



Social Justice and Peace Studies 1026G (670)
Summer 2026
Approaches to Social Justice and Peace Studies

Course Information:

Calendar Description: This course provides a comprehensive survey of theoretical approaches to social justice and peace. It examines contemporary theories of justice, such as utilitarian, libertarian, distributive, procedural, religious and feminist. It examines contemporary theories of peace such as conflict resolution, pacifism, non-violence, war and humanitarian intervention.

Prerequisite(s):

Anti-requisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50 **Breadth:** Category A

Subject Code: SOCLJUST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary pre-requisites.



Approaches to Social Justice and Peace

SJPS 1026G, Section 650

Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Pietro Pirani

Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom

Office: TBA

Email: ppirani2@uwo.ca

Location of Class: On-line delivery

Course Description

Course Description: This course provides a comprehensive survey of theoretical approaches to social justice and peace. It examines contemporary theories of justice, such as utilitarian, libertarian, distributive, procedural, religious and feminist. It explores current ideas of peace, such as conflict resolution, pacifism, non-violence, war and humanitarian intervention—Extra Information: 3 hours.

Pedagogical Method & Expectations

This course is divided into two parts. In the first part, we will explore a critical analysis of classical and contemporary theories of justice, including present-day applications such as affirmative action, income distribution, the role of markets, debates about rights, and arguments for and against equality. In the second part, we will dwell on contemporary theories of peace and their contributions to the notion of justice; specifically, we will examine concepts of peace and justice in post-conflict transition environments, war, and conflict resolution.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of how thinkers approach questions related to social justice, reach conclusions about social and civil matters, and argue for them.
2. Examine critical issues in contemporary theories of justice;
3. Critically analyze the socio-cultural and international contexts that influence the notions of peace and justice.
4. Develop confidence to express and articulate their ideas more broadly.

Class format

This course is taught over six weeks. Students are expected to actively participate in online activities and complete the assigned weekly readings.

This is an asynchronous online course, meaning all aspects of the course will be done on your schedule at the most convenient time.

This course begins on June 15 and continues until July 24, honouring all important dates derived from University-approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

You are expected to interact regularly with other students and with me, your instructor, throughout the course. The course is designed to structure and guide some self-paced elements and offer interactive

opportunities for community learning. This work may happen in smaller groups. Students bring their knowledge, experience, and interests to our learning community, which we will build on, and we will use our course material (readings, discussions, lessons, etc.) to amplify learning for everyone. We will all be responsible for our learning progress and contributing to the growth of our learning community by participating in all course activities and assessments. We will be ready to engage and connect meaningfully. We will be present, professional, respectful and prepared to contribute to our group.

Online behaviour and intellectual property statement:

- All students are expected to engage online professionally and respectfully. This includes all interactions with peers and communication with your professor; failure to do so will result in academic discipline.
- Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member’s intellectual property; it should not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without the prior written consent of the faculty member.
- Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.
- Class-specific policy on AI: Within this course, using artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Modes of delivery:

Lecture: virtual asynchronous

How to contact me:

Email: ppirani2@uwo.ca. I will try to respond within 24 business hours.

Course Outline

- I. Approaches to Justice
- II. Approaches to peace

Required Texts

- Michael Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010)
- Online texts and texts posted on Brightspace in the folder “Resources”. See “Reading Schedule” in this syllabus for readings.
- Throughout this course, you will be expected to apply the theories covered in class to ongoing conflicts worldwide. You should, therefore, develop a general knowledge of current events. Examples of newspapers and news journals with good international coverage include *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, *The Economist*, *The Guardian Weekly*, and *The New York Times*. Depending on where you live, local newspapers such as *The London Free Press* are good sources for information about issues in your community. Most newspapers are also readily accessible online and at the University’s libraries.

Evaluation

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Online Discussion	30%	
Online Group Presentation (OGP)	15%	

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Argumentative Essay	25%	July 20 th
Online final exam	30%	July 30 th
Total	100%	

Please refer to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness for medical absence.

(http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Any absence for legitimate reasons will be handled by re-weighting the term work grade accordingly. You must provide documentation for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation to the Faculty Dean's Office and not to the instructor.

FRIDAY MAKE-UP EXAMS

Please note that Friday, Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Course Requirements

A. Online Group presentation (OGP) (15%)

A group presentation should familiarize you and your classmates with the critical themes and concepts of a section. It would be best to assume that the rest of the class has read the articles/chapters and built on that shared knowledge. A group that merely summarizes the readings will receive a lower grade, and a group that **analyses** and **applies** the readings will receive a higher grade.

- Students must form two-person teams and deliver one video presentation, **8–9 minutes long**, for each group during the course. You may use PowerPoint or any other presentation software. You do not need to appear on camera; voice-over narration is sufficient.
- Two groups will **explore** one of the five analytical themes addressed in the discussions. For each discussion, one group will answer the question affirmatively, and the other will answer it negatively. The activity is academic; therefore, your presence in either one of the two groups may not necessarily represent your point of view. The activity is meant to provide pro and con arguments to the rest of the class for the **general online discussion**.
- To join a group, please visit our website on Brightspace → Communications → Groups.
- Each student **MUST** join a group by June 18th, 2026, by 11:59 pm. After that date, Brightspace will randomly assign a group to unassigned students.
- Videos must be uploaded to **the Online Group Presentation** folder in Brightspace's **Assignments** folder on the due date.
- The schedule and themes for the presentation will be discussed and explained asynchronously on June 16th on Brightspace.

There is no expected format for the presentation: be creative! As you prepare for your presentation, please remember that I will be looking for three features:

- Clarity: Does the presentation analyze the themes and concepts clearly and concisely? Is the material in a framework that helps the other students and me understand the authors' arguments?
- Creativity: Do you present the material promptly and excitingly? Are the examples recent and relevant?
- Correctness: How well did you understand the concepts and themes? Did you include the essential elements?

Please note (1): Your video presentation will be shared with the rest of the class.

Please note (2): You are not expected to participate in the discussion portion during the week you present.

Schedule

Deadline: June 24th

Online Group Presentation 1:

Utilitarianism - Would you murder one person to save three lives?

(Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeZEvSMMRo0&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=1)

- D1 Yes
- D1 No

Deadline: July 1st

Online Group Presentation 2:

Is lying morally wrong?

(Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM6MaJAE3Qk>)

- D2 Yes
- D2 No

Deadline: July 8th

Online Group Presentation 3:

Should surrogacy be legal?

(Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADK54Qxvc64>)

- D3 Yes
- D3 No

Deadline: July 15th

Online Group Presentation 4:

Libertarianism – Is it just or unjust for the State to tax the rich to help the poor?

(Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN_SaWd_0II&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=5)

- D4 Just
- D4 Unjust

Deadline: July 22nd

Online Group Presentation 5:

Are wars ever just?

- D5 Yes
- D5 No

B. Online discussion = 30%

Each week, you will be asked to respond to the question debated by your colleagues in the Online Group Presentation. These discussions will familiarize you with the critical themes and concepts in each lesson. Discussions are about more than exchanging information; they require you to extend current thinking, introduce alternatives, and facilitate new understandings for yourselves and your colleagues. You should expect that every student has read the articles/chapters and built on that shared knowledge. A person who merely summarises the readings will receive a lower grade, and a person who analyses and applies the readings will receive a higher grade.

- **Guidelines and schedule:** Each group discussion will be held during Week 2, Week 3, Week 4, Week 5, and Week 6. You must contribute according to the schedule and participate in both discussions. You can access each debate from Brightspace's "Communications" tab and then "Discussions".
 - **Please note:**
 - Questions discussed in each unit are the same for all students.
 - This course will require the electronic submission of assignments through the plagiarism detection service Turnitin (<http://www.turnitin.com>).
 - **Deadline:** On the week of the discussion, your original posts must be submitted by Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

C. Argumentative Essay = 25%

An essential part of the course is the research paper. The paper is designed to help you learn more about justice and peace and improve your writing and research skills.

The paper is argumentative, and the paper's topic must be selected from any material we will cover in class.

Instructions for the paper

- Must be a policy paper. For more information on how to write an argumentative paper, check out: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/index.html
 - **Please note** that **descriptive essays**, which largely "re-tell the story," **cannot** qualify for a grade greater than C+.
- Must be a **minimum of 1500 words** to a **maximum of 1800 words** – including parenthetical notes, but **excluding** works cited and cover page
 - **Note:** Under length Deficiency Penalty = -10
- Should have a **separate Cover Page** which has: your name, your student number, this course's number and title, and **my name**
- Must be typed in **12pt** font in Times New Roman
- Must be written in **formal academic English**, obeying formal British or American or Canadian grammar, spelling, and language rules – check out: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/>
 - **Please Note:** Marks will not be deducted for **occasional errors in grammar or spelling**; the mark primarily reflects the student's ability to **analyse, organise, and review** a topic in the review format. However, **significant or consistent style problems will lower the final grade**
- Must have an introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, bibliography/works cited, and citations
- Must have page numbers
- Must be **double-spaced**
- For this paper, use a **citation style of your choice**. For guidelines: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp/index.html>
 - Note: No Citations Penalty = -10%
- **Must have a Works Cited list in alphabetical order**
- **Good academic sources: journal articles and books** through King's online journal retrieval systems
- **At least four scholarly journals or book sources**
- **No textbooks** are considered part of your academic sources and should be used sparingly for only limited factual or statistical data
- **Due Date:**
 - July 20th, 2026
- The paper **MUST** be submitted **electronically** in **Word** format. Any other formats will not be accepted. The essay must be submitted to the drop-box on OWL by 11:59 pm on the due date. There will be a 2% penalty per day for late papers. If you are going to be late, PLEASE contact me before

the deadline. **No papers will be accepted after three days past the deadline.** The only reason for missing a deadline is an illness or a personal crisis. In both cases, you are required to document your reason for the late submission.

C. Online final exam = 30%

The final exam will be written online on Brightspace. Time: The final exam will be available from 9 am to 8 pm on July 30.

1. The exam will cover ALL COURSE NOTES and COURSE READINGS from **Week 1 to Week 6.**
2. The exam will have **50 multiple-choice questions.**
3. Students can only access the test once and have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete it once they have started.
4. Ten sample questions will be posted at the end of **Week 5** to give you an idea about the nature of the questions on the midterm.

Weekly Schedule

PART I: Approaches to Justice

Week 1: June 15

Topic: What is Justice?

Reading: Sandel, Chapter 1: "Doing the Right Thing"; "The Ring of Gyges" (Brightspace)

Topic: Utilitarianism

Reading: Sandel, Chapter 2: "The Greatest Happiness Principle."

Week 2: June 22

Topic: Immanuel Kant

Readings: Sandel, Chapter 5: "What Matters is the Motive"

Topic: John Rawls

Readings: Sandel, Chapter 6: "The Case for Equality"

OGP 1

Week 3: June 29

Topic: Libertarianism

Reading: Sandel, Chapter 3: "Do We Own Ourselves?"

Topic: Markets and Moral

Reading: Sandel, Chapter 4: "Hired Help"

OGP 2

Week 4: July 6

Topic: Aristotle

Readings: Sandel, Chapter 8: "Who Deserves What"

OGP 3

PART II: Approaches to Peace

Week 5: July 13

Topic: Just War Theory

Readings: Lucas, G. (2019). *Ethics and military strategy in the 21st century: moving beyond Clausewitz*, pp. 52-65 (Brightspace)

Topic: Humanitarian Intervention

Readings: Hehir, A. (2013). *Humanitarian intervention: an introduction*, pp. 15-26; 168-186 (Brightspace)

OGP 4

Week 6: July 20

Topic: Transitional Justice

Readings: Sifris, R. (2010). "The four pillars of transitional justice: a gender-sensitive", in *Research Handbook on International Human Rights Law* (Brightspace)

OGP 5

King's University College General Course Policies 2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details
https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see [https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports - TurnItIn.html](https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or

distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

GENDER-BASED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

King's at Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[Mental Health and Wellness at King's – King's University College](#)

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Case Manager/Social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.