

# JS 111: Struggle for Justice

Course Syllabus  
TH: 1:30-4:15  
MacQuarrie Hall 520

Professor: Mark E. Correia, Ph.D.  
Office: MacQuarrie Hall 513  
Hours: T/R: 9:00-10:00; 11:50-12:50 or by appointment  
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## Course Description

What is “justice”? Does America have a “just” society? If not, can we achieve a “just” society? Is “justice” important? Does each citizen of the United States have the same fundamental rights? Are individuals treated *fairly* in America regardless of race, gender, SES, or ethnicity? Are we guided by fundamental values and morals in are society? Through the use of philosophy, political theory, and policy implementation, we will examine these questions and others throughout the course. The primary purpose of this course is to get students to think critically about what constitutes a “just” society and their contribution to such a society.

## Learning Objectives

Students will develop:

1. An understanding of the broader sense of social justice.
2. A broad understanding of the relationship between social justice and social policy.
3. Skills to evaluate social policy through the social justice framework.

## Required Texts

In addition to the required readings listed below, additional course material will be posted on WebCT and indicated with an “\*”.

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nickel and Dimed*. New York, NY: Henry Hold and Company.

Boyle, T.C. (1995). *Tortilla Curtain*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Shipler, D. (2005). *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. Vintage.

Students will be required to access WebCT for this course. If you do not currently have a WebCT account, please go to <http://sjsu.webct.com/webct/public/home.pl> and follow the instructions to create an account. The WebCT login for this course is [http://sjsu.webct.com/SCRIPT/js111sp07mc/scripts/serve\\_home](http://sjsu.webct.com/SCRIPT/js111sp07mc/scripts/serve_home). The contents and schedule of this course are subject to change—any changes will be posted on WebCT.

## **Suggested Materials**

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2001), 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. This is available in the reference section of the bookstore or can be found [online](http://www.apastyle.org) at [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org).

## **Course Requirements**

**Participation:** As noted above, participation counts as a major portion of the student's grade. Therefore, weekly attendance will be taken. I do require that you read the assigned readings and expect that you are fully prepared to discuss the material in class. Students will be expected to participate in class discussion and answer questions about the readings and/or the various issues being discussed. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to come to class prepared. Participation points are based on the student's contribution to the discussion. Please notify me in advance of any absences.

**Journal:** Each student will be required to keep a journal throughout the course. The purpose of this journal is for the student to record his/her thoughts concerning "justice" throughout the course. The journal should be either typewritten or kept in a journal notebook and will be collected at various times throughout the semester. Points are based upon number of entries, as well as the student's ability to integrate various themes of "justice".

**Response Papers:** Throughout the course, we will watch several movies dealing with the various topics discussed. The movies chosen depict certain situations that require us to critically think about "justice", racial discrimination, the death penalty and the overall structure of American society. Each student will be required to write a paper discussing a particular aspect of the movie (topics will be distributed prior to the movies). It is suggested that students incorporate the readings and notes from class into their discussion. The papers will be 3-5 pages in length APA style, using 12-point font and 1 inch margins. Variations from this format will not be accepted. In total, 4 response papers will be submitted (from 4 different sections of the course). The student will post these assignments on Turnitin.com (please see WebCT for additional information).

**Interview:** Each student will be required to complete an interview with an individual(s) from a social justice related agency. The purpose of this interview is for the student to gain information and insight into local agencies who are promoting social justice issues. A list of possible agencies will be listed on WebCT, however, it is the responsibility of the student to find an appropriate agency and clear this with the professor by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Official criminal justice agencies cannot be used for this assignment. Additional information will be posted on WebCT.

**Presentation:** Students will be required to present the material for and lead one class discussion. Due to the limited time, students will work in groups of 4 or 5. Each member of the group will be required to actively participate in the presentation. The groups should present an overall discussion of the topic and stimulate class discussion through questions, etc. Grades will be based upon the material used, coverage of the topic, and ability to generate discussion. It is strongly suggested that students draw upon resources other than those provided in class. Additional information concerning these presentations (e.g., structure, grading criteria, etc.) will be distributed during the second week of class.

**Final Paper:** Rather than having a final exam, students will be asked to turn in a final paper. This paper will be due on the day of the final exam. The topic for this paper will be distributed no later than 1 week prior to the due date. The purpose of this paper is not to test the student on their knowledge, but to force them to think critically about an aspect discussed in the course. This paper should be no less than four pages and no more than fifteen. No late papers will be accepted.

All written work turned in for grading (i.e., term paper and assignments) will be graded according to the following criteria: content of the paper, logic and organization of paper, critical thinking, grammar and adherence to APA style. Writing is an art that takes time to flourish—nurture it over time and resist the temptation to procrastinate.

**Email:** I will accept assignments via email according to the following protocol. Deviations from this protocol will not be accepted and your email will be bounced back to you:

1. *Subject Line:* This line will contain the student's name, course and the assignment number. For example, Mark Correia, JS 111, Assignment #1.
2. *Format:* All papers sent electronically **must be saved in .doc or .rtf**. I will not accept papers saved in .wps, .wpd or pasted into an email.
3. *Email Address:* mcorreia@casa.sjsu.edu.
4. *Confirmation:* I will send out a confirmation receipt for those emails with assignments that I have received within 24hrs. If you do not receive a confirmation, your assignment was not received.
5. *Responsibility:* It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the assignment is properly attached to the email. If the assignment is not attached and received by the due date, the assignment will be considered late.

## Course Grading

Participation	(150 pts)
Journal	(100 pts)
Response Papers (4)	(200 pts)
Interview	(100 pts)
Presentation	(100 pts)
Final Paper	<u>(150 pts)</u>
	800 pts

## Course Outline

Since we all have some sense or idea concerning “justice”, this course is based upon substantial student participation. Voicing our opinions, examining ours and other's perspectives of “justice”, will allow us to more adequately develop an understanding of this important concept. Hence, lecture will play a minor role throughout the course.

## **Part I: “Introduction to “Justice”**

### ***Week 1: January 25***

Course Introduction and Syllabus Review

Theories of “Justice”: Part I

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

### ***Week 2: February 1***

Theories of “Justice”: Part II

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

**Movie: *Les Miserables***

**Class Discussion**

***Response #1 Distributed***

## **Part II: “Distributive Justice: Part I”**

### ***Week 3: February 8***

Discrimination and Racism: Nature of society?

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

**Movie: *Crash***

***Response #1 Due; Response #2 Distributed***

### ***Week 4: February 15***

Reverse Discrimination: Is there such a thing?

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

Education, Employment and Affirmative Action: Is diversity important?

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

***Response #2 Due***

**Week 5: February 22**

**Movie: *American History X***

**Required Reading: *B. Ehrenreich, All  
Shipler, All***

**Class Discussion**

***Response #2 Due; Response #3 Distributed***

**Part III: “Distributive Justice: Part II”**

**Week 6: March 1**

Poverty, Inequality and Relative Deprivation: Individual or Societal Problem?

**Required Reading: *B. Ehrenreich, All  
See WebCT\****

***Response #3 Due***

**Week 7: March 8**

Welfare: Safety Net or Societal Drain?

**Required Reading: *See WebCT\****

**Movie: *Boyz in the Hood***

**Class Discussion**

***Response #3 Due; Response #4 Distributed***

**Week 8: March 15**

**Spring Break**

**Part IV: “Procedural Justice”**

**Week 9: March 22**

Policing America: Are they “just” and “fair”?

**Required Reading: *See WebCT\****

***Response #4 Due***

***Week 10: March 29***

Courts and Criminal Sentencing: Does race and ethnicity matter?  
***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

***Week 11: April 5***

Death Penalty: The ultimate form of discrimination or “justice” in action?  
***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

***Documentary: Deadline***

**Video Discussion**

***Response 5 Distributed***

***Week 12: April 12***

**International Police Executive Symposium, Dubai, UAE**

**Part V: “Citizenship, Religion and Justice”**

***Week 13: April 19***

Environment Justice: The Link Between the Environment and Civility  
***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

***Documentary: An Inconvenient Truth***

***Response 5 Due; Response 6 Distributed***

***Week 14: April 26***

Immigration: Measuring our Level of Civility  
***Required Reading: T.C. Boyle, All***

***Documentary: Crossing Arizona***

***Response #6 Due; Response #7 Distributed***

***Week 15: May 3***

Human Rights: The Tie that Binds  
***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

***Interview Due***

## ***Week 16: May 10***

Values and Morals: Is there a Common Core in America?

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

Democracy and Citizenship: Facilitate or deter “justice?”

***Required Reading: See WebCT\****

Conclusion

## ***Week 17: May 15***

***Final paper due***

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### **Syllabus Addendum**

**Grading:** In order to receive a grade for this course, all course requirements must be completed. Failure to complete any of them may result in a failing grade for the course.

Paper and course grades may be disputed at the instructor’s convenience (or during office hours). It is important to note, however, that upon review, the instructor reserves the right to increase as well as decrease the grade in question. Late assignments and papers will not be accepted nor any extra credit provided.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The “I got caught cheating” policy for this class is swift, severe, and certain: that is, if you cheat, chances are very good that you will be caught, then publicly shamed, and punished with a failing grade for the course. In addition, plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please contact the professor—while many students are ignorant of this offense, ignorance is not an excuse. I have several speeding tickets that prove this point!

**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, 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. It also demonstrates 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 that practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action that 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>

**Course Add/Drop Statement:** 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.***

**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)

**ADA:** “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 that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.”

**Electronic Devices:** Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, PDA's or any other electronic device that “makes noise”. While I commend those of you who have mastered text messaging, the use of these devices during class is disruptive and will not be tolerated. If I see you text messaging, I will ask you to leave the room. The use of computers in the classroom will not be allowed—accept for use during a group presentation.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Class motto: “Treat others as you think they would like to be treated”. Yes, this is a spin on the ever popular, but not so empathetic phrase. This is a time to open your minds to new ideas, to explore new concepts, so please take advantage of this opportunity. Further, please be respectful of others and show them common courtesy. I firmly believe that the learning process is enriched by discussion, but damaged by arguments. Respect and professionalism are the guiding principles of this class. Tardiness will not be tolerated, if you are late, do not disturb class—wait until break to enter the classroom.

**Written Work:** I understand that many of our students have very busy life's, filled with work and family obligations. I understand that “school work” is difficult to fit in to an already full schedule. With this said, I do expect quality work from everyone. Write every paper as though it is your best paper ever and be proud of your paper and work that you complete for this course.

As a side note: I am well aware of the websites that offer papers to students and have software that allows me to compare papers I receive to the thousands of databases of papers that exist. Trust me, it is not worth your effort, chances are, I will find out. All papers that are turned in to this class will be submitted to turnitin.com. Please see the course website for additional information.

**+/- Grading:** This course will be using the +/- system on final grades based on the following percentages:

95-100:	A	74-76:	C
90-94:	A-	70-73:	C-
87-89:	B+	67-69:	D+
84-86:	B	64-66:	D
80-83:	B-	60-63:	D-
77-79:	C+	0-60:	F