

# *Seminar in Justice and Social Theory*

## Course Syllabus

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

**Office Hours:** Mon., 1:00-5:00 PM

MacQuarrie Hall 508

**Class Meeting Times and Location:** Monday, 5:30 - 8:15 p.m., MacQuarrie Hall (MH) 510

**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. Arrigo, Bruce A. (1999). *Social Justice/Criminal Justice: The Maturation of Critical Theory in Law, Crime and Deviance*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Barry, Brian. (2005). *Why Social Justice Matters*. Cambridge, UK & Malden, MA (USA): Polity.
3. Clayton, Matthew & Andrew Williams, Eds. (2004). *Social Justice*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
4. Okin, Susan Moller. (1991). *Justice, Gender and the Family*. NY: Basic Books.

**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, make sure cell phones (or pagers) are 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 will count for 15% of your grade. Each week, two or three 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 five discussion questions based on that week's readings. Please indicate the reading(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.

You may earn up to 5 points per class for participation. This includes both weeks we are discussing the assigned reading and weeks when students are presenting their own work. 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.

During weeks when we are discussing reading assignments, on-time submission of five written questions will earn 3 points per class.

**Papers:** Three papers are required for this course: one *evaluating* one of the issues raised in the *Barry* book (e.g., meritocracy, personal responsibility, costs of justice/injustice); a second *analyzing* a particular issue raised by *Okin*, (specifically, whether anything has changed in the last 15 years and the prospects for justice in regard to that issue); and a final one *applying* one or more of the specific perspectives covered in the course to a topical issue (e.g., "from the perspective of utilitarianism, is the death penalty just?" or "From a Rawlsian perspective, should same-sex marriage be legal?"). Each paper should be approximately 8 pages of text (no more than 10), 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.

The topics or questions guiding each paper will be developed jointly by the instructor and students during the first week of the seminar on the topics under consideration. For the third paper, each student must select a different topic. For each paper, in the weeks before the paper is due, 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.

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. Any student who has a concern about the content, format and quality of this undertaking 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, and your bibliography 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, will be penalized. I will endeavor to return your papers the week following their submission. However, depending on class size it may take two weeks to return papers, because I want to provide each student with written comments. Attached to this syllabus is the evaluation and scoring rubric I will use to grade your papers.

**Presentations:** On the dates 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.

*Note on presentations:* 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, 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:** Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation:	5 points possible per class x 14 classes =	70 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
Papers:	100 points possible per paper x 3 papers =	300 points possible
Presentations:	25 points possible x 3 presentations =	<u>75 points possible</u>
Total		488 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	

**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](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 2006, the work must be completed and submitted to me by the end of the Fall 2007 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](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct)

**Withdrawals:** Similarly, 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. Monday August 28: Introduction to course.  
*No reading assignment*

(Monday September 4: Labor Day holiday – no class)

### **I. Introduction: What is “Justice”?**

Week 2. Monday September 11: Historical & Contemporary Theories  
*Read for class:* Clayton & Williams, Introduction and Chs. 1-4  
*Paper topics* selected/discussed

Week 3. Monday September 18: Contemporary Theories, continued  
*Read for class:* Clayton & Williams, Chs. 5-8

### **II. Social Justice or Injustice in Today’s World, or, the Relevance of Social Theory**

Week 4. Monday September 25: Social Justice and Equality  
*Read for class:* Barry, Chs. 1-7

Week 5. Monday October 2: Social Justice, Meritocracy, Personal Responsibility, & Economics  
*Read for class:* Barry, Chs. 8-16

Week 6. Monday October 9: Student Presentations - Paper #1 Due  
*No reading assignment*

### **III. Justice/Injustice in other Arenas: Gender, the Family, the Environment, etc.**

Week 7. Monday October 16: Evaluating the Potential for Social Justice  
*Read for class:* Barry, Chs. 17-20; Clayton & Williams, Chs. 10-12  
*Paper topics* selected

Week 8. Monday October 23: Justice, Gender and the Family  
*Read for class:* Clayton & Williams, Ch. 13; Okin, Chs. 1-4

Week 9. Monday October 30: Justice, Gender and the Family, conclusion  
*Read for class:* Okin, Chs. 6-8

Week 10. Monday November 6: Student Presentations – Paper #2 Due  
*No reading assignment*

### **IV. Social Justice and Criminal Justice**

Week 11. Monday November 13: Critical Criminologies and Social Justice, Part I (Marxist, Socialist Feminist, Peacemaking Criminologies; Prophetic Criticism)

*Read for class:* Arrigo, Introduction and Chs. 1-4

*Paper topics* selected

Week 12. Monday November 20: Critical Criminologies and Social Justice, Part II (Anarchist, Postmodern Feminist, Constitutive Criminologies; Semiotics)

*Read for class:* Arrigo, Chs. 5-8

Week 13. Monday November 27: Critical Criminologies and Social Justice, Part III (Critical Race, Chaos, Catastrophe/Topology, and Queer Theory)

*Read for class:* Arrigo, Chs. 9-12

Week 14. Monday December 4: Critical Criminologies and Social Justice, Conclusion; Course Wrap-up

*Read for class:* Arrigo, Ch. 13

Week 15. Monday December 11: Student Presentations - Paper #3 Due

*No reading assignment*

## Evaluation and Scoring Rubric for JS 201 Papers

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