12 Steps to Submitting a Social Justice Course Proposal

Three documents are required.
I. “Special Course Designation Form” from the Dean’s Office or website below
   http://www.gonzaga.edu/Academics/Colleges-and-Schools/College-of-Arts-and-Sciences/Faculty-Staff/faculty-forms.asp
II. “Requirements for an A&S Social Justice Course” from the above website
III. Your course syllabus

Part I – The “Special Course Designation Form”

1. Complete the “Special Course Designation Form” from the above website, making sure that you obtain the signature of your Department Chair. Social Justice designations are assigned to a specific course and instructor, so please fill in the “specific instructor” line on the form.

Part II – The “Requirements for an A&S Social Justice Course”

2. See the website below for a digital copy of the “Requirements for an A&S Social Justice Course” form; a copy appears at the end of this document. See also: http://www.gonzaga.edu/Academics/Colleges-and-Schools/College-of-Arts-and-Sciences/Majors-Programs/SJ-FA-FC-CAS-core-requirements.asp

3. Use the “Requirements for Gonzaga University A&S Social Justice Courses” form as a template for your submission.
   a. Type your name, your department and the title and number of your proposed course at the top of the copied form. For example: Pat McCormick
      Religious Studies
      Principles of Christian Morality (RELI 330)
   b. After reading the form carefully, replace the explanatory text beneath each of the four numbered bold paragraphs with a description of just how your course will meet the four requirements. In other words, write a paragraph or two explaining how this course will meet each of the four criteria. Be as specific as possible, for example, by referencing dates in the syllabus and/or readings/assignments/exercises that these address topics.

4. In response to the first criterion, identify a number of specific social injustices (i.e. slavery, racism, discrimination, perpetuation of unearned privilege, etc.) that will be addressed in your course, and name and explain the specific critical and/or analytical tools (i.e., social analysis) you will use to help the students recognize, understand and respond to these injustices. Note: Steps 9 and 10 ask that you highlight sections in your syllabus that directly identify the issues and critical tools as well as the specific readings and/or assignments that deal with injustices.

5. In response to the second criterion, identify the experiences of difference (race, class, gender, orientation, religion, etc.) to be addressed in this course. Then describe how personal narratives or third-person narratives will be incorporated into the course readings, films, or other media. Explain briefly how these narratives will enable students to experience to some degree the personal ‘lived’ experience of these marginalized groups.

6. In response to the third criterion, identify those practices and structures (and beliefs) which serve to create or maintain the injustices addressed in this course. (For example, Jim Crow laws and sharecropping served to preserve racism and discrimination.)

7. In response to the fourth criterion, show how your course will help students grasp the causes, consequences and cures of injustice and develop habits of critical reflection about social justice.
Part III – Annotating your course syllabus

8. Create or edit a syllabus for this course. (If you are creating a new course and syllabus, you will also need to submit the course to your department, the A&S Dean, and the Academic Council for approval. A review by the department and the Academic Council will take a bit longer, but can be done at the same time you are submitting a proposal to the Social Justice committee.)

9. In your syllabus, **highlight** in yellow where you explain to the students what a Social Justice course is, why this course is a Social Justice course, and what issues and critical tools they will be learning. Additionally, the syllabus needs a statement specifically defining the social justice component(s) of the course. To serve as a thematic outline for the course, in the syllabus, provide an annotated assignment/reading schedule that explicitly identifies the SJ themes/issues as well as the critical tools to be learned. If needed, please use your response in step 4 as a way to provide additional explanations or details.

10. In your syllabus, **highlight** in yellow every element that explicitly addresses the social injustices and the specific readings and/or assignments that deal with these injustices. If needed, please use your response in step 4 as a way to provide additional explanations or details.

Part IV – Submitting the paperwork

11. Electronically submit (I) the signed “Special Course Designation Form”, (II) your response to the “Requirements for an A&S Social Justice Course”, and (III) your annotated syllabus to Andrea Bertotti Metoyer at bertottimetoyer@gonzaga.edu. Note that the Social Justice Committee may request revisions to your response or syllabus. After any revisions are approved, you will be informed that the application has been recommended to the Dean, who makes the final approval.

12. If you need a 12th step, consider approaching a colleague who teaches a Social Justice course early on, and asking for help or feedback as you work through steps 3 to 9. Or, as a final step, you might consider inviting another colleague to apply for a Social Justice designation.

Part V – Deadlines and timelines

Applications will be accepted at any point during the calendar year. Course reviews will take place during the academic year, while course reviews during the summer will be at the committee’s discretion. The committee works hard to complete its first review within a 2-4 week timeframe. Because revisions are often requested and the committee must approve these revisions, before the Dean’s approval, the total timeframe for SJ approval often takes approximately 8 weeks. No courses will be approved retroactively.

If a course review is desired prior to … then the application must be received by…

| the registration period (i.e., the SJ designation will appear on Zagweb when students register), | September 15th for spring courses, or by January 31st for summer/fall courses. |
| the start of classes (i.e. the SJ designation will not appear on Zagweb when students register), | November 15th for spring courses, or by March 31st in the spring term for summer/fall courses. |
**Requirements for an A&S Social Justice Course**

*In order to be approved for the Social Justice Arts and Sciences Core Requirement (courses with a ‘J’ suffix) courses must satisfy the four following criteria.*

1. **SJ courses should introduce students to one or more social justice concerns and help them to develop critical & analytical tools to recognize, understand, & respond to institutional and structural injustices found in economic, political, cultural, or ecclesial systems.**

   In response to the first criterion, *identify a number of specific social injustices* (i.e. slavery, racism, discrimination, perpetuation of unearned privilege, etc.) that will be addressed in your course, and *name and explain the specific critical and/or analytical tools* (i.e., social analysis) you will use to help the students recognize, understand and respond to these injustices. Note: Steps 9 and 10 ask that you highlight sections in your syllabus that directly identify the issues and critical tools as well as the specific readings and/or assignments that deal with injustices.

   Information regarding the Ignatian social justice model as it relates to the first criterion: "Social justice" refers to conceptions of justice applied to an entire society. That is to say, it refers to the idea of a just society, which gives individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society. The commitment to social justice is deeply rooted in Catholic social teaching and in the mission of Jesuit education. It is also an essential element of our Enlightenment inheritance which continues to inform liberal societies.

   Efforts to define a just society often include discussion of the dignity, rights, and responsibilities of human persons; the common good and community; discrimination and oppression of vulnerable members of society; the role of individuals, voluntary associations, and the government in addressing injustice or in ensuring just relationships and institutions; responsibilities and rights related to the environment; state sanctioned use of violence; global solidarity and development; and the participation of all people in the economic, political, and cultural life of their societies. While it is essential to provide adequate description, historical background, and cultural context for various practices and institutions, SJ courses must also engage students in thoughtful analysis about how these practices and institutions promote or undermine social justice. Globalization, for instance, is not by itself a social justice issue. But it becomes one if we critically examine the distribution of wealth between the North and South or critically analyze claims that the spread of capitalism only works if social welfare programs are reduced in ways that disenfranchise working class people in America and abroad.

   While it can arguably be said that everyone wishes to live in a just society, there is significant disagreement about what a "just society" actually is. There is considerable disagreement between those who argue that governments must intervene at times to ensure a just society and those who believe that social justice can only be achieved through the voluntary cooperation of individual citizens working to promote the common good. It is part of our educational mission to introduce students to diverse theories and practices, while providing them with critical analytic tools to engage in communal dialogue about social justice.

2. **The content of SJ courses should focus on the experience of difference, either in our own contemporary culture or in global cultures of the present or past, particularly those differences (like race, class, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation) that have served as a basis for discrimination, oppression, or other forms of injustice.**

   In response to the second criterion, *identify the experiences of difference* (race, class, gender, orientation, religion, etc.) to be addressed in this course. Then *describe how personal narratives or third-person narratives will be incorporated into the course readings, films, or other media.* Explain briefly how these narratives will enable students to experience to some degree the personal ‘lived’ experience of these marginalized groups.

   Information regarding the Ignatian social justice model as it relates to the second criterion: The idea of experience and reflection leading to action is fundamental to Ignatian spirituality and education. Through his conversion experiences, Ignatius learned that God speaks through the experiences of other people and their narratives of struggle and peace, courage and fear. He learned and taught that God was to be found in all things, places, and people. Attention, respect, and openness to the lived experiences of diverse people are key components of SJ courses at Gonzaga. Nearly all of our students come from the dominant cultures of society and it is likely that little in their experience at Gonzaga will expose them to what it is like to not be in the dominant culture. Consequently, the criterion of the “experience of difference” requires that SJ courses include...
personal narratives or third-person narratives that enable students to experience to some degree the personal ‘lived’ experience of what it is like to be from a marginalized group.

SJ courses provide learning about social justice in ways that engage students both intellectually and affectively, and then help them to consider appropriate responses to injustice. Personal experiences stimulate imagination and affect. Attentiveness to and reflection on experiences of exclusion, oppression, and marginalization can empower our students and faculty to work toward social justice. There are different ways to engage students in the lived experiences of those outside the dominant cultures. Proposals for SJ courses should include an explicit statement of how that experience of difference will be communicated to students.

3. **The focus of SJ courses should be on contemporary social justice issues and should identify practices & structures that discriminate against, marginalize, or oppress certain groups, as well as those that violate human rights, impede the full development of persons or communities, and/or frustrate the authentic and equal participation of any group in economic, political, cultural or ecclesial structures.**

In response to the third criterion, *identify those practices and structures (and beliefs) which serve to create or maintain the injustices addressed in this course. (For example, Jim Crow laws and sharecropping served to preserve racism and discrimination.)*

Information regarding the Ignatian social justice model as it relates to the third criterion: SJ courses aim to develop world citizens who are keenly aware of how social and institutional practices and structures can promote human development or undermine such development and human welfare. In 1547 when Ignatius opened his first school for young men who were not Jesuits, he saw this as an opportunity to form the hearts and minds of those who would in turn form or influence others. Today, as Jesuit educators we continue to educate those who will lead and influence others. We aim to form men and women who will use their knowledge for the common good, imagining themselves as citizens of a global culture concerned about the well being of all its people. Consequently, SJ courses should raise awareness about contemporary social justice issues and prepare students to participate in the processes of achieving just societies.

While SJ courses seek to engage students with issues of social justice in the contemporary world, this criterion does not exclude courses of a historical nature. Understanding past events and experiences clearly contributes to our understanding of the historical, cultural, and political roots of contemporary injustices. It also provides positive and negative exemplars, along with additional resources for imaginative engagement in the contemporary context. SJ courses may study social justice issues in the past as long as they also explicitly engage students in making connections and applications to contemporary social justice issues.

4. **SJ courses should help students grasp the causes, consequences and cures of various forms of social injustice and help students develop habits of critical thinking and personal reflection on social justice issues. Social justice courses may also include the presentation of alternatives that enable us to imagine and work for justice.**

In response to the fourth criterion, *show how your course will help students grasp the causes, consequences and cures of injustice and develop habits of critical reflection about social justice.*

Information regarding the Ignatian social justice model as it relates to the fourth criterion: SJ courses should help students to develop habits of and tools for social analysis. Courses should endeavor to understand the causal roots of social injustice, the effects of unjust practices and social structures, and also possible alternatives and the means to achieve them. Habits of critical analysis and reflection, like all habits, require good modeling, practice, and evaluative feedback. Instructors in social justice courses will take care to design their courses in ways that provide sufficient opportunity for students to practice these critical and analytic skills through oral and/or written analysis.

Courses will differ in the amount of attention they give to the presentation of alternatives and solutions, but all courses should provide students with resources to imagine how relationships, practices, and institutions can be restructured to empower all women and men.