



Social Justice and Peace Studies 1026G (574) (575) (576) (577)
APPROACHES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE STUDIES
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: P. Pirani

Email: ppirani2@uwo.ca

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.

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.



Approaches to Social Justice and Peace
SJPS 1026G, Section 574
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Pietro Pirani

Email: ppirani2@uwo.ca

Office Hours: *Office hours information can be found on OWL Brightspace*

Office: TBA

Course Description

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Pedagogical Method & Expectations

This course is divided into two parts. In the first part, we will explore the critical analysis of classical and contemporary justice theories, 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 how peace and justice notions apply to 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 social justice questions, reach conclusions about social and civil matters, and argue for them.
2. Explain the origins of the concept of “crimes against humanity”, and appreciate its increasingly prominent role in international law and humanitarian policy;
3. Examine critical issues in contemporary theories of justice;
4. Critically analyse the socio-cultural and international contexts that influence the notions of peace and justice.
5. Demonstrate practical writing communication skills in various formats (e.g., group discussion and essay) and various purposes (e.g., defending, explaining, persuading, and arguing).
6. Identify their personal and socio-cultural values and their relationship with events associated with justice.
7. Develop confidence to express and articulate their ideas on a broader level.

Class format

This course is taught over 12 weeks, comprising one two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial sessions per week. Students are expected to actively participate in tutorials and complete the assigned weekly readings.

This course begins on **January 5th** and continues until **April 30th**, honouring all important dates as outlined in university-approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

Throughout the course, you are expected to interact regularly with other students and with me, as your instructor. 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 or through opportunities to meet as a class. Each student brings their knowledge, experience, and interests to our learning community, which we will build on and use our course material (readings, discussions, lessons, etc.) to amplify learning for everyone. We will all be responsible for our learning progress and also for contributing to the growth of our learning community through our participation in all course activities and assessments. We will be ready to engage and connect meaningfully. We will be present, professional, respectful, and ready 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, as well as communication between TAs or 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 faculty member's prior written consent.
- Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the instructor's prior written permission.
- 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
- Class-specific policy on AI: Within this course, using artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Chat GPT is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Modes of delivery:

Lecture: in-class

How to contact me:

Email: ppirani2@uwo.ca. I will try to return a response 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)
Price: \$21
- Online texts and posted texts are available in the "Resources" folder on Brightspace. 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 can also be readily accessed online and at the university's libraries.

Evaluation

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Participation	15%	
Group presentation	5%	
Midterm	25%	February 9 th
Argumentative Essay	25%	April 1 st

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Final exam	30%	TBA
Total	100%	

For medical absence, please refer to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

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

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

Course Requirements

A. Participation (15%)

Students are required to take an active role during the course. This means completing the assigned readings for each class, attending online tutorials regularly and on time, and consistently participating in tutorial discussions with high-quality contributions.

Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Builds on other comments;
- Transcends the "I feel" syndrome. That is, it includes some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs. In other words, the comment demonstrates some reflective thinking.

B. Group presentation (GP) (5%)

A group presentation should familiarise 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 summarises the readings will receive a lower grade, and a group that **analyses** and **applies** the readings will receive a higher grade.

- Students are asked to form four-student teams and **give** one 10-12-minute presentation during the semester.

- Two groups will **explore** one of the six analytical themes discussed. 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 discussion.
- To join a group, please go to our website on Brightspace → Communications → Groups you can join.
- Each student **MUST** join a group by January 15th, 2026. OWL will assign a group randomly to unassigned students after January 15th.
- The schedule and themes for the presentation will be discussed and explained on January 5th.

There is no set 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 analyse the themes and concepts clearly and concisely? Is the material placed in a framework that helps me and the other students understand the authors' arguments?
- **Creativity:** Do you present the material in a timely and exciting manner? Are the examples recent and relevant?
- **Correctness:** How well did you understand the concepts and themes? Did you include the essential elements?

C. Midterm exam = 25%

The midterm will be written in class on February 9th at 12:30 am.

1. The midterm will cover ALL COURSE NOTES and COURSE READINGS from **Week 1 to Week 5**.
2. The midterm will have **60 questions**.
3. Students will only be able to access the test once and will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete it after they start.
4. Ten sample questions will be posted at the end of **Week 3** to give you an idea about the nature of the midterm questions.

D. 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 2000 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:**
 - April 1st, 2026
- A Marking Sheet shows other expectations for your paper.
- 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 Brightspace 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.

E: Final exam = 30%

The exam will be held in person during the scheduled exam period by the university. The exam format will be discussed in the review class at the end of the term. The materials on which you will be tested on the exam will be discussed and explained in class. The exam will cover ALL LECTURES, LECTURE NOTES, and LECTURE READINGS.

Weekly Schedule

PART I: Approaches to Justice	
Lecture schedule	Tutorial schedule
Week 1: January 5 th Topic: Introduction	
Week 2: January 12 th Topic: What is Justice? Reading: Sandel, Chapter 1: "Doing the Right Thing." "The Ring of Gyges" (OWL)	Introduction
Week 3: January 19 th Topic: Utilitarianism Reading: Sandel, Chapter 2: "The Greatest Happiness Principle."	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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1 Yes • D1 No
Week 4: January 26 th Topic: Libertarianism Reading: Sandel, Chapter 3: "Do We Own Ourselves?"	Group Presentation 2: 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_0ll&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D2 Just • D2 Unjust

<p>Topic: Markets and Moral</p> <p>Reading: Sandel, Chapter 4: "Hired Help"</p>	
<p>Week 5: February 2nd</p> <p>Topic: Immanuel Kant</p> <p>Readings: Sandel, Chapter 5: "What Matters is the Motive"</p>	<p>Group Presentation 3: Market and Moral - Should surrogacy be permitted? (watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiFvn6AfBqw&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3 Yes • D3 No
<p>Week 6: February 9th</p> <p>Midterm</p>	
<p>Week 7: February 23rd</p> <p>Topic: John Rawl</p> <p>Readings: Sandel, Chapter 6: "The Case for Equality"</p>	<p>Group Presentation 4: Affirmative action: Should groups that have traditionally faced discrimination be given special consideration when applying to a university or for employment? (watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuB244eXpio&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D4 Yes • D4 No
<p>Week 8: March 2nd</p> <p>Topic: Aristotle</p> <p>Readings: Sandel, Chapter 8: "Who Deserves What"</p>	<p>How to Write an Argumentative Essay</p>
<p>PART II: Approaches to Peace</p>	
<p>Week 9: March 9th</p> <p>Topic: Peace vs. Justice</p>	<p>Group Presentation 5: Is lying morally wrong? (watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM6MaJAE3Qk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D5 Yes • D5 No

<p>Readings: Albin, C. (2009). “Peace vs. Justice — and Beyond”, in <i>The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution</i> (OWL)</p>	
<p>Week 10: March 16th Topic: Just War Theory Readings: Lucas, G. (2019). <i>Ethics and military strategy in the 21st century: moving beyond Clausewitz</i>, pp. 52-65 (OWL)</p>	<p>Group Presentation 6: Aristotle - Who should be allowed to own the world’s rarest violin? (watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiFvn6AfBqw&list=PLH37By4v_fxl-VGRzq7R6yC4-uSihxAHK&index=8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D6 Just: The person who can use it best deserves to own the violin. • D6 Unjust: The person who pays the most deserves to own the violin.
<p>Week 11: March 23th Topic: Pacifism</p>	<p>Group Presentation 7: Are wars ever just?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D7 Yes • D7 No

<p>Readings: Kling, J. (2018). "Humanitarian Intervention and the Problem of Genocide and Atrocity", in <i>The Routledge Handbook of Pacifism and Nonviolence</i> (OWL);</p> <p>Fiala, A. (2018) "Pacifism in the Twentieth Century and Beyond", in <i>The Routledge Handbook of Pacifism and Nonviolence</i> (OWL)</p>	
<p>Week 12: March 30th</p> <p>Topic: Conclusion</p>	

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.

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

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

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/

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 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

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

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.