

## Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond

Fall 2006

### LDST 205: Justice and Civil Society

Dr. Thad Williamson

Rm. 135, Jepson Hall

twillia9@richmond.edu

Office hours: Mondays, 2-4 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 December 15 will result in a failing grade for the course; no excuses. It is *highly* recommended that you complete your service by Monday December 4. Additionally, at least 8 hours of service should be completed by Monday October 2 and 16 hours completed by Monday November 6, so plan accordingly. On Monday September 11, 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 September 8, along with a list of times during the week you will be available. The ride-along will take place in October or early November; we will discuss the ride-along experience in class in November. 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 September 8 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 Poverty Simulation exercise, to be held on Wednesday Sept. 20 from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Haynes Room in the Commons. The second is the performance at the Modlin Center of the play "Nickel and Dimed" on Monday October 23 (I will hand out ticket vouchers to you on the second day of class.) The third are the ongoing discussions of the book "Class Matters," part of the One Campus, One Book program this fall. 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 three 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 three papers. At least one of the papers must be submitted by Friday Sep. 22. No late or after-the-fact response papers can be accepted. 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. (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.

6. Three short, in-class quizzes. These short 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 dates of the quizzes are September 29, November 7, and December 1.

7. Completion of two longer papers.

The first paper (5-6 double-spaced, 1” margin pages), due in-class Monday October 9, 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 Monday October 2.

The second paper (9-11 double-spaced, 1” margin pages), due Friday December 15 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 late November.

It is also highly recommended (but not required) that you submit an outline of this final paper by December 8. 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
- 20% Response Papers
- 15% In Class Quizzes
- 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 and defend an 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 roughly 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

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

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 both e-reserves and paper reserves.

\*\* Newspaper/magazine articles linked directly from the syllabus (electronic version)

## **I. Sources of the Idea of Justice**

### **Monday August 28. Overview of the Course**

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

### **Wednesday August 30. 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 September 1. 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 September 4. The Biblical Tradition**

Abraham J. Heschel; *The Prophets* ix.-xiii; 27-38; 198-221\*

### **Wednesday September 6. 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 September 8. The Impartial Spectator**

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

## **Contemporary Conceptions of Social Justice**

### **Monday September 11. Justice as Utility Maximization**

Initial short discussion of service site experiences.

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

### **Wednesday September 13. 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 \*

### **Friday September 15. Utilitarianism Applied, II: Redistribution and World 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 \*  
Douglas Hicks, “Bono Made Me Do It: Global Poverty and Christian Response”, *The Christian Century* (article to be emailed)

### **Monday September 18. The Limits of Utilitarianism; Justice as Fairness**

Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 30-39 (Warning: this is difficult.)  
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* 19-24  
Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 1-12

### **Wednesday September 20. The Original Position; Two Principles of Justice**

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 39-79

Recommended secondary text if still having trouble understanding Rawls:  
Joshua Cohen, “For a Democratic Society,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, 86-131

### **Friday September 22: Contemporary Rawlsianism; Class Debate on Meritocracy**

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 135-139; 176-179

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 Sept. 25. Libertarian Critiques of Rawls and Redistribution**

Robert Nozick, “The Wilt Chamberlain Example,” excerpted from *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 115-118\*  
Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 7-21, 161-169, 190-195.

Recommended:

Joshua Cohen, “Lecture on Nozick” and “Lecture on Friedman” (To be distributed via email)

**Wednesday Sep. 27. Communitarian and Civic Republican Critiques of Rawls**

Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 66-81, 95-108 \*

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 3-30, 95-108; \*

**Friday Sep. 29. In-Class Quiz To Be Administered by Jepson Staff**

**Monday October 2. Capitalism, Inequality, and Exploitation**

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

**Wednesday October 4. Equality of What? The Capability Approach**

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

**Friday October 6: Class Debate: Universal Stakeholding, Pro and Con;**

Bruce Ackerman and Amy Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society*, 21-45 \*

**FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE OCTOBER 9**

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

**Monday October 9. In-Class Film TBA**

No reading

**Wednesday October 11. Inequality in the United States: An Overview**

*Class Matters*, Chapter One.

Samuel Bowles, Richard Edwards & Frank Roosevelt, *Understanding Capitalism*, 343-374 \*

**Friday October 13: Class as Lived Experience**

*Class Matters*, Chapters TBA  
David Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 39-76

**Monday October 16: No Class, Fall Break**

**Wednesday October 18: The Organization of Work and the Labor Market**

Samuel Bowles, Richard Edwards, & Frank Roosevelt, *Understanding Capitalism*, 183-212 \*  
Ehrenreich, Chapter 1

**Friday October 20 The Experience of Work, I**

Ehrenreich, Chapter 2  
*Class Matters*, Chapters TBA

**Monday October 23. The Experience of Work, II**

Ehrenreich, Chapter 3  
Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 121-141

**Wednesday October 25. Poverty**

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 1-38, 77-95

**Friday October 27: The Role of Parenting**

Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, & Family Life*, 107-164;  
Shipler, 142-173

**Monday October 30: U.S. Social Policy and The Welfare System**

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 201-253

In-Class Handouts

**Wednesday November 2: European Social Policy**

Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream*, 37-52, 70-83\*  
Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, 7-27 \*

In-Class Handouts

**Friday November 4: Concluding Discussion on Poverty and Social Policy**

Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 254-300

**Monday November 7. Class Discussion Day; In-Class Quiz**

No reading

**IV. Race, Gender, & Sexuality**

**Wednesday November 9: 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 \*

**Friday November 11: Racial Stigma in the United States: Analysis**

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

**Monday November 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\*

**Wednesday November 15: Justice and the Family Structure**

Susan M. Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, 110-186\*

**Friday November 17: 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 \*

Susan M. Schell, "The Liberal Case Against Gay Marriage," *The Public Interest*, 2004 (see <http://www.thepublicinterest.com/archives/2004summer/article1.html>) \*

**Monday November 20: Class Discussion Day**

Discussion of police ridearound and juvenile court experiences.

No reading.

**V. Justice, Politics, and Power**

**Monday November 27. Justice, Democracy & Power: Theory**

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

John Gaventa, *Power & Powerlessness*, 3-25 \*

**Wednesday November 29. Justice, Democracy and Power: Two Examples**

John Gaventa, *Power & Powerlessness*, 137-165 \*

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

(Class will divide into two groups: half will read the Gaventa carefully, half will read the Johnston.)

**VI. Personal Responsibility, Agency and Social Justice**

**Friday December 1: Reacting to Injustice: Constructive Anger; In-Class Quiz**

Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, 242-272; 287-298 \*

**Monday December 4: Organizing as a Response to Injustice**

Edward Chambers, *Roots for Radicals*; 21-44, 124-141 \*

**Wednesday December 6: Asset-Building as a Response to Injustice**

Steve Dubb, *Building Wealth: The New Asset-Based Approach to Solving Social and Economic Problems*, 3-11\*

Bill Shore, *The Cathedral Within*, 124-143. \*

**Friday December 8: Conclusion**

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

**FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY DECEMBER 15, 5 p.m.**

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