



**Social Justice and Peace Studies 2305F (570)**  
**LIVING A JUST LIFE IN AN UNJUST WORLD**  
**Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

**Instructor:** K. Gain  
**Email:** kgain4@uwo.ca

---

**Course Information**

**Calendar Description:**

The first part of this course investigates a number of philosophical debates about what it means to live justly. The second part exposes students to a range of possible career paths in order to gain some insight into how one might reconcile progressive values with living in the real world.

**Antirequisite(s):** Social Justice and Peace Studies 3382F/G

**Prerequisite(s):** Social Justice and Peace Studies 1025F/G and Social Justice and Peace Studies 1026F/G; or 1.0 course at the 2200-level or above, or permission from the Department.

**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 enrol 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 prerequisites.

## SOCLJUST2305F: Living a Just Life in an Unjust World

### King's University College

---

Instructor:	Dr. Klaire Gain
Mode of Instruction:	In-person
Office Hours:	Available at Request
Contact:	<a href="mailto:kgain4@uwo.ca">kgain4@uwo.ca</a> (best contact)

---

**Course Overview:** How can we live a just life in an unjust world? This course investigates a range of answers to this question from a philosophical as well as a practical vantage point. We explore some of the deepest questions about how we should live, such as: Can a good person be politically neutral? Should people be involved in politics in some form, or is it fine to not care? Should egalitarians donate their income? Is it ethical to eat meat? Are our consumption patterns ecologically sustainable? What does it mean to live ethically in the shadow of climate catastrophe? More broadly, how can we live, love, and work in a way that respects and reflects values of economic, ecological, gender, decolonial, and racial justice? Given that we all need to find a job and a way to live in the world, how can we do so with integrity? The ultimate aim of the course is to empower students nearing the end of their SJP studies with enhanced knowledge, as well as enhanced sensitivity to the inherent tensions, of reconciling one's progressive values with living in the real world.

**Course texts:** All readings/resources available online via OWL at no additional cost

**Learning Objectives:** Throughout the course of SOCLJUST2305F students will:

- Explore key debates and discussions surrounding ways to live a just life in an unjust world through an intersectional lens
- Develop an understanding of alternative ways of being under current systems of privilege and oppression
- Engage with classic and contemporary texts/theorists regarding questions of morality
- Explore current and historical social movements and the possibilities of creating a more just world through grassroots organizing
- Formulate a personal framework for discussing and debating what it means to live a just life in an unjust world

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will be expected to:

- Understand ways in which everyday decisions are connected to economic, ecological, gender, decolonial and racial justice
- Comprehend the complexities of living a just life in an unjust world through an intersectional lens
- Recognize the importance of historical and contemporary social movements in creating a more just world and the significance of grassroots organizing in doing so
- Demonstrate foundational knowledge of key debates in living a just life, comparing and contrasting different viewpoints while locating an individual position
- Apply knowledge and understanding to daily life, contributing to a shift towards a more just world

***Class Attendance and Participation:***

This course demands a high degree of participation from all students. I expect that students will have read and thoughtfully engaged with all weekly material. I also expect that we will collectively maintain a respectful classroom and constructive learning environment. This includes compassion and empathy, active listening to different perspectives and never engaging in hateful speech or behaviour. Please note that since we are discussing topics of power, oppression and social justice, you may find some material to be difficult to read/watch. Your emotional health is important and please do not hesitate to reach out if there is material that may be challenging for you to engage with.

**Class Schedule & Readings:**

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1: September 4th	Introduction to the course, each other and term objectives	Heath Justice (2020): Demanding kinder classrooms doesn't make you a snowflake
Week 2: September 11th	How Should We Think?	Le Guin (1973): The One's Who Walk Away From Omelas  Krznaric (2012): Six Habits of Highly Empathic People
Week 3: September 18th	Should We Care About Politics?	Nelson Mandela – Speech from his trial (posted on OWL)

		<p>Smith (2019): Is Justin Trudeau Really a Progressive?  <a href="https://www.straight.com/news/1252136/justin-trudeau-really-progressive">https://www.straight.com/news/1252136/justin-trudeau-really-progressive</a></p> <p>Spend 5 minutes reading over where the parties stand on the main issues (make notes of the things that stand out to you):</p> <p><a href="https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/elections/federal/2019/party-platforms/">https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/elections/federal/2019/party-platforms/</a></p>
<p>Week 4: September 25<sup>th</sup></p> <p><i>Due: Opinion Piece</i></p>	<p>Should We Engage in Lifestyle Politics?</p>	<p>Portwood (2013) <i>Lifestyle Politics and Radical Activism</i>, Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 1-50)</p> <p>Portwood (2013) <i>Lifestyle Politics and Radical Activism</i>, Chapter 6 and 7 (pp. 131-161)</p>
<p>Week 5: October 2<sup>nd</sup></p>	<p>Should We Engage in Consumer Activism?</p>	<p>Bowes (2010): <i>The Fair Trade Revolution</i>, chapter 1 &amp; 4.</p> <p>Chmel (2019): You Can't Save the Planet by Yourself</p>
<p>Week 6: October 9<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>Should We Donate Some of Our Income?</p>	<p>Excerpts from Peter Singer (2019), <i>The Life You Can Save</i></p> <p>Schweickart (2016) <i>Global Poverty: Alternative Perspectives on What We Should Do—and Why</i></p>
<p>Week 7: October 16<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>Should We Eat Meat?</p>	<p>Singer (1990), <i>Animal Liberation</i>. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (pp. i-vii; 1-17)</p> <p>Balcomb (2016): <i>Lessons from Animal Sentience: Towards a New Humanity</i> (pp. 1-17)</p> <p>Jean Kim (2020): <i>Dangerous Crossings</i>: Chapter 7: Makah Whaling and the (Non)</p>

		Ecological Indian (pp. 205-252)
Week 8: October 23 <sup>rd</sup>	No Class: Independent Study Week  <i>Dr. Gain is away at a conference. This is a designated work period for your critical paper: Instructor available for zoom meetings</i>	No Assigned Readings
Week 9: October 30 <sup>th</sup>  <i>Due: Essay # 1</i>	How Can We Live Sustainably?	Berners-Lee (2022) The Carbon Footprint of Everything  Spend an hour reading about the carbon footprint of different things so that you get a sense of what matters a little and what matters a lot. Make sure to also read the sections on “Burning the world’s fossil fuel reserves” and “What can we do?”
Week 10: November 6 <sup>th</sup>  <b>Fall Reading Week</b>	No Class	
Week 11: November 13 <sup>th</sup>	How Should We Love?	Excerpts from Easton and Hardy, <i>The Ethical Slut</i> , (second edition, 2009)  Excerpts from Taormino (2008) <i>Opening Up: A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships</i> .
Week 12: November 20 <sup>th</sup>	How Can We Navigate Patriarchy and Foster Equitable Relationships?	Emotional Labour – The Metafilter Condensed. (You do not need to read every word- spend 1 hour reading parts that interest you)  Ukockis (2019): When Masculinity Becomes Toxic

		(p.114-140)
Week 13: November 27 <sup>th</sup>	How Can We Create a Just Workplace?	<a href="https://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008.01.01-Factsheet-UnionMythsFacts.pdf">https://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008.01.01-Factsheet-UnionMythsFacts.pdf</a>  Excerpts from <i>1919: a graphic history of the Winnipeg General Strike</i>
Week 14: December 4 <sup>th</sup>  <b>Last Day of Class</b>  <i>Unit 4: What's Next?</i>  <i>Due: Essay # 2</i>	How Can We Unlearn Racism and Decolonize Our Minds?	Kimmerer (2013) <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> . Read chapters: Skywoman, Allegiance to Gratitude, Sitting in a Circle  Watch <i>When They See Us</i> , on Netflix (please reach out to Dr. Gain if you do not have access to a Netflix account)

**Assignment Schedule:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value</b>
Engagement Ongoing	Attendance and Participation	15%
4 Reading Responses Students choose 4 weeks of interest throughout the term	A one page critique of one of the readings for the chosen week  (250-300 words)	4 x 5%  = 20%
Opinion Piece September 25 <sup>th</sup>	Students will write an Op-Ed in the format of an opinion piece that might appear in <i>The New York Times</i> or <i>The Guardian</i> based on a contemporary debate  (750-1000 words)	20%
Essay # 1 October 30 <sup>th</sup>	An essay response to one of the proposed questions (posted on OWL)  (1500-2000 words)	20%
Essay # 2 December 4 <sup>th</sup>	An essay response to one of the proposed questions (posted on OWL)  (2000-2500 words)	25%

**Assignment Details:**

All assignments are to be completed in APA format

### **Participation- Ongoing (15%)**

You will be required to read for each class. Plan to read critically rather than just for content. You are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to each class period and to be prepared to participate in discussions. Participation grades are based on regular attendance, reading each week's assignment, asking insightful questions, contributing to discussion in a positive way and being a respectful listener. No single portion (attendance, discussion, questions, etc.) determines your overall participation grade.

### **Reading Responses- 4 Weeks (of your choice) throughout the term (4 x 5% = 20%)**

Each response is for a separate week, of your choice, throughout the semester. This will be a one page (250-300 words) response to one of the readings for that week. This is supposed to be a critical reflection on the piece, not a summary or description. The responses must be submitted at the before of the relevant class (on OWL). For example, if you choose to write a response for the week on whether we should donate our income, then you must submit a reading response before that class begins. Late responses will not be accepted.

### **Opinion Piece- September 25<sup>th</sup> (20%)**

Students will write an Op-Ed in the format of an opinion piece that might appear in The New York Times or The Guardian. Drawing on at least two class readings the goal is to make an intervention in a contemporary debate that is happening in society in a thoughtful, non-dogmatic, and persuasive manner. 750-1000 words.

**Essay #1** - March 29th (20%): Students are expected to write an essay based on a weekly discussion question (or another approved topic). A list of questions, along with further details, will be posted on the OWL page. This paper should be 1500-2000 words in length and written in APA formatting.

**Essay #2** – Dec 4th (25%): Students are expected to write an essay based on a weekly discussion question (or another approved topic). A list of questions, along with further details, will be posted on the OWL page. This paper should be 2000-2500 words in length and written in APA formatting.

**Absences and late assignments:** Late assignments and papers will have 2% per day late penalty. Assignments and papers are due at the beginning of class. In the event of a medical emergency, students are requested to contact the Academic Dean's Office immediately to determine a course of action. This typically requires medical documentation or other relevant proof as to why an absence was unavoidable.

Please refer to this policy:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

**Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:**

([http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)). Student Medical

Certificate (SMC) [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

**Tests/Examinations:** Students are responsible for seeking accommodation with appropriate documentation, prior to writing tests/examinations, if they are of the view that their performance may be affected by extenuating circumstances.

**Support Services:** Your mental health is important. Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Accessibility Services (formerly Services for Students with Disabilities) at King's is available at <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-departments/dean-of-students/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The website for Academic Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>

**Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:**

You are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

Use of Laptops in the Classroom:

King's University College at The University of Western Ontario acknowledges the integration of new

technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of laptop computers can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes

SOCLJUST2305: Living a Just Life in an Unjust World  
Dr. K.Gain, Fall 2025

that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of laptops by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using laptops for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct. See [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/studentLife/conduct/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_2003.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/studentLife/conduct/code_of_conduct_2003.pdf)

Inappropriate use of laptops [or smart phones] 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 are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.”

### **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, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://turnitin.uwo.ca/>.

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.

### **Copyright re: Course Material**

Lectures and course materials, including power point 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. Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member is interested in posting a student's answers or papers on the course web site he/she should ask for the student's written permission.

(Commercial use of Course material - <http://umd.edu/legal/commercial.html>) **Mailbox re Submission of Late Essays/Assignments ONLY:**

Only late essays/assignments not handed in at class may be dropped off in the drop box, located between the inner doors of the Cardinal Carter Library. Please inform your students that SOCLJUST2305: Living a Just Life in an Unjust World  
Dr. K.Gain, Fall 2025

essays dropped into the mailbox will be picked-up twice per day: once in the morning (9:30 a.m.) and in the afternoon (4:00 p.m.). All essays dropped off after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday will be date-stamped the following Monday. Essays should be placed in an envelope addressed to the professor with the course code and student number clearly indicated.

**Class Cancellations:**

All reported class cancellations are posted at: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/outages-service-interruptions/>

**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 [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses\\_enrollment/exams\\_and\\_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

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://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

**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 (under Special Examinations).

### **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://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/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/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

Academic Support Services at King's University College:  
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

### **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://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing [Care@kings.uwo.ca](mailto: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.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](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://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

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

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

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 you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking 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/Originality Reports - 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.