

SRSC 510: Perspectives on Social Justice
Western Kentucky University
Fall Semester 2016
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Course description: This course provides an in depth consideration of major perspectives concerning social justice issues. It serves as a theoretical foundation for other core courses, electives, and the community-based learning that is central to the program.

Student Learning Outcomes: Through section papers, Blackboard Discussions, and their final research paper, students will be able to

- identify and explain key positions and arguments concerning social justice;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of multiple positions related to complex social justice issues;
- articulate how concepts of social justice affect contemporary problems of sustainability and community development; and
- develop and defend their own positions and arguments as they relate to social justice and contemporary social justice issues.

Course requirements:

1. **Completion of one major research paper.** This paper will be approximately 20-30 pages in length (typed, double-spaced). The paper will be graded on content, clarity, and style. Students will select a specific topic in consultation with the professor. Elements of the paper will be turned in by the following schedule:

1. Abstract (100-200 words), including clearly defined thesis statement.

Meeting with professor (5-10 minutes). This element must be completed by **September 30**. This element is worth 25 points.

2. Detailed outline of entire paper (approximately 2-3 pages). Meeting with professor (5-10 minutes). This element must be completed by **October 30**. This element is worth 75 points.

3. Final draft of the paper is due by **December 8**. It is worth 200 points.

There are a total of 300 points associated with the research paper.

2. **Completion of four section papers.** The course is divided into four sections. At the conclusion of each section (the Sunday of the last week, except for Section Four), students must submit a paper (approximately 1000-1500 words) on a key problem or issue from that section. Topics may vary, but each paper should demonstrate a clear understanding of the material under discussion, pose one or more compelling questions for the reader, and offer one or more conclusions (even if tentative). Poorly written papers will be graded accordingly. **Each discussion paper is worth 50 points. Thus, this element is worth 200 points.**

3. **Participation on Discussion Board.** Each week students must participate in one or more Blackboard Discussion Board forums. The instructor will generate the forum

topics, but students are encouraged to suggest topics for new forums. Students must post at least twice per week, with at least one post in direct response to another student's post. While there is no prescribed length, the forums are NOT the place for unreflective and undefended opinions. Please think well before posting and provide evidence (preferably from the course readings) for what you claim. **This element is worth 100 points.**

Your final grade is composed of these three elements totaling 600 points. Consequently, students will be able to keep track of their standing in the course at all times.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

Theories of Justice

Week One (begins August 22)

Michael Sandel, *Justice: A Reader*, chapter II

Related Lectures at [Harvard University's Justice with Michael Sandel](#)

Episode 1 on Utilitarianism

Episode 2 on Utilitarianism

Week Two (August 29)

Michael Sandel, chapters III and IV (pp. 83-117)

Related Lectures at [Harvard University's Justice with Michael Sandel](#)

Episode 3 on Libertarianism

Episode 4 on Locke

Week Three (September 5)

Michael Sandel, chapter VI

Related Lectures at [Harvard University's Justice with Michael Sandel](#)

Episode 6 on Kant

Episode 7 on Kant/Rawls

Week Four (September 12)

Michael Sandel, chapters VII and VIII

Related Lectures at [Harvard University's Justice with Michael Sandel](#)

Episode 8 on Rawls

Week Five (September 19)

Michael Sandel, chapters X and XII

Related Lectures at [Harvard University's Justice with Michael Sandel](#)

Episode 9 (Part Two) on Aristotle

Episode 10 on Aristotle

Episode 11 on Communitarianism

SECTION PAPER DUE ON SUNDAY

Gender and Family

Week Six (September 26)

Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, chapters 1-3

Week Seven (October 3)

Okin, chapters 4-6

Week Eight (October 10)

Okin, chapters 7-8

SECTION PAPER DUE ON SUNDAY

The Capabilities Approach

Week Nine (October 17)

Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, chapters 1-4

Week Ten (October 24)

Martha Nussbaum, chapters 5-8, Conclusion, and Postscript

SECTION PAPER DUE ON SUNDAY

Human Nature, Sacrifice, the Environment, and Sustainability

Week Eleven (October 31)

Eric Bain-Selbo, "Sacrifice in a Post-Moral Society" #

Essays (chapters 1-4) from *The Environmental Politics of Sacrifice* #

Week Twelve (November 7)

Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them*, Part I

Week Thirteen (November 14)

Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them*, Parts II-III

Week Fourteen (November 21)

Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them*, Part V

NOTE: Part IV is optional.

SECTION PAPER DUE ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Week Fifteen (November 28)

RESEARCH PAPER WRITING WEEK

Denotes readings available on Blackboard.