

Catholic Economic Justice
RELS 399

Fall Semester 2015
W 11:00–1:30
Prof. Matt Eggemeier and Peter Fritz
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Office hours:

W 1:30–2:30 (shared office hour); Eggemeier: TR 12:30–1:45; Fritz: TR 2:00–3:00. Since this is a team-taught course, we encourage you to direct all communication to both of us (especially emails), and if you wish to meet with us, to attempt to find a time when we can all meet together. Appointments outside our posted office hours are welcome.

Course description:

This course will introduce students to the tension between Catholic theology and capitalist economics, and to grassroots Catholic attempts to work for economic justice. Students will explore Catholic Social Teaching, a tradition of Catholic doctrine led by recent popes' sharp criticisms of capitalism; they will familiarize themselves with the main tenets and practices of the dominant contemporary model of capitalism, Neoliberalism; they will engage in theological inquiry into four major topics--creation, the human person, the church, and the end of the world; and they will learn, in part by experience, about several models for Catholic, grassroots activism toward economic justice. This course is recommended especially for students who want to learn about and actively participate in the Catholic, social justice-oriented mission of Holy Cross. This course includes a community based learning component that will require at least two hours of weekly service at a community partner organization in Worcester.

Course goals:

By the end of the course, students should ...

1. Have a working familiarity with recent Catholic social teaching on capitalism.
2. Be able to speak and write intelligently on the main aspects of neoliberalism.
3. Have considered some important models of Christian resistance to neoliberalism, including theoretical, direct action, radical democratic, and intersectional approaches.
4. Have begun reflecting theologically on neoliberal capitalism with respect to one or more of the following classic theological topics: ecclesiology, creation, and eschatology.
5. Have applied in action and reflection the theories of this course by doing service at a Catholic organization in Worcester that works toward remedying the ills of our socio-economic system.
6. Have improved their ability to write concise, clear, and closely documented arguments, whether in brief or more lengthy forms.

Required texts:

The following texts are available in the Holy Cross bookstore:

1. Thomas Massaro, SJ, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, second classroom edition, Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, ISBN-13: 978-1442210134, paperback.
2. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, Zone Books, 2015, ISBN-13: 978-1935408536, hardcover.
3. Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism v. the Climate*, Simon & Schuster, 2014, ISBN-13: 978-1451697384, hardcover.

Many more required texts will be posted on Moodle, as designated in the schedule below.

Course requirements:

1. **Regular attendance and informed, active participation.** Active participation creates a positive learning environment for all involved in a course, whatever course. This is particularly true in a seminar. Active—and in this case we mean **vocal**—participation is not just something that “spices up” class, but is the central component of it. A seminar consists of a group of people who are reading the same works and digging deeply into them together. The key idea here is collaborative inquiry. We are helping each other to learn and to understand. This all occurs via conversation. Since this course meets only once a week, it is **imperative** that each participant in our semester-long conversation attend **every** class.
2. **Completion of the required reading before the class for which it is assigned.** This seminar is reading intensive. Without reading the assigned texts, you cannot constructively participate in class, and you will not benefit as much as you should from the course. Please read the texts carefully and keep up with the schedule below. Take careful notes on the readings, at least in the margins. This syllabus provides a schedule of most of this semester’s readings. We shall specify several selections and there may be some alterations to it as we proceed, but you will be notified well in advance in either case. Plan ample time to ingest and to digest over 100pp. of reading per week, and to complete your writing assignments.
3. **Community based learning: direct, weekly service.** As stated in the course description and course goals, this is a community based learning course that requires **weekly service** (around 2 hours/week) at a community partner organization in the city of Worcester. During our first class meeting you will receive ample information about how to sign up for a site, what will be involved and expected for the service component, and other salient logistical information. For now, please note that there will be a CBL Fair in **Hogan 401 on Tuesday, Sep 8, from 4:30–5:45PM**. This will be a prime opportunity for you to meet and to speak with representatives from our community partners and to sign up for a service site. Please also note that the Director of the Donelan CBL Office (**Fenwick 322**), Dr. Michelle Sterk Barrett, and other

office staff have set aside time for our class on **Monday, Sep 7, from 10:00AM–12:00 noon** to fill out necessary paperwork and in case you would like to drop in and ask questions/learn more about CBL. Periodically throughout the semester we will set aside class time for reflection specifically on your CBL experiences. See #4 below for writing assignments related to CBL. We hope that the CBL component of this course will help you to assimilate and to deepen your engagement with the theoretical-theological-Catholic critique of capitalism prosecuted in the other components of the course.

4. **Weekly writing.** Every week you will have a brief writing assignment for this course. Several weeks will be set aside to reflect in a formal, written way on your CBL experiences. For the other weeks you will write a position paper that responds directly to questions that we will pose to you. Construct each paper according to the appropriate instructions below. The aim of both kinds of papers is twofold: they will help you improve your writing, and they will ensure that you have something to say in class discussions. Please submit each paper on Moodle via the link provided under the week for which the paper is due **by 5:00 PM the evening before class**. Plan your reading, writing, and service time accordingly. You can always submit early!!

Here are the **required** parameters for **CBL Reflection Papers**:

You will write four CBL reflection papers over the course of the semester. These four papers should build off one another, allowing you to deepen your engagement with your work at the community partner organization and to recognize the connection between the work you are doing there and in the other work you are doing for this course. If you need further guidance, we can provide that as the semester proceeds.

Paper 1: The focus for this paper is **attention**. Write a 300-word reflection paper that describes your experience of the community partner organization. Try to answer questions such as: Where is the site? What work did you do there? Who did you meet? What did you discuss? The object here is to compose the scene for us. Be as detailed and concrete as you can. In the process of preparing and writing up your description, we hope you will become more attentive in your service.

Paper 2: The focus for this paper is **understanding**. Write a 300-word reflection paper that describes your experience in your service work, but this time try to understand the work being done at your community partner organization in terms of your understanding of neoliberalism and its destructiveness, and in terms of the models for social change discussed in part two of the course. How is your organization trying to remedy the ill effects of contemporary capitalism? With which model for social change does your organization's work seem to fit best?

Paper 3: The focus for this paper is **evaluation**. Write a 300-word reflection paper that evaluates your service work, positively and negatively, from both the perspective of neoliberalism and of Catholic Social Teaching. What faults might a neoliberal find with your work? Would a neoliberal find anything positive about your work? Then answer both of these questions from the viewpoint of CST. What principles of CST fit best

with your particular service work? Are there any ways that CST might challenge the particular work you are doing?

Paper 4: The focus for this paper is **conversion**. Write a 300-word reflection paper that discusses how your outlook on service at a community organization has changed in light of our semester-long conversation on capitalism and Catholic Social Teaching. Let us be clear: this is not an occasion to hit us with a bunch of pious platitudes or for you to emote vaguely about your CBL experience. Instead, discuss specific, concrete examples of ways that your thinking and/or behavior has changed—or will change—because of this experience. There is always the possibility that this experience didn't change you much. If that's the case, discuss this, and tell us why you think no change happened or needed to happen.

Here are the **required** parameters for all of the **Position Papers**:

- a) Begin the paper with a **thesis**. State it in no more than **35 words**, and set it off as separate from the body of the paper. Your thesis should clearly and concisely answer the question posed, and it should imply the structure of the rest of the paper.
 - b) Write the **body** of the paper in **300 words** or fewer, beyond your thesis statement. Make sure that each sentence follows logically from the one before it, and that all sentences refer back to some aspect of the thesis.
 - c) The paper must refer specifically and frequently to our reading for the week. **Quote or paraphrase** several different sites in the text that illustrate your points. Use parenthetical citations, referring to the work and page number you are referencing: e.g., (Klein 89).
 - d) End the paper with **three critical questions** about the readings that could generate discussion during the seminar. Over the course of the semester we will ask you to pose critical questions to the class from this list.
5. **Midterm examination.** The week after fall break (class meeting on Oct 21), the first half of class will be devoted to a written, closed-book, closed-note exam on the key concepts covered in the course so far. The purpose of this exam is to make sure that everyone is ready to proceed to the second half of the course, during which we will ramp up our theoretical critique of neoliberal capitalism. More details on the format of and content on the exam will be shared with you by midsemester break.
 6. **Attendance at one extra event (Nov 12, 4:30 PM, Rehm Library).** We have the unique privilege this semester of having one our course authors visiting to give a lecture. We will attend a lecture by **Wendy Brown**, entitled "Cultures of Capital Enhancement: Who Is the Neoliberal Subject and What Does It Know of Democracy?". You are **required** to attend this lecture, and to post a reflection on it on Moodle by Friday Nov 13 at 5:00PM (so take good notes!!!). If you are **absolutely unable** to attend this lecture, please let us know **in advance**, and we can arrange a makeup assignment. *This syllabus is advance notice. Please plan accordingly.*

7. **Major paper.** By the end of the course, you will produce a **10-12-page**, double-spaced research paper. We will discuss the topic and parameters of this paper later in the semester. It will be due via **Moodle** by **Thursday, Dec 14 at 11:59PM**. For now, keep this in mind: you must choose your topic at the latest by **Oct 28**. Before you make your selection, you should consult in office hours with at least one of us (ideally both). Please begin thinking about your selection early and keep us updated as to what you might like to research. Remember: we are experienced researchers and can help you select a topic area and narrow down a specific topic!

Assessment:

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation (including attendance and preparation):	25%
CBL Service:	15%
Weekly reaction/position papers:	30%
Midterm examination:	10%
Major Paper:	20%

Your average will be aligned with the following grading scale: 100-95 (A), 94-90 (A-), 89-87 (B+), 86-83 (B), 82-80 (B-), 79-77 (C+), 76-73 (C), 72-70 (C-), 69-65 (D) 65-0 (F).

Academic honesty:

You are required to adhere strictly to the College's academic honesty policy. To review this policy, please consult the College Catalog at <http://www.holycross.edu/catalog/>. There are three notes to be made with respect to this course. First, please write your papers yourself. Second, for the midterm, you are welcome and encouraged to study together. Third, for your final paper, please cite your sources, and cite them accurately. Since this is an upper-level course, you will have to draw on other scholars' work. Give credit where credit is due. If you ever have any questions with respect to citations, please ask us.

Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Part One: Introductions		
Sep 2	Course Introduction;	Read: Syllabus;

	Papal Teaching on Capitalism	<p>Pope John Paul II, <i>Centessimus Annus</i>, selections (Moodle);</p> <p>Pope Benedict XVI, “Ethics and Market,” <i>Caritas in Veritate</i>, selections (Moodle);</p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>, selections (Moodle).</p>
Sep 9	What Is Catholic Social Teaching?	<p>Read: Thomas Massaro, <i>Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action</i>, ix–16, 33–54, 79–150.</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
Sep 16	The Game Changer: Neoliberalism	<p>Read: Jesuit Provincials of Latin America, “Letter on Neoliberalism” (Moodle);</p> <p>Wendy Brown, <i>Undoing the Demos</i>, 9–45;</p> <p>Manfred Steger and Ravi Roy, <i>Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction</i>, 1–49 (Moodle);</p> <p>John Sniegocki, “Neoliberal Globalization: Critiques and Alternatives,” 321–339 (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
Part Two: Grassroots Models for Catholic Economic Justice		
Sep 23	Direct Action/Anarchism	<p>Read: Dorothy Day, <i>Selected Writings</i> (Moodle);</p> <p>Mary Segers, “Equality and Christian Anarchism: The Political and Social Ideas of the Catholic Worker” (Moodle);</p> <p>David Graeber, “Occupy Wall Street’s Anarchist Roots” (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Reflection paper on CBL.</p>
Sep 30	Grassroots Radical Democracy	<p>Read: Romand Coles, “Of Tensions and Tricksters: Grassroots Democracy in Theory and Practice” (Moodle);</p> <p>Jeffrey Stout, <i>Blessed are the Organized</i> (Moodle);</p>

		<p>C. Melissa Snarr, “Women’s Working Poverty: Feminist and Religious Alliances in the Living Wage Movement” (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
Oct 7	Intersectionality: Race/Class/ Gender	<p>Read: Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” accessible online at http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/.</p> <p>Andrea Smith, “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing” (Moodle)</p> <p>Arundhati Roy, excerpt from <i>Capitalism: a Ghost Story</i> (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
MID-SEMESTER BREAK		
Oct 21	<p>Mid-Term Exam/CBL Discussion</p> <p>There are no readings assigned for this week. Instead, you have two tasks. First, for Monday, Oct 19, by 5:00PM, you must write a reflection paper on your CBL experience. Second, for Wednesday you must study for the midterm exam.</p>	
<p>Part Three: Neoliberal Capitalism vs. Catholic Theology</p>		
Oct 28	Neoliberalism Destroying the Earth	<p>Read: Naomi Klein, <i>This Changes Everything</i>, 1–95, 161–187.</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>

Nov 4	Catholic Theology of Creation	<p>Read: Naomi Klein, <i>This Changes Everything</i>, 337–366, 449–466;</p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si</i>, selections (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Reflection paper on CBL.</p>
Nov 11	Neoliberalism: Deforming People and Communities	<p>Read: Wendy Brown, <i>Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution</i>, 47–78, 175–200;</p> <p>Mike Davis, “Slum Ecology” (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Reflection paper on Wendy Brown lecture due Friday by 5:00PM.</p>
Nov 18	Catholic Anthropology and Ecclesiology	<p>Read: William Cavanaugh, “Freedom and Unfreedom,” 1–32 (Moodle);</p> <p>Jon Sobrino, “The Principle of Mercy and the Samaritan Church,” 15–26 (Moodle);</p> <p>Daniel Bell, <i>Economy of Desire</i>, 93–122, 161–186 (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
Dec 2	Marxist and Neoliberal Eschatologies	<p>Read: Terry Eagleton, <i>Why Marx Was Right</i> (Moodle);</p> <p>Maurizio Lazzarato interview (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: Position paper.</p>
Dec 9	Catholic Eschatology	<p>Read: Karl Rahner, “Marxist Utopia and the Christian Future” (Moodle);</p> <p>Peter Fritz, “Reader’s Guide to Rahner” (Moodle);</p> <p>Johann Baptist Metz, “God Against the Myth of the Eternity of Time” (Moodle).</p> <p>Write: CBL Reflection paper.</p>