

[JUPS 2029-20 - Summer 2025]

Everyday Justice

Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu | 1:00 pm - 2.55 pm | Reiss 152

Instructor: Helal M. Khan, PhD

Man's sense of justice is one, 'justnesses' are many.

- Albert Ehrenzweig and Peter Weston,
quoted in *The Metaphysics of Chinese Moral Principles*, Mingjun Lu (2022)

Course Outline

This course will adopt a broad anthropological perspective to introduce students to the cultural and utilitarian contexts of justice that speak to the everyday experience – urging students to rethink issues of education, health, housing, wage, economy, communication, environment, and spirituality, including the issue of justice itself. Taking advantage of the fast-paced and immersive nature of summer classes, we will explore both classic and contemporary works on justice, delving into the idea of 'just-ness'. Class discussions will embrace a summer spirit, combining dialogue, campus walks, and outdoor sessions. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply frameworks of justice and just-ness to their experiences on university campuses, at home, in the workplace, in marketplaces, and within broader social and civic spaces.

Course Objective

This course seeks to deepen participants' understanding of justice as a process, practice, and philosophy, while also exploring its legal, moral, and ethical dimensions. Leveraging the dynamic nature of summer learning – with its shorter sessions, rapid feedback, and engaging discussions – the course aims to inspire and energize participants' commitment to understanding justice in everyday life.

Grading System: Standard Letter (A-F).

Distribution: A: 100-95, A-: <95-90, B+: <90-85, B: <85-80, B-: <80-75, C+: <75-70, C: <70-65, C-: <65-60, D+: <60-55, D: <55-50, F: Below 50.

University guidelines regarding appeal procedures may be found [here](#).

Total Class Sessions: 20

Class Days: Monday–Thursday (4 days a week), 07 July - 07 August 2025

Textbooks: The following books are partially used (no purchase is necessary – required chapters will be provided via Canvas):

1. Amartya Sen. 2009. *The Idea of Justice*. Harvard University Press
2. Clifford Geertz. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*.
3. James Scott. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* [The full book is available online through GU library]

Coursework and Assessment

The course uses a combination of quizzes, debates, and a short project, and excludes any final examination. Your grades will be determined based on the following components:

- **Quizzes (45%):** Three in-class quizzes (45%) will assess your grasp of course materials, lectures, and discussions. Each quiz includes:
 - Written response (10 points)
 - Oral component (5 points), held before or after the written quiz and may involve multiple sessions.

Further instructions regarding quizzes will be provided in class. For a general quiz rubric, please refer to [*this*](#) document.

- **Debate (15%):** You'll engage in a class debate, proposing topics early in the course. Final topics will be selected collectively, and debates will be held in pairs to ensure broad coverage. See [*here*](#) for an example list of topics.
- **Short Project (20%):** You'll choose a campus-related material, space, or place reflecting themes of justice. Consider how it relates to personal or community experiences, what it reveals about justice, and any tensions or contradictions it holds.
 - **Topic Selection.** You are free to choose a material object (e.g., a statue, memorial, or artifact), a specific campus space (e.g., a building, field, or classroom), or a broader place (e.g., library, dining hall, or another community gathering area) that you feel embodies certain themes of justice. Consider the following questions during your selection:
 - Does your chosen subject connect to your personal experiences or community perspectives surrounding it?
 - Exactly what lessons of justice does this space/place/material evoke?
 - What tensions or contradictions might exist in its representation? (Consider who or what is present? Who or what might be absent?)

- If there are issues of inequality or injustice connected to it, are there efforts underway to address these issues? If not, what role can you - individually or as part of a larger group - play in addressing some of these concerns?
 - What key questions should one consider for further research on this space, place, or material?, and likewise.
- **Output.** Upon completing your project, you will deliver a formal 7 minute presentation to the class, offering your research findings and analysis. I expect you to explore the broader justice implications of your research, including potential directions for further study.

While no additional written assignment is required, you will incorporate your findings and reflections into your formal reflection note (see below).

- **Reflection Paper (10%):** Upon completion of the course, you will submit a 500-word reflection linking course materials, discussions, and your project experience. This task is designed to help you consolidate your introductory understanding of everyday justice while also drawing lessons from a project you've recently completed.
- **Attendance and Participation (10%):** Attendance and active participation are essential. Each class earns 0.5 points: 0.25 for being present and 0.25 for contributing to discussions. Please notify me in advance of absences. The following guidelines will apply:
 - Attendance will be recorded for each class. If you anticipate being absent, please email me *before* the session so I can plan accordingly.
 - Every class session has **0.5 points** assigned to attendance and participation (0.25 points for participation and 0.25 points for attendance, respectively).
 - Excused absences may be granted with proper documentation, such as medical records or a note from your academic advisor. However, *participation points for that session cannot be made up.*
 - **Quizzes and debates** are single-session, interactive events and may not be rescheduled. Therefore, if you cannot attend the entire class, I encourage you to join for part of the session to minimize missed content.
 - If you do miss a class, I recommend **reaching out to a classmate** for notes rather than requesting a recap from me.

Additional Rubrics: I will provide specific requirements for each assignment – quizzes, debates, and individual projects – before their occurrence. If you have any questions or uncertainties, please be sure to ask me before completing these assignments.

Office Hours: Find on [this](#) page.

During these hours, I will be available in my office (Car Barn Suite 171 Room 174), so appointments are NOT required. Please utilize office hours to discuss with me any concerns related to your academic or intellectual progress. Outside these hours, I also stay available via email and telephone – in that preference.

Important Days: First day of class: Monday July 7, 2025. Last class: Thursday August 7, 2025.

Follow the main campus administrative calendar [here](#) for holidays/breaks/other official activities.

AI Usage Policy

- You are *encouraged* to explore AI resources to aid your **class preparations**, provided they genuinely enhance your learning.
- However, AI use during **in-class quizzes** is *strictly forbidden* and will be considered a violation of the university's honor pledge. While I will not actively monitor take home submissions for AI usage, the no-AI rule will be strictly enforced during quizzes.
- For AI-related training, refer to university resources provided by the CNDLS, including instructional guidelines, [here](#).

Makeup Policy

- Quizzes and debates cannot be rescheduled. If you miss a quiz for unavoidable reasons, an alternative task (graded out of 10 points) may be assigned. However, this task will not include the oral component and will be graded out of 10 points instead of 15.
- Late assignments lose points: 12 max for 3 days late, 9 max for a week late. No submissions accepted after a week. If you are submitting a late assignment, please email it to me directly – do not upload it to Canvas, even if the system allows you to do so.
- Missing the debate session will result in forfeiting 10 points: you may only earn up to 5 points by participating in the pre-debate class discussion and submitting the position paper. In exceptional cases, if I permit you to join via Zoom (with a colleague's assistance in connecting you via a computer other than the class computer), you will be eligible for a maximum of 5 out of 10 points for your presentation.
- You may reschedule your project presentations by arranging a slot swap with a classmate without any penalty. Do plan ahead to organize the swap and inform me of the changes.
- Please utilize the office hours to discuss your individual situation with regard to this make up policy.

Academic Support: For general academic support, I encourage you to consult the university's Academic Resource Center. Additionally, I remain available for any specific and course-related assistance you might need. Please feel free to reach out at any time.

Library Resources: The university library offers a vast collection of books, journals, and databases in both physical and digital formats. I encourage you to use these materials, along with research assistance from librarians who can help with research strategies, finding credible sources, and proper citation. Also, utilize the Research Guides section for peace and justice-related as well as other entries. Using these resources will enhance the quality of your assignments and deepen your understanding of course materials.

Citation: Please cite any specific information you provide in your submissions (does not apply to in-class quizzes). Use any academic citation style as long as you use it consistently. Beginners might consider using the AAA or Chicago style guides (see here) but other options such as Harvard, APA, MLA, and AMA styles are also acceptable.

WEEKLY SESSIONS & READINGS

Week 1 - July 7, 8, 9, 10

Weekly Theme: Justice and Just-ness

(Course Opening)

Monday, July 7

Read: Course syllabus (*this document*)

Watch: 'Is there a limit to human compassion?' Al Jazeera panel, *The Stream*: <http://tinyurl.com/y5a6ewda> (Focus 6:30-10:25) - Compassion is critical to understanding justice, so we will take a moment to reflect on this question as we begin our journey.

Course introduction: Know yourself and your colleagues

Tuesday, July 8

Read: 3 pages of Amartya Sen (pp. 1-3) and familiarize with his ideas of justice [Canvas]

Check: how much talk is too much, and does silence count inside a classroom? (sadly, it does not!). So, how can you help me advance this course's learning goals? <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/quiet-in-the-classroom>.

Consider: What is an anthropological approach to justice?

Course introduction (continued)

Wednesday, July 9

Read. Words About War Matters: A Language for Discussing War and Foreign Policy.' <http://tinyurl.com/4daj5wrs>.

Read: 2 more pages of Sen's Intro (pp.20-21) and figure out differences between justice and just-ness (fairness) [Canvas]

Watch: 'Can't you see we are intertwined?' (*No Other Land* Wins Best Documentary Feature Film, 97th Oscars Speech, 2 March 2025). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gzo7PiFiaM>.

Quiz 1

Thursday, July 10

Read: Martin Luther King, Jr. 1963. Letter from a Birmingham Jail [Canvas]

Read: Justice in the historical context – Equal Justice Initiative (Montgomery, AL), 'Special Feature: The Kiss.' <https://eji.org/news/the-kiss>.

Check: 'Wrongful Convictions.' <https://eji.org/issues/wrongful-convictions>.

GU campus tour

Week 2 - July 14, 15, 16 17

Weekly Theme: The Global Survey

(Justice in global contexts: resistance, migration, and systemic inequities)

Monday, July 14

Read: Johanna Selimovic. 2019. 'Everyday Agency and Transformation: Place, Body and Story in the Divided City.' *Cooperation and Conflict* 54 (2): 131-148. [Canvas]

Watch: 'Why isn't the world keeping #EyesOnSudan?' AJ 19 Jan 2024.
<http://tinyurl.com/4y3f3nrs> [12:35-21:32m].

Library Visit – Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library

Tuesday, July 15

Read: James Scott. 1987. 'Small Arms Fire in the Class War'. Ch. 1 in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms Of Peasant Resistance* [Canvas; full book available online through GU library]

Watch: 'Do Boycotts Against Israel Work?' - Interview by Omar Barghouti, January 2025.
<https://tinyurl.com/3827a46u>.

Debate - Prelim discussion

Wednesday, July 16

Read: Arjun Appadurai. 2006 'Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger.' [Canvas: Focus pp. 49-53]

Watch: 'Palestinian-American lawmaker denied opportunity to speak at the DNC.' MSNBC August 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/bd8ejwwp>. (Would you consider this an example of racial injustice? Discuss in class).

Quiz 2

Thursday, July 17

Read: Alessandro Monsutti. 2007. 'Migration as a rite of passage: Young Afghans building masculinity and adulthood in Iran.' *Iranian Studies* 40(2):167-185. [Canvas]

Debate - Finalize topics

GU campus tour

Week 3 - July 14, 15, 16 17

Weekly Theme: Focusing on the Domestic

(Justice and inequality in the U.S. – work, housing, poverty, and racial injustice)

Monday, July 21

Read: Amartya Sen. 2009. Ch 15 - Democracy as Public Reason (3 sections - Canvas).

Watch: PBS Documentary, 'America By the Numbers.' <https://tinyurl.com/4cdbmh7a>.

Tuesday, July 22

Read: Noel Ignatiev. 1995. 'Introduction' & 'White Negroes and Smoked Irish.' In *How The Irish Became White* (focus on pp. 34-42) [Canvas].

Watch: 'Why is Gen Z rejecting hustle culture and redefining the meaning of work?' AJ 12 Jan 2024. <http://tinyurl.com/4z7cypmk>

Debate - Prep Session

Wednesday, July 23

Read: Matthew Desmond. 'Empower the Poor.' Ch 8 in *Poverty, by America* (2023) (focus on the 2nd section: What About Housing? (Canvas)

Check: 'How College Football Is Clobbering Housing Markets Across the Country.' *The New York Times*, 19 Dec 2023. <http://tinyurl.com/2h57vjsz>

Debate - Main Session

Thursday, July 24

Read: Criminal Justice Reform – Brian Osgood, ‘I thought I would die in prisons’.
<https://tinyurl.com/dbur5wxk>.

Watch: Netflix documentary on the US Prison System, featuring testimony from activists: *13th*.
<https://tinyurl.com/3db7nvsw>. (10 minutes)

GU campus tour

Week 4 - July 28, 29, 30 31

Weekly Theme: Understanding Others

(Anthropological perspectives on justice and representation)

Monday, July 28

Read: Jeffery Deal. 2010. ‘Torture by *Cieng*: Ethical Theory Meets Social Practice among the Dinka Agaar of South Sudan.’ *American Anthropologist* 112 (4): 563–575.

Check: ‘Nitrogen Execution Method Touted as More ‘Humane’ but Evidence Lacking.’
Scientific American, 26 Jan 2024, <http://tinyurl.com/u3akhp4y>.

Tuesday, July 29

Read: Clifford Geertz. 1973. ‘The Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight’, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* [Canvas: Read pp. 412-417].

Check: Samuel Huntington. 1993. ‘The Clash of Civilization?’ [Canvas]

Wednesday, July 30

Read: Interview, Dah Eh, a Thai-Burmese-American girl, from Princeton University’s Oral History Archive. <https://www.rfmi.princeton.edu/oral-archive/dah-eh>

Check: The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org> (‘Youth Justice by the Numbers’)

Quiz 3

Thursday, July 31

Read: Hilary Parsons Dick. 2011. 'Making Immigrants Illegal in Small-Town USA.' *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 21 (S1): E35–E55.

Check: 'More Than A City of Churches.' <https://tinyurl.com/2t9kfeus>.

Sites Visit & Final Presentations Day 1

Week 5 - July 28, 29, 30 31

Weekly Theme: The Policy Imperatives

(Policy, activism, and environmental justice)

Monday, August 4

Read: Rob Nixon. 'Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor.' Ch. 4 in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). Focus pp.45-50 [Canvas]

Check: William Wordsworth. 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798.' <https://tinyurl.com/y9eetf4p>

Sites Visit & Final Presentations Day 2

Tuesday, August 5

Read: Gabriel's story in *Lives in Limbo* (Gonzalez 2016): 'Early Exiters: Learning to Live on the Margins,' pp. 120-122.

Discussion : Student-led Session (3 minutes per student): Say something about your experience with the US or another educational system and related norms of behavior. What are/were the just and not-so-just aspects of it?

Sites Visit & Final Presentations Day 3

Wednesday, August 6

Please take time to visit a religious or spiritually oriented space of your choice, either on campus or anywhere within the DMV before this session. This experience is meant to deepen your reflection on the topic and enable you to engage thoughtfully in the discussion.

Read: Sarah Ihmoud. 2019. 'Murabata: The Politics of Staying in Place.' *Feminist Studies* 45 (2-3): 512–540.

Read: 'Tension ... is deepening.' <https://tinyurl.com/4u6va6ce>.

Final Presentations (classroom session - if any)

Thursday, August 7

Read: Helal Khan, 'The Musalla as a Liminal Space for Refugees.' Ch. 4 in *The Role of Regimes of Cooperation in the Well-being of Rohingya Refugees in Chicago, Milwaukee & Fort Wayne* [Ph.D. dissertation, UND, 2023] [Canvas] - read about one-third of the chapter (~20 pages); you can pick the sections of your choice.

Check: Nick Lioudis, 'What is the Gold Standard: History and Collapse', *Investopedia* 14 Oct 2014. <https://tinyurl.com/nhtt26d9>.

Course Feedback