BA 40.834.330.01  
Introduction to Social Justice  
Rutgers University – Newark  
School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)  

Fall 2015

Instructor: Lindsey M. McDougle, PhD  
Class Meeting Location: CPS TBD  
Class Meeting Day/Time: Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:30 – 12:50 pm  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Office: School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) – Room #329  
E-mail: lindsey.mcdougle@rutgers.edu

Life’s persistent and most urgent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Course Description

This is an introductory survey course of social justice issues (primarily in America). Social justice can be defined as the act of "... promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity." Social justice is generally equated with notions of equality.

The scope of this course is as broad as the idea(s) of social justice itself and as complex as notions of equality. We will begin with a foundational exploration into social justice concepts, issues, and policy remedies—thereby developing the necessary analytical tools and information to assess inequality and injustice and address historical and contemporary issues. During our exploration of these topics, students will participate in a “Book Club” where they will interact with their classmates to critique a specific social justice text.

In this course, students will be encouraged to think critically and expansively about the social world and the conditions of humanity. Student learning in the course will be facilitated through various readings, lectures, student presentations, class discussions, and other relevant course assignments.
Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students who have fully participated and read all course material should have:

1. An appreciation of the diversity of forms of social justice that exist.
2. A broad understanding of the social policies intended to create justice.
3. An ability to critically analyze and problem-solve around the social justice topics that we explore.

Textbook and Course Readings

The textbook for this class is: Social Policy and Social Change: Toward the Creation of Social and Economic Justice (2nd Edition) - (Identified as TEXT in Course Outline, below)

Other required reading material is available on the course Blackboard site (and via hyperlinks in the Course Outline, below). Additionally, each group is required to obtain the book assigned to their “Book Club” (see Course Outline, below). You are expected to read and comprehend all of the required material.

Summary of Grades and Assignments

The following summarizes the point breakdown for the assignments in this class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>See rubric, below</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Reflection Paper</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>(See Instructions on BB in Week 2 Folder)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Week 8 (See Course Outline, below)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Club Presentations</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Throughout the course, you will participate in a book club with select classmates. Your group will deliver two presentations to the class to provide everyone with a better understanding of the topic(s) in your book. At the end of the presentations, groups will pose one reflection question to the class. (See detailed Instructions on BB) • Presentation 1 = 5 points • Presentation 2 = 10 points</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Response Papers</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Each student must write a one-page (full-page, double-spaced, one-inch margin, 12 point non-condensed font) response to the reflection question(s) posed by presenting groups. (See Instructions on BB) • 8 response papers (all @ 5 points each)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Book Club Presentation</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>As a concluding activity, book clubs will present (as a group) the important ideas of their book to the class in an interesting and engaging format of their choice. (See detailed Instructions on BB in Week 15 Folder)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflective Book Review</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>See details (See detailed Instructions on BB)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all group assignments, you may evaluate each member’s contribution.
A Few Notes

Attendance:

Active participation is one of the best and most reliable ways to demonstrate your understanding of ideas and concepts discussed in the readings and presented in class. My role (as the instructor for this course) is to provide you with a conceptual framework and to facilitate your learning. My role is not merely to deliver factual material to passive learners. The exercises and discussions in this course are intended to provide you with an opportunity to test your knowledge, formulate ideas, and get feedback from your peers. Therefore, weekly class attendance is necessary, but not sufficient for an excellent class participation grade; see participation rubric, below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution Level</th>
<th>Description of Contribution Level</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Contributions reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive and provide major insights and direction for class. Arguments are persuasive. If this person were not a class member, the quality of the discussions and exercises would be significantly diminished. No unexcused absences. Successfully completed plagiarism quiz.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Contributions reflect thorough participation. Ideas are usually substantive, they provide good insights, and sometimes provide direction for the class. Arguments are often persuasive. If this person were not in the class, the quality of discussions and exercises would be diminished considerably. One to two unexcused absences.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Contributions reflect satisfactory participation. Ideas are generally useful and substantive but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Arguments are fairly well substantiated and sometimes persuasive. If this person were not in the class, the quality of the discussions and exercises would be somewhat diminished. Three to four unexcused absences.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>This person has said little to nothing in class. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of the exercises and discussions would not be affected. Five or more unexcused absences.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Contributions reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered do not provide a constructive direction for the class and often are obvious or confusing. Integrative comments and effective arguments are absent. Although this person showed up to class, if this person were not a class member valuable airtime would be saved. Five or more unexcused absences.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While I expect all students to attend each class, I understand that life sometimes intervenes in our plans. Please speak with me if you must miss a class for professional or personal reasons. Any absences without prior approval will be reflected in your final participation grade (except, of course, in extenuating circumstances). The same policy applies for arriving late/leaving early. Absences are not an adequate excuse for failure to complete assignments or stay up-to-date with course readings.
Civility Pledge: In this course, I acknowledge that racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, able-ism, and other forms of interpersonal and institutionalized forms of oppression exist in society, and agree to do my best to better understand those forms of oppression, refrain from repeating misinformation, and harness knowledge to change perceptions. I will:

- Keep an open mind, listen, and respect everyone;
- Keep personal experiences shared in the context of the classroom confidential unless otherwise agreed upon;
- Not ridicule or demean anyone for sharing his/her personal experience(s) and idea(s)
- Not rely on any individual to be a representative spokesperson for a given group of people.

Course Communications: Appointments are strongly preferred over “drop-ins.” However, I am willing to with meet with “drop-in students” if I am in the office and available when you stop by. Please email me for appointments: lindsey.mcdougle@rutgers.edu. When sending e-mail, please include the course title (i.e., Introduction to Social Justice) in the subject line.

Grade Appeals: Grades are intended to reflect your overall quality of performance on assignments. You may appeal a grade that you receive if you think that the grade does not reflect the quality of your performance on a particular assignment. To appeal a grade, within one week after your graded assignment is returned, submit a clear written explanation describing why you believe the assigned grade is inappropriate. I will carefully consider all appeals. I will not, however, re-grade an individual component of an assignment. Instead I will re-grade the assignment in its entirety. As a result, your final grade for the re-graded assignment may be greater than, less than, or equal to the original grade.

Laptops and Cellular Devices: I welcome and encourage the use of laptops in class for taking notes or for completing group tasks. However, I kindly ask that you use these devices only for relevant activities pertaining to this course. If students are observed engaging in outside activities, I will need to strictly limit the use of electronic devices in the classroom. Cell phones should be turned off or transferred to voice mail during class time.

Late Assignments: No late assignments will be accepted. All assignments are due when they are scheduled to be submitted, as indicated in the Course Outline. Do not ask to submit an assignment late—it will not be accepted.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty: When writing about, paraphrasing, or quoting the work of others, you must give proper attribution in the form of parenthetical citations and quotation marks around directly quoted phrases or sentences. Using work in this class that you have completed for another class is plagiarism. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. If you are found in violation of academic dishonesty, you will be subject to the full enforcement of the applicable policies and procedures of Rutgers University.

URLs in the Syllabus: Links to some of the required readings in the syllabus have been included for ease of access to course material. If a link does not work, there is a copy of each reading in the associated week's folder on the course Blackboard site.

Written Work: Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected—as is a writing style befitting someone earning an undergraduate degree.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Welcome and Introductions               | - Course Syllabus *(Review Carefully!)* (BB)  
- Book Club General Guidelines (BB)  
Due by 11:59pm on Sept 7th                                                    |
| 2    | What is Social Justice?                 | - TEXT Chapter 1 – Introduction *(pgs. 1 – 4)*                                                                                                                                                                    | [5 points]: Introductory Reflection Paper  
Due by 11:59pm on Sept 14th                                                   |
| 3    | Policies to Address Injustice           | - TEXT: Chapter 2 – The Nature of Social Policy                                                                                                                                                                   | [Participation Points]: Book Club Reading Schedule  
Due by 11:59pm on Sept 21st                                                   |
| 4    | Social Values and Ideologies            | - TEXT: Chapter 3 – Historical Values Influencing Social Problems and Social Policies                                                                                                                            | [5 points]: First Book Club Presentation *(Groups 1, 2)*  
- Tuesday: Group 1 - *The Meaning of Matthew: My Son’s Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed*  
- Thursday: Group 2 – *Asking for it: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture and What We Can Do about it*  
[5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper *(All Students)*  
Due by 11:59pm on Sept 28th                                                   |
| 5    | Economic Inequality and Income Policies | - TEXT: Chapter 4 – The Economic System and Social Justice  
- TEXT: Chapter 7 – Policies to Support Income: Welfare and Social Security  
- Tuesday: Group 3 - *Poverty in America (3rd edition)*  
- Thursday: Group 4 – *Nothing about Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment*  
[5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper *(All Students)*  
Due by 11:59pm on Oct 5th                                                   |
| 6    | Educational Inequality                  | - An introduction to education and social justice.                                                                                                                                                              | [5 points]: First Book Club Presentations *(Groups 5, 6)*  
- Tuesday: Group 5 - *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools*  
- Thursday: Group 6 - *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness*  
[5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper *(All Students)*  
Due by 11:59pm on Oct 12th                                                   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7    | Discrimination, Privilege, and Power | TEXT: Chapter 5 – Discrimination and Social Justice in the United States (pgs. 137 – 172) | [5 points]: First Book Club Presentation (Groups 7, 8)  
- Tuesday: Group 7 - The Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America  
- Thursday: Group 8 - At Home on the Street: People, Poverty, and Homelessness |
| 8    | Midterm Review and Midterm Exam | TEXT: Chapter 5 – Discrimination and Social Justice in the United States (pgs. 177 – 188) | [5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper (All Students)  
Due by 11:59pm on Oct 19th |
| 9    | Sexism, Sexuality, and Gender Issues | Lee, M. (November 26, 2012). What is was like to be a woman at Goldman Sachs. The Atlantic.  
TEXT: Chapter 5 – Discrimination and Social Justice in the United States (pgs. 177 – 188) | [10 points]: Second Book Club Presentation (Groups 1, 2)  
- Tuesday: Group 1 - The Meaning of Matthew: my Son’s Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed  
- Thursday: Group 2 – Asking for it: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture and What We Can Do about it |
| 10   | Health and (Dis)abilities | TEXT: Chapter 5 – Discrimination and Social Justice in the United States (pgs. 189 – 193)  
TEXT: Chapter 9 – Health Care Policy  
Jaffe, E. (June 9, 2015). How poverty alters the young brain. In CityLab, The Atlantic. | [10 points]: Second Book Club Presentations (Groups 3, 4)  
- Tuesday: Group 3 - Poverty in America (3rd edition)  
- Thursday: Group 4 – Nothing about Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment |
Cohen, M. (April 28, 2015). How for-profit prisons have become the biggest lobby no one is talking about. In The Washington Times.  
Ford, M. (June 8, 2015). America’s largest mental hospital is a jail. In The Atlantic. | [10 points]: Second Book Club Presentations (Groups 5, 6)  
- Tuesday: Group 5 - Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools  
- Tuesday: Group 6 - The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness |
|      |       |           | [5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper (All Students)  
Due by 11:59pm on Nov 16th |
### Housing Inequality and Housing Policies

**Nov 17**
- TEXT: Chapter 10 – Housing Policy

[10 points]: **Second Book Club Presentation 1** (Groups 7, 8)
- Tuesday: Group 7 - *The Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America*
- Tuesday: Group 8 - *At Home on the Street: People, Poverty, and Homelessness*

[5 points]: Social Justice Response Paper
Due by 11:59pm on Nov 23rd (BB)

**No in-person class meeting on November 19th – Work on Final Group Presentation**

### Individual and Collective Tools for Addressing Social Justice Issues

**Nov 24**
- Johnson, A. G. (n.d.). *What can we do? Becoming part of the solution*

[Participation Points]: Social Justice in the News
Due by 11:59pm on Nov 30th

**No class on November 26th – Thanksgiving Holiday**

### Review of Course Concepts and Open Topics

**Dec 1 and 3**

[10 points]: **Final Book Club Presentations**
- Tuesday: Groups 1 – 4
- Thursday: Groups 5 – 8

[15 points]: Individual Reflective Book Review
Due During Finals Week – Due by 6pm on Wed. Dec. 15th

**This outline is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion in order to better achieve the student learning outcomes identified above. Students will be notified**