

POL 210: Race, Class, and Social Justice
Fall 2015
Melissa Harris-Perry

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 to bring enthusiastic participation to these experiences and to reflect critically on their experiences in written work. Students will work collaboratively to build 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 FIVE (5) 300-500 word reading responses on the course Sakai site by Wednesday at 2:00PM. Students may choose to write in any five weeks over the course of the semester. The reading responses should be organized as follows:

Part 1: 100-150 word summary of the reading

Part 2: 100-150 word assessment of the most valuable contribution of the reading to our understanding of social justice as a concept. This can be critical or laudatory.

Part 3: 100-150 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 very 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 FIVE (5) 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 five social actions, but reflection essays are only required of FIVE (5).

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 forthcoming.

Social Action Reflections are due within One Week (7 days) of the completion of the action.

Tool Kit (30%)

Students will collectively write a Tool Kit for Action as the course final project. Full description of the Tool Kit project and rubric for assessment is forthcoming.

Peer Assessment (10%)

Students will provide feedback for peers as part of the final Tool Kit group project.

Extra Credit

Throughout the semester this course will offer opportunities to attend campus events for extra credit. Each Extra Credit event attended counts toward ½ point on the final grade.

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

Barry, B. (2005). *Why social justice matters*. Polity.

Berman, A. (2015). *Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*. Macmillan.

Dyrness, A. (2011). *Mothers united: An immigrant struggle for socially just education*. U of Minnesota Press.

Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. University of Chicago Press.

Eubanks, V. (2011). *Digital dead end: Fighting for social justice in the information age*. MIT Press.

Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (2009). *Why deliberative democracy?*. Princeton University Press.

Kristof, N. D., & WuDunn, S. (2014). *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*. Knopf.

Mansbridge, J. J., & Morris, A. (2001). *Oppositional consciousness: The subjective roots of social protest*. University of Chicago Press.

Walsh, K. C. (2008). *Talking about race: Community dialogues and the politics of difference*. University of Chicago Press.

Wells-Barnett, I. B. (1997). *Southern horrors and other writings: the anti-lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. J. J. Royster (Ed.). Bedford Books.

Extra Credit Opportunities

Delores Huerta Lecture, TBA

Joy Ann Reid Lecture, TBA

Ta-Nehisi Coates Lecture, TBA

More opportunities will be made available throughout the semester.

Week 1, August 26**Introduction**

Students post a link to a recent news article in Sakai (anytime in 2015) about a social injustice as you see it. Every student will be prepared to explain why this issue is indicative of injustice in some way.

Week 2, September 2**Different Perspectives on Social Justice**

Barry, B. (2005). *Why social justice matters*. Polity. Part I and Part II (Chapters 1-7)

* Rand, A. (1964). *The virtue of selfishness*. Penguin., "The Nature of Government" and "Racism"

* Horwitz, S. (2015) *Breaking Down the Barriers: Three Ways State and Local Governments Can Improve the Lives of the Poor*.

Week 3, September 9**Deliberation**

Gutman, A. and Thompson, D. (2004) *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

Walsh, K. C. (2007). *Talking about race: Community dialogues and the politics of difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

Action 1: WFU Action Team Community Forum, 7pm
--

Week 4, September 16**Deliberation**

* Mendelberg, T., & Oleske, J. (2000). Race and public deliberation. *Political Communication* 17(2), 169.

Walsh, K. C. (2007). *Talking about race: Community dialogues and the politics of difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Week 5, September 23**Research and Teaching**

Dyrness, A., (2011). *Mothers united: An immigrant struggle for socially just education*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, 3, 4, 6 and Conclusion

Action 2: Attend North Carolina Women's Summit 2 panels

Week 6, September 30**Philanthropy**

Kristof, N. D., & WuDunn, S. (2014). *A path appears: Transforming lives, creating opportunity* (First edition.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Part 1 (Chapters 1-7)

Action 3: Take Part in Hit the Bricks on 10/1

Week 7, October 7

Philanthropy

- * Dasgupta, I., & Kanbur, R. (2011). Does philanthropy reduce inequality?. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 9(1), 1-21.
- *Reich, R. (2005) A Failure of Philanthropy: American charity shortchanges the poor, and public policy is partly to blame. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.
- *Jenkins, J. C. (1998). Channeling social protest: Foundation patronage of contemporary social movements. *Private action and the public good*, 206-216.

Action 4: Attend Women's Fund Meeting

Week 8, October 14

Media

Wells-Barnett, I. B. (1997). *Southern horrors and other writings: the anti-lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. J. J. Royster (Ed.). Bedford Books

*Watch: *Inconvenient Truth* or *Hotel Rwanda*

Action 5: Work with Joy Reid to create and submit Op-Ed for *Old Gold and Black* or other campus publication

Week 9, October 21

Media

Eubanks, V. (2011). *Digital dead end: Fighting for social justice in the information age*. MIT Press.

Action 6: Work with Sherri Williams to create and implement social media campaign for campus issue

Week 10, October 28

Civic Action and Volunteerism

- * Morton, K. (1995). The irony of service: Charity, project and social change in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2(1), 19-32.
- * Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual review of sociology*, 215-240.

Action 7: Campus Kitchen Shift
Action 8: Project Pumpkin Booth

Week 11, November 4

Protest

Mansbridge, J. J., & Morris, A. (2001). *Oppositional consciousness: The subjective roots of social protest*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2,4 and 9

* Barber II, W. J., & Zelter, B. (2014). *Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation*. Chalice Press. Chapters 1, 13 and 14

Action 9: Attend Moral Monday protest, rally or teach-in

Week 12, November 11

Policing/ Criminal Justice Reform

Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. University of Chicago Press.

Action 10: Attend Campus Policing Community Forum

Week 13, November 18

Policing/ Criminal Justice Reform

* Rios, V. M. (2012). Stealing a bag of potato chips and other crimes of resistance. *Contexts*, 11(1), 48-53.

* Robinson, A. L., & Chandek, M. S. (2000). Differential police response to Black battered women. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 12(2-3), 29-61.

*The Century Foundation, Two Views on the Failure of Policing

*The Ferguson Report

Action 11: Complete assessment of current criminal justice reform plan as provided

Week 14, November 25

THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS

Week 15, December 2

Voting and Elections

Berman, A. (2015). *Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*. Macmillan.

Action 12: Take part in voter registration effort in Winston-Salem

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