



**TR527: “Manna and Mammon in a World of Disparity:
Toward a Theology and Practices of Sabbath Economics”**

Spring 2016

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

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This will be a hybrid course with 20 hours of in-class instruction and 20 hours of online instruction by [Ched Myers](#) (based in southern California with [Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries](#)). Our process will be supported by a local teaching assistant, Chad Schwitters, executive director of [Urban Homeworks](#) in Minneapolis.

Course Description

Description: Economic justice is predicated on the principle of relative equity regarding basic human needs. This course examines this notion through the biblical lens of “Sabbath Economics,” which identifies relational sufficiency as the divine vision for human life, and structural socio-economic disparity as an essential characteristic of human sin. Our moral and social imagination needs inspiration from the old wisdom of scripture to engage pressing challenges of today’s vastly unequal and ecologically unsustainable economic realities. Because 2016 is the year of Luke’s gospel in the Revised Common Lectionary, class sessions will explore these issues primarily through the third gospel’s narratives concerning wealth and poverty, and how Jesus navigated the conflicted terrain of his social world. Other readings will focus on contemporary economic ethics and practices.

The course will touch upon salient issues of economic anthropology including: debt and surplus; gift economies and market determinism; charity and justice; ecological economics and disparity as an unsustainable “design flaw” from a permaculture perspective; the relationship between capital and community; poor people as subjects; hospitality and exclusion; addiction and recovery; insularity and solidarity; provisional discipleship strategies of economic repentance, resistance and renewal; and Sabbath Economics covenanting. Along the way we will look at some contemporary faith-rooted social movements seeking to address disparity in the Twin Cities, nationally and globally, including local guest speakers.

Learning Outcomes. Students will:

- 1) Learn moral and theological language that can contest social silence and popular exoneration around issues of economic inequality;
- 2) Gain basic literacy in differing (and contesting) economic philosophies, and learn tools of social analysis;
- 3) Be exposed to a theological framework and hermeneutic approach that “reads the Bible economically in order to read the economy biblically.”
- 4) Have multiple opportunities to craft sermons or bible studies for their local faith communities during Lectionary Year C;
- 5) Be invited to reflect on personal and political practices of economic justice, compassion and sustainability through a Sabbath Economics lens.

Requirements and how evaluated (% of grade):

1. **20%:** Attendance of online lectures (or prompt review of recording); attendance at hybrid in-class sessions (April 18-21); completion of required reading.
2. **20%:** A four page book review of one of books 5-9 listed above. Due: Friday 3/18.
3. **15%:** A two page exposition of a Lukan text through the lens of Sabbath Economics (excluding texts we work with in class). Due: Friday, 4/1.
4. **15%:** Participation in local exposure tour.
5. **30%:** Final project presentation (in class during hybrid week, 30 min) and integration paper (no more than 10 pages) about how you are going to tackle one concrete aspect of Sabbath Economics practice in your home life, neighborhood, work and/or ministry. Paper due 4/22.

Course Texts - Required:

1. Ched Myers, *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics* (Tell the Word Press, 2001) and Matthew Colwell, *Sabbath Economics: Household Practices* (Tell the Word Press, 2007); available from www.chedmyers.org/books/sabbath-economics-booklet-bundle-biblical-vision-sabbath-economics-myers-and-sabbath-economics.
2. Select articles to be provided by professor.
3. Tavis Smiley and Cornel West, *The Rich and the Rest of us: A Poverty Manifesto* (Smiley Books, 2012).
4. [O. C. Edwards, *Luke's Story of Jesus*, Fortress Press, 1981.](#)

Course Texts - Supplemental & Recommended:

5. Pyung Soo Seo, *Luke's Jesus in the Roman Empire and the Emperor in the Gospel of Luke* (Pickwick Press, 2015).
6. Jonathan Knight, *Luke's Gospel* (Routledge, 1998).
7. Ulrich Duchrow and Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Property for People, Not for Profit: Alternatives to the Global Tyranny of Capital* (Zed Books, 2004).
8. Chuck Collins and Mary Wright, *The Moral Measure of the Economy* (Orbis Books, 2007).

9. Barbara Brandt, *Whole Life Economics: Revaluing Everyday Life* (New Society Publishers, 1995).

Grading Rubrics/Criteria for Evaluation:

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| 1. Papers should be single spaced, 12 pt font, header with your name, footer w/ page #. No separate title page needed; indicate class # and date under paper title |
| 2. Final presentation should be creative, engaging; no more than a half hour in length. |

General Class Structure:

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| 1. Weekly two hour webinar-style presentations from instructor, or local discussion or project visit. |
| 2. Last week of semester is hybrid week for in class instruction |
| 3. Optional local conversation with T.A. Chad Schwitters |

Course Schedule (topic/assignments, etc. for each week):

(bold = online sessions, all times PST; italics = Lukan text in RCL)

Wed Jan 27: Introduction to Theme & Class (online session, 5-7 pm PST)

- Community, Logistics & Requirements, Learning Covenant & Goals, Overview of Syllabus
- Intro to Sabbath Economics: The 1st Temptation (Lk 4:1-13; *1 Lent, 2/14*)

Tues Feb 2: Naming the 1% (online session, 5-7 pm PST)

- The Occupy Critique; Ignacio Ellacuria on the "civilization of wealth and poverty"
- The Political Context of the Gospel: Luke and Empire
- Socio-economic disparity as a problem in the Hebrew Bible and Luke
- Disparity in Modernity & Antiquity: an anthropological approach

Mon Feb 8: Luke's Context, Theological/Social Project (online session, 5-7 pm)

- Overview of Luke's Narrative Style and Story
- The Nazareth Sermon as Jubilee Manifesto (4:14-30: *3 & 4 Epi, 1/24, 31*)

Week of Feb 15: Field trip (no online session) to visit local sites doing economic justice work (Minneapolis will be tour of Urban Homeworks and discussion of *Smiley & West* with Chad Schwitters).

Wed, Feb 24: Showing & Telling Jubilee in Luke (online session, 5-7 pm)

- Wilderness Feedings, Eucharist as a Sabbath Economics Ritual (9:10-17)
- Disciple's Prayer: Jubilee Manifesto Reiterated (11:1-4: *10. Pent, 7/24*)
- Jubilee movements in history

Week of Feb 29: The Great Economy (optional discussion with Schwitters)

- Community and Capital: Tonnies and Polanyi
- *Pleonexia*: The First Rich Man Parable (Lk 12:13-21; *11. Pent, 7/31*)
- Ecological Economics: Wendell Berry and Hazel Henderson

- Apprenticing to the Great Economy (Lk 12:22-34)

Mar 7: Hybrid week (no online session); another opportunity to visit local sites

Mon, Mar 14: Healing from Too Little & Too Much (online session, 5-7 pm)

- The political body as metaphor for the body politic
- Debt: Woman Bent Over (Lk 13:10-17; *14. Pent, 8/21*)
- Affluenza: Man Too Bloated (14:1-6)
- Response: Bob Two Bulls, Episcopal Diocese of MN Native Ministries

Mar 21 Easter Week (no class); another opportunity to visit local sites (optional: BCM webinar on “Watershed Discipleship,” Tue, Mar 22, 5:30-7 pm PST)

Tue, Mar 29: Hospitality vs. Hierarchy (online session, 5-7 pm PST)

- Downward Mobility: Banquet Parable 1 (Lk 14:7-14; *15. Pent, 8/28*)
- The Welcome Table: Banquet Parable 2 (Lk 14:15-24)
- Response: Mark Van Steenwyk, Mennonite Worker ()

Wed, Apr 6: Subverting a “Filthy Rotten System” (online session, 5-7 pm)

- The “De-fective” Manager (Lk 16:1-14; *18. Pent, 9/18*)
- Consequences of Disparity: Dives & Lazarus (16:19-31; *19. Pent, 9/25*);

Week of Apr 11: Roundtable on Economic Justice and Development Work in the Twin Cities facilitated by Chad Schwitters (date tba)

Apr 18-21 (in class sessions Mon-Thurs, 9-noon, 1-3 pm): Redistribution as Redemption and the Cost of Discipleship

- **Mon:** “Do you see this woman?” (7:36-8:3; *4. Pent, 6/12*); Sociodrama; Project presentations
- **Tue:** “God has raised up the lowly...” (Lk 18:35-43); “...and brought down the mighty” (Lk 19:1-10; *24. Pent, 10/30*); Project presentations
- **Wed:** A Final Warning Tale: Defection as a *Via Crucis* (Lk 19:11-27); Project presentations
- **Thu:** Household Covenanting & Sabbath Economics strategies today; Class Evaluation

Expectations for Auditors:

Students auditing this class are expected to view/attend all presentations, and read as much of the required material as possible. You are welcome to attend the local project visit(s).

Petition for Extension Policy

The work for a course must be completed by the end of the final class session. The performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of the work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructor. Extensions of time to complete course work beyond the end of the final class session will be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. [Each instructor will include this policy on each course syllabus as well as the criteria by which she or he will grant such an extraordinary exception.]

If an exception is made, the instructor must agree to the extension by the end of the final class session and the student must complete the Petition for Extension form to be submitted in lieu of a grade. If the student is unable to negotiate the extension by the end of the final class session due to critical health issues, the student is responsible for seeing that the instructor is notified as soon as possible and then negotiating the extension promptly. If no petition for extension is filed, a final grade will be submitted.

Copyright Compliance Policy

All work in this class is expected to follow the Copyright Compliance Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*. The full Copyright Policy is at the Circulation desk in the Spencer Library.

Academic Integrity Policy

All work in this class is expected to follow the Academic Integrity Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Inclusive Language Policy

All work in this class is expected to follow the Inclusive Language Policy in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Confidentiality and Disclosure within Small Group Settings

All work in this class is expected to follow the Policy Regarding Confidentiality and Disclosure within Small Group Settings in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Statement on Boundaries

Regarding Professional Boundaries, see the Statement on Boundaries in the *Masters Student Handbook*.

Email Communications

To be in compliance with FERPA regulations, email communications from the faculty and staff of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities will be handled via UTS email only. Assistance setting up forward or redirection of messages is available by contacting computersupport@unitedseminary.edu.