LDST 205--Justice and Civil Society  
Spring 2019

Dr. Thad Williamson, Jepson School of Leadership Studies  
Twillia9@richmond.edu  
Office Hours: Fridays, 2-3 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 21st 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 four component parts:

1. Theory: What Do We Mean When We Talk About “Justice”?
3. Experience: How Structural Injustices Play Out in Specific Communities and Lives

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: 24 hours on main site. Students will be placed with the RVA Future Centers, Richmond Peace Education Center, Circles RVA, NextUp RVA, or another specifically approved site.

2. Attendance at the following three campus events: Ibram X. Kendi lecture, March 1, 3:30 p.m., Jepson Alumni Center; Larry Bartels lecture (Jepson Forum), March 5, 7 p.m., Jepson Alumni Center; Melody C. Barnes lecture (Jepson Forum), April 10, 7 p.m., Jepson Alumni Center. Submit a brief three paragraph summary of the event and how it relates to Justice within one week following the event.
3. Attendance at any two of the following community/campus events: MLK Day Campus Celebration Event (10 a.m. breakfast or 3 p.m. ceremony), January 21; Richmond Peace Education Center Generation Dream Edu-Concert, February 1 (7 p.m., Richmond Public Library) or February 24 (3 p.m., VCU Institute for Contemporary Art); Panel Discussion on Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond, January 27, 2 p.m., Modlin Center; #RedforEd march, January 28, VCU Monroe Park, 11 a.m.; Mayor’s State of the City Address, January 31; Zeynep Tufecki lecture (Jepson Forum), February 13, 7 p.m., Camp Concert Hall, other approved events as the semester proceeds. Submit a brief three paragraph summary of the event and how it relates to Justice within one week following the event.

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

4. Three (3) six-page analytical papers
5. Two (2) three-page personal reflections
6. One (1) twelve-page final paper
7. Attendance, preparation for class, consistent class participation, event write-ups

Notes on Written Assignments

Longer analytical 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 analytical paper.

Prompts for the personal reflections will be distributed 5 days prior to their due date, and will include instructions and guidelines. (The main tip: read thoroughly the book you are writing about.)

For the longer analytical papers, the emphasis is on critical thinking, making good arguments, and effective understanding of and use of the course material. For the shorter reflection papers, the emphasis is on depth of personal engagement with the material as well as understanding of and reflection upon the authors’ aims.

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 prior to entering the classroom.
6. Bring your book to class every time.
7. No class absences without permission are acceptable. The first unexcused absence will lead to a 1% deduction on your final course grade; each additional absence will lead to an additional 2% deduction on your final course 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—you 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? Adam Smith can’t answer that question—it is our job as students to answer that question ourselves.

**Jepson School of Leadership Studies Common Course Policies**

**Awarding of Credit**

To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

[registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

**Disability Accommodations**

Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.

[disability.richmond.edu/](disability.richmond.edu/)

**Honor System**

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

[studentdevelop.m.unt.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html](studentdevelop.m.unt.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html)

**Religious Observance**

Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.

[registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)

**Note on Class Evaluations**

Student course evaluations will be completed in-class on the last day of the semester. Bring a laptop to the final day of class. All students are requested to complete the evaluation. Your participation is helpful in improving pedagogy and effective learning in the Jepson School.

**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 a coherent 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 5 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.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE OF STUDY

January 16, January 18
Danielle Allen, *Cuz* (complete)

January 23, January 25

*Personal Reflection #1: Due January 28, 6 p.m.*

January 30
J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*

February 1
J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*

February 6
J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*

February 8
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Communist Manifesto” (distributed as PDF)

February 13, February 15, February 20, February 22
Reinhold Niebuhur, *Moral Man & Immoral Society* (13th: Chapters 1-2; 15th: Chapters 3-5; 20th; Chapters 6-8; 22nd, Chapters 9-10)

*Analytical Paper #1: Due February 25, 6 p.m.*

February 27, March 1, March 6, March 8
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (27th: Sections 1-9; 1st; Sections 10-19; 6th; Sections 20-30; 8th; Sections 31-32, 41-43, 48, 51-52); Martin O’Neill and Thad Williamson, “Property-Owning Democracy and the Demands of Justice” (distributed as PDF)

*Analytical Paper #2: Due Friday March 8, 11:59 p.m.*

NOTE: I AM EXPECTING YOU TO ATTEND THE LAST CLASS BEFORE SPRING BREAK

**SPRING BREAK!!**

March 20, March 22
Robert Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin* (20th: Chapters 1-3; 22nd: Chapters 4-5, Epilogue)

March 27
March 29

Selected readings on Richmond history (Williamson-Howard-Hayter manuscript) to be distributed as PDF

**Personal Reflection Paper #2: due Monday April 1, 6 p.m.**

April 3 and April 5

Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, *American Society: How it Really Works* (Capitalism: Chapters 1-9); Dollars & Sense, *Current Economic Issues*, articles TBA from Chapters 6, 7, 10

April 10 and April 12


April 17 and April 19

Wright and Rogers, *American Society: How it Really Works* (Democracy: Chapters 16-22); Dollars & Sense, *Current Economic Issues*, articles TBA from Chapter 4, 5, 8, 9

**Analytical Paper #3: due Monday April 22, 6 p.m.**

April 24 and April 26

City of Richmond, Office of Community Wealth Building Annual Reports, 2016 and 2019

Melody C. Barnes and Thad Williamson, “Becoming the American Community We Should Be but Have Never Been”

Thad Williamson, “Seven Habits of Civically Engaged Human Beings”

**FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY MAY 3rd, 6 p.m.**