

Justice and Civil Society
LDST 210
Spring 2025
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Craig T. Kocher
Office: Wilton Center
E-mail: ckocher@richmond.edu
Phone: 289-8500 (office)
Office hours: by appointment
Class meeting time Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-4:15pm. Location: Wilton Center 103

Purpose

This course is shaped by the following three foundational questions:

- 1) What is justice?
- 2) What is justice in society?
- 3) What does justice mean to me?

Together we will explore ancient and modern theories of justice as they relate to society. Readings will focus on the nature of civil society, theories of personal and communal expressions of justice, and social and moral analysis of significant challenges facing contemporary society, with a particular emphasis on Richmond, Virginia and Northern Ireland.

The course includes a travel experience to Northern Ireland to explore the political and religious context of *The Troubles*, with attention to the struggle for civil rights in that region of the world and the more recent processes of peace-making and reconciliation. Students will be asked to compare and contrast the two social locations of Richmond, VA and Northern Ireland.

The course includes a Community-Based-Learning (CBL) component in the second semester in which students engage with the lived experience of social challenge through a community organization in the Richmond region.

Learning Objectives

In seeking to answer the three foundational questions, the course shall enable students to meet these objectives:

- explore the relationship between justice and contemporary society;
- analyze social challenges in light of different theories of justice;
- learn from and with others of different backgrounds and beliefs;
- develop relationships across lines of difference within a community-based organization;
- discern and develop personal values and goals;
- reflect on career and personal opportunities to advance justice in society.

PEIC Course

This course also serves to fulfill the power, equity, identity, and culture component of the general education curriculum.

The power, equity, identity, and culture (PEIC) component of the general education curriculum strives to prepare students to understand, analyze, and contribute to a diverse, complex, and interconnected world. It engages students in a discussion about diversity and power imbalances either in the past or present among various cultural perspectives, within the U.S. or abroad. Students learn about inequities in particular societies and eras as well as efforts that aim to reduce them, and the challenges and opportunities diversity brings. Additionally, this component of the general education curriculum encourages students to engage with questions about how attitudes, experiences, and/or beliefs are shaped by context and cultural identity.

1. Students will analyze the origins and dynamics of structural inequities and power imbalances in specific societal contexts.
2. Students will analyze how attitudes, experiences, and/or beliefs are shaped both by context and/or cultural identity.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the effects of inequities and power imbalances on a society, and the historical or current efforts, successful and unsuccessful, used to reduce such effects.

Required Texts

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption
Bryan Stevenson

Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?
Michael Sandel

Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis
Robert Putnam

Other Readings

All other readings are on blackboard.

Graded work (1000 points total)

- Class participation: 100 points
- Four reading quizzes: 100 points (25 points each)
- Paper 1: 200 points
- Paper 2: 250 points
- Paper 3: 350 points

Graded work defined

- **Class participation:** This means attending class prepared and alert. High marks will be given to students who engage thoughtfully and regularly with the readings, the content of the lectures, and the reflections of their peers. Two journal entries will be included in the class participation grade. No electronics allowed (computers, tablets, phones) unless required for learning accommodations. Drinks are allowed in class; food is not. Students should use the bathroom ahead of class time so as not to disrupt the chemistry of the class. Students are expected to be in class unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor beforehand.
- **Reading quizzes:** The course readings are central to the learning goals of the class. There will be four pop quizzes throughout the semester to ensure students are reading and comprehending the material.
- **Mid-term paper:** The paper should follow the format for papers in the syllabus and be emailed to the instructor as a PDF before class on March 7. See the assignment prompt in the syllabus.
- **Final paper:** The paper should follow the format for papers in the syllabus and be emailed to the instructor as a PDF by 5:00pm on April 30. See the assignment prompt in the syllabus.

The mid-term paper and final paper should be organized as follows. The organization also serves as a pattern for the response paper and journal entries, though word limitation for those assignments will necessitate significant focus from the author. The papers should use Chicago style footnotes.

1. *Format.* Please type the paper double-spaced, in Times New Roman font size 12, on one side of the paper only, with one-inch margins all the way around. Page numbers should be at the bottom center.
2. *Title.* Think carefully about how your title communicates the argument of the paper in an attractive way, and whether you want to use a subtitle. The title, name of course, word count, and your name should be on a cover sheet.
3. *Introduction.* Write this after you have written your paper, so that it genuinely introduces:
 - the argument that follows
 - the specific ways in which you are narrowing your subject down to a manageable size
 - the specific terms you are using that need some definition

- the introduction should not take up more than 5% of a paper of this kind. One or two paragraphs should do it. The introduction for the response papers and journal entries may be only a couple of sentences.
- 4. *Main body of the paper.* A sequence of subheadings that divide the paper into logical, roughly even-length sections reassures the professor that the argument has been planned and reasoned carefully before being written.
- 5. *Conclusion.* Should be very short and summarize main findings.

Grading Standards:

These standards have been articulated by Jepson faculty members and serve as a helpful guide for students preparing papers.

“A” work is well-written, well-argued, and thoroughly conversant with the source material, containing no major inaccuracies or contradictions, and illustrating subtlety and nuance of argument. “A” papers consist of interesting, substantial thoughts well-packaged in technically proficient writing.

“B” work attempts to forward an argument and shows good familiarity with and understanding of the source material, and is generally well-written. There are generally two genres of “B” work: papers that have some of the qualities of an “A” paper, but also contain serious flaws; and papers that contain no serious flaws, but also lack originality or depth of perceptiveness, or simply fail to be persuasive.

“C” work makes an attempt to complete an assignment but contains substantial flaws, either of writing quality, inadequate comprehension of the material, unsupported arguments, and/or logically contradictory or implausible arguments.

“D” and “F” work refers to papers that are seriously inadequate and fail to meet the basic requirements of the assignment.

Late Paper Policy: Papers should be emailed to the instructor as a PDF. Students will receive a one letter grade penalty for every day an assignment is late.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to be in class unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Unexcused absences will negatively impact the student’s final grade.

The Honor System: The Jepson School supports and adheres to the provisions of the Honor System as sanctioned by the School of Arts and Sciences. All work should be your own. A violation of the Honor System may result in a failing grade for the course.

AI Policy: The Honor Code prohibits the use of any unauthorized assistance. For this course, the use of text-generating artificial intelligence tools (such as but not limited to ChatGPT) is considered unauthorized assistance, and using it in connection with any

assignment that you submit will be considered an Honor Code violation. This includes the use of generative AI for any stage of the work from conception to completion.

Course of Study

M August 25 SSIR introduction with Sage Ober

W August 27 No Class

M September 1 David Brooks, *How to Know a Person*, Chapters 1-4

W September 3 Patrick Radden Keefe, *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*

M September 8 Patrick Radden Keefe, *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*

W September 10 Guest Speaker: David Kitchen
Watch the following interview with Dr. Gary Mason.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdK-CJ43d78>

M September 15 *Making Sense of the Troubles*, Chapter 1
Listen to podcast with John Hume and David Trimble
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/john-hume-and-david-trimble-a-vision-of-peace/id1025864075?i=1000488332557>

W September 17 Theories of Justice 1-2

M September 22 Theories of Justice 3-4

W September 24 Theories of Justice 5-6
Discuss approaches to paper 1

M September 29 Richmond's Unhealed History, Part 1

W October 1 Richmond's Unhealed History, Part 2

M October 6 Travel Prep Final Logistics

W October 8 Class will not meet at the regular time. Attend Weinstein-Rosenthal Forum with David Brooks, 7:00 p.m. Alice Jepson Theatre, Modlin Center for the Arts.

Paper 1 due

Travel to Northern Ireland Thursday, October 9 – Tuesday, October 14

M October 20 Process Northern Ireland Travel Experience: Peacemaking
Listen to podcast with John Hume and David Trimble
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/john-hume-and-david-trimble-a-vision-of-peace/id1025864075?i=1000488332557>

W October 22 Process Northern Ireland Travel Experience: Forgiveness
<https://www.goshen.edu/news/pressarchive/10-02-07-nolt-convo/speech.html>
Watch Obama's Speech after the Charleston Massacre
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9IGyidtfGI>

M October 27 Educational Disparities
Five Miles Away, A World Apart
Discuss approaches to paper 2

W October 29 Our Kids
Introduction and Chapters 1-2

M November 3 Our Kids
Chapters 3-4

W November 5 Our Kids
Chapters 5-6 and conclusion

Friday, November 7
Paper 2 due

M November 10 Healthcare Inequalities in the United States
Guest Presenter: Prof. Rick Mayes

W November 12 Just Mercy, Chapters 1-4

M November 17 Just Mercy, Chapters 5-9
Discuss approaches to paper 3

W November 19 Just Mercy, Finish the Book
Watch Netflix Documentary, 13th

M November 24 – No Class

W November 26 – Thanksgiving Holiday

M December 1 Theories of Justice 7-8

W December 3 Theories of Justice 9-10 and course conclusion
W December 10 Paper 3 due by 5:00 p.m.

Course papers: Students will be required to complete three papers for this course. All three papers should follow the format outlined earlier in the syllabus. The papers should be emailed to the instructor as a PDF by the deadline.

Paper 1 Prompt

Choose a justice-related issue in contemporary American society such as healthcare disparities, immigration, child poverty, various forms of racial inequality, the environmental crisis, etc.

You will then need to shape the issue for a particular context. For example, child poverty in Richmond, VA, or the impact of climate change on communities of color in a specific region.

The paper should include the following:

- 1) A strong thesis statement
- 2) At least three reputable sources
- 3) A brief summary of the three approaches to justice we have looked at in class:

Utilitarianism/Welfare
Libertarian/Rights Based
Virtue and the Good Life

- 4) Use one of the theories, along with your research, to articulate a potential solution to the issue you are exploring.

The paper should follow the format guidelines in the syllabus and should be 1600-1800 words in length.

The paper should be emailed to the instructor as a PDF by Wednesday, October 8 at 5:00 p.m.

Paper 2 Prompt

Write a paper comparing and contrasting the social contexts of Richmond, Virginia and Northern Ireland. The paper should draw heavily on course materials and the fall break travel experience to Northern Ireland. The paper should have a well-developed thesis and could focus on one of many themes such as the struggle for civil rights, opportunities and challenges of reconciliation and peace-making, the role of memorialization and the impact of public memory, etc. The paper should follow the format guidelines in the syllabus and should be 1600-1800 words in length.

The paper should be emailed to the instructor as a PDF by Friday, November 7 at 5:00 p.m.

Paper 3 Prompt

Develop a systematic analysis of an organization that is addressing a specific social justice issue which you are interested in helping to solve. The social problem should be significantly different from the one you addressed in your first paper.

In writing the paper, you should draw upon the following to support your argument. Your own interests and experience, multiple course readings, at least five reputable sources beyond the scope of the class, and insights gleaned from the travel experience to Northern Ireland.

The paper should include strengths and weaknesses of the organization's approach to the problem and offer suggestions for how the organization may be more effective at fulfilling its mission. The paper should be 2200-2400 words in length and follow the format outlined in the syllabus.

The paper is due by Wednesday, December 10 at 5:00 p.m. and should be emailed to the instructor as a PDF. The paper counts as your final exam.

Jepson Common Syllabus Insert

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

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/

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."

<https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/index.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

Addressing Microaggressions on Campus

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.¹ Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups.² Furthermore, both students and faculty that are exposed to microaggressions more often are more likely to have depressive symptoms and negative affect (a negative view of the world).³ A comfortable

and productive environment where meaningful learning happens can be collectively created through actions, words, or environmental cues that promote the inclusion and success of marginalized members, recognizing their embodied identity, validating their realities, resisting sexism, ableism, and racism.⁴

The University of Richmond is committed to building an inclusive community. To this end, the Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI) was created in 2021 and offers ongoing support and assistance for a diverse student body.⁵ With this in mind, as a community member at the University of Richmond, I pledge to address microaggressions in the classroom by holding myself, other students, and faculty accountable for what is said and being receptive to criticism when perpetuating these slights, snubs, or insults.

¹Sue, S., Zane, N., Nagayama Hall, G. C., & Berger, L. K. (2009). The Case for Cultural Competency in Psychotherapeutic Interventions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 525–548. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163651>

²Bergom, I., Wright, M.C., Brown, M.K. and Brooks, M. (2011), Promoting college student development through collaborative learning: A case study of *hevruta*. *About Campus*, 15: 19-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20044>

³Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The Impact of Racial Microaggressions on Mental Health: Counseling Implications for Clients of Color. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00130.x>

⁴Rolón-Dow, R. (2019). Stories of Microaggressions and Microaffirmation: A Framework for Understanding Campus Racial Climate. *NCID Currents*, 1(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/currents.17387731.0001.106> ⁵ <https://inclusion.richmond.edu/>

SYLLABUS INSERT REGARDING ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Skills Center (asc.richmond.edu): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Tutors will be available virtually. The on-call peer-tutors available for these appointments are listed in the Box file: [On-Call Online Tutors](https://richmond.box.com/s/dpe37chr2zodr3o1amtj8omjk72v2ktb) (<https://richmond.box.com/s/dpe37chr2zodr3o1amtj8omjk72v2ktb>). Email [Roger Mancastroppa](mailto:rmancast@richmond.edu) (rmancast@richmond.edu) and [Marco Ortiz](mailto:marco.ortiz@richmond.edu) (marco.ortiz@richmond.edu) for appointments in academic and life skills to request a Zoom conference.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians: (library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876): Research librarians help students with all steps of their research, from identifying or narrowing a topic, to locating, accessing, evaluating, and citing information resources. Librarians support students in their classes across the curriculum and provide library instruction, tutorials, research guides, and individual help. All research support will be provided online or by appointment and students can contact a librarian for help via email (library@richmond.edu), text (804-277-9ASK), chat, or Zoom (by appointment).

Career Services: (careerservices.richmond.edu or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.richmond.edu or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Speech Center (speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations. Remote practice sessions can be arranged.

Writing Center (writing.richmond.edu or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can