

Seminar in Justice Studies
Justice Studies 466W-01
Rhode Island College, Spring 2026
Gaige 301

Prerequisite: Pol 332, Soc 302, Soc 362, 12 additional credit hours of Justice Studies coursework

Instructor Information

Dr. Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

marthur@ric.edu (preferred) or 401.456.8681 (be sure to leave a callback number & when to call). I respond to emails and calls Mondays through Friday afternoons, and occasionally on Sundays.

Student Meetings: Drop-in availability immediately after class. You can also book an appointment at <https://calendly.com/mmlarthur> (in person in Gaige 351 or by phone or Zoom) or let me know if you need an alternate time I have not made available to book. Other drop in hours as posted.

Graduate Assistant

Prescilla Da Fonseca (pdafonseca_5072@email.ric.edu), a graduate student in the MA in Justice Studies Program, is available to provide extended support for your work in this course, including brainstorming ideas; talking about reading, writing, and research; and tutoring/review of skills. She will have drop in hours TBA in the Sociology Department.

This course is scheduled in a **hybrid modality**. We will meet in person most weeks on Tuesdays from 4-5:50 pm, with other components of the course completed outside of in-person meetings. You will be asked to meet with me and with smaller groups of classmates outside of scheduled class time; these meetings may occur via Zoom or in-person depending on availability. You will need to have reliable Internet access on a computer or tablet and to check your email regularly.

Course Description

The Justice Studies Seminar is the integrating capstone experience for Justice Studies majors. In this course, you will bring together what you have learned in the Justice Studies program to complete an extensive writing assignment, reflect on your educational experience, and prepare for the world beyond RIC. The coursework will help you strengthen and solidify your reading, writing, and analytic skills so that you are ready to put them to use in further education and future employment.

Materials

Chiarello, Elizabeth. 2024. *Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis*. Princeton. ISBN: 9780691224770

Farris, Emily and Mirya Holman. 2024. *The Power of the Badge: Sheriffs and Inequality in the United States*. Chicago. ISBN: 9780226834511

Vega, Irene. 2025. *Bordering on Indifference: Immigration Agents Negotiating Race and Morality*. Princeton. ISBN: 9780691262093

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard.

While the books are available on e-reserve, I strongly encourage you to purchase a copy of at least the one book you will focus on more intensely (to be assigned in Week 2 of class). Also, please return your ebook when you are done reading for the moment so another student can use it.

****TO PROTECT THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING COVID/FLU SYMPTOMS OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED. ****

Course Requirements

This course is graded out of 110 points; the cutoff for an A grade is roughly 95. However, students will not be able to pass without at least minimally-acceptable submissions for all major assignments, given that this is a senior seminar.

- 1) *Class participation*: Participation includes engaging respectfully in large- and small-group discussion (including classmates' book group sessions), attending any required individual & small group meetings, etc. This will require having completed assigned readings prior to scheduled class meetings. You will also at times be called on in class to discuss the work you are doing, and you should be prepared to speak about the week's work in any class session. Should these requirements present personal difficulties for you, please contact me *right away*. In addition, you will be expected to complete all assigned reading and be prepared to discuss it in class. **15 points.**
- 2) *Learning Activities*. Throughout the semester, there will be a variety of in-class and online learning activities, including career preparation activities, scaffolded steps towards developing the policy paper, in-class quizzes, a final reflection paper, and others. While many of these will be posted on Blackboard and noted in the syllabus, in-class quizzes and writing assignments will not always be announced in advance. **25 points**
- 3) *Book groups*: students will be split into teams (or work alone, depending on class size) to read one of our assigned texts more intensively and lead a book-group discussion a portion of that book. This will require your group to choose 60-90 pages to assign and to prepare discussion questions for the class and lead the discussion in small groups. **10 points.**
- 4) *Policy paper assignment*: you will develop a policy paper inspired by an idea in your assigned book. This will require a literature review and a consideration of legal, theoretical, and empirical concerns shaping particular policy choices. The project will be completed in stages, with feedback and opportunities for revision. **30 points**
- 5) *Final Exit Interview*. During the final exam period, you will meet with the professor individually for a 30-minute exit interview. This exit interview will include questions about your experience in the Justice Studies program at Rhode Island college more generally as well as questions about your policy paper assignment and the assigned reading for the course. **30 points**

Note: federal guidelines expect students to complete three hours of work (including both in-class and out-of-class time) for every credit hour earned (to see this definition, search for "credit hour" at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2>).

Course Schedule

The schedule below is tentative and may be rearranged as needs dictate. Please check Blackboard for more specific details. *Readings & activities we will discuss in class are due no later than the beginning of class on the date for which they are listed. Nearly all assignments will be due on Sundays at 11:59 pm, with a no-questions-asked extension until 9 am on Tuesday. Any other dates are noted specifically (peer reviews and book groups are the exceptions).*

In assigned readings below, Chiarello, *Policing Patients* will be indicated with a **C**, Farris & Holman, *The Power of the Badge* with an **F**, and Vega, *Bordering on Indifference* with a **V**.

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Assigned Readings</i>	<i>Other Assigned Work</i>	<i>Class Meeting Date</i>
1	January 25	☒ Entire syllabus ☐ Read: Willingham, "How to Read Difficult Books"	☐ Introductory survey (will ask you about book/topic preferences)	January 20
2	January 25	☐ C , "Introduction," 1-23 ☐ F , "Introduction," 1-11 ☐ V , "Introduction," 1-26	N/A	January 27
3	February 1	☐ Begin reading the rest of your assigned book ☐ Young & Quinn, "An Essential Guide to Writing Policy Briefs"	☐ Policy paper topic proposal and exploration	February 3
4	February 8	☐ Career & Life Design Center materials in Blackboard ☐ Complete reading your assigned book	☐ Begin finding sources ☐ Book group dates & pages	February 10
5	February 15	☐ Wang & Park, "Searching for Information" ☐ Bardach, "The Eightfold Path" ☐ Your paper sources	☐ Sources assignment ☐ Career Profile assignment	February 17

6	February 22	☐ Your paper sources ☐ Booth, “Organizing Your Argument” and “Incorporating Sources”	☐ Annotated bibliography	February 24
7	March 1	☐ C, “Appendix,” 211-21 ☐ F, “Data and Methods Appendix,” 175-86 ☐ V, “Methodological Appendix,” 155-68	☐ Be prepared to speak about your project in class this week ☐ Cover letter & resume ☐ Indiana University Plagiarism Certification Test	March 3
≈SPRING BREAK≈				
8	March 15	☐ C, “Rethinking Policy and Practice,” 185-210 ☐ F, “Sheriffs, Inequality, and the Possibility of Accountability,” 147-76 ☐ V, “Conclusion,” 134-51	☐ Draft of rationale for action	March 17
9	March 22	☐ Sample policy papers in Blackboard	☐ Draft of proposed policy options ☐ Book group 1 prep	March 24
10	March 29	☐ Book group 1 assigned pages	☐ Book group 2 prep	March 31
11	April 5	☐ Book group 2 assigned pages	☐ Book group 3 prep ☐ Book group 1 self & peer assessment ☐ Draft of policy recommendations	April 7
12	April 12	☐ Book group 3 assigned pages	☐ Book group 2 self & peer assessment ☐ Draft of executive summary	April 14
13	April 19	☐ Review Week 3, 5, & 6 Reading	☐ Book group 3 self & peer assessment ☐ Complete revised draft of policy paper	April 21
14	April 26	☐ Reading TBA	☐ Policy paper peer review ☐ Final reflection	April 28
15	May 3	N/A	☐ Final policy paper ☐ Exit interview ☐ Course feedback form	<i>Individually Scheduled</i>

Course Policies

Academic Integrity: All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <https://library.ric.edu/proethics/>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Using AI writing systems, including text editors like Grammarly and chatbots like ChatGPT and Claude, and turning in the results as if they are your own work.
- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or check the links in Blackboard.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricated or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with other students or seeking help from professionals or peers on assignments which prohibit such activities.
- Destroying course materials or preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Academic Integrity Committee at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance: Please make every effort to attend all scheduled class sessions. Class sessions will not be recorded and group activities cannot be made up. However, we can work out a plan for alternative assignments if you become ill, face quarantine, or otherwise will miss more than a class or two. If you need an extension, instructions for requesting one are available in Blackboard.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard; you can request an extension for eligible assignments using the link in Blackboard. Assignments **must** be saved in *.rtf, *.doc, or *.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work.

Course Technology: Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at least a couple of times per week, and to have sufficient Internet access to complete readings & assignments via Blackboard. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services right away (<https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/user-support-services> or 456-8803).

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with the Center for Disability Access in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/center-disability-access>--if you have a disability that requires or would benefit from accommodations to ensure you have equal access to success in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment: Rhode Island College and its faculty are committed to creating a safe and open learning environment for all students. The College prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. RIC encourages all members of the community to seek support from, and report to, the Office of Institutional Equity. You may contact the Office at 401-456-8218, or learn more about college policies by visiting the <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/office-institutional-equity>. If you have experienced, witnessed, and/or received information about a potential violation, you can submit an incident report at that site. Incident reports are routed to the Director of Institutional Equity / Title IX Coordinator, and will initiate outreach from the Director to the individual(s) who have experienced harm.

All faculty and staff are now mandatory reporters. This means that if we learn about something that might be sex discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, pregnancy discrimination, LGBTQ discrimination), then we must report what we know to the Title IX Office. Usually, reports will only leave a record of concern, but sometimes, a report can be escalated into an investigation without a victim's consent. Mandatory reporters are expected to share information learned in all settings, including during class activities, assignments, office hours, and outside of class. **Please be thoughtful about what you disclose to me.**

Pregnancy Modifications: Rhode Island College prohibits differential treatment or discrimination against students based on their current, potential, or past parental, family, marital status, or pregnancy or related condition. Students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions may meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss reasonable modifications. The College's Pregnancy Policy is available at <https://our.ric.edu/pregnancy> and students can meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss reasonable modifications by initiating a request at that site. College policy requires all employees, upon receipt of a disclosure of pregnancy or related condition from a student, to refer that student to the Title IX Coordinator.

Basic Wellness Needs: To learn effectively, you must have basic security: a roof over your head along with a reliable place to sleep and enough food to eat. If you're having trouble with any of those things, please contact Learning for Life (l4info@ric.edu, or phone 401-456-6320). Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center (401-456-8094). Students in distress can call 401-456-4673 (HOPE) to confidentially speak with licensed clinician 24/7 at no cost. If you are experiencing a financial emergency, the FAST Fund provides small grants, outside of the RIC financial aid system. Learn more or apply at <https://fastfundric.wixsite.com/fast>.

Writing Lab: Everyone, even excellent students, benefits from having another set of eyes on their writing, so visit the **Writing Lab** early often to help develop your ideas, organize your writing, and improve your drafts: <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/division-student-success/student-services/academic-success-center/writing-lab>.

If you would like more information about the resources available at RIC or help navigating them, you can ask me at any time this semester. You do not need to tell me why you are asking to get help, whether for a friend, another student, or yourself.

Public Speaking Support: The Academic Success Center (ASC) offers public speaking and presentation practice tutoring where 50-minute appointments can be booked on the Writing Lab schedule. Tutors can support students on outlines, visual aids, delivery techniques, and strategies to ease presentation anxiety. All tutoring schedules can be viewed, links to book, and additional resources can be found on the [Tutoring at ASC](#) page. Email tutoring@ric.edu with any questions.

Academic Freedom

As college students, you are here to learn not just facts, but how to think critically think and reason. In many of the classrooms you'll enter, your preconceived notions, and sometimes deeply held beliefs, will be challenged. We ask you to embrace the opportunity to hone your own ideas and strengthen your opinions both outside and inside the classroom.

Academic freedom is the principle that supports a welcoming academic environment where open inquiry, critical analysis and intellectual growth are possible, and respectful debate is valued. By ensuring the right to express thoughts, challenge assumptions and pursue knowledge freely, academic freedom not only enriches individual growth but also upholds the integrity of higher education as a site of innovation and discovery. In this course, it is mutually agreed (by both instructor and student) that we support these principles of academic freedom.

Similar to how First Amendment protections allow us to question the orthodox and test the controversial, academic freedom allows professors and researchers to conduct their studies without fearing negative consequences based on their findings. While you may question your professors, and in fact sometimes may be encouraged to do so, professors maintain the right to determine the content of class lessons and the flow of classroom discussion. Curiosity and a healthy amount of skepticism are key components of learning, but respecting your professors as leaders of the classroom environment is also critical. Classrooms are not public forums, such as public sidewalks or greenspaces; they are spaces where discussion is curated by your professor based on course relevance.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet learning outcomes of the Justice Studies program (see <https://www.ric.edu/academics/undergraduate-degree-programs/justice-studies-ba> and click on "Program/Learning Goals" for more details):

1. Communicate, in written and oral form, criminological, sociological and other social justice arguments;
2. Engage in work developing research literacy;
3. Develop a sociological perspective on the justice system;
4. Become familiar with debates and guidelines about ethical, professional and moral standards involved in criminal justice activities;
5. Become familiar with issues of social justice both within and beyond the criminal justice system.

This course is designated as a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course for the Justice Studies major.