ®

### **March 4 (W): In-Class Midterm Examination**

## **IV. THE CURRENT PROBLEMS IN AMERICA AND BEYOND: POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, AND SHRUNKEN PUBLIC SPACE**

### **Part I: Poverty in America**

#### **March 16 (M): Poverty Is Expensive**

-- Shipler, *The Working Poor*, pp. 1-38.

-- Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. 11-49. (Chapter 1)

#### **March 18 (W): Self Degraded**

-- Shipler, *The Working Poor*, pp. 121-141,

-- Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. 51-119. (Chapter 2)

\* *Second Paper is Due.*

**March 23 (M): World Being Shrunk and Discussion on *The Bluest Eye***

-- Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. 121-191. (Chapter 3)

-- Discussion on *The Bluest Eye*

**March 25 (W): Inheritance of Poverty**

-- Shipler, *The Working Poor*, pp. 39-76, 142-173.

**March 30 (M): America, the Other Side I**

-- Benjamin R. Barber, *Consumed* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), pp. 3-37. ®

**April 1 (W): America, the Other Side II**

-- Barber, *Consumed*, pp. 116-165. ®

**Part II: Struggle for the Public Space**

**April 6 (M): The Political Economy of Public Space**

-- David Harvey, "The Political Economy of Public Space," in Setha Low and Neil Smith (eds), *The Politics of Public Space* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 17-34.

-- Dolores Hayden, "Building the American Way: Public Subsidy, Private Space," in Setha Low and Neil Smith (eds), *The Politics of Public Space*, pp. 35-48.

**April 8 (W): The Privatization of the Public Space**

-- Setha Low, "How Private Interests Take over Public Space," in Setha Low and Neil Smith (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space*, pp. 81-103.

-- Don Mitchell and Lynn A. Staeheli, "Clean and Safe?," in *The Politics of Public Space*, pp. 143-175.

**April 13 (M): Public Space and Terror**

-- Cindi Katz, "Power, Space, and Terror: Social Reproduction and the Public Environment," in Setha Low and Neil Smith (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space*, pp. 105-121.

-- Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, pp. 1-41. ®

**April 15 (W): The Right to the Public Space**

-- Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, pp. 161-226. ®

## **VI. PASSION AND ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE**

### **April 20 (M): Passion and Action for Democracy and Justice**

-- Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), pp. 242-272. ®

-- Benjamin Barber, *A Place for Us* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), pp. 69-113. ®

\* *Third Paper is Due.*

### **April 22 (W): Conclusion**

No reading. Final thoughts and wrap-up

\* *Final Paper is due on Wednesday April 29, 3p.m.* (Turn hard copies of your final paper into my office, Jepson Hall 245.)