We meet on Thursday afternoons. Please Complete assignments as scheduled below, and prepare to participate in lively conversations of same. And complete the placements that you’ll have discussed with Dean Soderlund (see the calendar appended to this document). Placements should permit you to bring “street-level smarts” to our class discussions of issues that relate to immigration, poverty, racism, gender bias, cultural difference, and cultural assimilation, which, this semester, form the core of what will concern us.

Most sessions with be divided into three components. The first, a conversation about the assigned readings and issues we’ve previewed during the prior meeting--as well as what registers as important to you while you’re completing assignments. During the second third, we’ll break into smaller groups, for which Jepson discussion leaders, will have prepared agenda. The final third of each class will harvest what breakout discussions raised or resolved, and we’ll preview the next week’s assignments.

Although some details may change during the semester, please continue to refer to the syllabus often to ensure you understand when and why we do what we do. Comments and questions in bold print have been drafted to help you drill into the assignments.

Requirements and grading

Six classes will start with a short quiz, both to lubricate the conversation that will follow and to give me something to grade. I’ll drop your lowest grade, which may well be the 0 recorded if you have the misfortune of missing one of the Thursdays that started with an exam. Each quiz can earn you 5 points or 5% of your final grade. Add to that total of 25, the 30 points you can earn on the mid-term, scheduled for March 1st and 45 points you’ll receive for a brilliant final, and you’ll get all of the 100 points on offer--an easy A+. I’m not inclined to quantify class preparation, but what I call fudge factors hoist your grades after all the computations are totaled, so that consistently informed participation in class and disciplined, creative participation at your placement sites boost your final grades as your numbers get translated into letters for transcripts.

“Participation at your placement sites” refers to the thirty hours of supervised public service or twenty-six hours coupled with the police ride-along. Note the schedule for completing the documentation that Jepson requires, and please consult Dean Kerstin Soderlund, if/when you have questions.
BOOKS (available at the student book store)

Miller, THE CRUCIBLE
Pogge, WORLD POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Bonilla-Silva, RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS
Kimmel, GUYLAND

The assigned articles listed below are available on the UR library’s e-reserve and are so listed or on-line, if followed by the url.

THE WHAT-AND-WHEN OF IT ALL

Jan. 12, Course introduction: retributive justice and revenge.

Jan. 19, Read Robert Solomon, “introduction” (e-reserve, listed as “introduction and part of chapter 4,” although you may omit the 4th chapter. Add to that Peter French’s chapter on the concept of revenge (e-reserve, listed as “concept”), and “Dead or Alive: American Vengeance Goes Global,” http://www.jstor.org/stable/40072158. You might find Michael Sherry’s comments in “Dead or Alive” extreme, nonetheless, be ready to discuss his examples—and to add some of your own—to formulate an interpretation of what passes in Sherry’s article as a “policed and punitive nation.” Is it good or bad to live in a policed and punitive nation/world? Or is it the way to enforce decisions that reasonably and justly resolve social problems?

Jan. 26, Read chapters 2 and 4 of Desmond Tutu’s NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS, available on e-reserve, and watch 2 films (on reserve in the media resource center, DRY WHITE SEASON and 1 of the following: V IS FOR VENDETTA or HANNA. We’re discussing revenge, retributive justice, and punishment, but before we head toward distributive justice, let’s look at the experiment in South Africa, in which, in effect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission tried to use amnesties or pardons to reconcile the races after what’s been called (wrongly, I think) “the end of apartheid.” Do you think that Tutu’s apology for the experiment (and for the commission) as well as his concept of “restorative justice” are excuses for avoiding hard and just decisions? What do you think of the way the film, DRY WHITE SEASON ended? The film used André Brink’s novel as a source, but filmmakers changed the ending. Referring to Tutu’s notions, change the film’s ending again, change the ending of the other film you’re viewing, and let me know which endings satisfy your desire for justice.

Feb. 9, Read Alba and Nee, “Remaking the Mainstream”; Lakoff and Ferguson, “The Framing of Immigration”; and Gleason, “The Odd Couple: Pluralism and Assimilation” (all three on e-reserve). Are you persuaded by Lakoff’s and Ferguson’s emphasis on framing and reframing issues? Does their article’s discussion of “frames not taken” persuade you that the term “alien” is prejudicial? Can we negotiate around terms sufficiently to find a way out of what Gleason calls the current “semantic muddle”? Are we in a no-win situation--not just semantically but in our world of policy and political practice--when we celebrate pluralism and expect assimilation?

Feb. 16, Can’t go another week without a film, so back to the Media Resource Center to watch CRASH. And please read Charles Lawrence’s “Two Views of the River: Critique of the Liberal Defense of Affirmative Action,” http://www.jstor.org/stable/1123688 along with Beverly Tatum’s comments on racism and “Identity Development in Adolescence” the fourth chapter of her WHY ARE ALL THE BLACK KIDS SITTING TOGETHER IN THE CAFETERIA (the assigned chapter is on e-reserve). What is affirmative action? And what is the liberal defense of it? Why does Lawrence criticize the liberal defense? Lawrence wants to address the problems related to something he calls “structural discrimination.” Does he do so successfully? Would you say that Tatum’s chapter successfully personalizes what Lawrence describes as “structural”?

Feb. 23, Read the conclusion to Mica Pollock’s book, BECAUSE OF RACE, which you’ll find on e-reserve, listed as “Arguing toward Everyday Justice” and RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, chapters 1-2, 5-6, and 8-9.

March 1, MIDTERM EXAM. In addition to reviewing what we’ve discussed and read so far, please draft a short essay (750 words, double-spaced), the take-home portion of your exam. Your challenge is to assess whether what Bonilla-Silva calls “playing the infamous race card” is either helpful or harmful in achieving social justice.

March 15, Read Arthur Miller’s THE CRUCIBLE and the slices of R.I. Moore’s THE FORMATION OF A PERSECUTING SOCIETY, on e-reserve. We head backwards into the medieval period (Moore) and to colonial America, as repossessed for the stage by Miller to examine the urge to persecute, to keep a “them” down to make certain an “us” is up. Is it necessary and/or prudent to exclude some as deviant or heretical to reinforce the unity of others? Moore says that the experience of being excluded has effects on (and can even be said to create) the identities of groups we exclude. Were you persuaded? If so, does that mean that the “we” do the “them” a favor by excluding them? Of course, Arthur Miller doesn’t do John Proctor favors
in *THE CRUCIBLE*, but could you say that John’s fate illustrates some of Moore’s themes and undermines others?

March 22, Read Pogge’s *WORLD POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS*, pp. 33-57, 97-110, and 114-35. *Why should people in affluent countries (call them “elites”) be responsible for life-threatening poverty in what was once called “the third world”? Aren’t the regimes in destitute countries responsible for their citizens? And when those regimes seem to be corrupt and unjust, do the elites in affluent nations have rights or responsibilities to interfere? What do you think about Pogge’s proposed “core criterion of basic justice”? Do you think it’s “minimally just,” “fully just,” outright unjust.*

March 29, Read Pogge’s *WORLD POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS*, PP. 152-61 and 174-264 as well as the two short articles on e-reserve, Debra Satz’s “What Do We Owe the Global Poor” and Allen Patten’s “Should We Stop Thinking About Poverty in Terms of Helping the Poor?”


April 12, Read Kimmel’s *GUYLAND*, chapters 7-12; Cech’s and Blair-Loy’s article on “Perceiving Glass Ceilings,” [http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2010.57.3.371](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2010.57.3.371); and Jennifer Hendricks’s “Body and Soul: Equality, Pregnancy, and the Unitary Right to Abortion,” on e-reserve. *Are women accomplices in perpetuating much of the “soul-numbing elements of Guyland that subsequently brace inequities in the workplace? Arguably, the fetus is the correct place to begin a discussion of the current abortion/choice issues, but our interest in gender inequalities is better-served if we drape our conversations around Hendricks’s analysis of “the harm of forced pregnancy.” For the occasion, therefore, whatever your position on abortion rights and wrongs is, assess Hendricks’s argument to see if it works and how it affects our culture’s definitions of “liberty” and “gender equity.”*

April 19. We’ll be talking in various sessions about your experiences at the community-based learning sites. Today, we’ll concentrate on just that and on the fit (or a lack of fit) between your classroom conversations of justice and your on-site participation and observations. Bring a typescript draft of your evaluations of your community-based experiences, due tomorrow, April 20.

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Important deadlines (documents to be submitted to Dean Soderlund)
January 13, police ride-along application.
January 20, court observation alternatives to the ride-along should be arranged with Dean Soderlund.
January 27, community-based learning contract due.
January 18, 19, 25, and 26, Bonner Center orientations for Build-it site, Families Initiative site, and PACE site. See Dean Soderlund’s schedule for details. April 20, student evaluations of learning sites and volunteer service logs are due.