**Formal Paper: What is Social Justice?**

The final paper should reflect the accumulated knowledge of the class by addressing what you think social justice really means. One could argue that there are at least two perspectives on an “ideal” way to treat people who are different, both interpersonally and as a society.

1. One perspective argues that treating people differently is the problem: to be fair and just, we should treat everyone the same, and to do anything else would mean stereotyping or discriminating.
2. The second perspective argues that the first perspective fails to account for real differences in experiences, and that to be fair and just we must consider these differences when we act toward others.

While these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, they do sometimes lead to different policies from government and different behaviors from individuals. Note that these perspectives are also distinct from how we actually execute them (saying you should be colorblind does not mean you actually are; make sure not to confuse the philosophical argument for the reality). You may find that you agree with a philosophy in principle but do not find it realistic to implement.

For this paper, discuss these perspectives as shown in academic writing and in real-world examples. The conclusion should reflect your definition of social justice/equality/fairness (with reference to these two perspectives). You do not have to pick a side (you can argue for one, both, or neither), but you should have a **clear conclusion** about what social justice is that follows from what you show about these two perspectives.

* You are required to use multiple academic sources. Specifically, use **at least** six academic sources, which you should find through the Stetson Library Catalog. At least two sources should be empirical articles (contains data collected for the article). In other words, you should be able to use data/research findings to show why each perspective defines fairness and justice the way it does. Make sure that **at least** two of your sources were not those that we discussed in class / represent your original work.
* You should connect the theory from the academic readings to real-world events. Use **at leas**t 4 sources (news stories, public speeches, etc.) Again, make sure **at least** half of these are not those we discussed in class/represent your original work.
* Format: 12 point/Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, APA citations (Author, Year) and References section. While I do not have a length requirement, I think it will be difficult to sufficiently address the prompt in less than 8 double-spaced pages (not including the References page).

Helpful hints/insight into the mind of the person assigning your grade:

* The idea is to synthesize these materials, not to list them out: do not write a separate paragraph for each source, but connect them through their shared ideas. Good writing will reflect the way that you can integrate what you use (seeing both the details and the big picture each time).
* **Do not use direct quotes** from the academic articles to make your arguments: put everything of substance in your own words. You can quote real comments made in speeches/news events from your non-academic sources, but this should take the form of explaining what a person said in a significant event (“I have a dream,”) rather than quoting the news article’s summary of an event. This should be *your* work and *your* writing, not your ability to copy/paste. **Do** give citations to show where your ideas are originating!
* Make sure to have a strong introduction and conclusion, and to check throughout the process on how you have organized your paper. The reader should understand why you move from one paragraph to the next (use good transitions) and should be able to anticipate your conclusion from the body of your paper. It will help to refer back to your thesis/connect your material to the “point” of what you think social justice is.
* Revision is the key to excellent writing. Don’t be afraid to rewrite or think of rewriting as punishment: this is part of the process.
* I think the paper will be easier if you take note of readings and arguments about prejudice and justice that you find compelling throughout the semester (I encourage you to keep a separate file just for that).
* When in doubt, ask! I can’t write the paper for you, but I’m happy to help you organize your thoughts, understand “what I’m really asking for,” and find relevant sources.
* While there may be an exception, I prefer you to avoid “I” statements in the paper. Think of it as arguing for/making a case for what you think may be true, rather than stating “I believe this…” or saying an opinion is a fact.

**Rubric:**

16 points: explained and incorporated 4 academic sources, two of which are empirical papers

8 points: explained and incorporated 4 real-world events/speeches/non-academic sources

6 points: identified the two perspectives, including strengths and weakness

5 points: clear conclusion: what is social justice?

5 points: synthesis

4 points: in-text APA citations and References page

6 points: proofreading/flow/clarity