

Local Justice

Time	Tue, Thu: 11:00AM–12:20PM
Location	Cooke Hall 248
Instruction Mode	LEC (Lecture) and P (In Person)
Credits	3.00

Notes Buddy

Instructor	Professor David Emmanuel Gray
Contact	📍 Park Hall 118, ✉️ degray@buffalo.edu
Student Meetings	Mon, Wed, Fri: 10:00AM–12:00PM, or by appointment
Course Website	https://www.buffalo.edu/~degray/LJ26/

Overview

Description

Buffalo is often called the “City of Good Neighbors.” But what does it mean to be a good neighbor, and what would it mean for Buffalo to be a just city? Is justice simply a matter of treating everyone the same? Or do values such as fairness, equity, inclusion, and shared responsibility require us to take differences in circumstances, opportunities, and needs into account? How should the benefits and burdens of city life be distributed among residents, neighborhoods, businesses, and other communities?

In this course, we reflect on questions like these through the case of Buffalo, examining local issues from economic, social, political, and ethical perspectives. In doing so, we will attempt to arrive at a better understanding of local justice, what individuals and institutions owe to one another, and what it might truly mean to live in a “City of Good Neighbors.”

Purposes & Learning Outcomes

The primary purpose of this course is to engage your cognitive and affective capacities for practically deliberating with others about issues of local justice and, in doing so, prepare you all for roles as future leaders.

To help guide us, this course has six learning outcomes. By the end of this course, you will be able to...

1. Explain and summarize arguments within philosophical texts.
2. Apply these arguments to the difficult social and political debates that currently confront our communities.
3. Assess competing claims concerning the nature of justice and the demands it makes on our actions and decisions.
4. Connect ideas of local justice with your own lived experiences.
5. Put your own conception local justice into action.
6. Reflect on your own assumptions and form more considered judgments on how you may address social issues.

I have designed all course activities (see page 2) with these in mind.

Learning Resources

There are no textbooks to buy for this course. I have posted all the readings on the course website. I expect you to read that material according to the class schedule (on pages 3–7). The course website will also give you access to all other resources, along with any updates to our schedule

Announcements & Other Communication

I will email important information to you throughout the semester, so routinely check your UB email for updates. Otherwise, I will gladly answer your questions, discuss your work, or respond to your concerns. Please visit me during my student meeting hours or reach out to me via email.

In designing this course, I have drawn on a wealth of material. Ramona Ilea (Pacific University) and Monica Janzen (Anoka-Ramsey Community College) have directly influenced many activities for this course. See their website on Engaged Philosophy (<https://www.engagedphilosophy.com>) for more. Meanwhile, Rory E. Craft (York College of Pennsylvania) provided me with invaluable assistance for the ungrading components of this course.

Ungrading Scheme

This course uses an “ungrading” approach, which focuses on learning and growth rather than points. Individual activities you complete will not receive grades. Instead, I will respond with questions and comments meant to help you better achieve the learning outcomes for this course. The aim is to create an environment where **experimentation is encouraged** and learning does not depend on getting things “right” the first time.

Throughout the semester, you will reflect on your own work and on the work of your peers. My goal is for you to take intellectual risks, seek meaningful improvement, and engage with the course without worrying about losing points for trying something new. Ungrading does not mean that all work is treated as equivalent; it means that quality is discussed through feedback and reflection rather than numerical scores.

To support this process, I will check in with you regularly, and you are welcome to ask about your progress at any time. If you participate actively in class discussions, keep up with annotating the readings on Perusall, and complete all the assigned activities in good faith, you will be well positioned for success in the course.

Midway through the course and again at the end, you will submit a self-reflection on your learning. In each reflection, you will assess the extent to which you have demonstrated growth and mastery in course material and the skills this course seeks to impart along three interconnected dimensions:

1. Achievement of the course learning outcomes.
2. Effort and engagement in the learning process.
3. Professionalism as a member of our learning community.

You will then propose the course grade you believe most accurately represents your work and learning, supported by specific evidence from throughout the semester along those three dimensions. (See the table on pages 8–9 for more on how letter grades relate to those dimensions.)

Your proposed grade should reflect the level at which you *consistently* performed across all three dimensions. A strong record in one area does not by itself justify a higher grade when another area shows a substantial or sustained shortfall. For example, an A proposal should be supported by evidence of high-distinction achievement, sustained and reflective effort, *and* consistently professional behavior.

This process is not about arguing for the highest grade you can obtain. It is an opportunity to make a thoughtful, evidence-based judgment about your learning, growth, choices, and participation in the course.

If you and I agree, that will be your grade. If we differ, then we will have a conversation to clarify our perspectives and reach a resolution together.

If you are interested in the theory behind and arguments justifying ungrading, I recommend the work of Susan Blum and Jesse Stommel.

Activities

Participation & Attendance

This course is based on the principle of experiential learning, where you learn not only from me but also from your discussions and interactions with your classmates. Indeed, like any activity, you get better at philosophy the more you actually *do* it. Therefore, we will work both in and out of class doing many different activities. This means that the quality of the course depends critically on your individual attention and participation. The purpose of us coming together as a class is to learn and engage in these discussions as a group.

Our class meetings will therefore be driven by discussion of the readings and their arguments, with time often set aside for group activities. This gives you the chance to actively practice philosophy, rather than passively absorb what others may say about it. To help keep you engaged, I will do my best to make our class meetings worthwhile and time well spent. I will also take special care to create an environment where you feel comfortable asking questions and expressing your own views. To get the most out of our class meetings, please *do not confuse this cooperative style of learning with mere conversation or informal, organized chatting*.

This is why I expect that you will **show up on time to our class meetings**, prepared to take notes, pay close attention to what we are covering, ask questions when confused, positively work with your partners during in-class activities, and, by the end of class, grasp what we accomplished that day.

I also highly encourage you to **find yourself a notes buddy**. That is, you are encouraged to exchange university email addresses with at least one other person in class. That way, if you miss something covered during a class meeting, you can contact your notes buddy and catch up on any material that you might have missed. In short, **if you miss class or are late to class, for any reason, contact your notes buddy**.

What If You Miss a Class Meeting?

Missing an in-class activity, such as a group discussion, under any circumstances does not excuse you from that activity. That said, I do not expect perfect attendance from you, so very occasionally missing a class meeting may not have significant impact on your success in the course.

In any case, if you miss a class meeting for a reason that is excused according to the university attendance policy (on page 12), you may have the opportunity to complete a make-up activity. The nature of this opportunity will depend on the precise class meeting missed, as some in-class activities are unique without any meaningful equivalent. However, even if the absence is excused, you must reach out to me via email with your documented excuse within 72 hours of the absence. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to make up the missed activity.

Group Discussion

Time is set aside during every class meeting for you to engage in discussions with your classmates, either in small groups or with all of us together as a class. Your success in group discussions are primarily based on you showing up on time, paying attention, remaining in the classroom, staying on topic, and doing your part. Getting "right" answers is usually not the goal of group discussion, so please do **take risks** and **push yourself out of your comfort zone** so that you may have a more rewarding learning experience.

Social Annotation

Readings are assigned most weeks, which you are expected to have read and thought about according to the class schedule (on pages 3–7). This allows us to spend our class meetings discussing and applying those texts rather than merely review their contents. Hence, you must do more than merely peruse the readings: you must endeavor to understand what they are trying to convey.

To assist you with in that process, you will work with your classmates on Perusall to collaboratively annotate the readings. Unless you are told otherwise, for each of the social annotation activities, make at least 5 annotations to the reading. Your annotations for a reading are due at 10:30AM, 30-minutes *before* we talk about that reading in class.

Substantive responses to the annotations of your classmates will count as annotations of your own. Indeed, this is meant to be a real social experience for us, so **I would strongly prefer that at least half of your annotations are in response to those of a classmate**. Remember, though, be respectful of each other—the purpose of these annotations is for us to think about the readings together while also learning from each other.

Experiments in Local Justice

You will also be doing several experiments in local justice throughout the semester. The overarching goal of all these experiments is to help you connect our discussions of local justice to the real world and your own experiences back to those discussions.

Without a doubt, these are the most amazing part of the course!

Most experiments will be followed up with a reflection activity and, if appropriate, documentation of what you did. I will give you more specific requirements as the due dates approach. If you feel anxious about any experiment guidelines—let me know so I can better clarify them.

Please note that many of these experiments in local justice ask for you to interact with your world and community. However, please do so only in a way that is **SAFE** and **COMFORTABLE** to **YOU**. You get to choose how you will complete these experiments. Please do not hesitate to meet with me if you are encountering difficulties in completing them.

Final Presentation

The most important experiment in local justice that you will do this semester is completing the Active Citizen Micro-Credential from UB's Office of Community & Civic Engagement. For that activity, you will have to put together a one-minute Pitch-Your-Impact video that showcases your work and its impact. Then, during our final exam period during finals week, you will do a short (four- to five-minute) oral presentation where you reflect on your activity and present your Pitch-Your-Impact video to me, your classmates, and anyone else you would like me to invite. (That four- to five-minute minutes does include the time for your video, so plan your presentation accordingly.)

Schedule

wk	Date	Topics & Readings	Activities
1	8/25 (Tue)	What is Local Justice? (Topic #1) Read: Brooks, D. (2018, October 18). The neighborhood is the unit of change. <i>The New York Times</i> . https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/opinion/neighborhood-social-infrastructure-community.html	
	8/27 (Thu)	What is Local Justice? Read: Jacobs, J. (1961). <i>The death and life of great American cities</i> . Random House.	
	8/28 (Fri)		Introductory Survey due by 11:59PM (midnight). Honor Agreement due by 11:59PM (midnight). Active Citizen Micro-Credential Enrollment due by 11:59PM (midnight).
2	8/31 (Mon)		Eyes on Your Street Observation due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	9/1 (Tue)	What is Local Justice? Read: Partnership for the Public Good. (2022–2026). <i>Community agendas: 2026 to 2022</i> . https://ppgbuffalo.org/community-agenda/	Community Issue Mapping due in class.
	9/3 (Thu)	Guest Speaker: Hannah Giarrizzo (Assistant Director, Community & Civic Engagement, University at Buffalo) Read: University at Buffalo. (n.d.). <i>Community & civic engagement micro-credentials</i> . https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/life-on-campus/community/values/community-civic-engage.host.html/content/shared/www/studentlife/units/uls/student-engagement/signature-opportunities/sen-cert-community.detail.html Read: Adams, J. S., Patterson, S., & Skendall, K. C. (2024, February 8). Socially responsible leadership and the social change model. <i>New Directions for Student Leadership</i> , 2023(180), 61–71.	
3	9/7 (Mon)		One Local Choice Audit due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	9/8 (Tue)	Guest Speaker: Kimberly Podgorsak (Coordinator of Federal and State Aid, Economic Development, Town of Amherst) Reading TBD.	
	9/10 (Thu)	Guest Speaker: Hannah Giarrizzo (Assistant Director, Community & Civic Engagement, University at Buffalo) Read: Spears, L. C. (2005). The understanding and practice of servant-leadership. <i>The International Journal of Servant-Leadership</i> , 1(1), 24–45. Read: Cole, T. (2022, March 21). The white-savior industrial complex. <i>The Atlantic</i> . https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/	

All times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Every required reading will have a social annotation activity due that day at 10:30AM.

Do not forget that **every class meeting will have some sort of group discussion activity**.

Optional Material: Any items in the schedule marked optional are just that. While I may discuss optional material during class, *you are not required* to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Schedule (Continued)

wk	Date	Topics & Readings	Activities
4	9/14 (Mon)		Local Justice Issue Selection due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	9/15 (Tue)	Guest Speaker: Hannah Giarrizzo (Assistant Director, Community & Civic Engagement, University at Buffalo) Read: Lopez, C. (n.d.). <i>Analyzing root causes of problems: The "but why?" technique</i> . Community Tool Box. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/analyze-community-problems-and-solutions/root-causes/main	Root Cause Tree due in class.
	9/17 (Thu)	Field Trip: Experience UB Fair Read: Putnam, R. (1995, January). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 6(1), 65–78.	Experience UB Fair Visit due in class.
5	9/22 (Tue)	Consequentialist Justice (Topic #2) Read: MacAskill, W. (2015). Worms and water pumps. In <i>Doing good better</i> (pp. 1–14). Avery.	
	9/24 (Thu)	Guest Speaker: Mitchell Nowakowski (Buffalo City Council Member, Fillmore District) Reading TBD.	
6	9/28 (Mon)		Volunteer Project Approval due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	9/29 (Tue)	Consequentialist Justice Read: MacAskill, W. (2015). Overhead costs, CEO pay, and other confusions. In <i>Doing good better</i> (pp. 103–127). Avery.	Charitable Giving Investigation due in class.
	10/1 (Thu)	Mutual Aid (Topic #3) Read: Pearlman, S. (2022, June 23). <i>In tension: Effective altruism and mutual aid</i> . Blog of the American Philosophical Association (APA). https://blog.apaonline.org/2022/06/23/in-tension-effective-altruism-and-mutual-aid/	
7	10/5 (Mon)		Mid-Semester Reflection due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	10/6 (Tue)	Mutual Aid Read: Gammage, J. (2021, January 25). <i>Solidarity, not charity: Mutual aid's an-archic history</i> . Blog of the American Philosophical Association (APA). https://blog.apaonline.org/2021/01/25/solidarity-not-charity-mutual-aids-an-archic-history/	
	10/8 (Thu)	Distributive Justice (Topic #4) Read: Nozick, R. (1974). Distributive justice. In <i>Anarchy, state, and utopia</i> (pp. 149–231). Basic Books.	

All times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Every required reading will have a social annotation activity due that day at 10:30AM.

Do not forget that **every class meeting will have some sort of group discussion activity**.

Optional Material: Any items in the schedule marked optional are just that. While I may discuss optional material during class, *you are not required* to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Schedule (Continued)

wk	Date	Topics & Readings	Activities
8	10/12 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #1 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	10/13 (Tue)	 Fall Break 	
	10/15 (Thu)	Guest Speaker: Hannah Giarrizzo (Assistant Director, Community & Civic Engagement, University at Buffalo) Read: Doner, A., Rosing, H., Hopes, K., & Dwyer-Voss, R. (2022). <i>Asset mapping user guide: Overview</i> . Institute of Museum and Library Services. https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/tool-asset-mapping-user-guide.pdf Read: Keam, H. (n.d.). <i>Asset based community development at a glance</i> . Tamarack Institute. https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Abcd-at-a-glance.pdf Read: Voice of Witness. (n.d.). <i>VOW's ethical storytelling principles</i> . https://voiceofwitness.org/resource-library/ethical-storytelling-principles/ Read: Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. (2019). <i>Ethical storytelling guide for nonprofits: Key principles & practices</i> . https://legacy-dev.scu.edu/media/ethics-center/social-sector-ethics/Ethical-Storytelling-Guide-for-Nonprofits-2019.pdf	
9	10/19 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #2 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	10/20 (Tue)	Distributive Justice Read: Rawls, J. (1999). The principles of justice. In <i>A theory of justice</i> (Rev. ed., pp. 47–101). Belknap Press.	
	10/22 (Thu)	Charter Schools (Topic #5) Read: Schmidtz, D. (2019). Charter schools. In H. Brighouse & D. Schmidtz (Eds.), <i>Debating education: Is there a role for markets?</i> (pp. 17–45). Oxford University Press.	
10	10/26 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #3 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	10/27 (Tue)	Charter Schools Read: Brighouse, D. (2019). The case against markets in education. In H. Brighouse & D. Schmidtz (Eds.), <i>Debating education: Is there a role for markets?</i> (pp. 171–210). Oxford University Press.	
	10/29 (Thu)	Relational Justice (Topic #6) Read: Scheffler, S. (2003, January). What is egalitarianism? <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> , 31(1), 5–39.	

All times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Every required reading will have a social annotation activity due that day at 10:30AM.

Do not forget that **every class meeting will have some sort of group discussion activity**.

Optional Material: Any items in the schedule marked optional are just that. While I may discuss optional material during class, *you are not required* to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Schedule (Continued)

wk	Date	Topics & Readings	Activities
11	11/2 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #4 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	11/3 (Tue)	Field Trip: Election Day Bash Read: Beramendi, P., Besley, T., & Levi, M. (2024) Political equality: What is it and why does it matter?, <i>Oxford Open Economics</i> , 3(Supplement_1), i262–i281. https://doi.org/10.1093/ooec/odado55	Election Day Bash Visit due in class.
	11/5 (Thu)	Relational Justice Read: Garrau M., & Laborde, C. (2015). Relational equality, non-domination, and vulnerability. In C. Fourie, F. Schuppert, & I. Wallimann-Helmer (Eds.), <i>Social equality: Essays on what it means to be equals</i> (pp. 45–64). Oxford University Press.	
12	11/9 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #5 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	11/10 (Tue)	Structural Injustice (Topic #7) Read: Blatto, A. (2018, May 7). <i>A city divided: A brief history of segregation in Buffalo</i> . Partnership for the Public Good. https://ppgbuffalo.org/buffalo-commons/library/resource:a-city-divided-a-brief-history-of-segregation-in-buffalo-1/	Parable of the Polygons due in class.
	11/12 (Thu)	Structural Injustice Read: Young, I. M. (2011). Structure as the subject of justice. In <i>Responsibility for justice</i> (pp. 43–74). Oxford University Press.	
13	11/16 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #6 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	11/17 (Tue)	Structural Injustice Read: Young, I. M. (2011). A social connection model. In <i>Responsibility for justice</i> (pp. 95–122). Oxford University Press.	
	11/19 (Thu)	Policing (Topic #8) Read: Monaghan, J. (2023). Policing in a complex and coupled criminal legal system. In <i>Just policing</i> (pp. 27–47). Oxford University Press.	
14	11/23 (Mon)		Volunteer Log #7 due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	11/24, 26	 Thanksgiving Break 	
15	12/1 (Tue)	Policing Read: Monaghan, J. (2023). Legitimacy risks and the separation of police powers. In <i>Just policing</i> (pp. 81–100). Oxford University Press.	
	12/3 (Thu)	Pitching Your Impact Reading TBD.	

All times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Every required reading will have a social annotation activity due that day at 10:30AM.

Do not forget that **every class meeting will have some sort of group discussion activity**.

Optional Material: Any items in the schedule marked optional are just that. While I may discuss optional material during class, *you are not required* to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Schedule (Continued)

wk	Date	Topics & Readings	Activities
16	12/7 (Mon)		Volunteer Project Poster due by 11:59PM (midnight). Pitch-Your-Impact Video due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	12/8 (Tue)		Final Active Citizen Reflections due by 11:59PM (midnight).
	12/10 (Thu)	Final Presentations from 11:45AM to 2:45PM	Final Presentations due in class.
17	12/14 (Mon)		End-of-Semester Reflection due by 11:59PM (midnight).

All times are Buffalo (Eastern Standard) Time.

Every required reading will have a social annotation activity due that day at 10:30AM.

Do not forget that **every class meeting will have some sort of group discussion activity**.

Optional Material: Any items in the schedule marked optional are just that. While I may discuss optional material during class, *you are not required* to have done them. Even so, I provide these items in case you are curious to learn more about these topics. Any activities related to optional material will only assume that you were present in class if/when they were discussed.

Letter Grades & Measures of Success

As mentioned on page 1, at the end of the course, you will propose the final letter grade that you believe most accurately represents your work and learning in this course. Your proposal should be supported by specific evidence from throughout the semester and should consider three interconnected dimensions: (1) **achievement** of the course learning outcomes, (2) **effort and engagement** in the learning process, and (3) **professionalism** as a member of our learning community.

Your proposed grade should reflect the level at which you **consistently** performed across all three dimensions. A strong record in one area does not by itself justify a higher grade when another area shows a substantial or sustained shortfall. For example, an A proposal should be supported by evidence of high-distinction achievement, sustained and reflective effort, **and** consistently professional engagement. The table below and on the next page will help you better understand my expectations regarding each of these three dimensions

Remember, this process is not about arguing for the highest grade you can obtain. It is an opportunity to make a thoughtful, evidence-based judgment about your learning, growth, choices, and participation in the course.

Letter Grade	UB Grade Category	Achievement	Effort & Engagement	Professionalism
A	High Distinction	Your work provides clear and consistent evidence of exceptional achievement of the course learning outcomes. You can point to specific examples showing deep understanding, insight, accuracy, and the ability to apply, synthesize, or extend course concepts.	You can demonstrate sustained, high-level engagement with your learning through preparation, practice, revision, reflection, and thoughtful use of feedback across the course. Your effort has been consistent rather than concentrated only around major assignments.	You have consistently contributed to the course as a responsible and engaged member of the learning community. You have been punctual, prepared, attentive, respectful, communicative, meaningfully involved in class activities and discussions, and consistently met course deadlines.
A–	High Distinction	Your work provides strong evidence of excellent achievement of the learning outcomes, with only minor gaps or inconsistencies. You can identify examples of thoughtful, accurate, and well-developed work throughout the course.	You have shown strong and sustained effort through regular preparation, revision, practice, and use of feedback. You can explain how your engagement contributed to your growth over the semester.	You have consistently demonstrated professional habits, including punctuality, preparation, attentiveness, participation, respectful communication, follow-through, and meeting deadlines. Minor or occasional lapses may have occurred, but they have not characterized your overall engagement
B+	Superior	Your work demonstrates very strong achievement of the learning outcomes and a clear command of most course concepts and skills. You can identify areas of strong performance as well as places where greater depth, consistency, or independence would have strengthened your learning.	You have invested substantial and generally consistent effort in preparation, practice, revision, and responding to feedback. Your record of engagement shows meaningful commitment to improving your work.	You have regularly been prepared, punctual, attentive, respectful, and constructively involved in the course, and you have generally met deadlines reliably. Occasional inconsistencies have not significantly affected your contribution to the learning environment.
B	Superior	Your work demonstrates solid and competent achievement of the learning outcomes. You can show that you understand and can apply the major concepts and skills of the course, while also identifying some limitations in depth, complexity, or consistency.	You have demonstrated consistent and appropriate effort and have engaged in the work needed to develop your knowledge and skills. You have generally responded to feedback and opportunities for growth.	You have generally demonstrated good professional habits in attendance, punctuality, preparation, attention, communication, participation, follow-through, and meeting deadlines. Your engagement has supported your learning and the work of the class, even if it has not always been fully consistent.

Letter Grades & Measures of Success (Continued)

Letter Grade	UB Grade Category	Achievement	Effort & Engagement	Professionalism
B–	Superior	Your work demonstrates generally successful achievement of the learning outcomes, but you can identify noticeable gaps or inconsistencies in understanding, application, or independence.	You have put forth meaningful effort, although your preparation, practice, revision, or use of feedback has sometimes been uneven. Your reflection should identify where more sustained engagement would have strengthened your learning.	You have usually met professional expectations, though recurring lapses in punctuality, preparation, attention, participation, communication, follow-through, or meeting deadlines have affected your engagement.
C+	Average	Your work demonstrates adequate achievement of the learning outcomes, with clear strengths in some areas and meaningful gaps in others. You can provide evidence of progress while also identifying outcomes that remain less fully developed.	You have shown sufficient effort to make progress, though your preparation, practice, revision, or use of feedback has been inconsistent. Your self-assessment should acknowledge where your engagement limited further growth.	You have demonstrated acceptable professional behavior overall, though attendance, punctuality, attentiveness, preparation, participation, communication, follow-through, or meeting deadlines have been uneven.
C	Average	Your work demonstrates basic achievement of the essential course learning outcomes. You can show functional understanding of core concepts and skills, while recognizing significant limitations in depth, precision, consistency, or independent application.	Your effort has been adequate but often focused on meeting immediate requirements rather than sustained learning and improvement. Preparation, practice, revision, or use of feedback have been inconsistent.	You have met basic expectations for professional conduct, though recurring weaknesses in attendance, punctuality, preparation, attention, communication, participation, follow-through, or meeting deadlines have affected your experience in the course.
C–	Average	Your work demonstrates partial achievement of the learning outcomes, with important areas of knowledge or skill remaining underdeveloped. Your proposed grade should account for both the learning you can demonstrate and the significant gaps that remain.	You have made some meaningful effort, but it has not been sufficiently consistent or sustained to address important learning gaps. Opportunities for preparation, practice, revision, feedback, or support have sometimes gone unused.	Your professional engagement has been inconsistent and has at times interfered with your learning or contribution to the course. Frequent issues may have occurred in attendance, punctuality, preparation, attention, participation, follow-through, or meeting deadlines.
D+	Minimum passing performance	Your work demonstrates limited achievement of the course learning outcomes. You can provide some evidence of learning, but substantial gaps remain in understanding, skill, application, or consistency.	Your effort has been limited or inconsistent and has not resulted in sustained progress toward many of the course outcomes. Your reflection should acknowledge significant missed opportunities for engagement and improvement.	You have met professional expectations inconsistently, and issues with attendance, punctuality, preparation, attention, participation, communication, responsibility, follow-through, or meeting deadlines have meaningfully affected your learning.
D	Minimum passing performance	Your work demonstrates only minimal achievement of the essential learning outcomes. You can identify some evidence of learning, but major deficiencies remain across the course.	Your engagement has been substantially below what was needed for successful development in the course. Preparation, practice, revision, response to feedback, or use of available support have been minimal or highly inconsistent.	Your professional conduct has frequently fallen below course expectations, and patterns of lateness, absence, lack of preparation, inattention, limited participation, poor follow-through, or missed deadlines have significantly affected your engagement.
F	Failure	The evidence from your work does not demonstrate sufficient achievement of the essential course learning outcomes to support passing the course. Significant gaps remain in the knowledge, skills, or applications expected by the end of the course.	There is insufficient evidence of sustained effort and engagement to demonstrate meaningful progress toward the course outcomes. Opportunities for practice, revision, feedback, communication, or support have gone substantially unused.	Your professional engagement has not met the minimum expectations necessary for successful participation in the course. Persistent concerns in this area have significantly limited your ability to engage in the learning process.

Policies

Late Work

Classes become quite overwhelming when deadlines are missed. In such situations, it is easy for work—and anxiety!—to pile up. This is why I expect that all your activities are done on time.

That said, there may be times when you cannot get things done as expected. If that happens, **do not panic!** Please see me about what a reasonable accommodation might look like in your situation.

Reasonable Accommodations

You are a human being with all the usual challenges associated with human finitude. Illness, family emergencies, job interviews, other professors, and so on will inevitably lead to legitimate conflicts over your time. If you expect that you will be unable to complete a course activity on time, please notify me as soon as possible and we can agree on a reasonable accommodation.

Please recognize that most reasonable accommodations will require that you do additional work. This is done to keep things fair between you and your classmates—after all you are asking for extra time that they do not get. So when you propose a reasonable accommodation, please reflect on what would preserve that fairness.

Photography & Recording Etiquette

To maintain an open academic environment that encourages class discussions about potentially controversial, sensitive, and/or personal issues, I ask that you please refrain from taking photographs or making audio and/or video recordings during class.

Mobile Phones, Laptops & Related Technologies

Student interactions with portable technology devices can harm the dynamics of the classroom. Unless I tell you otherwise, you must silence mobile phones prior to class and not use them during class. All laptops should be closed unless you have made prior arrangements with me and have demonstrated that using a laptop is necessary for your learning.

Sharing Course Materials

All my course materials, available digitally or distributed in hardcopy during class, are protected by copyright laws. You may use these materials and make copies for your own personal use, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of course materials without my written permission is strictly prohibited.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is embodied by commitments to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, diligence, and rigor in the pursuit of knowledge. As a student in this class, academic integrity means following all directions on assignments, clearly distinguishing your own original work from the work done by others in your assignments, and seeking help whenever you are struggling. This is laid out in the academic honor code (on page 11) for this course. You are also expected to sign an agreement to adhere to that code.

In this class, the typical violation of academic integrity is *plagiarism*. Examples of this include cutting-and-pasting material without proper citation, paraphrasing ideas from external sources (including large-language models (LLMs) and generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT) without attribution, and borrowing ideas from a classmate without acknowledgment.

To avoid this, you must strive for clarity in your writing in order to distinguish between when you are presenting your own ideas (typically by using first-person pronouns “I”, “me”, “my”, etc.) and when you are presenting someone else’s ideas (by properly citing the source). Keep in mind, this includes the ideas of your classmates and any assistance you receive from the Center for Excellence in Writing (CEW), from LLMs and generative AI tools, and from me.

While I treat violations of academic integrity on a case-by-case basis, I carefully follow the University at Buffalo’s process of consultative resolution. According to this process, when I suspect an academic integrity violation, I first meet with the student for an explanation. If, after that meeting, I remain convinced that there is a violation, I will report it to the Chair of the Philosophy Department, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Academic Integrity Office. This protects the student’s right to appeal.

Beyond that, I typically impose a penalty that exceeds the penalty of not having done the activity at all, which for this course usually involves reducing your final grade in the course. Again, the student retains the right to appeal any such decision.

In particularly severe cases, or when the student has committed previous academic integrity infractions, there may also be further penalties imposed by the Academic Integrity Office.

For more information, please visit their website:

<https://academicintegrity.buffalo.edu>

If you ever find yourself tempted to violate these standards of academic integrity, please seek an alternative course of action. Email me for a reasonable accommodation, or turn in partially completed work. I assure you that the impact will be far more generous in these ways.

Academic Honor Code for Local Justice

Students at the University at Buffalo, because they part of a community of scholars, must share its commitment to learning and discovery. The nature of this commitment generates fundamental obligations to the highest standards of academic integrity, honesty, and ethics. Adhering to these principles ensures that the academic endeavors we undertake garner us the greatest personal satisfaction and intellectual gain.

The University at Buffalo academic community is composed of learners—individuals dedicated to an open exchange of ideas and who share their ideas for the purpose of improving knowledge for all people. In order for this academic enterprise to be successful, we must embrace personal, ethical, and moral principles to guide our interactions.

These principles require personal integrity, a commitment to honesty without compromise, as well as truth without equivocation and knowing when to place the good of the community above the good of the self. Obligations once undertaken must be met, commitments kept.

The discovery, advancement, and communication of knowledge are not possible without these commitments. Creativity cannot exist without acknowledgment of the creativity of others. New knowledge cannot be developed without credit for prior knowledge. Without the ability to trust that these principles will be observed, our academic community cannot exist.

The commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to the highest of personal, ethical, and moral standards also contributes to the respect in which the University at Buffalo degree is held. Students must not destroy or otherwise diminish that respect by their failure to meet these standards.

Student Responsibilities

For this course, it is important that no one gains an unfair advantage through academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is any act that does or potentially could improperly distort student grades or other academic records. Such acts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation and/or completion of any course activity.
- Unauthorized collaboration with another student or person in fulfilling course requirements.
- Unacknowledged use of large-language models (LLMs) and generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, in completing any course activity. (Using AI tools that are *not* generative, such as spellcheckers and auto-annotation (e.g. EndNote) are permissible.)
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate citations.
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the student.

In addition, each student enrolled in this class must sign an honor agreement affirming their commitment to uphold this code. This agreement may reappear for activities to remind everyone of their responsibilities.

Faculty Responsibilities

As the instructor, I am also expected to help create an environment where honesty flourishes. To that end, I will do my utmost to make it known as specifically as possible, on multiple occasions, what constitutes appropriate academic conduct as well as what comprises academic misconduct in this course.

Throughout all this, I will also provide clarification to any student questions concerning any of the above.

University Policies

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University at Buffalo is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for equal access to this course for all students. To access accommodation services, you must initiate the request with Accessibility Resources at Student Life.

If Accessibility Resources determines that your request for accommodation is reasonable, they will provide you with an Accommodation Memo. Keep in mind that you will need a new Accommodation Memo each semester. (If you are a returning student and your needs have not changed, you can simply contact Accessibility Resources for an updated Accommodation Memo.)

Once you receive your Accommodation Memo, it is your responsibility to inform faculty and staff of any accommodations that they may need to know about. The Accessibility Resources staff will explain in more detail how (and when) to share this Accommodation Memo with others.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/who-we-are/departments/accessibility.html>

Sex Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

The University at Buffalo is committed to ensuring that all members of our community can work and learn in a safe environment, free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking.

For my part, I am committed to preserving a classroom and university environment in which each student can contribute and learn free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. I am also committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, and so on.

Please note that **all University at Buffalo faculty members are required to report disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to me in- or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in assignments), I am required to share that with EDI. EDI, will, in turn, reach out to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. EDI will keep all information private, and will only proceed with an investigation with the consent of the student, or if there is a risk to the health or safety to the reporting student or others if the university does not take action.

For more information, please contact the University at Buffalo's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266, or visit

<https://www.buffalo.edu/equity/support/obtaining-assistance/sex-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment.html>

For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Attendance

The university is committed to promoting student responsibility; therefore, there is no rule for student class attendance. However, every class instructor shall provide students a course syllabus during the first week of class that specifies attendance policies and dates and times for classes, exams and all other required activities. Classes are to meet at the time and location listed in the official university course schedule, unless changed with the consent of the entire class. Instructors may take account of unexcused absences in determining course grades. However, participation in various university activities (e.g., athletics) may require class absence.

Students may be justifiably absent from classes due to military obligations, religious observances, illness documented by a physician or other appropriate health care professional, conflicts with university-sanctioned activities documented by an appropriate university administrator, public emergencies, and documented personal or family emergencies. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor in writing with as much advance notice as possible. Instructors may determine a reasonable amount of coursework that should be completed to make up the student's absence. Students are responsible for the prompt completion of any alternative assignments.

If a student absence situation cannot be resolved between the student and the class instructor, or either party feels unfairly treated by the process, the Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate Students should be followed. For more information, please visit

<https://catalogs.buffalo.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=19#academic-grievance-policy-and-procedures-for-undergraduate-students>

For information regarding procedures for military call-up during the semester, please refer to the Undergraduate Leave of Absence forms. For more information, please visit

<https://catalogs.buffalo.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=19#leave-of-absence>

Attendance on Religious Holy Days

Students who belong to religious faiths that require observance during work or school days will be excused from class without penalty if they have provided advanced instructor notification. If such a requested absence results in a student's inability to fulfill the academic requirement of a course scheduled on that particular day, the instructor must provide an opportunity for the student to make up the requirement without penalty. Students shall not be charged any fees or experience any adverse or prejudicial effects due to absence from coursework due to religious observance.

If a student absence situation cannot be resolved between the student and the class instructor, or either party feels unfairly treated by the process, the Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate Students should be followed. For more information, please visit

<https://catalogs.buffalo.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=19#academic-grievance-policy-and-procedures-for-undergraduate-students>