Featured Course:
Inside out
by, Elizabeth Linehan, RSM and Thomas Brennan, SJ

On most Wednesday afternoons this spring, fifteen SJU students and two faculty members will pile into a van (plus one car) for a 30-minute ride to the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center (PICC). This institution, part of the Philadelphia Prison System, will be their classroom for the semester – theirs, and fifteen incarcerated men who are, for now, their classmates.

The course, taught by Rev. Thomas Brennan SJ (English) and Sr. Elizabeth Linehan RSM (Philosophy), aims to engage the “inside” (PICC) students and the “outside” (SJU) students in a challenging and rich conversation about the meaning and multiple dimensions of freedom. How different, really, are students in prison from students not in prison, with respect to the most important human freedoms? Aren’t there other ways to be held captive besides being locked in a cell? Other ways to escape what enslaves us besides a jail break?

Course readings for Dimensions of Freedom include two novels, poetry of 19th Century England (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley), selections from Plato, Epictetus, Augustine, John Stuart Mill, Hannah Arendt – and more. The class is part of a program created by Professor Lori Pompa of Temple University: The Inside Out Prison Exchange Program. Saint Joseph’s, through the Faith-Justice Institute, has offered three other courses in this program, beginning in spring 2008.

Critical Thinking:
Engaging Mind and Heart
What Solidarity Means to Me

By Theresa Plummer, 2011, Service Scholar

The Faith-Justice Theology course that I took with Dr. Beyer this past semester, Economics, Politics and Ethics of Solidarity in Poland, is by far the most worthwhile and personally fulfilling class I have ever taken. Solidarity is many things; it is a movement, a virtue, a lifestyle, and a choice. To me, it is also a deeply spiritual thing. Learning how people used solidarity to overcome tremendous odds was more than inspiring. It became something I wanted to strive for, a decision-making process that would bring me closer to the humanity I share in common with others and through this sharing, closer to our Creator. I could not look at the events of Polish Solidarity without seeing God. To me, God was the movement, present in every struggle for equality, every fight for freedom, every risk taken to do the right thing and every brave choice made at the risk of losing one’s safety. It is impossible to say just how much I got out of this class. It nurtured something in me that is going to grow for the rest of my life. It has made me a better person and as a result, I hope that I can have a positive effect on others. I honestly wish everyone could take this class.

Faith Justice Studies Minors Enjoy “Dinner and Dialogue”

Faith-Justice Studies Minors are in for a real treat this Spring semester. Father Joe Sands, S. J. the Faith-Justice Institute’s Visiting Fellow will be assisting in the offering of four dinner & dialogues focusing on Catholic Social Teaching and entitled “Enhancing the Faith that does Justice”. The first dinner was March 1, and was a great success! Future reflective dinners will be held in the dining room in Mandeville Hall from 5 to 7 pm on March 25, April 13 and May 4. Any questions can be directed to V.G. Johnson at 610 660-1574.
Community Partner Spotlight:
The Arc of Philadelphia
A Celebration of Service
by Michael Barnes, Service Site Supervisor

Two years ago, The Arc of Philadelphia/PDDC who advocates and serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities began working with the Faith Justice Institute. The partnership has paid dividends for both The Arc/PDDC and each student who comes to our organization. The students have brought a contagious energy and filled our facility with such love and compassion for the individuals we serve in many different capacities.

On top of their weekly service commitments, many of the service-learning students have come to our First Friday Dances each month. That says quite a bit about these students who have such busy schedules during the week and who are willing to give up their Friday night to dance and socialize with all of our guests. They keep coming back time and time again...

As the Director of Marketing here at The Arc/PDDC, it is so incredible for me to watch each student develop through their service in such a short amount of time. The education and service experience outside the classroom is providing each student with an experience that touches them in such a powerful manner. I watch each student come to work with individuals with disabilities, and they keep coming back even after the semester culminates to share their love and talents with people who have goals and aspirations just as they do. Each student has come to realize that they are working with people first, who just may happen to have a physical disability or small barrier that they must hurdle in their everyday lives. The connection is special, and it is so fulfilling to watch the relationships that have been formed.

This partnership has been so special to all of us here at The Arc of Philadelphia/PDDC. Thank you for making us feel so much a part of the St. Joe’s family and community. We can’t say enough about the work of the Faith Justice Institute it is an honor to work with such a great group of students and faculty. Thank you for sharing your love with all of us and celebrating life by putting others first. ☀

Outreach Lecture
The Faith-Justice Institute is committed to bringing the horrors associated with human trafficking to the University's awareness. The Faith-Justice Institute Outreach Lecture for Spring 2010 is entitled “Exploring Hidden Injustice: Faces and Facets of Human Trafficking”. It will be held on Thursday, March 25, 2010 at 7:30 pm in the Wolfington Teletorium, Mandeville Hall. The panel presentation is offered in conjunction with the Faith-Justice Series course in International Marketing taught by Dr. Brent Smith of the Haub School of Business. A panel of three anti-human trafficking speakers will include: Steve Wagner, President of the Renewal Forum, Sister Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ, Justice Coordinator of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill and Hugh Organ, Associate Executive Director of Covenant House, Philadelphia. Please call 610 660-1338 for more information.

Calendar of Events:
- The week of March 21st is SJU’s annual Labor Rights Week. The purpose of this week is to highlight the year-long efforts of Students for Workers’ Rights to raise awareness about different injustices in the workforce. The theme of this year’s week is sweatshops and fair trade.
- On Wednesday, March 24, in the Mandeville Teletorium, Jim Keady (SJU ’93) will be presenting his “Behind the Swoosh: Sweatshops and Social Justice” lecture about his experience living in Indonesia on the wage of $1.25 a day