

Table of Contents

Why faculty should use this guide.....	1
Social Justice rubric description.....	1
Considerations for designing social justice assignments.....	2
Examples of assignment instructions and tips across disciplines.....	3-8
ILO Social Justice rubric.....	9
Instructional resources available from the Office of Diversity.....	10
Assignment essentials relevant to all assignments.....	11

ILO Social Justice rubric description

Given the dynamic landscapes of our local and global communities, social justice is an ongoing process of critical reflection, advocacy, and the examination of disciplinary approaches, various contexts, and power structures.

Why faculty should use this guide

This guide was developed by and for faculty in all Cal State East Bay academic colleges to support us in our efforts. By applying the suggestions contained in this guide, we are better able to craft assignments that help students demonstrate their achievement of the Institutional Learning Outcomes of Social Justice as they apply to our particular disciplines and programs.

Social justice is a malleable concept and should be adapted as needed to fit your course outcomes, disciplines, and pedagogy. This guide is being written in order to help faculty to create a learning environment that is conducive for students to address social justice issues. Consider the language of social justice and the impact it has on the class discourse.

Whether or not it is a major focus of your course, we are uniquely positioned as educators to nurture learners who can affect positive change based on nuanced understanding of relevant contexts, power structures, perspectives on social justice, and opportunities for advocacy.

Considerations for designing ILO Social Justice assignments

- This is an invitation for faculty and students to engage in ongoing learning about these concepts and theories. These topics are not merely intellectual but also include emotional and personal experiences. If feelings of defensiveness or tension arise, this is part of the process and instructors have a role facilitating the discussion in a safe environment.
- Discussions can be a particularly powerful way to facilitate learning by inviting students to externalize their ideas, emotions, questions, etc. Equitable facilitation with group learning agreements (sometimes called ground rules) and thoughtful prompts can particularly benefit students who may not usually engage in the classroom on this topic. Rather than avoiding sensitive topics, address the topics proactively to prepare students for the discussion and assignment.
- Recognize and empathize with student and faculty circumstances and the influence that it has on their role in discussion. For example, not looking to a student for input due to their race; creating space in order for all voices to be heard; listening to solutions for issues by those who have been directly affected by that issue. Integrate student views and input into assignments and classroom norms.
- Include learning materials that represent diverse epistemological, ontological, and disciplinary stances.
- Define key words in a manner that is helpful to your students as it applies to your discipline.
- Encourage your students to make the discourse their own to incorporate the issues into their own worldview relative to their lived experience. Similarly, be sensitive to questions or comments that may be posed.

<p>This column contains the definition of the rubric category, tips and guiding questions when designing an assignment</p>	<p>This column contains examples of language and approaches that instructors might use in the assignment.</p>
<p>Considerations for developing assignments focused on “Context(s)”</p> <p>“Context(s)” definition: <i>How context influences social justice.</i></p> <p><i>Context(s) may include: historical, political, cultural, economic, environmental, artistic, geographic, social.</i></p> <p><i>Influences may include: inequality; othering and inclusivity; intersectionality; amplifying or silencing of narratives.</i></p> <p>Tips for “Context(s)”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and examine multiple contexts and how they’re related. • Emphasize how understanding various contexts at play in your discipline can highlight how they influence or pave the way for problems and issues most often considered in your discipline. • Consider having students provide various types of evidence that they considered different contexts. • Note how complex and fluid contexts can be. <p>Guiding Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you encourage students to integrate varied contexts? • How do various contexts impact students' perceptions of power, equality, equity, inclusion, exclusion, and dignity? 	<p>Example assignment instructions/prompts for “Context”</p> <p>General Example for “Context(s)”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how context may be perceived differently for different people, and how those perceptions influence behavior. • Identify how various contexts at play shape advocacy or actions that are deemed acceptable. • Whose stories / what stories are often held up as the most respected or essential to a course/discipline/topic and which are typically silenced? What does this tell us about context? <p>Discipline Specific Examples for “Context(s)”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics: Discuss how rent control is experienced by different stakeholders (for example: tenants, landlords, developers). • Health Sciences: Identify an overlooked and/or surprising contextual influence for resistance to changes in health care policy (e.g. medical insurance for all). • Kinesiology: Identify how an interviewee's experiences in youth sport were gendered by a male-dominated sports context. • STEM: What historical and economic factors influenced the lines of inquiry that the most celebrated astronomers, physicists, biologists, psychologists, etc. pursued? • Nursing: What political, economic, and geographic factors are at play in the development and deployment of nutrition guidelines? • Economics: Discuss the various factors that shape education opportunities of children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which contexts do you tend to include or center in your pedagogy, course content, and assignments? • What contexts are considered taboo or irrelevant in your discipline and how might understanding these dynamics shape your class? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance: Discuss how the financial literacy of parents (context: economic, cultural) impacts the saving/investment behavior of children as well as their long-run wealth accumulation? • Political Science: Research a specific policy. Discuss the historical, political, and economic contexts that shaped that policy.
<p>Considerations for developing assignments for “Power Structures”</p> <p>“Power Structures” Definition: <i>How power systems, dynamics, and/or mechanisms influence social justice.</i></p> <p><i>Power structures may include institutionalization of privilege, oppression, poverty, violence, marginalization, and minoritization.</i></p> <p>Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide concrete examples such as governing bodies, professional organizations, regulatory bodies, racial hierarchy, or patriarchy. How did these come about and are they a necessary way to structure society? • Emphasize that there is a relationship between power structure and social justice. <p>Guiding questions for developing assignments focused on “Power Structures”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways can we step out of power structures, reject them, challenge them, and/or navigate them? • In what ways are you asking students to also deconstruct privilege rather than focusing specifically on marginalized or disadvantaged people? 	<p>Example assignment instructions/prompts for “Power Structures”</p> <p>General Examples for assignment instructions examples for “Power Structures”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select an issue and examine the various power structures at play, trace the historical path to why/how power structures are as they are. • What are the gatekeeping mechanisms that shape who/how people can enter the prevailing power structures? Are there individuals who are institutionally or systemically blocked from entering? • How does the power structure affect different populations in different ways? • Have you ever been marginalized? Have you ever contributed to the marginalization of other people? How might these experiences help you to understand communities/society as a whole? What dynamics, practices, and/or policies made this possible? • Identify an existing power structure such as racial or patriarchal hierarchies. If this structure were to no longer exist, how would society look different? How would policies look different? • Compare and contrast power structures at various geographic levels: local, state, federal, and global. • Describe how existing power structures influence daily life. Where do you fall within the power structure and how do you navigate power structures? • How do prevailing power structures such as economic structures shape the structure of education? • Identify existing power structures and all their complexity. What are the various layers, relationships, etc. of the power structures you would like students to consider?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose an issue (i.e. gentrification) and discuss the role the current power structure influences this issue. Who is affected and how? Who is benefiting from this issue and why? <p>Discipline Specific Examples</p> <p>Kinesiology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are various constructions of the body and what power structures are involved? Identify how the power structure impacts student-athletes and the NCAA in the case of affording athletes their names, images and likenesses. <p>Political Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the various modes of political participation? How do these modes challenge or uphold the existing power structure? Discuss the context in light of the existing power structures in which each mode is most effective. Identify: 1) Who is voting, 2) Who is being disenfranchised? 3) Who is being put in power? 4) Who are policies benefiting? <p>Nursing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which organizations and agencies champion “patient-centered care”? What is meant by this phrase? What does this communicate about power structures in health and health care?
<p>“Critical Perspective(s)” Definition <i>Reflects on own and others’ perspectives and roles regarding social justice (e.g., lived experiences; positionality and status quo; values and attitudes; biases and stereotypes; identity and intersectionality; harm and compassion)</i></p> <p>Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance/examples about self-reflection - consider expectations and disciplinary norms which may cause confusion about reflective writing (e.g. the use of “I...” statements) Provide definitions of positionality, intersectionality, etc. 	<p>Example assignment instructions/prompts for “Critical Perspective(s)”</p> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a given issue/problem in your course/discipline: What are the various perspectives at play? What are the underlying values, attitudes, biases, etc. that inform or shape these perspectives? What are the implications? What are the norms in your future or current profession? What other perspectives might be relevant? What would need to be true in the world for you to take on a perspective that you disagree with? Or that you want to take on but feel that you can’t? How has your perspective changed in light of this assignment?

- “Critical” - what does this mean in your course/disciplines?
- Have students reflect on their lived experience and how that affects their perspective relative to others.

Guiding questions for developing assignments focused on “Critical Perspective(s)”

- What are the norms in your discipline with regard to self-reflection?
- What/whose perspectives are considered part of the canon of your discipline? What/who else can be considered?
- Considering your discipline, what other disciplines’ perspectives seem relevant or would add to nuanced reflection?
- How are various perspectives communicated? (e.g. social media, peer-reviewed journals, mainstream media, etc.) What are the biases in these communication platforms?

Discipline specific:

Philosophy:

- John Rawls suggests that just laws are a product of making laws without knowing personal circumstance (race, sex, wealth, etc). How would this change our current laws?

Economics:

- If governments implement a new policy, what would be the impact on different communities or populations (e.g by geography, gender, income, immigration status, social status, race, etc.)?
- Given the crises of housing and displacement in the Bay Area, how might various stakeholders’ (tenants, landlords, developers, unhoused people, etc.) perspectives influence the solutions they propose? How might your own personal experience impact solutions you would support?
- Given the high cost of labor, bringing manufacturing back to the United States leads to greater costs to the consumers while benefiting those currently working in manufacturing. What are the various perspectives at play? Consumer? Worker? Government agency? What are the underlying values or priorities of these perspectives?

Nursing, Health Sciences, Social Sciences

- Describe your housing situation over the course of your life. How have these conditions influenced your wellness and life opportunities? After reviewing several discriminatory housing policies, how would you connect these policies to your own lived experience and to health indicators we have considered throughout the Bay Area?
- What does food mean to you? How have you experienced hunger? How might your responses to these influence your nursing care?

“Advocacy” Definition

Identify individual or group opportunities and actions intended to advance social justice.

Advocacy may include historical, current, or future: civic engagement, policy, future research, building/supporting coalitions /communities, and elevating awareness.

Tips

- Define what advocacy means in relation to the course and provide concrete examples.
- For complex issues, help students understand where they can start to have a sense of agency.
- Decide what/who you or your students are advocating for.
- Consider that advocacy does not automatically lead to desired outcomes or success.
- Discuss what intersectionality means to you/your students.
- Provide guidance about change; Aspirational - not necessary actually done during the assignment/academic term.
- Allow students to choose a topic they are “enthusiastic” about. Consider making it personal.

Example assignment instructions/prompts for “Advocacy”**General:**

- Identify an issue that affects a community: Who is marginalized? What are potential solutions to address that issue? How are these solutions reflective of who has proposed them. How might a recommendation be different based on those who have the need versus those who do not have the need.
- Identify local, national, or global organizations and explore how they engage in advocacy.
- How would you engage those in positions of power to enact change?
- Design a brochure/infographic/social media campaign to raise awareness about an issue that affects a community.
- What groups can you build coalitions with to increase your resources?
- Identify how academic research can lead to raising awareness and influencing policy/social change.
- What is or might be the outcome of the advocacy work?
- Anticipate potential unintended consequences of advocacy work.
- How might various forms of advocacy include individual and collective strategies?
- Imagine you had all the resources you needed, how would that change your advocacy strategy?
- How might you address the issue of gentrification and ongoing displacement on access to urban space? How would you use your power to advocate for change?

Guiding questions for developing assignments focused on “Advocacy”

- In what ways are you asking students to consider how change / advocacy are relevant to them personally, academically, and professionally?
- What experiences (of privilege and/or marginalization) do students bring to the assignment?
- Once you identify an issue, challenge students to not only describe the issue but possibilities for change.
- Be mindful of how student engagement with the assignment is likely to be related to their personal experiences with the topic.

Discipline specific:

Economics: What is the best course of action for companies concerned about wage equity while seeking to be cost effective? For example, California AB 5.

Political Science: Lobby for a policy. Research an existing policy and what elected representative supports/opposes it. You have three minutes to make your case.

Philosophy: Taking \$20, cause the greatest social change you can with it, and write about your experiences.

Kinesiology: Conduct an interview with someone who has experienced discrimination. Ask them for their thoughts on what can be done to achieve reconciliation, and whether they believe sports can help achieve such reconciliation, or if they perceive sports as a barrier to such reconciliation. Ask them to elaborate as to why.

Nursing: Given the increasing prevalence of childhood hunger, how might nurses address this topic at the individual, family, community, and systems levels?

ILO Social Justice Rubric Approved by ILO Subcommittee 5-4-20

Description: Given the dynamic landscapes of our local and global communities, social justice is an ongoing process of critical reflection, advocacy, and the examination of disciplinary approaches, various contexts, and power structures.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<p>Disciplinary/Interdisciplinary Critical evaluation of approaches or information specific to the discipline(s); may include disciplinary values.</p>	Skillfully evaluates disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches.	Adequately evaluates disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches.	Somewhat evaluates disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches.	Little or no evaluation of disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches.
<p>Context(s) How context influences social justice.</p> <p>Context(s) may include: historical, political, cultural, economic, environmental, artistic, geographic, social.</p> <p>Influences may include: inequality; othering and inclusivity; intersectionality; amplifying or silencing of narratives.</p>	Thoroughly explains context and its influence.	Adequately explains context and its influence.	Somewhat explains context and its influence.	Little to no explanation of context and-its influence.
<p>Power Structures How power systems, dynamics, and/or mechanisms influence social justice.</p> <p>Power structures may include institutionalization of privilege, oppression, poverty, violence, marginalization, and minoritization.</p>	Comprehensively explains the influence of power structures	Adequately explains the influence of power structures	Somewhat explains the influence of power structures.	Little to no explanation of the influence of power and obstacles to achieving social justice.
<p>Critical perspective(s) Reflects on own and others' perspectives regarding social justice.</p> <p>Perspectives may include: lived experiences; positionality, values, attitudes, and biases</p>	Comprehensively demonstrates critical reflection of self and others' perspectives..	Adequately demonstrates critical reflection of self and others' perspectives.	Somewhat demonstrates critical reflection of self and others' perspectives.	Little or no critical reflection of self and others' perspectives.
<p>Advocacy Identify individual or group opportunities and actions intended to advance social justice.</p> <p>Advocacy may include historical, current, or future: civic engagement, policy, future research, building/supporting coalitions /communities, and elevating awareness.</p>	Thoroughly identifies opportunities and explores actions.	Mostly identifies opportunities and explores actions.	Somewhat identifies opportunities and explores actions.	Inadequately identifies opportunities and explores actions.

Instructional Resources Available from the Office of Diversity

The [Office of Diversity](#) aspires to embody an authenticity that values the lived experience of all students, faculty, staff and to operate in partnership with the campus community to promote equitable student success.

University Diversity Office Mission and Logo



The Office of Diversity aspires to embody an authenticity that values the lived experience of all students, faculty, staff and to operate in partnership with the campus community to promote equitable student success.

We commit:

To center students

- To use critical race theory as a lens for analysis in decision-making
- To a holistic approach to problem solving and student support
- To serve as advocates, allies and accomplices
- To use nondominant and nonhierarchical practices
- To operate out of the theory of social justice
- To be mindful of intersectionality
- To value equity for all persons
- To interrogate systems of oppression

Here are some of our services for faculty and your students that support classroom assignments and instruction and also focus on building community, advocacy, inclusive, and mindful and providing a supportive environment.

- Read an [Urgent Message from the University Diversity Officer](#)
- Consider having your class attend [Cultural Awareness Keynote Speakers](#) to support your pedagogy and assignments.
- Consider joining a [Faculty/Staff Affinity Group/Mixer](#) for connection, support, ideas, and community.
- Let your students know about the [Diversity and Inclusion Student Center](#) (DISC) which provides a space for dialogue and engagement on equity and social justice. The DISC provides opportunities for leadership development, community engagement, and co-curricular programming on various topics of diversity and inclusion.

Assignment Essentials Relevant to All Assignments

Students complete assignments to:

- practice applying skills, content, and concepts learned, demonstrate their achievement, and
- to be assessed and receive feedback on the achievement of assignment, course, and program learning outcomes.

How will my assignment prompt students to show what content they have learned and/or demonstrate their skills?

Does the array of assignments in this class address students with varied learning preferences multiple means of demonstrating knowledge and skill acquisition?

Students need *clear and transparent expectations* and instructions documented *in writing*:

- Assignment instructions should clearly identify tasks, provide the required format elements, and describe the final product.
- Assignment descriptions should help students clearly understand the main purpose.
- Assignment descriptions should also demonstrate the connections to how their work meets learning outcomes, builds on their knowledge and skills for future assignments, relates to graduation, and has professional relevance.
- A grading rubric that expresses expectations and aligns with the outcomes will assist students as they complete the assignment.



How will assignment instructions clarify what tasks to do, how they are connected, how to get started, and how to complete the tasks?

How will you know if students met the assignment expectations; how will students be assessed?

Chunk and scaffold assignments: Students perform better on assignments when instructors break them into manageable chunks. Presenting students with smaller assignments that build into a larger one creates the opportunity for early feedback and improvement.

Example of smaller assignments that build toward a research essay that meets expectations:

Course timing	Week 6	Week 8	Week 10	Week 12	Week 14
Developmental Assignment Due	Thesis statement	Annotated Bibliography	Outline	Essay Draft	Final essay

Reflection Aids Retention: Students' learning improves and sticks when they *reflect* on their process and their completed assignment:

- Ask students to report what they learned from the assignment or what they would do differently in a future assignment.
- Student reflection on assignment process and performance may also help you shape the next version of the assignment.