INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW

Social justice has moved to a central place in planning theory and practice, building on prior commitments to advocacy, equity, and deliberative planning. But moving beyond the abstraction of justice to definition, institutionalization, implementation, and practice has proved challenging. Social justice—a term coined by 19th century theologians with roots in Aristotelian ethics—is one of those ideals that is easy to extol and hard to realize in practice. And the challenge of implementation has been heightened by existing conditions of structural inequality, social fragmentation, globalization, authoritarianism, demagoguery, institutional failure, and more.

This seminar will try to work through the possibilities and challenges of social justice in planning and public policy. We will explore the idea of social justice as a normative principle, motivating precept, guide to action, and evaluative standard in the practice of planning and public policy. We will grapple with enduring questions and emerging realities in assessing the promise and pitfalls of tying practice to the elusive ideal of social justice.

Reaching a usable specification of social justice requires, first, a clear understanding of the concept of justice and, second, clarification of what is delimited, included, and excluded by qualifying justice as specifically “social.” Probing both sets of questions is a tall order but that is our task in this seminar. First, what is the meaning of justice in the context of planning and public policy? Is justice a universal principle or is it context-dependent? Is justice a process for achieving desirable outcomes? Or is justice a standard for evaluating outcomes once they are achieved? Then, what is “social” about social justice? Is social justice a subset or domain of a larger or more encompassing ideal of justice? If so, what are its substantive limits, spatial boundaries, and analytical correlates? Or, rather than a substantive domain, does the social refer to a deliberative community or a collective process within which a specification of justice can be defined and applied? Our readings will work through these theoretical/conceptual considerations illustrated through empirical applications in housing, community development, the environment, transportation, diversity, inequality, and other examples.

Readings and discussions will proceed along four parts in seeking answers to these and related questions (see Class Schedule and Readings below).

Part I (weeks 1-2) will introduce the questions and issues raised by a commitment to social justice in the practice of planning and public policy. Why is social justice an appropriate, tenable, or necessary consideration for planners and policy-makers? What is entailed in thinking about justice in this context? What is the problem for which social justice is the solution?
In Part II (weeks 3-7), we will examine a range of contending approaches to understanding the nature, dynamics, and requirements of justice as an ideal and a guide to practice in planning and public policy. A voluminous literature in philosophy, politics, ethics, and the social sciences has defined and conceptualized justice in disparate ways, variously focusing on the fairness of outcomes, the legitimacy of process, the integrity of deliberation, the inclusiveness of knowledge claims, and a pragmatist understanding that seeks to transcend the dualism of process and outcomes. Each of these understandings and approaches entails priorities and commitments that situate the ideal of social justice differently with respect to the practice of planning and public policy. This diversity of approaches and perspectives, in turn, requires clarity and reflection on the meaning, implications, and requirements of justice that we choose to employ as a guide to practice.

Part III (weeks 8-11) will focus on the contexts of justice: issues and considerations that pose challenges to a commitment to social justice. (How) can the ideal of social justice be advanced under conditions of structural inequality and unequal power relations? How is social justice operationalized in the context of multiculturalism and diversity, and in the face of dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, citizenship, community, and understandings of the public interest? What is the appropriate spatial scale of justice in an era marked by both intensified localism and rampant globalization? What, if anything, is the role of the state in the realization of social justice?

Finally, Part IV (weeks 12-14) is devoted to case studies via in-class student presentations of research papers examining social justice in planning and public policy (more information on this below). The final class meeting will provide a summary and wrap-up discussion on what we have learned and what remains to be known.

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Understand and evaluate a variety of answers to the question: “What is social justice?”
- Articulate a rationale for social justice as among competing goals of planning and public policy.
- Recognize the barriers to the achievement of social justice in planning and public policy and be able to identify and assess strategies for reducing those barriers.
- Research and report on a case study of planning or policy in which social justice was explicitly invoked and/or played a role in development of the case.
- Advance the theory and practice of social justice in planning and public policy.

EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading and active participation in seminar discussions [30%]**
   This is a *graduate-level seminar*, in which each seminar member shares responsibility to actively participate in the teaching and learning that we accomplish in class each week.
   Active participation requires:
   - regular class attendance
   - completing the assigned readings in full in advance of each week’s class meeting
   - engaging with other seminar members in the respectful and constructive exchange of ideas
2. **Leading class discussion** [10%]
   Each student will be responsible to lead the seminar discussion during one week of the semester. This involves:
   - careful and thorough reading of the week’s materials
   - preparation of questions and topics for discussion in advance of the seminar meeting
   - a summary of relevant related literature (critiques, reviews, illustrations, examples, etc.) for presentation to seminar members
   - guiding the discussion of the week’s readings

3. **Completion of two written critical reflection papers (approx. 5 pages each) discussing and evaluating the readings assigned in Parts II and III [30%]**
   You may select any of the readings within Part II (Approaches to Justice) as the subject of your first essay, and any of the readings within Part III (Contexts of Justice) as the subject of your second essay. Your essays should not merely summarize the readings; rather, they should offer a critical assessment of, and engagement with, ideas or issues in the readings. Guidelines for preparing reflection papers will be posted on the class Sakai site and will be distributed during the first seminar meeting.

   Reflection papers are due at the beginning of the class session in which the reading is assigned and discussed. Submit your papers as an e-mail attachment (.docx or .pdf) before class, in hard copy at the beginning of the class period, or in the Assignments folder on the class Sakai site. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font and must conform to professional standards of grammar, punctuation, and citation format.

4. **Researching, writing, and oral presentation of a seminar paper [30%].**
   The paper should provide a theoretical and empirical analysis of a specific case study in which concerns of social justice played a role in the practice of planning or public policy. Data for your case study may be obtained through original research (e.g., interviews, participant-observation, etc.) or may rely on secondary sources or both. More information on this will be provided in class.

   For your guidance in planning your work, the following due dates will apply:
   - On February 8th, submit a one-page statement describing your selected research topic and the sources you expect to use in conducting your research.
   - Oral seminar presentations (20 minutes + 10 minutes for discussion) are scheduled for April 12th and April 19th.
   - Written papers (approx. 20 pages) are due one week following your oral presentation.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, will result in a grade of ‘F’ or zero (0) for the assignment in question, and may jeopardize your continued enrollment in the program. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the use of another’s words or ideas without proper attribution. Please familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on plagiarism and academic integrity found at the following sources:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/
http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-grad-students
REQUIRED READINGS

The following required texts are available at the Rutgers Bookstore:


Additional required readings listed in the Class Schedule below will be posted by week under “Resources” on the class Sakai site.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PART I. INTRODUCTION TO JUSTICE

JANUARY 18  INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL JUSTICE THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

JANUARY 25  DEFINING THE PROBLEM


PART II. APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

FEBRUARY 1 DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE
Susan Fainstein. 2010. The Just City. Read all.


FEBRUARY 8 PROCEDURAL JUSTICE
Ch. 2. “Rawls and beyond,” pp. 52-74.


FEBRUARY 15 DELIBERATIVE AND EPISTEMIC JUSTICE


FEBRUARY 22  PRAGMATIC JUSTICE


MARCH 1  RESPONSIBILITY FOR JUSTICE

PART III. CONTEXTS OF JUSTICE

MARCH 8  STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY


MARCH 15  [NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK]
MARCH 22  DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, COMMUNITY, AND MULTIPLE PUBLICS
Gary Craig et al, eds. Social Justice and Public Policy
Ch. 3. “Multiculturalism, social justice and the welfare state,” pp. 53-76.


MARCH 29  SCALES OF JUSTICE
Gary Craig et al, eds. Social Justice and Public Policy


APRIL 5  JUSTICE IN/THROUGH THE STATE

[www.heritage.org/Research/Religion/hl1138.cfm](www.heritage.org/Research/Religion/hl1138.cfm)


**PART IV. CASES**

**APRIL 12**  
CLASS PRESENTATIONS

**APRIL 19**  
CLASS PRESENTATIONS

**APRIL 26**  
SUMMARY