

Seminar in Justice and Social Theory

Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: Tues., 11 AM – 1 PM

Wed., 3 PM – 5 PM

MacQuarrie Hall 508A

Note: e-mail is the best way to reach me outside of class

Class Meeting Times and Location: Wednesday, 5:30 - 8:15 p.m., MacQuarrie Hall (MH) 223

Course Description: This course examines classic and contemporary theories of justice, including legal, social, economic and criminal justice and their application to current social issues. As a graduate seminar, the course's emphasis is on reading, discussion, and oral and written analysis. A significant part of your grade is based on class participation, so it will be essential for you to keep up with reading, attend class regularly, and contribute to class discussions. Prerequisite: Graduate standing; JS 118 or equivalent.

Note: In order to satisfy the writing requirements for the M.S. degree in Justice Studies, JS 201 must be passed with a minimum grade of B.

Required Texts: available in paperback through Spartan Books (on campus & online), Roberts Bookstore, and Amazon.com. Used copies should be available from at least one of these sellers.

1. Barcalow, Emmett. (2004). *Justice, Equality, and Rights: An Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
2. Barry, Brian. (2005). *Why Social Justice Matters*. Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA (USA): Polity.
3. Matravers, Matt. (2007). *Responsibility and Justice*. Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA (USA): Polity.
4. Okin, Susan Moller. (1999). *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
5. Reiman, Jeffrey. (2007). *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*, 8th edition. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Student Learning Objectives: Successful completion of this course will enable students to

appreciate, describe, compare and critique diverse theories of justice, including their ethical foundations, their stated and unstated assumptions, their implications for social policy and law, and their relations to different political systems. Successful completion will also enable students to explicate the relationship(s) between social justice and criminal justice.

Course Requirements and Grading

During class, set cell phones (or pagers) to off or silent.

Participation: You are responsible for keeping up with the assigned reading and being prepared to discuss it in class. Active participation in class counts for about 15% of your grade. Each week, two students will be responsible for leading the discussion of that week's reading; collaboration among discussion leaders is encouraged. Before class, every student (including discussion leaders) is required to submit four discussion questions based on that week's readings. Please *type* your questions and indicate the book(s) and chapter number(s) relating to each question. These questions may be emailed, faxed, or dropped off in person **by 3:00 PM** on the day of class. Late submissions will not be accepted. During weeks when we are discussing reading assignments, on-time submission of four written questions will earn 3 points per class.

You may earn up to 5 points per class for participation, including the week in which students are presenting their own research. Five points will be awarded to students who participate fully each week. "Moderate" participation (a few comments or questions made) will be awarded three points. "Minimal" participation (a single comment or question, or students who participate considerably but arrive more than 15 minutes late or leave more than 15 minutes early) will be awarded one point. Students who are completely silent or are absent will receive no participation points, and students who fail to participate the entire semester cannot earn a course grade of "A." If you are someone who has difficulty speaking in class, I will be happy to call on you to prompt your participation.

Note on leading discussions and final presentation: The ability to distinguish the essential elements of an argument or analysis from more minor, supporting points is extremely valuable in both academic and professional settings, and is one that too few people have mastered, as you probably know from sitting through long staff meetings, training sessions, scholarly talks, and the like. Developing or honing this skill is one thing you will be doing in this class. That is, oral and written summaries should cover the *main* points, rather than *every* point, the author raises (or you discuss in your paper). Oral and written summaries will be evaluated on your ability to identify and summarize the main points in these brief formats.

Grades: Your grade will be based on participation in class (including leading discussion, submitting questions and participating in discussion), one in-class writing exercise, one take-home midterm, a term paper, and an in-class presentation of your research. Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation: 6 points possible per class x 12 classes = 72 points possible

Reading Questions:	3 points possible per class x 11 classes =	33 points possible
Leading Discussion:	10 points possible (x 1 class) =	10 points possible
In-class Writing:	100 points possible (x 1 class) =	100 points possible
Take-home Midterm:	120 points possible (x 1 midterm) =	120 points possible
Term Paper:	140 points possible (x 1 paper) =	140 points possible
Presentation:	25 points possible (x 1 presentation) =	<u>25 points possible</u>
Total		500 points

Your grades at the end of the semester will be curved (your performance is measured against the other students in the class). The student with the most points will set the standard for the highest “A” grade. From there, grades will be calculated as follows:

Grades as % of highest total score:	93-100% A	83-86% B	73-76% C	0-59% F
	90-92% A-	80-82% B-	70-72% C-	
	87-89% B+	77-79% C+	60-69% D	

In-class writing: Instead of a midterm exam, there will be one in-class essay exercise in which you will be asked to respond to two essay questions relating to the material covered in class to date. This writing exercise will be open-book and open-note, but you are advised to be familiar with the key points of the theories so that you do not waste all your writing time looking for information. The questions will ask you to compare, contrast and apply theories of justice, in order to assess your understanding of the material and your critical thinking skills. There will be *no make-ups* for students missing class this day.

Take-home midterm: In mid-October, you will be given a take-home midterm to be completed by the following week. This assignment also requires an essay, and is open-book and open-note, but must be completed by each student *individually* and in her/his *own words*. It must be typed, double-spaced, and digitally submitted to turnitin.com as well as submitted to the instructor on paper. Because you have a week to complete it, *no late take-home exams* will be accepted. Late exams will receive a grade of “0.”

For both the in-class and the take-home midterm, I will attempt to return them with grades within a week. However, because I tend to provide extensive comments on student work, depending on the size of this class it may take two weeks for me to return them.

Term paper: Instead of a final exam, you will be completing a research paper as your last exercise. For this paper, you will be asked to select a topic of interest to you involving group rights/multiculturalism/sex equality. Using the course material *and* independent research, you will analyze existing approaches to, or treatment of, this topic and which is most just. (For example, you might select the topic polygamy, discuss the situation of women (or, much more rarely, men) in countries permitting polygamy in comparison to countries prohibiting polygamy, and consider other arguments for allowing or prohibiting polygamy, in order to conclude that polygamy violates human rights, is consistent with equality, or that its moral significance varies.)

Each paper should be approximately 12-15 pages of text (no more than 15, excluding cover page and references), typed and double-spaced, in 12-point font and black ink, with standard 1-inch margins and references in APA style. Students must hand in *original* papers for this class. Copies of papers completed in previous classes, or papers largely adapted from previous classes, are unacceptable and, if submitted, will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Each student must select a different topic. The topic and questions guiding each paper will be developed jointly by the instructor and students in class in early November. Once the topic is selected, students will undertake library research and generate a minimum of 5 additional, directly relevant, *scholarly* (refereed) articles or books on the topic; at least four of these must be dated from the previous 10 years (1996-2006). These articles can be theoretical, policy, practice-oriented, or research studies, as appropriate, and must be directly related to the questions under consideration. Copies of the articles obtained from library research must be attached as an appendix to each paper.

Note on paper writing: As this is a graduate seminar, the expectation is that each student is able to initiate library research and summarize, analyze, apply and/or critique the relevant material. Exclusive reliance on textbooks from other classes, popular media such as newspapers and magazines, and web pages will result in low paper grades, as the requirement of *scholarly research* will not have been met. Any student who has a concern about the content, format and quality of her/his term paper may bring in a draft to me during office hours *one week prior* to the date the paper is due for my comments and suggestions.

Note on paper formats and grading: page numbering begins on the first page of text (your cover page, if you use one, is *not* page 1). Your bibliography, although it needs a regular page number, does *not* count as a page of “text.” Papers that are too short or too long, including papers using 1.5 or triple spacing instead of double spacing, or overly wide or narrow margins, will be penalized. Attached to this syllabus is the evaluation and scoring rubric I will use to grade your papers.

To receive credit for their papers, students must both (a) turn in a paper copy on the due date; and (b) submit a digital copy of the paper to turnitin.com. More information on turnitin.com will be provided in class.

Presentations: On the date your papers are due, you will give a brief presentation to the class on your topic, and distribute a *one-page* summary to the rest of the class and the instructor. Your written summary may be in outline or narrative form, and may be single-spaced if you choose. Use *10-point font or larger* for your summaries, and be sure to include your *name and topic*. The length of your presentations will depend on the number of students enrolled in the class, but plan on eight to ten minutes to allow time for questions. Please *practice* your presentations: you need to cover your main points clearly and concisely, and you will be cut off if you talk for too long. Thus, to get a good grade for your presentation, you can’t “wing it.” You may simply do an oral presentation, or you may bring in overheads or Power Point displays.

Students with disabilities/Americans with Disabilities Act: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability. The DRC will work with you to determine the disability, document it, and determine the services and accommodations necessary for your success. The DRC may also contact me to determine the types of consideration necessary. Where possible, students should register with the Center during the first three weeks of the semester. The DRC website: <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/>

Cheating and plagiarism (Academic Integrity): Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests or quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. They also demonstrate a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment in which academic integrity is the norm. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will both *fail this course* and *be reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action*, which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. The policy on academic integrity can be found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

To better understand plagiarism and to aid you in making sure that you are not plagiarizing, please see me and/or visit: <http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm>

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism and other forms of cheating. If you are working (or planning to work) in the criminal justice field, be aware that reports of cheating will go on your academic record and thus will be discovered by employers' background investigations of job candidates. If you're writing a paper and think something might be plagiarism, assume it is. Graduate students, especially, are presumed to know what constitutes plagiarism. Knowing the law of plagiarism and other forms of academic honesty is your responsibility. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Incompletes: Two thirds of the course must be completed and permission from the instructor *must be obtained in advance* to receive an Incomplete ("I" grade). Students are **strongly discouraged** from seeking incompletes except in very compelling circumstances; past experience has shown that many students never complete the coursework, with dire effects on GPA and completion of graduate studies. SJSU allows students *one year* to complete coursework in order to replace an "I" grade with a letter grade; for example, for an incomplete received in Fall 2007, the work must be completed and submitted to me by the end of the Fall 2008 semester. *At SJSU, incompletes not removed within one year's time count as a failing*

(“F”) grade in student GPAs.

Course Adds/Drops: Instructors are permitted to drop students who fail to attend the first scheduled class meeting and who fail to inform the instructor prior to the second class meeting of the reason for any absence and their intention to continue in the class. Some instructors will drop students who do not meet the stated course prerequisites. However, instructors are not required to drop a student from their course. *It is the student’s responsibility to make sure classes are dropped.* If you are given permission to enroll in the course on or after the first day of class, it is also your responsibility to add yourself in a timely manner. You, the student, are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawal, etc. found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

Withdrawals: Should it be necessary, it is the student’s responsibility to withdraw from the course after the add/drop deadline. Students who simply stop attending or otherwise participating will receive a grade of “U” (“Unauthorized withdrawal”), which counts as an “F” in the student’s GPA.

Legal Advice: Although I am an attorney, I am unable to provide legal advice. Whether made inside or outside of class, my comments about the legal system should not be construed as legal advice.

Course Outline, Reading Assignments, and Paper Due Dates

Week 1. Wednesday August 29: Introduction to course.
No reading assignment

I. Theories of Justice – Political, Economic, Social

Week 2. Wednesday September 5: Politics, Government, Liberty and Welfare
Read for class: Barcalow, Chs. 1-5

Week 3. Wednesday September 12: Just Societies? Property, Democracy, Communitarianism, Marxism and Feminism
Read for class: Barcalow, Chs. 5-10

Week 4. Wednesday September 19: In-class essays
No reading assignment

II. Justice and Responsibility – Is Criminal Justice “Just”?

Week 5. Wednesday September 26: The Concept of Responsibility
Read for class: Matravers, Chs. 1-2

Week 6. Wednesday October 3: Responsibility and Justice
Read for class: Matravers, Chs. 3-5

Week 7. Wednesday October 10: Responsibility and Criminal Justice, Part I
Read for class: Reiman, Intro & Chs. 1-2

Week 8. Wednesday October 17: Responsibility and Criminal Justice, conclusion
Read for class: Reiman, Chs. 3-5, Appendix
Take-home midterm distributed

Week 9. Wednesday October 24: Take-home midterm due

III. Social Justice or Injustice in Today’s World, or, the Relevance of Social Theory

Week 10. Wednesday October 31: Social Justice and Equality
Read for class: Barry, Chs. 1-7

Week 11. Wednesday November 7: Meritocracy, Personal Responsibility, & Economics
Read for class: Barry, Chs. 8-15
Paper topics selected

Week 12. Wednesday November 14: Barriers to and the Potential for Social Justice
Read for class: Barry, Chs. 16-20
Barcalow, Chs. 11-12

(Wednesday November 21: NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!)

IV. Egalitarianism, Universalism, Multiculturalism and Group Rights

Week 13. Wednesday November 28: Justice, Equality, and Groups, Part I
Read for class: Okin, pp. 3-68

Week 14. Wednesday December 5: Justice, Equality, and Groups, conclusion
Read for class: Okin, pp. 69-131

Week 15. Wednesday December 12: Student Presentations - Paper Due
No reading assignment

Evaluation and Scoring Rubric for JS 201 Papers

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor/Unacceptable
Statement of the Issue	(10 pts) Clear and thorough	(8-9 pts) Accurate but less thorough	(6-7 pts) Tangential, confusing, vague or incomplete statement of the issue	(0-5 pts) Missing or incomprehensible statement of the issue
Reasoning and Argumentation	(28-30 pts) Reasoning is logical and comprehensive; argument considers alternative or competing viewpoints, evidence or analysis	(25-27 pts) Reasoning skips a few logical steps; argument considers a few of the most obvious counterpoints or data	(21-24 pts) Reasoning only presents the main points, or is not logically organized; argument considers one or two competing points but dismisses them too quickly	(0-20 pts) Essential steps in reasoning omitted or contradictory points introduced without explanation; competing evidence overlooked
Support for Argument	(28-30 pts) Literature, examples and/or data are appropriate, sufficient, and persuasive, integrating both course material and independent research	(25-27 pts) Good use of scholarship, examples and data overall, but some claims unsupported	(21-24 pts) Examples, data or references for key points are missing	(0-20 pts) Data and references lacking; argument is based on anecdote, opinion, or questionable sources
Analysis/Synthesis	(28-30 pts) Writing synthesizes main ideas of several sources	(25-27 pts) Writing presents only a loose or general synthesis of ideas	(21-24 pts) Analysis is based on or dominated by main idea of one source, or paper reads like a summary of readings rather than a synthesis of them	(0-20 pts) Key concepts/ideas/sources missing, or are discussed but not linked to other elements of the paper
Conclusion	(19-20 pts) Appropriate in scope, summarizes main points of paper, considers limitations of arguments, data or analysis and/or discusses directions for future research	(17-19 pts) Conclusion is logical but looser, not fully supported by body of paper; limitations of arguments, analysis or data not considered	(16-18 pts) Conclusion extremely general, vague, or too broad	(0-15 pts) Conclusion missing or completely unsupported by body of paper
Overall Presentation	(19-20 pts) No or extremely few and minor writing and grammatical errors; references are in APA style	(17-19 pts) Writing and grammar acceptable overall, but contains a few significant errors; 1-2 APA errors in references	(16-18 pts) Writing and grammar problems throughout paper; 3+ APA errors in references	(0-15 pts) Writing and grammar significantly impede comprehension of writer's ideas and arguments; APA style completely missing in references; references missing