Course Description

What is social justice? How are identities, experiences, and structures of race, ethnicity, and class intertwined with social justice in the American context? Why does social justice matter? What can individuals and communities do to develop socially justice outcomes?

We will closely read a number of texts to explore responses to these broad questions. Assigned readings are drawn from a wide variety of disciplines and contemporary popular writings. In addition to traditional classroom practices of lecture, discussion, and writing, this course moves decidedly beyond the classroom by requiring students to engage in a number of social justice activities on campus and in the Winston-Salem community. Students are expected bring enthusiastic participation to these experiences and to reflect critically on their experiences in written work. Students will create a toolkit for social justice activity as the final project for the class.

Course Objectives

Students will critically engage a wide range of scholarly and popular texts focused on inequality, justice, community capacity building, and social action.

Students will become familiar with broad themes and approaches to social justice research, activism, and policymaking.

Students will develop skills of critical analysis and practical problem solving.

Students will be introduced to multiple, contested ideas for remedying injustice.

Students will produce a toolkit for action.

Students will participate and contribute to social justice activities on their own campus and in the community.
Assessment

Reading Responses (30%)

All students are expected to post THREE (3) 500-700 word reading responses on the course Sakai site by Tuesday 2:00PM. Students may choose to write in any three weeks over the course of the semester. The reading responses should be organized as follows:

Part 1: 200 word summary of the reading  
Part 2: 200 word assessment of the most valuable contribution of the reading to our understanding of social justice as a concept. Can be critical or laudatory.  
Part 3: 200 word explanation of an important tool /practice/policy for addressing and enhancing social justice as suggested by the reading. This will often be non-obvious and will require the student to be both critical and creative.

The reading responses are brief and must get to the point swiftly and clearly. Responses will be graded on insight, accuracy, creativity, and clarity of writing.

Social Action and Social Action Reflections (30%)

All students must take part in at least THREE (3) direct social action initiatives as designated on the syllabus or that are offered as opportunities arise throughout the semester. For each social action, students must write a THREE (3) page reflection essay. Students may participate in more than three social actions, but reflection essays are only required of THREE (3).

These reflections should be written in the first person and provide both an assessment of the action and of the student’s own self-evaluation of learning as well as the student’s theoretical and ethical understanding of what is meant by social justice.

A rubric for the Social Action Reflections is on the Sakai site.

Social Action Reflections are due within 10 days of the completion of the action.

Final Paper (30%)

Students will write a final paper offering a tool kit for social change based on what they have learned in this course. A full description of the final paper is forthcoming.

Class attendance and participation (10%)

Students will provide feedback for peers as part of the final Tool Kit group project.
Late Assignment Policy
All students have one Free Pass to be used on any written assignment except the final paper. One assignment can be turned in up to 48 hours late with no questions asked and no negative consequences for the grade. After the Free Pass is used, any assignment submitted late will be subject to the late assignment policy. Assignments submitted late will lose 1/3 letter grade for any late submission within the first 48 hours. Each additional 24 hours results in another 1/3 letter grade reduction.Exceptions to this policy will only be made for emergencies or health challenges that are documented by a physician or university administrator.

Attendance Policy
As a course that meets only once per week, attendance is particularly crucial for the learning environment. More than three (3) unexcused absences will result in 1/3 letter grade reduction from the final grade of the course.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethical conduct and academic integrity. Plagiarism need not be intentional. All cases of plagiarism – the theft of words, ideas, sources, and conclusions whether from written, audio, oral, or digital materials – will not be tolerated and will be reported to appropriate departmental and dean leadership.

Expectations for Classroom Behavior
We acknowledge that racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of interpersonal and institutionalized forms of inequality exist in society. This does not mean we all agree on the causes, consequences, or solutions for these forms of inequality. It does mean we agree to do our best to better understand them, refrain from repeating misinformation, and refrain from personal attack. No student is expected to have all the answers. Mistakes and questions are welcomed in the spirit of cooperative learning.
We will work to create an atmosphere where:

We keep an open mind and listen;
Everyone is valued and respected;
Everyone can work and learn;
Everyone engages in the thoughtful presentation of ideas, shares the floor, and can critically assess each other’s ideas;
No individual is ridiculed or demeaned for sharing personal experiences and ideas;
Personal experiences shared in the context of the classroom remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon;
No individual is expected to be a representative spokesperson for a given group of people, given there is intra-group diversity of skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.
Email Policy

Professor Harris-Perry typically responds to all necessary and appropriate emails directly related to course matters within 5 business days. Professor Harris-Perry does not respond to unsolicited student emails from Friday at 12:00 noon until Monday at 12:00 noon unless specifically designated.

Please be aware that Professor Harris-Perry will provide regular updates to the syllabus and various course materials on Sakai but students who rely on excessive use of email communications may experience a negative effective in their course grade. Professor Harris-Perry considers more than one email interaction a week to be excessive unless there is a legitimate and documented emergency.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Readings marked with a * are available as links from the course website. Books are all available through the university bookstore.

Michael Arceneaux. I Can’t Date Jesus: Love, Sex, Family, Race, and Other Reasons I’ve Put My Faith in Beyoncé. 2018

Brian Barry, Why Social Justice Matters. 2005

Ari Berman, Give us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America. 2015


Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself. 2012


Wesley Lowery. They Can’t Kill Us All. The Story of The Struggle for Black Lives. 2017

Diane Guerrero. In the Country We Love: My Family Divided. 2017


Extra Credit Opportunities
Week 1, August 28  Introduction: August 28 History

* Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror
* Confession of the Murderers of Emmett Till
* Videos Linked to Sakai RESOURCES link Week 1

Week 2, September 4  Perspectives on Social Justice

* Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror continued
  Brian Barry. Why Social Justice Matters. 2005 Focus on Sections I-V

Week 3, September 11  Perspectives on Social Justice: Help by Not Helping

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself. 2012

* Ayn Rand, The Virtue of Selfishness, “The Nature of Government” and “Racism”

* Steven Horowitz. Breaking Down the Barriers: Three Ways State and Local Governments Can Improve the Lives of the Poor. 2015

Week 4, September 18  Deliberation I


http://justiceharvard.org/justicecourse/

Week 5, September 25  Deliberation II


Week 6, October 2  Memoir I

Diane Guerrero. In the Country We Love: My Family Divided. 2017

Week 7, October 9  Memoir II

Michael Arceneaux. I Can’t Date Jesus: Love, Sex, Family, Race, and Other Reasons I’ve Put My Faith in Beyoncé. 2018

Week 8, October 16  Philanthropy I

Week 9 October 23  Philanthropy II


*Rob Reich: A Failure of Philanthropy: American charity shortchanges the poor, and public policy is partly to blame. Winter 2005


Week 10, October 30  Voting


Week 11, November 6  Media

Wesley Lowery. *They Can’t Kill Us All. The Story of The Struggle for Black Lives*. 2017

*Dr. Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti, Dr. Katherine Pieper, Ariana Case, & Angel Choi “Inequality in 1,100 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT & Disability from 2007 to 2017”


Week 12, November 13  Civic Action and Volunteerism


Week 13, November 20  No Class Meeting
Week 14, November 27  Protest


*Barber, William. *Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation* Chapters 1, 13 and 14


Week 15, December 4  Policing/ Criminal Justice Reform


*The Century Foundation, Two Views on Policing

*The Ferguson Report
Social Action Options

Voting/ Elections
Attend NC College Voter Summit
Volunteer 4 hours for a candidate or issue campaign
Serve 4 hours as a non partisan “Election Protection” volunteer on election day

Civic Action and Volunteerism
Serve 4 hours as a Project Pumpkin Volunteer
Serve a shift as a Campus Kitchen Volunteer

Philanthropy
Attend a Winston-Salem Women’s Fund meeting
Take part in Hit The Bricks for Piccolo Cancer Fund

Memoir
Attend Michael Arceneaux lecture on October 9
Write “your story” in 2000 words as a way of reflecting a social justice issue

Media
Craft and submit an op-ed to OGB or Wake Forest Review
Work one shift and attend two sessions of Immigration and Race Journalism Gathering

Check Sakai for more options and for details regarding these choices

December 10 by 5pm
**Final Tool Kit Due**