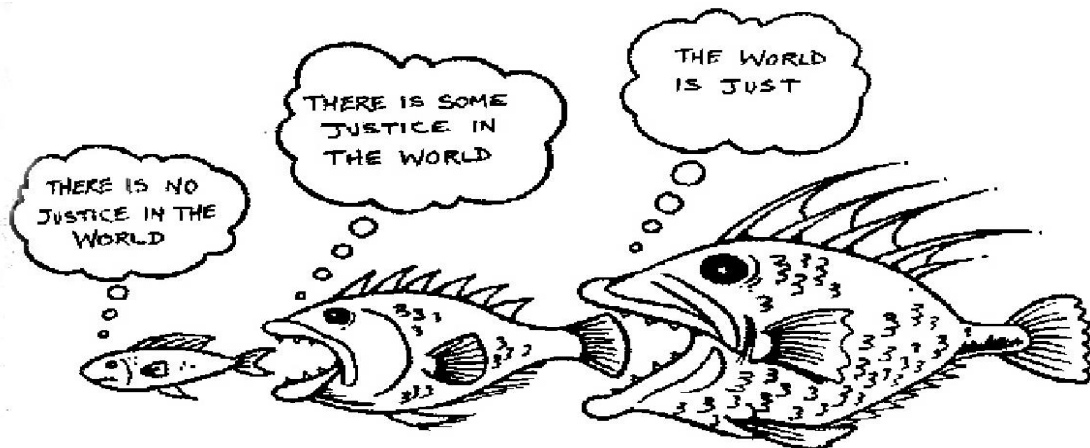


**POLS 2710/WGST2710X Theories of Justice
Spring 2024**

Dr. Wynne Moskop
McGannon Hall 136
wynne.moskop@slu.edu
314.977.2897

Office hours:
T 11am-2pm
R 11-11:45am
& by appointment



Adapted from Robert Mankof, "The Peoples Choices," *The New Yorker*, July 25, 2013,
https://www.newyorker.com/cartoons/bob-mankoff/the-peoples-choices#slide_ss_0=4

Catalog Description

This class exposes students to various ways in which political theorists have attempted to answer the question: "What is justice?" The course covers a variety of theories of justice, including utilitarian, liberal, feminist, and socialist perspectives. The course also applies theories of justice to actual political issues.

Course Description

This class exposes students to different ways in which political theorists and practitioners in law and politics have attempted to answer the question: "What is justice?" We study a variety of theories of justice—ancient, modern, and contemporary, with an emphasis on feminist alternatives to traditional theories. Readings include selections from Ptahhotep, Aristotle, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Rawls, Jane Addams, Eva Kittay, Joan Tronto, Kimberle Crenshaw, Charles Mills, and Miranda Fricker, among others. These readings are punctuated by court cases and policy-related readings.

The course is organized into three parts. Part I considers: What are theories of justice for? Who creates or articulates them? Whom do they serve? Part II examines historical perspectives on justice. Part III examines theories of justice from contemporary feminist and race perspectives.

Our overriding goal is to assess the potential of each theory for identifying and addressing injustice and progressing toward more just institutions and practices—in public and private spaces, and with attention to race, gender, religion, and citizenship status. We read with these questions in mind:

- To what problem of injustice does the writer respond?
- What remedies does the writer suggest?
- What epistemology, or way of knowing about justice, does the writer assume?
- Do the writer’s assumptions about justice serve some groups better than others?

Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU’s institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate [Core Student Learning Outcomes](#) (SLOs).

Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below:
University Core Student Learning Outcomes The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are:
SLO 1: Examine their actions and vocations in dialogue with the Catholic, Jesuit tradition
SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions
SLO 7: Evaluate the extent to which social systems influence equity and reflect innate human dignity

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:
Component-level Student Learning Outcomes Students who complete this course will be able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the cultural-institutional conditions and causes of just and unjust social systems using such concepts as social location, relationships, power, privilege, and vulnerability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply such ethical concepts as human dignity, equity, well-being justice, and the common good to critically evaluate both existing social systems and proposals for social change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envision and articulate systemic social changes and other ways to promote flourishing, well-being, equity, justice, and the dignity of the human person

Learning outcomes for the Political Science Major

1. Graduates will be able to identify the structure and operation of political systems in the U.S, across a variety of countries, and in multinational organizations.
2. Graduates will be able to distinguish among various approaches to studying political phenomena.
3. Graduates will be able to read carefully and evaluate and construct analytical arguments in clear and logical prose.
4. Graduates will be able to identify and gather information from credible primary and secondary sources.
5. Graduates will be able to design original research to test arguments and hypotheses with qualitative and/or quantitative approaches.
6. Graduates will be able to assess the effects of various social and political structures and public policies to determine which are more likely to promote equality, justice, freedom, or other values important to them.

In addition to meeting the University Core requirement in Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society, this course satisfies requirements in the Law, Religion, and Politics minor and the Public Law concentration in the Political Science major.

Student Learning Outcomes for this course. In this course, the learning outcomes listed above for DEJS and Political Science are translated in a particular way. By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Describe key concepts in the theories of justice we study
- Compare and contrast the different theories of justice
- Identify the implications of each theory for groups in different positions in society
- Evaluate written and oral arguments and your own actions in light of different theories of justice
- Make persuasive theoretical arguments, supported with evidence from the texts, in both written work and oral presentations

Format & Requirements

The format is a structured discussion. The reason for the discussion format is that this course focuses on how well you can understand and apply ideas; the only way to achieve this purpose is to read closely and to practice expressing the ideas in multiple contexts. The format provides multiple opportunities to practice using the ideas in different context—through discussion, journal reflections, and essays—so that you gradually develop facility using them. There will be no need to memorize points of a lecture.

You are expected to complete reading assignments before coming to class, participate in class discussions, and contribute to group writing and oral assignments. There may be occasional pop quizzes to encourage and check on familiarity with assigned readings. These will be part of the class participation grade.

During class, students take turns as "expert" discussants, responsible for helping to lead discussion on study questions for assigned readings and raising additional questions for class discussion. Every student will serve as a discussant three or four times during the semester. This format places a great deal of responsibility on students. Those who do not complete reading assignments on time cannot expect to understand the class discussions or contribute meaningfully. And, they will find themselves unprepared to write essays and exams.

Requirements

1) Class participation

- **Complete reading assignments on time and participate regularly in class discussions.** Philosophical readings can be challenging. To prepare for class discussion, be sure to *give yourself time to read more than once; and think about how you want to respond to study questions*. Then you will be ready to participate. Otherwise, you cannot expect to follow the class discussion as we develop responses to study questions and your own questions.
- You are expected to *complete reading assignments before the beginning of the class* in which they are to be discussed and to participate regularly in class discussions of the readings. You might think of the assigned reading as a "lecture" that everyone in the

class has already attended; in that context, the purpose of class discussion is, then, to process the author's ideas so that we understand them better and have the opportunity to consider their ramifications for justice. Naturally, you cannot expect to get much out of the discussion if you haven't "attended" the "lecture" to be discussed.

- **To prepare for class, I suggest that you outline the author's argument:** What is their purpose? What do they want us to learn? Why? Take note of passages in the text that help you respond to these general questions and to the specific study questions assigned for the text.
 - **Taking notes in class. What kind of notes is it helpful to take in a discussion class?** First, listen to the discussion and try to understand what each speaker is contributing to move the discussion forward. Second, when some part of the discussion clicks in your mind – by appearing to support or contradict your own tentative conclusions, write it down. Contribute your insight to the class discussion. All of this will help with your journal reflections (see below).
 - **Always bring a copy (paper or electronic) copy of the assigned text(s) to class** so that we can work together to understand an thinker's purpose, evidence, and underlying assumptions. Periodically class time will be allotted for you to write short journal reflections about what you have learned from our examination of particular texts. There may be occasional pop quizzes to encourage everyone to keeping up with reading assignments. Since the knowledge and ability to use it in critical analyze accumulate, if you fall behind at the beginning of the semester, that will hamper your progress for the remainder of the course.
 - Everyone in the class will have multiple opportunities to **serve as an "expert" discussant** who is responsible for commenting on study questions I will provide and for raising questions of your own.
 - There will be at least one reading and presentation project that small groups work on together.
 - There may be occasional **pop quizzes** over the readings to encourage you to pay close attention to them. Pop quizzes count as part of your class participation grade.
- 2) **Civility.** Talking about political issues and reading historical texts that employ language no longer in use today can be controversial. Strong opinions are expected and acceptable. Even so, it is crucial to maintain respectful, open conversation that allow us to question how well founded any of our assumptions may be. These guidelines may be helpful. (Modified from https://livingroomconversations.org/topics/talking_politics/)
- **Be curious about what we read and seek to understand the author's argument;** in the same vein, listen to other perspectives in class discussion and try to understand the speaker's perspective.
 - **Show respect to the voices of authors and also to members of our class; suspend judgment.** Setting judgement aside opens you up to learning from others and makes

them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.

- **Note any common ground as well as any differences**, among authors and among members of our class. Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- Be authentic and welcome that from others. **Share what's important to you based on our texts and your own experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.**
- Be purposeful and to the point. **Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering.** Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
- Own and guide the conversation. **Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole.** Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed.

3) Attendance and Absences. Attendance at every class is required, because discussing assigned readings and considering the perspectives of others is essential for learning to a) interpret and evaluate arguments and b) construct your own arguments. **Absences are excused *only* if you a) provide a good reason--e.g. illness, required university activity--preferably in advance, and b) within one week, email me written responses to all study questions for the reading assignment for that day.** You are allowed one unexcused absence with no penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will lower your class discussion grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.

4) **Journal reflections.** *Create an individual google doc inside this folder, [Theories of Justice Student Reflections](#).* You must sign in to your slU account to access the folder. Label your word document with your last name and share it only with me, giving me "editor" capability so that I can comment occasionally. This will be your space for continuing journal reflections that can help develop your interests and understanding throughout the semester. Periodically I will allot class time for you to reflect on what you have learned from our readings. Each entry should be dated. Guidelines will be given for different kinds of reflections or responses to study questions, as the need arises.

Journal reflections do not earn letter grades, but entries are considered as part of your class participation grade. I will comment on these reflections periodically, so that you will know how you are progressing in light of posted guidelines or specific assignments. I'm always glad to meet with you to discuss your reflections or to think about how to develop one of them into an essay. Two or three final journal reflections during the semester will be retained for University Core assessment purposes.

5) **Three short essays.** Essays will be evaluated according to criteria explained on the peer review/grading guideline posted on Canvas. The goal over the course of the semester is to improve your ability to read philosophical texts closely, reflect on them, and write clearly and persuasively about them.

We will discuss the first draft of Essay #1 in tutorial groups so that we have time to go over your draft carefully before you turn in a final version. The class will be divided into tutorial groups of 3. Drafts will be shared and each group will meet with me to review the drafts. Guided by the peer review guidelines/rubric, we will suggest ways to improve each essay. Each of you will have a turn as an author and as a helpful peer reviewer, so that you gain experience listening to others and learning from their perspectives. Since this is the only essay assignment for which we will take class time for tutorial groups, it is important to pay close attention to the peer review rubric and the feedback you receive so that your future essays show improvement. To ensure that you understand how well your first draft meets criteria on the rubric, which also are the criteria I use to grade essays, you will receive a grade on this initial draft of Essay #1. However, this grade does not count toward the grade on the final version of Essay #1; it is only a benchmark that indicates what you need to work on for the final (graded) draft.

The remaining two essays will vary somewhat in length and topics, but criteria (peer review and grading guidelines) will be the same so that you gradually improve through writing and revising. Again, to improve, it is always important to reflect on both the peer review guidelines and feedback on your previous essays. The third essay will serve as the final exam.

I strongly recommend visiting the writing tutors in the Student Success Center. They can help you organize your argument and eliminate any grammatical errors or confusing sentence structure that may interfere with clarity and persuasiveness of your essay. writing@slu.edu, <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/universitywriting-services/index.php>

- 6) **Exams.** There will be a midterm exam (consisting of short answer essays and a small group oral) and occasional pop quizzes, as noted above. The third essay mentioned above will serve as a final essay exam.

- 7) **Grading.** Grades will be determined as follows:

Class participation (General breakdown, or weight, given to each component: attendance & regular/thoughtful/informed class participation-20%); assigned discussant and group project participation-10%)– 30% total

Journal reflections and peer reviews that meet requirements posted on Canvas – 10% total

Midterm exam (short answer essay exam combined with small group oral exam)— 10% total

Two short Essays (Including rough drafts that meet guidelines and are submitted on time; these essays will be about 800 words. About 15% per essay, with an improved second getting a heavier weight) – 30% total

Final exam essay — This essay will be about 1000 words.- 20% total

Grades will be calculated using this scale:

A	4.0	A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	B	3.0	B-
				2.7
C+	2.3	C	2.0	C-
				1.7
D+	1.3	D	1.0	
F	0			

- 8) **Communication.** The easiest way to reach me is by email, wynne.moskop@slu.edu. Please do not hesitate to email with questions and concerns. I will answer within 24 to 48 hours. If you do not hear from me in 48 hours, please email again. (I get lots of emails and it's possible to miss one occasionally.) Help is *always* available, so please do not hesitate to ask. I am *always* glad to meet with you. If my office hours are not convenient, please ask for an appointment, and feel free to drop in to McGannon 136 whenever my office door is open.
- 9) **Electronics.** Computers and tablet are to be used in class only for accessing assigned readings, working on journal reflections, or taking notes or exams.
- 10) All students are expected to fill out both a **self evaluation and a course evaluation** at the end of the semester.
- 11) There is no required textbook for this class. All assignments are online or on electronic reserve in Pius Library. The electronic reserve password for this class is *justice*.

The following university policy statements can be found at the end of this syllabus:

- Student Success Center
- University Writing Services
- Academic Integrity
- Disability Accommodations
- Title IX
- Wellness
- Mental health resources



- Basic Needs Resources

Tentative Schedule

Assignments may be adjusted depending on needs of the class. Check Canvas for specific assignments and study questions for each class.

All required texts are available at no cost online, on Pius Library electronic reserve (ERes), or from the instructor. Here is a link to our electronic course reserve

list, https://libguides.slu.edu/er.php?course_id=105309 . However, you can reach the list by looking up the course number or instructor.

Part I. What are theories of justice for?

- Jan 16 INTRODUCTION. Who creates theories of justice? For what purpose? Whom do they serve?
In class, we will view & discuss [A Jury of Her Peers](#), Alfred Hitchcock’s version of Susan Glaspell’s 1917 short story about a murder on an isolated midwestern farm. (*A Jury of Her Peers* starts 1.22 minutes into the video.) Think about 1) alternative approaches to justice at work in this story, 2) which characters adhere to each approach, and 3) why.
- Jan 18 Miranda Fricker, Excerpt on “Testimonial Injustice,” from *Epistemic Injustice*, pp. 17-29 (on electronic reserve (ERes) in Pius Library. Password for this class is *justice*. Journal reflections.
- Jan 23 Martha Nussbaum, “Poets as Judges,” Ch. 4 in *Poetic Justice*. Pius Library electronic reserve (Eres)
- Jan 25 [Utah v Strieff](#) (2016). Read the syllabus, Justice Thomas’s opinion for the Court, and Justice Sotomayor’s dissent.

Jan 30-Feb 1 Tutorial Week for Essay #1

There will be no formal class this week. Instead class will meet in tutorial groups of 2 or 3 students to review your draft of Paper #1. This is a short paper, with an 800-word limit. Before your tutorial, you will use the Peer Review Guidelines posted on canvas to make suggestion for improving every other paper in your tutorial group. In the tutorial session, we will use the peer reviews to discuss each paper. After the tutorial, you’ll use suggestions from the tutorial to revise your paper for a grade.

Part II. Historical perspectives on justice

Ancient Perspectives

- Feb 6 Before the Greeks. Ptahotep (c. 24th C. BCE; Egypt), [The Maxims of Ptahhotep](#)
- Feb 8 Plato, [The Apology of Socrates](#). In addition watch this video version, [Man and the State: The Trial of Socrates](#), Encyclopedia Britannica production_(30 min). Journal Reflections.
- Feb 13 Aristotle, [Nicomachean Ethics](#), Book V
- Feb 15 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII. Journal Reflections.

Modern liberal justice: natural rights and the social contract

- Feb 20 John Locke, [Second Treatise of Government](#) (1690), excerpts.
- Feb 22 Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) excerpts (Eres). Journal reflections.

Modern liberal justice – gender and race perspectives

- Feb 27 Mary Wollstonecraft, [A Vindication of the Rights of Woman](#) (1792) excerpts
- Feb 29 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments & Resolutions”
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the 4th of July?” Journal reflections.

MIDTERM WEEK

Mar 5-6 Midterm group oral exams will be scheduled between 9 and 11 am on March 5. Midterm take-home exam is due on Canvas by 5 pm on Wednesday, March 6. Class will not meet on March 7.

March 9-20 Spring Break

Modern liberal justice in the 20th century. This section of the course will be the bases for a group project.

Mar 19 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), excerpt (Eres).

Mar 21 Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) excerpt (Eres)

Mar 26 Film, *A Theory of Justice: The Musical* (Music and lyrics by students at Oxford University). We'll view most of the film in class. Some [short excerpts are available on line](#).

Mar 28 Class will not meet formally. Work on group projects.

Mar 31 Last day to withdraw

Apr 2 Group project presentations in class. Every member of each group must have a role.

Apr 4 Draft of Essay #2 due on Canvas by 11 am. Class will not meet.

Apr 5 Peer review of another student's essay due on Canvas by 6 pm on April 5.

Apr 7 Final version of Essay #2 due on Canvas by 6 pm.

Part III. Critiques/Alternative Approaches to Liberal Justice and Ethics

Pragmatism

Apr 9 Jane Addams, [Democracy and Social Ethics](#) (1902), Chapters 2, 5, and 7.

Apr 11 Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907)

Feminist Care Ethics

Apr 16 Eva Feder Kittay, selection TBA

Apr 18 Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (2013), excerpt. Eres.

Intersectionality, Feminism, and Race

Apr 23 Kimberle Crenshaw, "[Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color](#)"

Apr 25 Charles Mills, "Racial Liberalism," *PMLA*, October 2008, 1380-1397. Pius Library electronic journals.

Apr 30 TBA policy application

May 2 Final class session: Review

May 9 ESSAY #3/Final Exam due on Canvas by 11:59 pm

University Policy Statements for all syllabi

Disability Services, and Academic Coaching. [Disability Accommodations Syllabus Statement](#)
Student Success Center and University Writing Services
[Student Success Center Syllabus Statement](#)
[University Writing Services Syllabus Statement](#)
Academic Integrity policy [Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement](#)

Title IX policy [Title IX Syllabus Statement](#)

Wellness

All students experience stressors and challenges at some point, and seeking support is beneficial. Such challenges may be the result of academic concerns (such as those related to particular assignments or content in a course), or they may be more personal in nature (such as concerns related to relationships, mental health, loss, identities, alcohol or drugs, housing or food security, or finances, among other things). If you experience these or other difficulties, please consider seeking support from the resources available to you.

- For concerns related to this course, please contact me. I am invested in your success and will support your success in the ways I can.
- Additionally, you have access to the many resources SLU provides in support of your personal wellness. You will find a list of available resources on [the Well-being page of the SLU website](#).

Mental health resources



Basic Needs Security

Students experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, and any other challenges that are impacting their personal and/or academic wellbeing are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office for support. Students can submit an [intake](#) form, email deanofstudents@slu.edu, or call 314-977-9378 to connect with their office. Students may also communicate directly with their instructors about any challenges they are experiencing to receive support and resource referrals.