General Expectations

This is a very demanding course. It involves both intensive reading and substantial direct involvement in the community, as well as periodic writing assignments and quizzes. You will not be able to do well in the course unless you make it a major priority.

I have several expectations for students in the course. The first is that you show up at least one minute early for each class, and stay until the end (even if occasionally the discussion runs one or two minutes over time). Bathroom breaks are disruptive and disrespectful; wait until after class unless it is an emergency. No laptops should be used in class, for any reason. Taking of notes is encouraged, but you need to be prepared to participate at any time.

Attendances at all classes is mandatory. It is equally important, however, that you come prepared for class. This means several things. First, you should have done the assigned reading prior to class. Second, you should bring the relevant text with you to class. Third, you should be sufficiently rested and fed to be alert and ready to participate during class. Sleeping or nodding off in class will be regarded as equivalent to an absence. Fourth, you should have a notebook devoted to this class only, both for taking notes and for keeping any and all handouts over the course of the semester.

The reading load for this class will strike some of you as high relative to other courses at the University of Richmond. It is a substantial amount of reading, and doing the reading in a thoughtful fashion will require a substantial investment of time and effort on your part. Generally speaking, you should always be carrying a book with you (whether for this class or another) and reading should be your default activity during the week as a college student.

This class will be a lot of work but I can make three promises to you. First, the quantity of reading is quite comparable to what your peers taking courses on “Justice” (or political philosophy) at other high-caliber colleges and universities are required to do. Second, compared to many of those courses, the readings in this class represent a diverse set of genres: philosophical texts, Biblical interpretation, a novel, first-person nonfiction, a historical study, a journalistic account, and a graphic novel (or “comic book” if you prefer!).
Third, if you make an investment in this material, the intellectual and (possibly) personal rewards will be rich. You have the opportunity to engage in detailed examination of the question of what “justice” is and what makes for a just society, and to engage directly with some of the central texts that have addressed this question in Western societies: Plato’s *Republic*, John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice*, Reinhold Niebuhr’s *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. You also will have the opportunity to relate these philosophical texts to contemporary issues of social justice. By the end of the class you should have acquired the tools not only to engage in further philosophical enquiry about the nature of justice, if you so choose, but also the ability to critically analyze other contemporary issues from the standpoint of social justice, and the ability to think critically and creatively about how to respond to social injustice. This is an unusual opportunity to think about all these questions together, in a serious way—at the same time that you are engaged firsthand in the community.

**Expectations Regarding Community Work**

It is critical that you establish a connection with your service site as soon as possible, that you begin your service work no later than the first week of September, and that you continue to be engaged regularly through the end of the semester. You are free to make the arrangements with your site supervisor that best fit your schedule and theirs, but whatever arrangements you make you should honor. Last-minute cancellations are disruptive and aggravating to the sites. Show up when you are supposed to show up and be sure to communicate clearly with your supervisor.

Your primary purpose while at the service sites is to be useful and helpful to the organization you are working with and the population the organization serves. From a pedagogical point of view, the aim of the service work is to directly expose you to ongoing social problems in the Richmond community. In almost all cases, these social problems are linked to questions of social justice: inclusion and exclusion, educational and economic inequality, meeting special needs. The reading we do in class will, over the course of the semester, help provide a deeper context for thinking about what is going on at your service site: why the social problem you are addressing exists, what questions of justice are implicated in the problem, and why and how the problem is or is not being addressed. This does not mean that all the readings directly connect to the kind of work you are doing in your service site. It also does not mean that the purpose of the readings is to show you to be a more effective volunteer.

We will talk about that question in the classroom from time to time, and you are invited to speak with me directly about that question at any time outside of class. If you wish to read a thoughtful reflection on community service, the book *The Call of Service* by Robert Coles is highly recommended.

**Short Explanation of the Course of Study**

This may be difficult and at times incomprehensible at the start of the course. But give it a try anyway. Then come back and re-read this near or at the end of the course.
“Justice” is a term with many meanings and many possible applications. This class is intended to explore many of these meanings and definitions, but it has a particular focus: social justice. We are not concerned in this class, primarily, with questions of criminal justice, for instance. Nor are we primarily concerned here with “just war theory.” Even within the framework of social justice, our ambit is limited. In this course, for instance, we will devote very little attention to questions of “global justice,” at least in the formally assigned readings.1

“Social justice” is a distinct mode of enquiry from personal ethics. That is to say, when discussing social justice we usually are not primarily talking about the individual character attributes of particular people. Rather we are talking primarily about institutional arrangements: the way the primary institutions of society are organized, and how these impact the lives and “life chances” of each person within society. These institutions include primarily the distribution of property and property rights; the law and courts; the form of government and the structure of political life; the mode of economic organization; rules regulating economic transactions; rules regarding the provision and distribution of health care and other care needs; and the educational system. They also may include the family, nongovernmental organizations, and religious institutions. In talking about social justice we are mainly examining how these institutions function and the ways in which they can be “just” or “unjust.”

The underlying assumption is that systemic social injustices are rarely a product of individual volition: correcting injustices is not simply a matter of convincing people to be nicer to one another. Individuals always find themselves embedded in particular social roles and identities only partly of their own choosing, and their actions and outlook on the world are shaped profoundly by institutional structures. If we regard it as unjust that some children in a given society are denied food, providing food to identified needy children, while admirable on humanitarian grounds, does not necessarily correct the injustice: that would require implementing a system that assured that no children went without food in the first place. How to do that (i.e. who pays for it; how it is to be implemented) is an institutional question.

This does not mean, however, that questions of individual ethics are irrelevant in discussing social justice. First, there is a long-running debate in political philosophy about whether, or to what extent, a just system of social institutions should (or must) aim to produce individual characters of a particular kind: that is, whether we should explicitly direct our institutional structures to encourage the nurturance of particular kinds of people with particular kinds of habits and desires. In this course we will be reading two thinkers with almost polar opposite answers to this question: Plato (who proposes a comprehensive educational program aimed at generating leaders of a very particular kind), and John Rawls (who argues that just institutions should not try to inculcate any particular way of life or any particular view of life’s purpose). But even Rawls thinks that what individuals believe and how they are motivated to act is important: their pursuit of individual aims should be (needs to be) regulated by a sense of justice.

Second, in many cases, there may continuity between concern for a particular problem or issue at an individual level and subsequent institutional analysis. Through volunteer work at a homeless shelter I may become concerned with the problems of particular homeless people and come to take an interest in their well-being. If I keep at it, I may become acutely aware of the limitations on resources available to help

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1 This is worth bracketing explicitly, because there are good reasons to believe that questions of global justice carry a special moral urgency in the early 21st century. They require a special analysis, however, that is beyond the parameters of this course—although these readings will provide much material that is relevant to such an analysis.
homeless people meet their needs and achieve economic and residential stability. This in turn might lead me to examine our public policies with respect to homelessness and affordable housing. That inquiry in turn might make me question why our society does not invest more in preventing homelessness, and lead me to question the overall distribution of resources in our society. Once we have reached this level of inquiry, we are clearly no longer talking about individual ethical questions (do I have a responsibility to help the homeless I see, and if so, how?) but about institutional questions: questions of social justice. But the origins of our interest in social justice (in this case, and probably almost all others) trace back to our individual concern for some particular person or persons (which may include ourselves).

On the flip side, the denial of social injustice and indifference towards, rationalization of, or ignorance of social injustice may be major impediments to attempts to correct such injustices. Indeed, one of the great evils of fundamentally unjust institutional arrangements is that they often encourage relatively privileged people to be indifferent or even callous towards the suffering and needs of others.

Third, and closely related to the above points, efforts to correct social injustices require the exercise of human agency. Often, agents must be willing to take great risks or bear enormous costs in order to confront existing injustices. Relatively powerless people run the risk of ostracism, economic sanction, imprisonment, even death when they challenge very powerful people and institutions. In other cases, persons in positions of power can make decisions which tend to perpetuate, exacerbate, mitigate, or eliminate pervasive injustices. The actions of these agents may be informed by self-serving calculations, but they also might be informed by what Rawls terms the “sense of justice”—a sense of what a just society should and should not be. Put another way, the sense of what is just and unjust often shapes or influences human agency, whether such agency involves the exercise of power or protest or resistance to it.

For all of these reasons, it is neither possible nor desirable to make an airtight separation between a focus on social institutions and their effects and a concern with the beliefs, motivations, and actions of individual persons. Nonetheless, placing a primary focus on institutional structures and the way they pervasively shape life chances and also (often) the kinds of motives and beliefs people have is an appropriate if not essential step in studying social justice (and its opposites). To use a sports metaphor, what we want to focus on first are not the actions of the players, but the rules of the game itself.

This focus on institutions can be contrasted to three other approaches to the question of justice. One alternative approach is to begin not with institutional analysis but with a discussion of individual ethical dilemmas. From a discussion of individual ethical dilemmas and the contrasting moral intuitions they expose, we work up to a general account of the kinds of principles which should govern our social life. This approach is well-exemplified by Michael Sandel’s recent book Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?, a book I admire and which is being used by the other sections of Justice and Civil Society this term. Note however that the very title of the book reveals a preoccupation with individual moral agency, not with institutional analysis. While it is certainly possible to move from the discussion of individual ethical dilemmas into a discussion of institutional arrangements, there is a risk that this jump may never be made, and that much of the content of social justice will remain under-explored.

A second approach is to attempt to draw a picture of what, in the abstract, justice entails, and then find some way to convert that picture into a concrete metric. Once we have such a concrete metric, we can then concentrate on trying to maximize that good, taking a pragmatic approach: that is, we adopt those
institutions and policies which seem in any particular circumstance to have the best chance of realizing or maximizing the metric. This sort of approach to justice is exemplified by utilitarianism: on the classical utilitarian view, justice is essentially a mechanism for promoting utility. Utility—human well-being—is what we are trying to maximize, and just institutions and policies are simply those which all things considered tend to maximize such utility over the long term. In the absence of a perfect measure of human well-being, we can supply plausible substitutes: most often, the good of money.

Utilitarianism is a formidable view (and the one John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* is most concerned with providing an alternative to). A similar sort of view has more recently also been forwarded by economist Amartya Sen, with the important contrast that rather than maximize “utility,” he believes we should be concerned with realizing multiple human capabilities. A just society is then one which best realizes the fullest possible realization of our human capabilities and the flourishing of each and every person. Institutions, rules, and policies are to be viewed pragmatically in view of their likelihood of realizing this goal. Like utilitarianism, this is also a formidable view of justice.

But properly understood, Sen’s view does not really remove the institutional question from the table, though it does encourages us to think pragmatically about the question as opposed to focusing all attention on the question of what the best ideal regime would be (given that there may be no way to realize it in practice). Moreover, Sen’s view run the risks of turning our attention only to policies and marginal steps (“what should we do, given the institutions we already have?”) and away from analysis of the institutions that shape how those policies are made. It does us little good to know what policies would best encourage further human flourishing if the regime we live in assures that such policies can never be adopted, or only adopted half-heartedly.

Indeed, consider a third alternative approach to “justice”, one drawn from social theory. This view, associated with the Marxist tradition but also with Max Weber, holds that it makes little sense to attempt to provide a description of ideal political-economic systems: that is, institutional arrangements that would be socially just. Rather, we should strive first to understand the internal dynamics of existing systems (such as capitalism). If we have a proper understanding of the workings of capitalism, we will realize that it is governed by its own internal dynamics, and that these dynamics will always trump a concern with “social justice.” In its most blunt form, the view is that capitalism always works to the advantage of those who own capital, even when it happens to provide ancillary benefits to large portions of the population; those ancillary benefits assure compliance with the regime, but they do not assure social and political equality and do not assure that all persons share in the benefits of the regime. Indeed (the view continues) capitalism in fact depends on the existence of a permanent group of relatively marginalized persons who can provide cheap labor. Discourse about “justice” and “fairness” in the context of this regime is just window dressing for a system that is designed to perpetuate both the superior economic and the superior political position of the small elite that owns most of the wealth and exercises vastly disproportionate political power, even within formally democratic societies.

The view just described is a classical Marxist view, but the logic of the argument also might apply to social theorists who assess capitalist societies in terms of a balance of power. That is, a common view among social scientists are that there are “varieties of capitalism” with distinct logics, including wide variations in labor laws, the provision of social welfare, and the relative strength of business and labor in the political arena. In some nations, private ownership of the means of production have coincided with
fairly extensive, universal social benefits. While such societies do generate a “sense of justice” (i.e. norms that social benefits must extend to everyone, or at least to all citizens), they also can be analyzed in terms of an analysis of class conflict and the relative strength of different particular groups within a particular society. As in the Marxist case, the view is that any analysis of the “justice” of an institutional arrangement must be subordinate to an analysis of power and conflict. Institutions are primarily mechanisms for peaceably mediating deep underlying conflicts.

Each of these alternative starting points for thinking about social justice, and the relationship between moral principles and institutional practices, has formidable intellectual adherents. Why then privilege an approach that puts primary focus on the specification of just social institutions? There are three answers to that question. The first is that the approaches of Sandel and Sen each leave open the possibility that institutional questions get simply ignored, or not given sufficient attention: we spend so much time working out abstract principles of individual action, or the best metric for human flourishing, that we do not think about how to realize these principles through institutional arrangements in a modern, complex society. Second, contra the Marxian/Weberian approach, it is argued that a) justice has a content independent of the outcome of power struggles in any particular society—in Rawls’s terms, justice is more than just an “accommodation” between competing groups; and b) that any coherent or attractive view of desirable political and economic institutions must have an underlying theory of justice or rightness. The belief that (for instance) “capitalism is bad” has no content unless it also believed that something else could be better, and unless there is a clear sense of what is bad about capitalism. (Indeed, it is demonstrably false that “anything would be better than capitalism.”)

Third, and most important, an approach that places institutions and their normative justification center stage allows us to not only conduct institutional analysis, but also to engage each of the other “starting points” as well. Vis-à-vis Sandel (and related thinkers), an institutional proposal that contrasts with our moral intuitions demands further scrutiny; ideally, the institutions we endorse as “just” should be consistent with our deepest held moral convictions, though it may be necessary to adjust these convictions and intuitions in light of a rigorous analysis. Vis-à-vis Sen (and related thinkers), we may agree that it is helpful if not essential to specify the sorts of capabilities human beings in a just society should be able to exercise, and to shape our view of the just distribution of goods and resources, as well as other institutional arrangements, in light of this conception. (Indeed, Rawls anticipates Sen’s view in speaking of “primary goods” to which all persons should have access.) But as noted above, identifying capabilities to be nurtured and enabling goods to be provided does not displace the necessity of an examination of institutional questions.

Vis-à-vis social theorists of capitalism, a theory of social justice aiming to specify just political-economic institutions should of course take note of what we empirically know and observe concerning existing political-economic systems. Moreover, it is a mistake to assume a priori that a theory of justice aims to provide a justification for any existing system. Rawls, for instance, is not concerned with justifying capitalism, or even with justifying the welfare state; he actually argues that justice requires something else (“property-owning democracy”). The fact that he did not explain in a high level of detail what that “something else” might be or how it could be achieved can be identified as a major omission in his body of work, but not necessarily a flaw in his mode of thinking about justice. Presumably that work could be taken up by others (indeed, to some extent it is, even now!).
The preceding paragraphs provide an explanation for why (in my view) institutional analysis is the best place to start an analysis of social justice, compared to alternative starting points. In one sense, they consist of a defense of John Rawls’s approach to thinking about social justice. But Rawls’s approach to justice can be criticized from a different direction as well: one may question the relevance of developing an “ideal theory” of justice, and reject Rawls’s claim that knowing the ideal to which one aspires is necessary and sufficient to guide judgments about the relative qualities of imperfect institutions. Sen’s emphasis on capabilities noted above is a species of this line of criticism, though I fear he goes too far in removing our attention from institutions. A more powerful version of the same kind of criticism holds that we cannot realize ideal principles of justice, because human societies will always be governed in large measure by the quest for power and material gain. Individuals and in particular classes will energetically resist threats to their prerogatives made in the name of justice. Reason alone is usually inadequate to generate meaningful movement in the direction of justice; coercion is also necessary. “Power concedes nothing without a demand,” as Frederick Douglass put it. We may be able to philosophically describe what a just society would look like, but we can realize it only imperfectly because human beings tends to be selfish, particularly in defending group interests. Not only are human beings selfish in this manner, they are highly skilled at using the language of justice to defend their own interests; privileged groups come to believe that they have a right to their privilege, that their privileges are just.

This line of thought is very old: we will encounter an early version of it in Thrasymachus’s speech in Book I of The Republic. Many religious views of justice, including those of the Hebrew prophets (described by Abraham Heschel), similarly condemn the widespread iniquities of corrupt social orders. Later in the course we read two texts that articulate this viewpoint in different ways: Reinhold Niebuhr’s Moral Man and Immoral Society, and Timothy Tyson’s Blood Done Sign My Name. The implication of this view is not that it is impossible to know what justice is, or to take steps to advances its realization. Rather, the implication is that the realization of justice will always be partial, and will always face powerful obstacles. Further, whatever advances in social justice we are able to achieve will be owed not either to reason or to social intelligence operating on their own, but also to conflict and the use of coercion to influence the actions of powerful institutions and actors.

**Justice and the Study of Leadership**

One final preliminary comment: how does this course relate to the study of leadership? This is worth noting up front, because unlike most other Jepson courses, we will not be doing many readings that are explicitly about leadership understood as individual leaders interacting with a community or an organization (one exception is Heschel’s The Prophets; another is Whatever It Takes, about Geoffrey Canada).

There are four points of connection worth noting. First, by exposing you to and compelling you to reflect upon some of the social inequalities characteristic of contemporary American society, the class is intended to deepen your understanding of the society we live in and hence the context in which leadership takes places in the United States. Second, in discussing competing accounts
of social justice we are also engaged in a discussion of the *ends* of leadership: what is leadership *for*? What are we, or what should we, be trying to accomplish when we act as leaders? One very plausible answer to those questions is that we should be striving to build a just society. But if that is our aim, we need to have a fairly clear sense of what exactly we mean by the idea of a just society (given that there will never be universal agreement on that point!)

Third, to discuss questions of social justice, and in particular the question of what a just system of social institutions look like, is in the same breath to discuss the question of how leadership should be organized. Should society’s key decisions be made by a permanent class of well-trained leaders who are experts in promoting the common good? Must a just society be democratic? Is democracy co-extensive with social justice, an instrument to promote social justice, a threat to social justice, or all of the above? A holistic account of social justice necessarily involves some conception of who should rule—the question of leadership.

Fourth, over the course of the semester we will take up various examples of leadership *for* social justice. If one does not happen to be living in an ideally just society, how can one act so as to call attention to and correct social injustices? What obstacles might such efforts face? This class will provide many examples to consider: the characters in the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, as well as author Harriet Beecher Stowe herself; the account of the fight over school desegregation in Richmond from the 1950s to the 1970s in *The Color of Their Skin*; the various personae dramatis in *Blood Done Sign My Name* (including the author); Geoffrey Canada of the Harlem Children Zone; and others.

In short, properly understood this course is deeply connected to multiple critical questions about leadership and its purposes.

**Brief Outline of the Plan of Study**

This course begins by considering a case of a social institution that today is universally regarded as unjust, but in its time had many defenders. Importantly, this institution has had lasting effects down to the present on the society we live in—slavery. In short, we begin by considering the nature of injustice, and of how people have struggled to overcome injustice.

We then turn to consider the biblical precursors of modern theories of justice: the (internal) critique of ancient Israeli society articulated by the prophets of the Hebrew Bible (“Old Testament.”)

We then shift gears to the Greek tradition of philosophy and consider what still stands as one of the most sophisticated, compelling, and influential accounts of justice ever written: Plato’s *Republic*. As we will see, Plato is not a democrat and not an egalitarian. But the questions he raises—and the answers he gives—still must be grappled with.
We then take a pit stop to consider the nature of work and class in contemporary society from the point of view of workers (i.e. ordinary people) themselves using a graphic novel version of Studs Terkel’s oral history collection, *Working*.

Then we turn to the book that has defined most contemporary debates about what justice should mean in the context of a democratic society: John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice*. We will strive to understand the theory as a whole, as well as the views he is arguing with. In the process it is likely that you (and I) will together raise many questions about Rawls’s theory.

We then turn to a particular case that corresponds to Rawls’s view that equality of opportunity must be a foundational principle for a just society: the case of the racial desegregation of schools in Richmond and the surrounding area between 1954 and 1989. The decisions made during this time period have had a lasting effect on the educational system and structure of opportunity we have today in Richmond.

The Richmond case is troubling for those who have faith in rational principles of justice. We then turn to another theorist of justice, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who offers a critique of liberal theories of justice and progress. For Niebuhr it’s not just about ideals: in the presence of what he calls human “sinfulness,” we must also wield power to advance justice. But our use of power in turn must be restrained by and informed by ethical considerations, including an awareness of our own tendency towards “sin.” This perspective on justice—and the American Civil Rights Movement—is brought to life in a concrete case by Timothy Tyson in his book *Blood Done Sign My Name*, focusing on the impact and aftermath of a racially motivated murder in Oxford, North Carolina in the early 1970s. This book is also a penetrating analysis of race and “race relations” in the United States.

Finally, we turn (all too briefly) to the question of what people are doing even now to attempt to rectify inequalities of opportunity, by reading Paul Tough’s book *Whatever It Takes*. This book describes the Harlem Children’s Zone, a widely praised comprehensive effort to improve the education and social support provided to children in the neighborhood that is a model for a new federal initiative. This book provides an excellent overview of recent social science research on the causes of persistent poverty and the inter-generational transmission of inequality, as well as vivid portrait of the efforts of the Harlem Children’s Zone and the obstacles it has encountered.

In addition to these readings, from time to time there will be brief class handouts, especially of statistical information regarding the distribution of income, wealth, etc. in the United States and trends in these distributions over the past 30 years; on the kinds of social programs available in the U.S. and in Virginia; and other topics that may arise. Hold on to these handouts (you may want or need to cite them in your papers).
Class Requirements:

1. Attendance at every class, on time, remaining in the classroom awake and alert until class is dismissed. Attendance at every class, on time, remaining in the classroom awake and alert until class is dismissed. Any unexcused absences will negatively impact your final participation grade, and multiple unexcused absences (or late arrivals) will have a negative impact at an exponentially increasing rate.

2. Being prepared to participate actively in every class (i.e. having done the reading); and actually participating.

3. Attend class field trip to Civil War Center/Slavery Trail on Friday August 27, 2-5 p.m. Transportation to be arranged informally.

4. Completion of 30 hours of community-based service learning. These should all be completed at the same site unless you get special permission (and have a good reason for doing your hours at more than one site). All hours must be completed by December 3. All forms must be signed and paperwork completed on dates announced by Dr. Soderlund. This is non-negotiable. **Option:** You may choose to go on a police ride-along with the Richmond Police Department, or attend a session of Juvenile Court. If you choose this option, your service requirement is reduced to 26 hours. If you are choosing this option, you must notify Dr. Kerstin Soderlund (ksoderlu@richmond.edu) by Friday Sept. 3, 5 p.m., cc’ing me. If you choose this option, you are also responsible for completing a two-page write-up describing your experience with the police or in juvenile court.

5. On or before October 13 (on your return from fall break), you will turn in a short (300-500 words) write-up describing your community service work so far. This is an ungraded exercise, but is mandatory.

6. Attend office hours or otherwise make an appointment with me no later than Monday October 4. Failure to do this will harm your participation grade.

7. Attend the lecture by Thad Williamson on “Sprawl, Justice and Citizenship” Wednesday October 6 at 11 a.m. in the Jepson Alumni Center. If you have class at noon on Wednesdays, or if you wish to bring your parents to a talk on this subject, you may alternatively come to a public lecture on the same topic being given Saturday Sept. 25 at 10:30 a.m. (parents’ weekend).

8. Attend two out-of-class events over the semester, from a specified list, related to the themes of the course. A list of Justice-related events that currently qualify is provided below. It is possible though not certain that additional events will be added to this list. How will you provide evidence that you have attended these events? You will complete a write up of two-three paragraphs describing each event you attend, and discussing how you think it relates to the course or to your service work. This is an ungraded exercise, but will affect your classroom participation grade.

9. Complete **four** papers of five pages each analyzing assigned readings. Specific prompts for each paper will be distributed at least one week before the deadlines. Paper due dates
10. Complete a final paper of eight-to-ten pages analyzing your service site. If your site has to do with education or children, your paper should engage with the arguments and findings of *Whatever it Takes*. If your site addresses another issue, you should plan to talk to me about additional sources for you to look at in writing this paper. Detailed instructions on this paper will be given in class on November 22.

11. Each student should keep a notebook including all returned (graded) papers and all returned (ungraded) write-ups from the semester. Turn this notebook in with your final paper at the end of the semester.

12. The instructor reserves the right to administer unannounced “pop” quizzes or in-class writing assignments. This will be done at my discretion to the extent that class members or a significant portion thereof are not adequately preparing for or participating in class. Any pop quizzes will affect the semester participation grade. The best way to assure there is never a pop quiz is for everyone to prepare for and participate in every class.

Preliminary List of Special Course-Related Events You May Attend:

September 11: UR Shantytown Event (must attend documentary film).

September 21. Poverty Simulation (6-8 p.m.), Center for Civic Engagement

October 4: Habitat Bus Tour of Richmond

October 20: Cleve Jones (activist on gay/lesbian equality issues)


November 10: Film showing of “Hoop Dreams” (in conjunction with First-Year Seminar on Sports, Leadership, and Justice)

Grading Formula:

Class attendance, preparation, and participation (includes any in-class “pop” quizzes, and attendance at special events): 20%

Four 5-6 page papers: 15% each (60% total)

Final 8-10 page paper: 20%.

General grading standards:

“A” work is well-written, well-argued, and thoroughly conversant with the source material, containing no major inaccuracies or contradictions, and illustrating subtlety and nuance of argument. “A” papers consist of interesting, substantial thoughts well-packaged in technically proficient writing.
“B” work attempts to forward an argument and shows good familiarity with and understanding of the source material, and is generally well-written. There are generally two genres of “B” work: papers that have some of the qualities of an “A” paper, but also contain serious flaws; and papers that contain no serious flaws, but also lack originality or depth of perceptiveness, or simply fail to be persuasive.

“C” work makes an attempt to complete an assignment but contains substantial flaws, either of writing quality, inadequate comprehension of the material, unsupported arguments, and/or logically contradictory or implausible arguments.

“D” and “F” work refers to papers that are seriously inadequate and fail to meet the basic requirements of the assignment.

Plan of Study

Weeks 1-2. Introduction/Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Critique of American Slavery

August 23. Course introduction; review of class requirements; handout on human “capabilities” (Martha Nussbaum); visit from Dr. Soderlund, Assoc. Dean for Student Affairs, Jepson School

August 25. Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Chapters 1-10 (pp. 1-100)

August 30. Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Chapters 11-27 (pp. 101-300)


Week 3. The Prophetic Critique of Social Injustice: Biblical Roots

September 6. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 5

September 8. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, Chapters 6, 7 and 11

DEADLINE: September 10 at midnight by email; bring hard copy to class September 13. 6 page paper on Stowe and Heschel

Weeks 4-6. Debating Justice: Plato’s *Republic*


September 15. Plato, *Republic*, Books II and 3

September 20. Plato, *Republic*, Book IV


September 27. Plato, *Republic*, Books VII and VIII
September 29. Plato, *Republic*, Book IX (Book X strongly recommended)

   Recommended: Thad Williamson, “The Good Society and the Good Soul,” *Leadership Quarterly* (article to be distributed via Blackboard/email)

**DEADLINE:** October 1 midnight by email; bring hard copy to class October 4. 6 page paper on Plato.

**Week 7: Class and the Experience of Work**


**Weeks 8-10. Justice for a Democratic Society: John Rawls’s *Theory of Justice***


**DEADLINE:** October 13. Ungraded writeup on your community work (1-2 pages); bring hard copy to class.


October 20. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 5; selected passages from chapters 4 and 6 to be assigned.


October 27. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 9; the Capabilities Approach (review of handout from first day of class)

   Recommended: Thad Williamson, “Who Owns What? An Egalitarian Interpretation of John Rawls’s Idea of a Property-Owning Democracy” (article to be distributed via Blackboard/email)

**DEADLINE:** October 29 at midnight by email; bring hard copy to class November 1. 6 page paper on John Rawls.

**Week 11. Equality of Opportunity and Its Opposite: The Case of Richmond**


November 3. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin*

**Weeks 12-14. Realism and Social Justice: Reinhold Niebuhr and Timothy Tyson**

November 10. Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, Chapters 5-7 (Chapter 4 recommended)

November 15. Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, Chapters 8-10

November 17. Timothy Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name, pp. 1-100

November 22. Tyson, Blood Done Sign My Name, rest of book.

**DEADLINE:** November 24 at 5 p.m. by email. Bring hard copy to class November 29. 6 page paper on Pratt, Niebuhr, Tyson

**Week 15. Equality of Opportunity in Contemporary America? The Case of the Harlem Children’s Zone**

November 29. Paul Tough, Whatever It Takes, Chapters 1-7

December 1. Tough, Whatever It Takes, Chapters 8-11

**DEADLINE:** December 10. 8-10 page paper analyzing your service site. If have been doing work on education or with youth, the paper should make reference to Whatever It Takes. If you are working in another area, you should meet with me to discuss appropriate research you should look at in writing your paper. Also, turn in your course notebook (all written work) at this time.