LDST 205--Justice and Civil Society  
Spring 2018

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:15-4:15 p.m. or by appointment, Jepson Hall 134

Course Aims

The aims of this course are fourfold:

1. To engage students in serious examination of the concept of social justice. What is a just society? What are its defining moral principles? What political, social and economic institutions are required to realize justice? What relationships must citizens have with one another in order to realize and sustain a just society?

2. To examine contemporary patterns of racial and economic inequality in the United States. This examination informs two further questions: First, how well does the contemporary United States realize social justice as a whole (as well as its component parts)? Second, what are the barriers to achieving a greater measure of social justice in the United States?

3. To expose students firsthand to community problems in Richmond, Virginia that are related to the distribution of social and economic opportunities and to historical patterns of racial and economic segregation. This exposure is intended to compel students to reflect upon the ways in which patterns of social justice and injustice impact particular persons and communities.

4. To engage students in considering how social justice might be better realized or advanced in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century U.S., including by considering current community efforts in Richmond, VA that seek to expand educational and economic opportunity.

The course of study has five component parts:

1. Inequality of Opportunity and Outcome: An Empirical Overview
2. Theorizing Justice: Historical Perspectives
3. Building a Contemporary Theory of Justice: Rawlsian Egalitarianism
4. Power, Poverty, and Political Economy
5. Corrective Justice and the Duty to Fight Injustice

A brief concluding section will consider current community efforts in Richmond to fight poverty, improve education and build community wealth.

In addition, the course has a significant semester-long community based learning requirement in which students work with organizations seeking to address community needs in Richmond.

Class Requirements

1. Community Based Learning placement: 28 hours on main site. Students will work with Dr. Kerstin Soderlund to establish placements for the semester.
2. Attendance at the following two Jepson Leadership Forum events: January 29, 7 pm, Robert Putnam; Jessica Valenti, February 21, 7 p.m.
3. Attendance at the MLK Community-Wide Celebration, January 24, 5:30 p.m. (Remarks by Mayor Levar Stoney).
4. Attendance at at least one off campus event in City of Richmond pertaining to topics of course, and submission of a short response paper documenting the event.

Successful completion and verification of mandatory community based learning is a requirement of a passing grade in this course.

5. Five (5) five-page analytical papers 60%
6. One (1) twelve-page final paper 25%
7. Attendance, preparation for class, and consistent participation 15%

Notes on Written Assignments

The five five-page papers will be based on analysis of the course material in the five sections of the course. Essay questions will be assigned the week prior to the due date (7 days or more). Tips on writing for this course will be distributed prior to the first paper.

The final twelve page paper will require students to integrate their community based learning experience with course material throughout the course, especially content in the last week (on community wealth building in Richmond). Detailed instructions for the final paper will be distributed one month before the final due date.

General Course Policies

1. Arrive two minutes prior to class so we can start on time.
2. Get enough sleep before you come, and eat breakfast.
3. Coffee in class is okay, but food is not.
4. Go to the bathroom before class. Do not interrupt class by doing so.
5. No electronic devices in use in class. All cell phones must be completely powered off and stored away.
6. Bring your book to class every time.
7. No class absences without permission are acceptable. Each unexcused absence will lead to a full letter grade drop in your semester participation grade. Falling asleep in class or other disruptive behavior will be treated as an absence.
8. Every student must attend professor’s office hours at least once prior to spring break.

How and Why to READ for this Class

Reading must be the fundamental default activity of all college students. When you are not doing anything else, you should be reading. This class will require that you do a lot of reading.
We live in a culture that has devalued deep reading and thinking. Why then read books, as opposed to just a series of short articles or excerpts? Because books are still the best technology we have for allowing a sophisticated train of thought—or body of knowledge—to be communicated from one human mind to another. A book allows the author to explore an event, person, or question in sustained depth, to present a sustained argument supported by evidence, to make connections between different events or phenomena, or to explore all sides of a disputed question thoroughly. Or a book may simply expand or stimulate our imaginations, our moral consciences, our sense of what is possible in human life. To read an interesting, important, or imagination-expanding book is one of life’s great pleasures—but it is a pleasure it takes effort to cultivate. Think of reading a book as engaging your mind with someone else’s mind in an extended, in-depth conversation. If your reading takes the form of a thoughtful, internal conversation with the author, when it comes time to write your papers—your actual chance to “talk back” to the author and his or her ideas—you won’t be struggling to generate material from scratch; instead you will simply be transcribing and refining the conversation you’ve already had in your brain. Good writing is fundamentally a result of good thinking, and good thinking comes about via the practice and habit of being in conversation with good thinkers—such as the authors we will be reading this semester.

But how then to read thoughtfully? First, cut out the distractions. Turn off social media, the Internet, and anything else that might tempt you to turn your mind away from what you are reading. Find a quiet space where you can concentrate fully on the text. Second, set yourself an attainable goal for how long you will concentrate fully on reading the text. Whether it’s thirty minutes, an hour, or two hours, set a goal, and stick to that goal, with the aim of increasing it over time. If you can learn how to sit in the library or somewhere for three consecutive hours, reading for 45-50 minutes at time, then taking 10-15 minute breaks each hour, you will over the course of the week get a lot done—and more importantly, have a lot of fruitful conversations with great thinkers and writers. Third, take notes as you go—either in the text margins, or in a notebook. This is helpful in keeping track of the author’s train of thought, and will help you remember arguments and key points when you go back to review or re-read. Fourth, when you are done reading a section, write down a few key points the author made, or alternatively some questions you have about the author’s arguments. Fifth, as you are reading, think not just about the face value arguments of the text, but also about the author’s intended audience and purpose. Why and for whom was this book written? Being able to answer that question often is very helpful in understanding the text as a whole. Sixth—and this is the most advanced skill, and one that will take time to master—think critically about what you are reading. Even the most brilliant texts, texts that have impeccable internal logic and that will make you smarter simply by reading them, have limitations of perspective and purpose. What does a text written in the 18th century about the human condition have to say that is of enduring value to us today? Rousseau can’t answer that question—it is our job as students to answer that question ourselves.
OVERVIEW OF COURSE OF STUDY

Required Texts

Martin Luther King, Jr. Where do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community
Robert D. Putnam, Our Kids
Paul Tough, Helping Children Succeed
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality
John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism; On Liberty; The Subjection of Women; Considerations on Representative Government
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Communist Manifesto”
John Rawls, A Theory of Justice
Peter Temin, The Vanishing Middle Class
Iris Marion Young, Responsibility for Justice
Tommie Shelby, Dark Ghettos
City of Richmond, Office of Community Wealth Building 2016 and 2018 Annual Reports

Note: The assigned syllabus is subject to change; in particular additional articles from contemporary events of relevance to themes of the course may be added. These will be circulated by the professor. Any changes to due dates of assignments will be announced via email.

Part One: Inequality, Education, and American History

Wednesday January 17. Introduction. M.L. King, Where Do We Go From Here?, Chapters 1-3

Friday January 19. M.L. King, Where Do We Go From Here?, Chapters 4-6

Wednesday January 24. R. Putnam, Our Kids, Chapters 1-2

Wednesday January 24: MLK Community-wide Celebration, 5:30 p.m. Camp Concert Hall. Required.


Wednesday January 31. R. Putnam, Our Kids, Chapter 4; Tough, Helping Children Succeed, Sections 11-23.

Friday February 2. R. Putnam, Our Kids, Chapters 5, 6; Overview of Richmond.

Paper #1 Due Monday February 5, 6 p.m, email and hard copy.
Part Two: What Does Justice Require? Historical Perspectives


Wednesday February 21. J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government,* Chapters 1-3, 6-8, 16.

*Wednesday February 21. Jepson Leadership Forum Event with Jessica Valenti, required, 7 p.m., Jepson Alumni Center.*

Friday February 23rd, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto.”

**Paper #2, Due February 26, 6 p.m., hard copy and email.**


Wednesday March 14th. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* Chapter Three (Sections 20-30)


**Paper #3. Due Monday March 19, 6 p.m., hard copy and email.**

Part Four: Power, Poverty and Political Economy.


Wednesday March 28. Temin, *Vanishing Middle Class,* 7-9; Edin and Shaefer, *$2 a Day,* Chapter 3.

Friday March 30. Temin, *Vanishing Middle Class,* Chapters 10-15; Edin and Shaefer, *$2 a Day,* Chapter 4.

**Paper #4. Due Monday April 2, 6 p.m., hard copy and email.**


Wednesday April 11. Shelby, *Dark Ghettos*, Chapters 1, 2.


Friday April 20. Edin and Shaefer, $2 a Day, Chapters 5-6; Shelby, *Dark Ghettos*, Epilogue; Thad Williamson, review of Shelby, *Dark Ghettos*; Thad Williamson, “Constitutionalizing Property-Owning Democracy.”

**Paper #5 due Monday April 23, 6 p.m., email and hard copy.**

**Conclusion: Justice and Practical Action**

Wednesday April 25th. Office of Community Wealth Building (City of Richmond) annual reports, 2016 and 2018.

Friday April 27. Thad Williamson, “Seven Habits of Civically Engaged Human Beings.”

**Final Paper Assignment Due Friday May 4, 12 noon, email and hard copy.**

**NO FINAL EXAM**