

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
Anne Frank

CAPSTONE: SOCIAL JUSTICE; Interpreting Men and Women for others.”
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The language of Social justice and the education of “Men and Women for Others” has centrality at Boston College. Coming toward the end of your college careers, this capstone is a place in which to reflect critically on your experiences with social justice and “being for others” at BC and elsewhere, and expand both your understandings and your activities in the present and future. Some questions we ask ourselves are: What is social justice? For whom and who decides? Who is oppressed? And who can “free” the oppressed? Who are the “we’ of “Men and Woman?” Who are the “Others”? What does it mean to be “for” others? Are we, and how are we, the keepers of our sisters and brothers? and who are they? Do we really care about a social injustice if it doesn’t affect us? We might learn in a BC class that having clean water --or water at all---is a life and death daily matter for millions, and we feel shocked and upset. But we have water, so it is easy to just let that knowledge drift into uselessness. Are our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers or maybe those “others” who don’t have water are not “our” type of sisters and brothers?

To have real advocacy in our troubled times, we need to understand the limits and the possibilities of our bequeathed lenses and neighborhoods, and acquire more lenses and neighborhoods, of both. In other words, it time to open our eyes wider and wider as we move on out into more “neighborhoods” of work and more sisters and brothers.

Every week

1. Prepare; Be Present, Participate.
2. Discuss a current event (and bring notes on) we are following from different social justice angles. if you want to email around interesting new /analytical articles, please do.
3. I will “prep” for readings due the following week
4. Short reflection papers – no less than 700 words--are due for all readings on the day we discuss these.
5. One (or two students together) need to lead the discussion. Part of doing that is preparing the most challenging and knotty question suggested by the reading. Please print up and distribute these in class to better organize the discussion.

6. I will take responsibility for bringing *something* to eat.

Class Assignments

1. Two Autobiographical narratives: oral presentation; and written text of no less than 1800 words each

2.. A short paper of between 2500-4000 words that explores the meanings and complications of social injustice and social justice by looking at the “moving parts” of any one case. The paper will examine what is at stake for the different groups involved, and what resolution constitutes justice—and to what extent, why and for whom. In the final part of the paper you will make your own reflection. Here are some immediate examples: DACA¹; the removal of statues of leaders of the Confederate; changing the name of Yawkey Way (and Yawkey Athletics Center at BC); legalization of same sex marriage; the provision of birth control at Boston College Health Service; graduate student union organization at BC; obviously there are more, whether on campus, in the nation, not to mention the world.

3. A carefully composed letter hypothetical descendant about what you were thinking and what you did—and why-- as a young person at this point in our troubled times. This is not meant to be a guilty or proud “report.” It is more like what- you- wish- you- had- done while you were young to face realities. It is wishful fictional legacy.

5.. A research paper of 7000-10000 words on the history of instances and /or projects of social justice in the work you are considering post BC. What has constituted social justice work in the fields of education, medicine, public health, government, international relations, psychology, finance, business management, social work, development and urban planning, communications and others.

6. “Jots;” Jot down your thoughts on a current Current Event. We will do these every few weeks, and spend a little time on it at the beginning of class.

Schedule, which, given the nature of the class, the syllabus is open to changes in texts and even topics. In all these classes and assignments are embedded the themes of social justice, and the problematic notions of “others,” and “Being Men and Women for Others.”

Week 1. August 30: introductions to one another; discussion of the context and possible interpretations of Anne Frank’s intense sentence in the epigraph to this syllabus.

Week 2. September 6: The Social Justice Catholic Landscape: Dorothy Day” We go on Record: The Catholic Worker Response to Hiroshima” Gustavo Gutierrez “*Theology of Liberation;*” Pedro Arrupe, “*Men for Others;*” and Pedro Arrupe“*Hiroshima Remembered.*”

Week 3. September 13: “Auto Biographical” educational and service work narrative of life at BC written and spoken.

Week 4. September 20: Hypervisibility/ invisibility: Racism, Identity; Action; Who is whose Other? Read and reflection paper on 1. George Yancy “Dear White People,” James Baldwin, “On Being

¹ Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a kind of administrative relief from deportation. The purpose of DACA is to protect eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States when they were children from deportation. DACA gives young undocumented immigrants: 1) protection from deportation, and 2) a work permit.

White,” and “Stranger in a Village; and on 2.” Frank Wu “A Letter to My Asian-American Friends About Racism;” Matthew Salesses, “How the Rules of Racism Are Different for Asian Americans;”

Week 5. September 27: Ethno/ Gendered/Class: Social Life Auto biography. Toughest most personal narrative to prepare and deliver. Pick any style and range you wish – in other words don’t talk about anything if you don’t want to.

Week 6. October 4: Paper on Social Justice due, -and presented.

Week 7. October 11: History and Social Justice Reparations: Readings and Reflection on Korean “Comfort Women” and Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations.”

Week 8. October 18: Law and Social Justice: Mass Incarceration: Readings and reflection on Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* and Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*

Week 9. October 25: LOWELL LECTURE SPEAKER, Khalil Gibran Muhammad: *Erasure: The Decriminalization of White American*. Meet at 6:30 outside of 100 Gasson.

Week 10 November 1: Racism is Evil? Not Nice? Wrong? A Life and Death Question Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, and discussion of “I Am Not Your Negro.” Please bring a topic for Final research paper with 500 words on why you have picked that topic and what you want to get out of the final paper for thinking about your post- graduation life!

Week 11 November 8: Global NGOs and Social Justice: Reading and reflection: Kris Holloway, *Monique and the Mango Rains*, *Two Years with a Mid wife in Mali*.

Week 12 November 15: Health and Social Justice, Reflection paper on “the Good Doctor” <http://archives.newyorker.com/?i=2000-07-10#folio=054>; “Paul Farmer, “Who Lives? And Who Dies?” and Rishi Manchanda on “TED talk “What Makes Us Get Sick?” These are all short!

Week 13 November 29: Class Room Presentation of Final Papers. 4 minutes each.

Week 14 December 6: Dinner at Caitlin’s house. Please email your *Letter to the Future about the Present* to the class ahead of time.

Final Papers are due December 13