Phil 260-001 Social Justice
Aug.—Dec. 2009
Call #: 11033
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If you need to see me, your best bet is to make an appointment. I can probably accommodate your schedule if my office hours are not convenient.

Prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Philosophy: Phil. 122.

Course Content: God calls individuals and communities to be just. Philosophers argue that justice is a virtue necessary for all societies and communities. But what does justice, especially social justice, mean? The concept has a history which this course will examine by a careful reading of classic texts of Old Testament, New Testament, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and Locke. Conflicting interpretations of the Industrial Revolution and responses to it will also be examined: Marx, Catholic social teaching, and social democracy. The role of unions and government welfare provisions as means to achieving social justice will also be investigated. The final section of the course will treat the issue of extreme poverty (the bottom billion who live on less than $1/day) in the context of growing global economic ties and domestic poverty (i.e. poverty in the USA) which raises social justice issues of race, class, equality of opportunity, and distribution of income and wealth. Central issues of the course include interpretations of property rights (private, public, common), alternative economic systems (markets, planning, mixed economies), poverty and poverty alleviation, and governments’ roles in establishing social justice.

Format: Lecture and discussion.

Blackboard: Assignments and links to texts will be posted on Blackboard.

Required Assignments:

1. Short written assignments to help students assimilate materials as the course proceeds and/or quizzes to show mastery of assigned reading materials. Since assignments are meant to prepare for class, late assignments will not be accepted for credit, nor will makeup quizzes be permitted. Short written assignments will be submitted via Blackboard “Discussion Board.” (30% of grade)

2. A 1000 word paper on the meaning of social justice in a religious or humanist tradition (e.g. Orthodox Judaism, Buddhism). The paper could also be a discussion of one or other criticism of the notion of social justice itself. (10%)

3. A 1200 word paper on international poverty alleviation. (10%)

4. A 1200 word paper on domestic poverty alleviation. (10%)


6. Final exam: W Dec. 16 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (30%).

Attendance: Attendance will be taken at each class. “After 6 absences the student will receive an F in the course. If the student goes beyond the maximum number of allowed absences before the last day for an administrative withdrawal, the student may still withdraw from the course in the normal way to
avoid an F.” (College of Arts and Sciences, Office of the Dean, Guide for New Faculty, Fall 2001, p.7)

Grading: A = 93-100%
A- = 90-93%
B+ = 87-89%
B  = 84-86%
B-  = 80-83%
C+ = 77-79%
C  = 73-75%
C-  = 70-72%
D+  = 67-69%
D  = 60-67%
F   = Below 60%

Texts: Texts will be available online (in Blackboard).

“Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodation in this class should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Disability Services are located in the Academic Enrichment Center, Monroe Hall 405.” (Statement suggested by the Office of Disability Services in the Academic Resource Center, Beginning of the Year Reminders to All A&S Faculty, p. 2)

Goals and Objectives: Please consult the Department of Philosophy: Goals and Learning Objectives (http://cas.loyno.edu/philosophy/programs.html) for Upper Level Philosophy Common Curriculum and also the College of Arts and Sciences Goals and Objectives of the Common Curriculum (http://cas.loyno.edu/common/purpose.html).

This course has been designed to satisfy Department Objectives for Upper Level Common Curriculum Classes Objective 5: Development of student capacity to reflect on and critique presupposed values,” especially ethical norms and standards in their variety and complexity ‘latent within contemporary economic structures and institutions, and Objective 7a: Development of student capacity to summarize with clarity and evaluation with insight some of the philosophical arguments, problems, questions, or issues arguably germane to the meaning and practical implementation of social justice.

It has also been designed to satisfy the College of Arts and Science Common Curriculum Objectives by helping students to develop comprehension of historical, economic, political, social and technological forces that shape, in particular, our society’s current economic arrangements, policies, and their impact on domestic and global poverty and poverty alleviation.

Outcomes Assessment: The course will begin with a survey of what students think about claims relevant to social justice. At the end of the course, students will revisit these claims after having read and thought critically about them. The pre-course and post-course surveys are designed to show students’ progress in thinking critically and
acting justly.

**Sequence of Classes**

M Aug. 31 Introduction to course

W Sept. 2 Survey of Students’ Views on Social Justice Issues
   Discussion of students responses to a variety of claims about economic and social justice
   that will be explored further in the course.

F Sept. 4 The Concept of Social Justice

M Sept. 7 Labor Day Holiday

W Sept. 9 Classic Texts 1: Old Testament


   Paper on meaning of social justice due.

W Sept. 16 Classic Texts 4: (*Politics*, Book 1, chaps. 8-10; Bk 2, chap. 5).

F Sept. 18 Classic Texts 5: Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q. 66, arts. 1-3, 7;


F Sept. 25 Trade 1

M Sept. 28 Trade 2

W Sept. 30 Industrial Revolution 1 [Marx 1]

M Oct. 5 Industrial Revolution 2 [Marx 2]

W Oct. 7 Industrial Revolution 3 [*How the West Grew Rich* 1]

F Oct. 9 Industrial Revolution 4 [*How the West Grew Rich* 2]

M Oct. 12 Industrial Revolution 5 [*How the West Grew Rich* 3]


F Oct. 16 Midterm Examination

M-T Oct. 19-20 Fall Holiday

W Oct. 21 Catholic Social Teaching 1 [Living Wage: *Rerum Novarum*]

F Oct. 23 Catholic Social Teaching 2 Unions 1 [Freeman and Medof, chap. 1]
M Oct. 26 Unions 2
W Oct. 28 Welfare State 1
F Oct. 30 Welfare State 2
M Nov. 2 Welfare State 3
W Nov. 4 Welfare State 4
F Nov. 6 Welfare State 5
M Nov. 9 Global Poverty 1
W Nov. 11 Global Poverty 2
F Nov. 13 Global Poverty 3
M Nov. 16 Global Poverty 4
W Nov. 18 Global Poverty 5
F Nov. 20 Domestic Poverty 1
M Nov. 23 Domestic Poverty 2
W-F Nov. 25-27 Thanksgiving Holidays
M Nov. 30 Domestic Poverty 3
F Nov. 21 Domestic Poverty 4
W Dec. 2 Domestic Poverty 5
F Dec. 4 Domestic Poverty 6
M Dec. 7 Domestic Poverty 7
W Dec. 9 Review 1

TR Dec. 10 Paper on Domestic Poverty is Due.

F Dec. 11 Review 2

W Dec. 16 Examination: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

        Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year