

# Syllabus

**Course Code:** HUMN 111

**Title:** Introduction to the Literature of Social Justice

**Institute:** Humanities

**Department:** English

## **Course Description**

This interdisciplinary course will survey literature that addresses diverse social justice movements and global issues, taking a critical approach to textual analysis and information literacy. Together, we will gain a deeper understanding of intersectional aspects of identity and analyze how power and privilege are reflected in rhetorical choices present in a variety of literary and social texts. Additionally, we will locate the ethical values of contemporary social justice movements in the U.S. and abroad within historical texts addressing human rights. Students will demonstrate agency by synthesizing their learning and experience to compose a well-researched proposal argument that spurs civic engagement in service of equity.

**Prerequisites or Corequisites** none

**Credits** 3

**Lecture Hours** 3

**Lab/Studio Hours** 0

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## **Required Textbook/Materials**

All required readings will be accessible online. Students do not need to purchase a textbook or any additional learning materials for this course.

## **Additional Time Requirements**

For information on Brookdale's policy on credit hour requirements, please refer to [Academic Credit Hour Policy](#).

## **Additional Support/Labs:**

See <https://www.brookdalecc.edu/academic-tutoring/>

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Read a variety of literary and social texts addressing social justice in a domestic and global setting
- Explicate key concepts of social justice issues and movements in different areas of the world
- Conduct research using library databases and the open internet; identify and analyze credible scholarly and popular sources in response to a topic question; practice information literacy by thinking critically about rhetorical choice, authorial authority, journalistic integrity, publication bias, and platform ownership (IL);

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- Identify the ethical values present in globally diverse social justice movements and locate these values in historical texts addressing human rights (E);
- Understand the identities of diverse peoples as socially constructed; recognize the way in which different aspects of identity (such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, etc.) intersect and are privileged or marginalized in various cultural contexts, in the U.S. and abroad (GC); and
- Synthesize course readings, independent research, and personal experience in a proposal argument addressing a social justice issue (IL).

*Learning outcomes support the following NJCCC General Education Knowledge Areas:*  
Information Literacy (IL), Ethical Dimension (E), Global and Cultural (GC)

### **Grading Standard**

While grades are only one measure of learning, they should nevertheless reflect a student's overall preparation and performance in the course. During the semester, all major assignment grades will be promptly posted online. Students are responsible for contacting their instructor in a timely fashion if questions or issues arise. Final letter grades will be based on overall percentages (listed below) and recorded on official transcripts at the end of the term.

(A) 100-93%    (A-) 92-90%    (B+) 89-87%    (B) 86-83%    (B-) 82-80%  
(C+) 79-77%    (C) 70-76%    (D) 69-60%    (F) <59%

### **Category Weightings**

- **Preparation and Participation (30%)**: To have a successful class session, all members of our discourse community must be prepared and willing to participate. Preparing for class means completing all required readings and written homework prior to class. Participation is demonstrated through regular engagement in classwork, contributions to discussions, and active listening.
- **Research and Critical Analysis of a Global Issue (10%)**: In this small-group project, students will use library databases and the open internet to research the representation of a global issue in various publications, both scholarly and popular, in the U.S. and around the world. For each source, they will conduct a critical analysis of rhetorical choice, authorial expertise, veracity of evidence, publication bias and credibility, and media ownership. (6-8 sources, 6-8 pages)
- **Ethical Foundations Essay (15%)**: In this essay, students will refer to an important international document that addresses human rights, such as the *UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and relate the ethical principles evident in select excerpts to a recent social justice movement that they have chosen to research. (4-6 sources, 4-6 pages)
- **Presentation on Identity and Inequities (15%)**: Working individually or in pairs, students will select a group that has been marginalized in the U.S. and abroad for one aspect of their identity (gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.) and locate scholarly and popular sources that use qualitative (case studies and personal experiences) and quantitative research (data on life expectancy, income, educational achievement, etc.) to

compare and contrast the experience of the marginalized group to that of the larger population. (5-10 sources; 5-minute, multimedia presentation)

- Proposal for Equity and Engagement (30%): Building on what they've learned this semester, students will research a social justice issue of their choice and compose a proposal argument that spurs engagement in service of equity. (6-8 sources, 6-8 pages)

### **Course Content**

Readings and discussion topics will vary within each course section. All sections of this course will support inquiry-based learning and take a constructivist approach to content, in which meaning is negotiated within a discourse community that sees the acquisition of knowledge as a social activity. Students will be expected to regularly read, discuss, and write about texts that address social justice movements and global issues. Concepts of social justice issues and movements in literature will be interwoven throughout the course, but their focus will be at the discretion of the discourse community. Information literacy will be a foundational skill that students will apply when approaching all course content. Additionally, each section of this class may include any number of approaches to understanding key concepts in social justice such as the world history perspective, environmental justice perspective, feminist perspective, or various spiritual approaches, such as liberation theology or engaged Buddhism. Potential social justice issues to be addressed may include generational inequality, poverty, housing, healthcare, educational and employment opportunities, racism and xenophobia, religious discrimination, gender inequity, LGBTQ+ discrimination, ableism, etc. Please see the syllabus addendum for more specific information about course lessons, readings, and weekly assignments within a particular section.

### **Class Policies**

Our class is a discourse community that supports scholarly inquiry and relies upon respectful dialog between all individuals. While diversity of perspectives and freedom of speech are valued in our class, we must all agree to avoid ad-hominem attacks or any speech that perpetuates negative stereotypes, as these types of overgeneralizations are harmful, fallacious, reductive, and antithetical to critical thinking. In short, while we may disagree in our views of controversial topics, we must all agree to treat each other with respect. Additional norms of behavior may be discussed and co-constructed by the class during the semester.

### **College Policies**

As an academic institution, Brookdale facilitates the free exchange of ideas, upholds the virtues of civil discourse, and honors diverse perspectives informed by credible sources. Our College values all students and strives for inclusion and safety regardless of a student's disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status, religious affiliation, political orientation, socioeconomic standing, and veteran status. For additional information, support services, and engagement opportunities, please visit [www.brookdalecc.edu/support](http://www.brookdalecc.edu/support)

### **NOTIFICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Brookdale Community College offers reasonable accommodations and/or services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who wish to self-identify must contact the Accessibility Services Office at 732-224-2730 (voice) or 732-842-4211 (TTY) to provide appropriate documentation of the disability and request specific accommodations or services. If a student qualifies, reasonable accommodations and/or services, which are appropriate for the college level and are recommended in the documentation, can be approved.

### **MENTAL HEALTH:**

24/7/365 Resources:

- Monmouth Medical Center Psychiatric Emergency Services at (732) 923-6999
- 2nd Floor Youth Helpline – Available to talk with you about any problem, distress, or hardship you are experiencing. Call or text at 888-222-2228 or visit the website at <https://www.2ndfloor.org/>

Faculty Counselors:

- Students who need to make an appointment with a faculty counselor can do so by calling 732-224-1822 (non-emergency line) during business hours. Faculty counselors are licensed mental health professionals who can assist students and refer them to other mental health resources.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT:**

Brookdale Community College fosters an environment of inclusion and belonging. We promote a safe and open culture, encourage dialogue respecting diverse perspectives informed by credible sources, and uphold the virtues of civil discourse. We celebrate all identities with the understanding that ultimately, diversity, equity, and inclusion cultivate belonging and make us a stronger Brookdale community.

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

See Brookdale's webpages for [general information about tutoring](#). For a list of departments and associated phone numbers, please see the [employee directory](#). All students enrolled in a Brookdale class are encouraged to utilize the resources below, which are offered at no additional cost to students.

- [Reading Center](#): The Center for Reading & Learning Strategies is located on the Lincroft campus in Larrison 124. The Center helps students enhance their reading comprehension and learn strategies for approaching challenging texts. To get reading assistance, please call 732-224-1900 or contact Jeanne McCarthy ([jeannemccarthy@brookdalecc.edu](mailto:jeannemccarthy@brookdalecc.edu)).
- [Writing Center](#): At Brookdale's Writing Center, students can work with a writing consultant at any stage of the writing process: from drafting, to revision, to proofreading. Writing Center appointments can help students clarify their main points, incorporate feedback, and address grammar and mechanical issues. The main Writing Center, which can be reached by calling

732-224-2941, is located on the Lincroft campus in Larrison 118. Appointments may also be available online and at other Brookdale locations.

- [Library](#): The Bankier Library, which is located in the MAN building on the Lincroft campus, has an extensive collection of print texts, as well as digital and multimedia learning materials. Additionally, there are numerous options for research assistance, both in-person and online (depending upon availability). Students can call the Research Help Desk at 732-224-2443 during library hours or schedule a one-on-one appointment with a librarian using the online appointment system.
- [Languages/ESL Tutoring and Resources](#): The ESL office, which is in Larrison 232 on the Lincroft campus, offers support to students seeking additional help with English. Brookdale's ESL Program features an 18-station computer lab equipped with ESL learning software for all levels, including a program focused on pronunciation. Workshops and conversation groups are also offered to reinforce lessons. Please call Synde Kaufman at 732-224-2656 or email ([ESL@brookdalecc.edu](mailto:ESL@brookdalecc.edu)) for more information.