

# JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY

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***“Without questions there are no answers. And without answers no truth, no progress, no future.”***

-Victor Canning

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## Overview

Justice and Democracy is a discussion-based class, focused on critical thinking. Students will engage in academic conversations about a variety of topics that have historical and contemporary relevance. Topics are selected by the instructor as well as students, and may include issues such as: mass incarceration, the war on terror, social movements and political activism, environmental justice, etc. - issues that (1) impact a large area, perhaps across countries, (2) has historical context, and (3) impacts a large population of people.

## Goals

- The goals of the course are to engage in critical conversations about issues affecting our global society with peers and consider possibilities and solutions to these issues.
- To understand how history provides insight and offers context to contemporary issues.
- To develop and enhance analytical and critical thinking skills in reading and writing about historical concepts and themes.

## Requirements

There are very few “requirements” in this class. Please be mindful of them:

1. Be on time to class with your materials ready.
2. Make up assignments if you miss anything due to absences or... Keep me informed if you need more time. The more I know, the more flexible I am.
3. Phones, laptops, electronic devices can be useful in class but only if they are for academic purposes. Consider the **Time, Place, and Manner** before using.

## Units of Study

As a class, we will determine what you’d like to study. This class will also be responsive to current events and shift curriculum as necessary to learn about and discuss these events with great depth. Units might include:

Crime and Punishment  
Responding to Terrorism  
Guns and White Nationalism  
The Environment  
Iran and the US

Geopolitics  
The War on Drugs  
Direct Action: Rebels w/ Causes  
Immigrants and Refugees

Poverty and Gentrification  
Gender Discrimination  
Art, Music, and Protest  
Cultural Appropriation

## Types of Assignments

Formal and informal assessments will be based on research projects, presentations, mini-papers, and overall class participation in student discussions. You will be assigned reading from a variety of sources. Class attendance is a top priority as well as full participation in discussions.

Most of the class will involve work that you can complete during the class period. For papers and projects, some work outside of class might be necessary.

**Evaluation**

- **Participation** (Discussion, Tardies, Texting, Effort) = 25%
- **Daily Work** (In class work, formative assessment) = 15%
- **Assessments** (Tests, Quizzes, Major projects) = 60%

Texting, skipping, unexcused tardies and absences, and inappropriate behavior will affect your participation grade.

**Grade scale**

- 90.0 – 100% = A
- 80 – 89.0% = B
- 70 – 79.0% = C
- 60 – 69.0% = D

**Materials**

You will need a spiral or composition notebook as well as a folder or 3-ring binder to keep your readings. We will not use a textbook, however you will have assigned readings to keep. These materials must be organized.

**Welcome to Justice and Democracy!**

We are all here to learn together, myself included. Please feel free to come and see me at any appropriate time. My job is to help you learn about this world and feel empowered to change it for the better.