

# Purpose of Module & Choice of Social Justice Issue

The purpose of this learning module is to provide you with an opportunity to explore situations in which people find themselves at a social or financial disadvantage due to religious, political, or economic differences. Social justice focuses on the equitable distribution of both the benefits and burdens of society. In some instances, some may call for a "redistribution of resources to ensure fairness in meeting the basic needs of people...to diminish significant disparities" (Weisheit & Morn, 2004, p. 30).

We have studied theories that focus on [justice](https://www.iep.utm.edu/justwest/) in society. In the case of [John Stuart Mills](https://www.iep.utm.edu/mill-eth/), his utilitarian definition of justice called for impartiality, fairness, and equality of opportunity for *classes* of people, rather than focusing on the justice due to *individuals*. He asserted that human beings have moral rights that transcend the law.

[John Rawls](https://www.iep.utm.edu/rawls/) offered a more refined theory of social justice which "specifically addresses the way modern society distributes its goods and services" (Souryal, 2015, p. 187). He argues that studying "justice" requires that we examine the structures of society, which includes political, legal, social, and economic institutions. He clearly distinguishes the concepts of "justice" and "fairness", and presents three rank-ordered principles: greatest equal liberty, greatest equal opportunity, and differences related to issues of inequality.

## Social Justice Topics: You Choose One

**Throughout this module, students will be working independently to choose and learn about a social justice issue that intersects with criminal justice. There are several issues criminal justice officials must react to during various decision-making points in the criminal justice system. Criminal justice officials must frequently respond to broader social problems in an ethical manner.**

You will choose one social justice topic that intersects with criminal justice from the following areas:

- Behavioral health (e.g., drug use, mental health)
- Environmental justice
- Gender justice
- Hunger & Homelessness

## Connecting Classroom Learning

Although it may not have meant much when you registered for this course, it is designated as a High Impact (HIP) Capstone course. As such, our learning is meant to incorporate activities that provide you with deeper, more meaningful learning experiences. High impact teaching practices provide various types of learning opportunities designed to increase rates of student retention and student engagement (See AACU's [High Impact Educational Practices](https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips)).

You are being provided with **your choice of two capstone projects** which provide an **integrative learning** experience. Simply stated, students will apply what they are learning in the classroom to situations beyond the campus or across disciplines or perspectives.

The AACU (2009) defines "integrative learning" as "an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and cocurriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus" (p. 1).

## Purpose of this Module

The purpose of the discussions and assignments in this module is to achieve the following course learning objectives:

- Identify, describe, and apply the foundations of ethics and morality.
- Explore the intersection of ethics in criminal justice with the broader scope of social justice.
- Demonstrate analytical skills and knowledge when examining ethical situations.

## Structure of this Module is Different

As you have probably already noticed, this module is structured differently. This is done to allow students the opportunity to delve deeply into a social justice issue of their own choosing. There are multiple pages and assignments associated with this module, so be sure to read everything carefully and review them throughout the remainder of the course. All the pages and assessments are linked to the Module page of Webcourse, and are found within the following Module 3 sections:

- Module 2: Capstone Projects: Intersections of Criminal and Social Justice
- Module 2 (cont.) - Capstone Service Learning Option
- Module 2 (cont.) - Capstone Activities for Everyone
- Module 2 (cont.) - Capstone Formal Paper Option

Be sure to read through everything. You will be choosing between the "Service Learning Option" or "Formal Paper Option" for your capstone project. If you have any questions after reading through the Module pages, please send me a message through Inbox.

### References

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). *Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/integrative-learning> (<https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/integrative-learning>)

Souryal, S. (2015). *Ethics in criminal justice: In search of the truth*. New York: Routledge.

Weisheit, R., & Morn, F. (2004). *Pursuing justice*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.