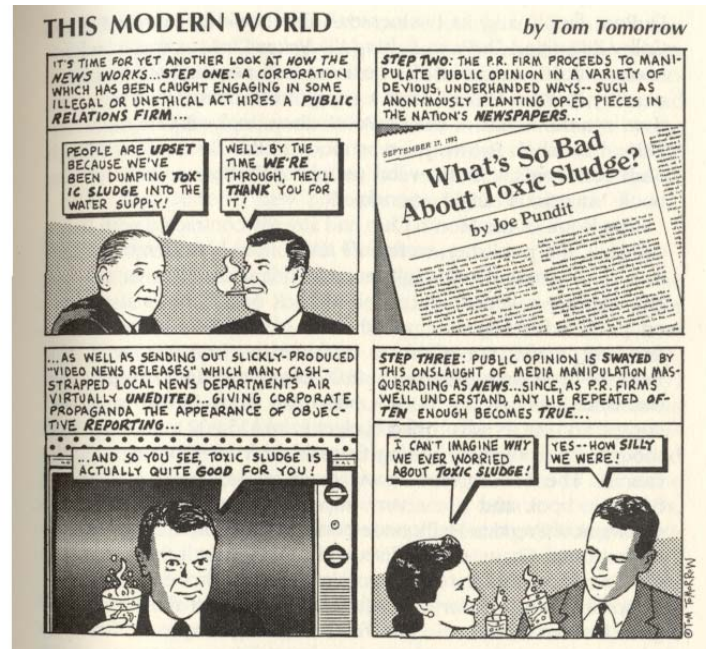


Prof. James Dawes
Office hrs. MWF 1-2
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JUSTICE

English 265



In this course we will examine texts by, about, and for workers for social justice. Our method will be interdisciplinary. With an eye toward aesthetics, we will examine novels and plays that have at their center protagonists who have been called to realize a vision of the just society or, more desperately, to stand alone against seemingly inevitable assaults upon human dignity. We will at the same time examine philosophical and sociological accounts of political action, including works that evaluate the effectiveness of different individual and organizational strategies for social change. Issues of particular importance will include obedience and disobedience, economic justice, eco-activism, globalization, human rights, and the question of personal vocation – that is, how do we bring together our ethical commitments and our working lives? Central figures will include Sophocles, Ibsen, Zola, J. M. Coetzee, Malcolm X, Naomi Klein, Barbara Ehrenreich, Terry Tempest Williams, Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, Naomi Wallace, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Alex Shakar, Kalle Lasn, and Noam Chomsky. Throughout the course we will pay special attention to the disproportionate costs borne by women and ethnic minorities in societies defined by radical asymmetries of power. Students will also be provided various opportunities for service in local activist and community organizations.

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“One cannot rule by force alone. True, force is decisive, but it is equally important to have this psychological something which the animal trainer also needs to be master of his beast. They must be convinced that we are the victors.”

Adolf Hitler

“Hope is a moral obligation.”

Anon.

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Requirements:

1. Finish required readings before class meetings. Reading load for this course will be quite heavy.
2. You will have a final project that will make up 25% of your final grade. You may choose to write an analytic essay with a thesis of your design (20 pgs., due December 15 in class). This paper must combine literary and non-literary texts from the course. External readings and original research with appropriate citations are required, but these must be centrally oriented around the primary texts and issues of the course. You may also choose to undertake a community-action project. Come by my office soon to plan with me. Community projects will involve semester-long internships or targeted, short-term projects accompanied by analytic or journal writing at the Center for Victims of Torture, the Sierra Club, or the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (one of the nation’s leading nonprofits involved in the globalization and fair trade debates), all of which have already put together project work for students from this course. Depending on the time commitment, such projects can count as an independent study worth one or two additional credits. The details and scheduling for such projects must be approved in the first two weeks of class. Formal class presentations will be required at the end of the semester for each essay and project.
3. This is a collaborative course designed to give you opportunities for developing institutional and consensus-building skills along with capacities for organizing knowledge, speaking publicly, and writing effectively. Significant individual initiative and a commitment to non-hierarchical cooperation are essential. Accordingly, the class will be broken into three collectives (listed as A, B, and C in the attached calendar). Each collective will give a presentation on the reading assignment of the day for four of our meetings. Assigned days for each collective are noted on the calendar. They will begin on September 22. Each member of the collective must participate equally, but what you do for your presentation is up to the collective. Work as a team. Be as scholarly or as creative as you wish, but be prepared to perform. You might: design class exercises like the ones I will offer in the beginning of the semester; put together a series of discussion questions or spontaneous writing assignments that will culminate in a series of mini-lectures from your group; use film, creative writing, or music to teach us and to reveal your sense of the text; establish a framework for collectively analyzing a text’s rhetorical devices

and effectiveness, or for inspiring questions both empirical and conceptual. Presentations will last one-half of the class period (approximately 1.5 hours). These presentations will not be individually graded; instead, they will be incorporated as a totality into your final grade (25% of final grade). I will meet with each group frequently throughout the semester to discuss their progress.

4. You will be required to write two op-ed pieces – *not* letters to the editor – for local or national newspapers (10% of final grade each). This will require that you choose an issue of importance to you, research it thoroughly, produce an innovative argument and policy suggestion, articulate it according to the format of the newspaper you are targeting, and turn it into me for official submission to the newspaper. The first must be completed by October 20; the second by December 8. The op-ed piece need not be accepted, but it must be submitted. It will be graded according to its clarity, freshness, newsworthiness, depth of research, and fidelity to the genre. 800 words is a common standard, so concision is a priority. Set aside a significant amount of time for these assignments. To compress original ideas with new research into such a small space is actually more difficult than writing a long paper. Read the op-ed pages of the New York Times in the library for exemplary samples. Do not model yourself, however, on the regular columnists -- the genre of "the column" is different from the genre of the external op-ed submission. The former relies on a combination of celebrity and the familiarity of an author's long-term relationship with a specific readership. The latter relies much more on expertise.
5. Full preparation and active participation in class will be evaluated as a significant part (10%) of your final grade for the course. Conversations with me outside of the classroom will not affect your grade for class participation.
6. You will have a final exam on the last day of class (20% of final grade).
7. Film and radio documentaries have been used as powerful tools in activist work, and as such will have an important function in this course. Throughout the semester we will screen relevant documentaries either in their entirety or in smaller installments as supplements to the discussions of the day. This material will be included on the final exam.

On Contacting Me:

I am officially on paternity leave this semester, so I will not have specific office hours. I am free to meet before and after class, and can schedule individual appointments for other times.

On Lateness and Absences:

It is extremely important to show up on time. Attendance is mandatory. Absences and lateness to class will result in a lower grade for the course. Perfect attendance will count in your favor; one or two excused absences will not substantially harm your grade, but you will not receive the boost that perfect attendance gives; three or more absences will noticeably affect your final grade; five or more absences will threaten your ability to receive credit for the course. Absences will also impair your ability to succeed in the

exam, as material from the classes will be an important component. There will be no make-up exams.

For every business day that an assignment is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 (for instance, an A becomes an A-, a B- becomes a C+, etc;). No extensions can be granted for assignments. "The night before" excuses (my computer crashed, I became suddenly ill, etc.) are particularly unuseful: work should be largely completed – and saved on disk (if you cannot afford disks I will provide them) – well before the night before.

If you have a special condition that merits certain accommodations on exams or papers these can be provided once you have given me the official documentation that the administration requires in such cases.

A Note on the Exam:

The exams will require very detailed knowledge, knowledge that cannot be acquired through cramming. The material of this course represents a body of knowledge, like economics or chemistry, that you will be required to master. Here are three representative final exam questions:

1. Describe in one or two sentences what or who the following are and why they are significant (be sure to identify the title and author of the work from which each is taken).
Baker farm
Carlo Marx
paper pills
2. Explain how minimum wage laws were used in developing countries by transnational corporations. Develop a specific case in two paragraphs.
3. "Writers are likely to read their admired precursors selectively and, in their own work, take elements adapted from their precursors to extremes." Evaluate the validity of this claim with reference to two literary works and two non-literary works from this course.

Students who complete required readings *before* class meetings will find themselves able to answer such questions (with adequate exam preparation) because classroom discussion will convert their short-term memory of freshly read texts into a more durable long-term memory.

September

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
The readings are organized into four sections: Case Studies in Power and Obedience (Antigone through Slaughter City); Corporations and Cultural Integrity	(No Logo through Culture Jam); Human Rights (Waiting for the Barbarians through Malcolm X); The Economy, People, and the Environment	(Nickel and Dimed through Blue Gold); Disobedience (the final section of No Logo and the Chomsky documentary).	1	2	3	4
5 The texts and themes of this course will, however, intertwine throughout. Discussions of globalization will necessarily entail	6 discussions of environmental ethics, for instance, just as analysis of Refuge and Waiting for the Barbarians will	7 require reconsidering Antigone and No Logo. The final exam will thus be cumulative and comparative.	8 first-class	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Finish Antigone, Ibsen, and Germinal up to part four, section 1, "On that Monday..." (p. 194 my edition)	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Finish Germinal Group a	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 Finish excerpt, Slaughter City, and No Logo chapters 1-8	30		

2004

October

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Finish Savage Girl Group b	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Finish Culture Jam Groups c and a	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Finish Waiting for the Barbarians Group b First op-ed due	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 Finish Sand Child Group c	28	29	30
31						

2004

November

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	1	2	3 Finish Malcolm X group a	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Finish Nickel and Dimed and No Logo 9-11 group b	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Finish Refuge group c and a	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Finish Blue Gold group b and c	25	26	27
28	29	30				

2004

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
			1 Finish No Logo	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Second op-ed due Meet at Media Services for Chomsky documentary	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Final presentations Final exam final papers due	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

2004