904:201 (01) - Introduction to Social Justice

T/TH 2:15-3:35 - HSB-106

S. Chan-Malik

This course examines various theoretical and activist approaches to social justice, while also considering cultural representations and the larger impact (cultural, political, social, etc.) of social justice struggles in both the U.S. and beyond. Central to our work in this course are issues of power, privilege, and “freedom.” In particular, we will ask: how have struggles for justice been influenced by categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality? What is the relationship between “justice” and “freedom”? Where do our understanding of justice come from and how do we seek justice in the contemporary world? What is the difference between social justice and civic engagement? Our materials this semester address three contemporary social justice struggles/issues: reparations, food justice, and disability rights.

Success in this course requires you to synthesize theory and practice. Each student will pursue a semester-long research project with a NJ/NYC social justice organization (I will provide a list for those who need suggestions) in which they investigate both the organization itself and the issue(s)/communities for which it advocates. The project will culminate in a 6-8 page research paper, in which you will articulate the organization’s goals, explain the history of the organization and its work, provide a detailed description of the organization’s current projects, and discuss how your involvement with the group has shaped (or shifted) your views on social justice. Students will also work in groups to research a contemporary social justice issue (which may or may not coincide with their organization) and do a group presentation in which they advocate for their organization and struggle.

904:201 (02) - Introduction to Social Justice

T 11:30-12:50/F 12:00-3:00 - TIL 253

E. Nazombe

This is a special section of the introductory course in the Social Justice Minor especially for members of the Livingston Social Justice Learning Community. The course will be organized using case studies of three recent events (the Trayvon Martin/George Zimmerman case; the US financial crisis and Occupy Wall Street; the Supreme Court decision on the Defense of Marriage Act) to explore social justice issues such as adultism, racism, classism and, sexism, heterosexism, transgender and religious oppression. Our framework is at once both national and global – our task is to think through both the roots of injustice, the paths to change and to make connections to our own identities and our own life experiences and commitments.

PRE-REQ: Only available to students in Social Justice Living & Learning Community Program