

Faith-Justice Studies Course Core Criteria

The Faith-Justice Studies Program is an interdisciplinary, self-designed curriculum that enables students to integrate their major area of study with inquiries into social justice and faith issues. All Faith-Justices Studies courses meet one or more the following criteria.

1) Engage students directly with the "sufferings of the poor" and explore the call, not only to serve them, but also to stand in solidarity with them.

Human dignity is most tragically affronted, not by material deprivation as such, but by every projection of contempt onto individuals and especially onto groups, on whatever basis. Oppression in its most dehumanizing form happens when a dominant culture says to whatever group it has chosen for scapegoating, "you are of lesser-worth-of little worth-of no worth." (Source: Thomas E. Clarke, Theologian)

- Prioritize "the poor and the marginalized" in course materials and class discussions.
- Highlight "the least among you" in presentation of course materials.
- Create written and oral assignments that engage student in reflection on the "sufferings of the poor".
- Create written and oral assignments that encourage reflection on standing in solidarity with the poor.
- Encourage students to attend lectures, events, and activities sponsored by The Faith-Justice Institute that address the sufferings of the poor.
- Encourage students to connect their lived experiences of service-learning, advocacy or other activities to the course materials.
- Incorporate readings from Catholic Social Teaching or the Jesuit charism where appropriate.

2) Invite students to analyze institutions and social structures and to question prevailing systems of thought or action that systematically contribute to modern-day social problems (poverty, racism, human rights violations, violence).

Often, underneath the intricacies of economic, financial and political interconnections, there remain misunderstandings, hardships and injustice. The flow of technological know-how increases, but it is those in possession of it who benefit, while the situation on the ground for the peoples who live in its shadow remains unchanged: for them there is little chance of emancipation. (Source: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*). Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good. Both professional competence and moral consistency are necessary.

- Include objectives or outcomes with discipline-specific macro structures that reinforce just/unjust systems.
- Assign readings that address systemic causes contributing to modern-day social problems.
- Direct class discussions that allow student questioning of prevailing systems of thought.
- Design written opportunities to allow individual student analysis of institutions and social structures and how they contribute to social inequalities.

3) Challenge students to consider existing social values (norms) and priorities in light of Gospel values and faith-based traditions of social justice.

Today our prime educational objective must be to form men and women-for-others; people who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ; ... people who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; people completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for people is a farce.

(Source: Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus).

- Incorporate Catholic Social Teaching tenets (for example solidarity, common good) in course materials.
- Demonstrate how specific Gospel passages relate directly to faith-justice issues.
- Integrate Gospel values (sanctity of life, human dignity, social sin, conscience) into course materials.
- Challenge students to personally reflect on faith-based traditions of social justice.

For more information on the Faith-Justice Studies Minor or Courses

Log onto www.sju.edu/faithjusticestudies

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