

Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond

Fall 2005

LDST 205: Justice and Civil Society

Dr. Thad Williamson

Rm. 135, Jepson Hall

twillia9@richmond.edu

Office hours: Monday, 2:15-4:45 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 substance 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 is the concrete meaning of terms like “fairness,” “equal opportunity,” and “liberty”? 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 U.S. 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. Barring extreme circumstances, students are permitted a maximum of two unexcused absences during the term. The third unexcused absence will result in a grade deduction of 1% from your final course grade; the fourth absence a further reduction of 2% (3% total), the fifth a further reduction of 3% (6% total), etc. Active participation means showing evidence of having done the reading prior to class, and constructive engagement in all class-related activities.

2. Completion of 28 hours of service in an approved site within the city of Richmond. Failure to complete this service by Monday December 12 will result in a failing grade for the course; no excuses. Additionally, at least 8 hours of service should be completed by Monday October 3 and 16 hours completed by Monday October 31, so plan accordingly. On Monday Sept. 19, 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 ongoing experiences at the sites.

3. Two additional hours of social observation. The recommended activity is participation in the Richmond police department's citizen ride-along program. To sign up, you must complete and send in the following form online <http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/forms/RPDRideAlong.aspx>; it is highly recommended that you do this in the first 2 weeks of class. If for some reason you do not want to do a police ride-around, the alternative activity will involve attendance at a session of juvenile court in Richmond. Any student wishing to pursue this option must email me and cc Cassie King (cking@richmond.edu) by no later than 5 p.m., Wednesday Sept. 7.

4. Completion of five short response papers totaling 600-700 words and reflecting on the substance of the assigned course readings 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 two or three 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 five papers. At least two of the papers must be submitted by October 7. No late or after-the-fact response papers can be accepted. Response papers will be returned the Monday after they are submitted.

5. Completion of two longer papers drawing on both the course readings and your own service experiences.

The first paper (5-6 double-spaced, 1" margin pages), due Monday October 10, 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 Sept. 30.

The second paper (7-8 double-spaced, 1" margin pages), due Friday December 16, 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; the assigned course reading; and at least three 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 on Friday December 2.

It is also highly recommended (but not required) that you submit an outline of this final paper by Friday December 9. I will schedule appointments on December 12-13 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.

Course Grading

Completion of the 30 hours of service is a requirement of any passing grade in the course.

Beyond this requirement, students will be graded as follows:

15% Participation in Class

35% Response Papers

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

There is no final exam for this class.

Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

Required books, available at the University Bookstore

J.S. Mill, *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor*

Glenn Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Discrimination*

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*

* Readings available online.

Mon. August 29. Overview of the Course

Introduction; review of syllabus and requirements; overview of site selection process with Cassie King.

I. Sources of the Idea of Justice

Wed. August 31. Why We Care: Mencius and Adam Smith on Social Sympathy

Mencius, *The Book of Mencius*, [Book II, Chapter 6](#) *

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, [9-66, 79-92](#). *

No Class Friday Sept. 2

Mon. Sept. 4. Labor Day.

Wed. Sept 7. The Greek Tradition

Plato, *The Republic*, [Books I and IV, plus excerpts from Books II and III](#).

Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, [66-77](#).

Fri. September 9. The Biblical Tradition

Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction*, [1-38, 140-144, 195-221](#).

Contemporary Conceptions of Social Justice

Monday September 12. Justice as Utility Maximization

J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*

Wednesday September 14. Utilitarianism Applied, I: The Utilitarian Case for Liberty

Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter III, “On Individuality”

Friday September 16. Utilitarianism Applied, II: Global Inequality.

Peter Singer, [“The Singer Solution to World Poverty,”](#) *New York Times Magazine*, Sep. 5, 1999
Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, [288-346](#)

BRIEF SYNOPSIS DESCRIBING YOUR SERVICE SITE DUE SEPTEMBER 19

Monday September 19. The Limits of Utilitarianism; Justice as Fairness

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, [1-24](#); Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, [19-24](#) (critique of utilitarianism).

Wednesday September 21. Two Principles of Justice

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, [52-93](#).

Friday September 23. Class Debate: Meritocracy Pro and Con

Re-read Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 91-93.

David Brooks, “Learning,” from *On Paradise Drive*, [153-185](#)

Jonathan Kozol, “Still Separate, Still Unequal,” *Harper’s*, September 2005, 41-54.

Monday Sep. 26. Libertarian Critiques of Rawls

Robert Nozick, “Moral Constraints and Distributive Justice,” excerpted from *Anarchy, State and Utopia*,* [100-118](#).

F.A. Hayek, “‘Social’ or Distributive Justice,” from *The Essence of Hayek*, [62-88](#).

Wednesday Sep. 28. Radical Critiques of Rawls

G.A. Cohen, “Justice, Incentives, and Selfishness,” in *If You’re an Egalitarian, Why Are You So Rich?* [117-133](#) *

Gar Alperovitz, “Distributing Our Technological Inheritance,” *Technology Review*, October 1994, [30-36](#)*

Friday Sep. 30: Debate: Universal Stakeholding, Pro and Con

Bruce Ackerman and Amy Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society*, [21-45](#)

Mon. October 3: Spheres of Justice and Limits of Liberalism

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, [3-30](#); Michael Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent*, [3-25](#). *

Wed. October 5: Reconciling Work with Citizenship: Two Views of Wage Labor

Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, [168-201](#); Walzer, [95-108](#), [165-184](#).*

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

Fri. October 7: Guest Speaker: Dr. John Moeser, VCU

Dr. Moeser will speak on the demographics and history of race and class in Richmond.

FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE OCTOBER 10

Monday October 10: Overview of Class and Poverty in America

[“Class in America: Shadowy Lines That Still Divide.”](#) *New York Times*, May 15, 2005

[“A Marriage of Unequals.”](#) *New York Times*, May 17, 2005

[“The Five Bedroom, Six-Figure Rootless Life,”](#) *New York Times*, June 1, 2005

Tables and Statistics from *The Wealth Inequality Reader*, 1-15

Wednesday October 12: The Experience of Work, I

David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor*; 1-76; Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, 1-49

Friday October 14: The Experience of Work, II

Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, 50-119; Shipler, 77-141; Discussion.

No Class Mon. October 17: Fall Break

Wednesday October 19: How the Labor Market Works

Randy Albelda, Robert W. Drago, and Steven Shulman, *Unlevel Playing Fields: Understanding Wage Inequality and Discrimination*, [64-83](#), [148-175](#).

Friday October 21: The Experience of Work, III

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 121-141; Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, 121-191; Discussion.

Monday October 24: The Poverty Trap in America.

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 142-230.

Wednesday October 26: American Social Policy in Comparative Perspective

Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream*, [11-17](#), [24-57](#), [78-83](#).

Friday October 28: Concluding Discussion on Poverty and Social Policy

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 231-303; Discussion.

IV. Race, Gender, & Sexuality

Monday October 31: Theorizing Privilege and Oppression

Iris M. Young, “Five Faces of Oppression” in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, [39-65](#);
Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege”, [147-159](#); Nathan McCall, *Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*, [3-49](#).

Wednesday November 2: Racial Stereotyping in the United States.

Glenn Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Discrimination*; first read the statistical appendix in the back of book, then 1-53; McCall, [60-88](#).

No Class Friday November 4

Monday November 7: Racism’s Stubborn Legacy: Racial Stigma in the United States

Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Discrimination*, 55-154.

Wednesday November 9: Gender Oppression and the Critique of Masculinity

J.S. Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*; Michael S. Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia,” [213-219](#)

Friday November 11. Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Politics

Iris M. Young, “The Scaling of Bodies and the Politics of Identity.” *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, [122-155](#); Robin West, “Universalism, Liberal Theory, & the Problem of Gay Marriage,” *Florida State University Law Review*, Vol. 25, [705-711, 726-730](#)

Monday November 14: Justice and the Family Structure

Susan M. Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, [110-186](#)*

Wednesday November 16: The Intersection of Race and Gender in Lived Experience: The Health Care Experiences of African-American and Latina Breast Cancer Patients

Aana Vigen, “To Count Among the Living”, 141-190.
[“Life at the Top in America Isn’t Just Better, It’s Longer.”](#) *New York Times*, May 16, 2005

Friday November 18: Discussion

V. Justice, Politics, and Power

Monday November 21. How Can (How Does) Injustice Coincide With Democracy?

Sheldon Wolin, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds*, [57-75](#); Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, [16-36](#).

Thanksgiving Break

Monday November 28. How Does Power Function in Advanced Capitalist Democracies? One Theory

Steven Lukes, *Power*, 1-60.

Wednesday November 30: How Does Power Function in Advanced Capitalist Democracies? The Example of Tax Policy

David Cay Johnston, *Perfectly Legal*, [5-19](#), [117-144](#), [274-291](#).

VI. Personal Responsibility, Agency and Social Justice

Friday December 2: Reacting to Injustice: Constructive Anger

Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, [242-298](#)

Monday December 5: Service as a Response to Injustice

Robert Coles, *The Call of Service*, 40-61, 68-94, 126-144.*

Wednesday December 7: Organizing as a Response to Injustice

Edward Chambers, *Roots for Radicals*; [21-44](#), [80-111](#).

Friday December 9: Asset-Building as a Response to Injustice

Bill Shore, *The Cathedral Within*, 124-143; *Building Wealth: The New Asset-Based Approach to Solving Social and Economic Problems*, 3-11, 17-53, 69-73.*

FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 16, 5 p.m.

Turn hard copies of your final paper into my box in the Jepson Faculty mailroom.