

THS 790B: Markets, Justice, and Christian Ethics

Fall 2014

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45

Wingate Hall 202

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I. Course Description

What is the market system, and how does it structure economic and social life? What is economic justice in the context of modern market systems, and how should Christians promote it? This course examines the structure of modern markets and evaluates their moral meaning in Christian theological perspective. After a brief introductory course section, the second section introduces the market system as a mechanism of social coordination and a context of moral meaning, practice, and experience. The third section embarks upon a fast-paced tour through Protestant and Catholic responses to modern industrial economies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fourth section explores contemporary issues in economic ethics, including globalization, capitalism, work, consumer behavior, corporate responsibility, debt and usury, global and domestic inequality, and the relationship between economy and ecology.

II. Learning Goals

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the fundamental structure of the market system;
2. Analyze the market system as a “moral ecology,” i.e., in terms of its distinctive moral commitments regarding human being and purpose, the moral logics according to which decisions about value are made, and patterns that determine how human beings relate to one another and the world;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how Christian theological traditions have responded to the challenges and opportunities of the modern market system;
4. Engage a diversity of theological voices in response to a range of issues bearing on economic justice, including globalization, capitalism, work, consumer behavior, corporate responsibility, global and domestic inequality, etc.
5. Exercise public leadership by expressing theologically informed views about economic justice in a public forum (the blogosphere).

III. Evaluation

Students will be evaluated in four areas, detailed below. The guidelines in section VI of the following document are used to evaluate student work: <http://college.wfu.edu/english/course-information/academic-writing/>.

1. Reader’s Response Papers (RRPs): Each student will write six (6) RRP’s, of 800-1,000 words each, in response to prompts provided by the instructor. The first several prompts are listed in the reading schedule below; the rest will be distributed as the semester progresses. Each

RRP is to be posted to Sakai by class time on the relevant due date. *All six RRP's together are worth 45% of the final course grade.*

RRPs should show the student's critical and creative engagement with course readings and discussions. RRP's will be graded on a 50-point scale. The following rubric will be used to evaluate each RRP: (1) 10 points for correct grammatical and stylistic usage; (2) 25 points for careful and accurate analysis of the relevant course readings; (3) 15 points for creative and thoughtful response to the ideas and arguments developed in the relevant readings and the RRP prompt. To receive full credit, RRP's must (1) engage course reading and other materials relevant to the sessions that the RRP covers, and (2) respond to all parts of the relevant prompt (parts are indicated by capital letters in each prompt).

2. Blog Assignment: Each student will contribute posts to a class blog for a total of 1,800-2,000 words. Blog posts will show the student's critical thinking about class material and discussions in response to any contemporary issue related to economic life of their choosing. Blog posts can be as short as 200 words. Detailed instructions on the blog assignment will be distributed in class. *All blog posts together are worth 15% of the final course grade.*
3. Final Paper: A final 12-15 pp. paper on a topic of the student's devising will be due on Tuesday, December 9, at 5:00 PM, uploaded to Sakai. Detailed instructions on the final paper will be distributed in class. The final paper is worth 30% of your final course grade.
4. Course participation: Students must attend class regularly and participate actively in course meetings. See section VI of this syllabus for course policies regarding participation. *Course participation counts for 10% of the final course grade.*

IV. Required Texts

The following five texts are available for purchase in the WFU Bookstore:

Bell, Jr., Daniel M. *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. ISBN: 978-0801035739.

Gonzalez, Michelle. *Shopping*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0800697273.

Lindblom, Charles. *The Market System: What It Is, How It Works, and What to Make of It*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0300093346.

O'Brien, David J. and Thomas A. Shannon. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992. ISBN: 978-0883447871.

Peters, Rebecca Todd. *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization*. New York: Continuum, 2006. ISBN: 978-0826418586.

Sandel, Michael. *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2013. ISBN: 978-0374533656.

V. Schedule of Course Meetings, Readings, and Assignments

An asterisk (*) indicates a book available for purchase in the WFU Bookstore. A dash (-) indicates a resource available online on the course's Sakai site under the "Resources" tab. Readings and resources under the "Recommended" headings are optional. As this is a new course, the instructor reserves the right to modify readings and assignments.

Part 1: Course Introduction

August 26 (Session 1): Markets and the Moral Life

No assigned reading.

August 28 (Session 2): Of Invisible Hands and Iron Cages: The Moral Ambiguity of Market Space

Required Reading:

- Daniel Finn, "The Four Problems of Economic Life" (24 pp.)
- Anthony Weston, "Don't Polarize – Connect" (9 pp.)

Part 2: The Market as Moral Ecology

September 2 and 4 (Sessions 3 and 4): What It Is and How It Works

RRP 1 for September 4: (A) Drawing on your reading of Lindblom and Finn, explore the market system as a "system of society-wide coordination of human activities" (Lindblom, p. 4). As succinctly as possible, describe how the market system achieves human coordination. (B) Then consider: Could we do without the market system? In other words, are there better ways of coordinating human activities in relationship to scarce resources? If so, what would the alternative be? If not, why not? (Yes-and-no answers are allowed, as long as you give reasons for your view.)

Required Reading:

- *Charles Lindblom, *The Market System*, pp. 1-107

September 9 (Session 5): Agents: *Homo Economicus*

Required Reading:

- Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good*, pp. 35-41, 85-96 (19 pp.)
- *Lindblom, *The Market System*, pp. 194-211
- Kathryn Blanchard, "Love Yourself as Your Neighbor Loves You" (37 pp.)

September 11 (Session 6): Agency: Freedom, Power, and Market Systems

Required Reading:

- *Lindblom, *The Market System*, 178-192
- Daniel Finn, "Social Causality and Market Complicity" (18 pp.)

September 16 (Session 7): Logic and Ends: *Quid Pro Quo*, Efficiency, and Externalities

RRP 2 for September 16: (A) Consider the discussions from sessions 5-7 on agents, agency, and ends. How does the market system generate moral ambiguity in the way it frames human agents, human agency, and the proper ends of human action? (B) Pick one of these three foci (agents, agency, and ends) and offer a *theological* response to the moral ambiguity associated with it. That is, how does a theological lens explain or make sense of the moral ambiguity?

Required Reading:

- *Lindblom, *The Market System*, pp. 111-146
- Kathryn Tanner, *Economy of Grace*, pp. 62-85 (14 pp.)
- Daly and Cobb, "Misplaced Concreteness: The Market" (18 pp.)

September 18 and 23 (Sessions 8 and 9): The Boundaries of the Market System

RRP 3 for September 23: (A) What is Michael Sandel saying about the dangers associated with the commodification of human goods via the market system? Reconstruct his argument in 400-500 words. (B) Do you agree with him? Provide a *theological* rationale as to why or why not. You might even suggest a modification of his view in light of your theological rationale.

Required Reading:

- *Michael Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy* (all)

Required Listening:

- This American Life*, "Take the Money and Run for Office," episode #461 (web link)

Recommended Listening:

- This American Life*, "Loopholes," episode #473 (web link)
- This American Life*, "When Patents Attack ... Part Two!," episode #496 (web link)

Part 3: Theological Traditions

September 25 (Session 10): The Social Gospel

Required Reading:

- Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order*, pp. 123-168, 352-364

Recommended Reading:

- Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth" (web link)

September 30 (Session 11): Catholic Social Teaching I

Required Reading:

- *David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, pp. 14-39, 59-64; 93-95; 139-142; 181-182

October 2 (Session 12): Christian Realism and Christian Socialism

Required Reading:

- Reinhold Niebuhr, *Love and Justice* (26 pp.)
- William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, pp. 101-122 ("A Suggested Program")

October 7 (Session 13): Catholic Social Teaching II

RRP 4 for October 7: One could say that Walter Rauschenbusch, Pope Leo XIII, and Reinhold Niebuhr each offer a different theology of institutional life. (A) How does each interpret theologically the challenges and opportunities associated with modern institutions, and in particular with modern economic life? (B) Which of these three views most resonates with you? Or what do you take and leave from any combination of them as you think theologically about human institutions?

Required Reading:

- *O'Brien and Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, pp. 411-427, 461-472

- Gustavo Guitérrez, "Liberation and Development" (7 pp.)
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, pp. 44-51 (7 pp.)

October 9 (Session 14): New Visions for Economic Life

Required Reading:

- Dorothy Day, "In Fields and Factories" (27 pp.)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "I See the Promised Land" (8 pp.)
- Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, "The Problem of Wealth" (20 pp.)
- REVIEW:** Tanner, "Economy of Grace" (from September 16)

Recommended Reading:

- Gary Dorrien, "Rethinking and Renewing Economic Democracy" (17 pp.)

Part 4: Contemporary Perspectives and Issues

October 14 (Session 15): Capitalism, Inequality, and Distance

Required Reading:

- Thomas Piketty, "Inequality and Concentration: Preliminary Bearings"
- Planet Money*, "Inequality Is Falling on Planet Earth" (web link)
- Jon P. Gunnemann, "Capitalism and Commutative Justice" (10 pp.)
- Michael Novak, "The Moral Case for Capitalism" (10 pp.)

Recommended Reading:

- Thomas Piketty, "A Global Tax on Capital" (25 pp.)

October 16: FALL BREAK – NO COURSE MEETING

October 21 and 23 (Sessions 16 and 17): Capitalism as Theology

Required Reading:

- *Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*, pp. 15-144
- Harvey Cox, "Mammon and the Culture of the Market: A Socio-Theological Critique" (10 pp.)
- Read all articles in "Has Capitalism Become Incompatible with Christianity?", *New York Times* (web link)

October 28 and 30 (Sessions 18 and 19): What Is Globalization?

Required Reading:

- *Rebecca Todd Peters, *In Search of the Good Life*, pp. 1-100

November 4 and 6 (Sessions 20 and 21): Responding to and Responses from the Global Neighbor

Required Reading:

- *Rebecca Todd Peters, *In Search of the Good Life*, 171-210
- Keri Day, "Global Economics and U.S. Public Policy" (26 pp.)
- Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Globalization and the Common Good" (22 pp.)
- Miguel De La Torre, "Global Poverty" (20 pp.)
- Paul Asante, "The African Concept of Community and Individual in the Context of the Market" (19 pp.)

November 11 (Session 22): Inequality at Home

Required Reading:

- "Overview" from *The State of Working America 2012* (49 pp.)

-REVIEW Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, "The Problem of Wealth" (20 pp.)

Required Viewing:

- *Frontline*, "Poor Kids" (web link)

Recommended Reading and Listening:

-*Planet Money*, "Most Americans Make It to the Top 20% (At Least for Awhile)" (web link)

-*Planet Money*, "How Far Your Paycheck Goes, In 356 U.S. Cities" (web link)

-*Planet Money*, "How Every U.S. State Has Fared Since the Recession" (web link)

-*This American Life*, "Trends With Benefits" (episode #490) (web link)

November 13 (Session 23): On Debt and Usury

Required Reading:

-Martin Luther, "Trade and Usury" (4 pp.)

-Ron Sider and Gideon Strauss, "A Call for Intergenerational Justice: A Christian Proposal for the American Debt Crisis" (web link)

-Luke Bretherton, "Neither a Borrower Nor a Lender Be" (5 pp.)

-Stephen Reeves and Steve Wells, "Predatory Lending" (1 p.)

-Lisa Sharon Harper, "The Budget and Your Neighbor" (2 pp.)

November 18 (Session 24): The Corporate Person

Required Reading:

-Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits" (web link)

*O'Brien and Shannon, *Catholic Social Teaching*, pp. 71-73, 250-255

-Laura Stivers, "Holding Corporations Accountable" (13 pp.)

-Jon P. Gunnemann, "Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth" (29 pp.)

November 20 (Session 25): Good Work

Required Reading:

-Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" (4 pp.)

-Joan Martin, "Between Vocation and Work: A Womanist Notion of a Work Ethic" (20 pp.)

-D. Michael Lindsay, "Faith-Friendly Firms" (25 pp.)

November 25 (Session 26): Consuming from Privilege

Required Reading:

*Michelle Gonzalez, *Shopping* (all)

November 27: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO COURSE MEETING

December 2 (Session 27): Economy and Ecology I

Required Reading:

-Jennifer Ayres, "Primer on the Global Food System: Policies" (17 pp.)

-Kathryn Blanchard and Kevin O'Brien, "Prophets Meet Profits" (22 pp.)

-Maylin Biggadike, "An Ecofeminist Approach to the True Wealth Project" (22 pp.)

December 4 (Session 28): Economy and Ecology II and Course Conclusion

Required Reading:

-Wendell Berry, "Two Economies" (18 pp.); "The Idea of a Local Economy" (14 pp.);

"Christianity and the Survival of Creation" (24 pp.)

VI. Course Policies

Attendance and participation: Attendance and active participation in course sessions are critical for learning. *For that reason, any student who accumulates more than five absences from course meetings will fail the course.* Students who contact the instructors before the beginning of class may be excused in dire and verifiable circumstances (such as a death in the family or grave illness). In the case of excused absences, some alternative arrangement will be assigned to satisfy a student's course participation work for that week so that the student's participation grade will not be negatively affected. Even excused absences, however, still count against the five-absence limit. Absences will not be excused for competing academic or social obligations.

Grading scale: B- (80-82), B (83-86), B+ (87-89), etc.

Late work: Work submitted after the due date will not normally be accepted without penalty. In dire circumstances (such as a death in the family or grave illness), students may arrange with the instructors to submit work late without penalty or with a modified penalty. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class session indicated as the assignment due date, unless otherwise noted.

Office hours: Dr. Senior's office hours can be arranged by appointment. Please email or call to schedule.

Use of technology in the classroom: Students are welcome to use electronic learning aids (laptop computers, iPads, etc.). However, if these aids disrupt learning, they will be banned from the classroom. Students must turn off their cell phones during class time. Ringing cell phones and texting during class will have an immediate and adverse effect upon a student's participation grade.

Learning accommodations: If you have a disability which may require an accommodation for taking this course, please communicate this to the professor and contact one of the individuals listed below, depending on the nature of the accommodation requested:

- Medical or mobility issues: Cecil Price, M.D., Student Health Services, 336-758-5218
- Learning issues: Van D. Westervelt, Ph.D., Learning Assistance Center and Disability Services, 336-758-5929

Students are only granted accommodations for which they have an official letter from one of these two University offices.

Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code of the University. Please refer to the Divinity School Bulletin and Student Handbook.

Documentation and plagiarism:

Documentation

When you use the words and ideas of others, you are taking part in an ongoing scholarly conversation. It is always necessary to identify the other speakers in the conversation. Therefore you must cite the source of any material, quoted or paraphrased, you have used. Different disciplines and various journals use different citation methods. To learn more about the different styles of citation and help you document your research properly, click on <http://zsr.wfu.edu/research/guides/citation.html>.

The absence of such documentation constitutes plagiarism, perhaps the most serious academic offense. See below for a statement clarifying Wake Forest's policy on plagiarism. Proper documentation requires a bibliography of any outside texts you have consulted (both traditional sources and on-line sources) **as well as** individual notes that demonstrate your debts to outside sources.

Plagiarism

To put your name on a piece of work is to say that it is yours, that the praise or criticism due to it is due to you. To put your name on a piece of work any part of which is not yours is plagiarism, unless that piece is clearly marked and the work from which you have borrowed is fully identified. Plagiarism is a form of theft. Taking words, phrasing, sentence structure, or any other element of the expression of another person's ideas, and using them as if they were yours, is like taking from that person a material possession, something he or she has worked for and earned. Even worse is the appropriation of someone else's ideas. By "ideas" is meant everything from the definition or interpretation of a single word, to the overall approach or argument. If you paraphrase, you merely translate from his or her language to yours; another person's ideas in your language are still not your ideas. Paraphrase, therefore, without proper documentation, is theft, perhaps of the worst kind. Here, a person loses not a material possession, but something of what characterized him or her as an individual.

If students wish to do one project for two courses, or to draw on work previously done in order to complete an assignment for a current course, they must get the expressed permission of all affected faculty in advance of turning in the assignment. The faculty suggests that approved combined projects should represent significantly more effort than the individual projects they supplanted.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of another person's rights, whether the material stolen is great or small; it is not a matter of degree or intent. You know how much you would have had to say without someone else's help; and you know how much you have added on your own. Your responsibility, when you put your name on a piece of work, is simply to distinguish between what is yours and what is not, and to credit those who have in any way contributed.

The School of Divinity participates with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in a Graduate Student Academic Honor Code that sets standards of conduct for academic pursuits. Please refer to the School of Divinity Bulletin for a full version of the Honor Code.

NOTE: The sections on "documentation" and "plagiarism" are taken from the WFU Department of English website and are used with permission. See <http://college.wfu.edu/english/course-information/academic-writing/>.

Citation format: Please use the *Chicago Manual of Style* to document your writing in both footnotes and bibliographies. A guide to the Chicago Manual can be found at the following web address: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Course conduct: This course seeks to be inclusive of and hospitable to persons of all races, cultures, abilities, gender and sexual identities, and religious traditions. Throughout the course, students and the professor are to be mindful of and seek to embody the values of the School of Divinity Mission Statement and Guiding Principles as they are set out in the Bulletin and on the School of Divinity website.

Hospitality and language at Wake Forest School of Divinity: The School of Divinity seeks “to cultivate a community of learners that celebrates diverse religious, racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and sexual identities and that fosters accessibility for all of its members.”

Theological commitments lead the faculty to identify language use as one way we embody and practice hospitality. We invite all members of our learning community to join us in paying attention to how we use language and in exploring new language practices that cultivate hospitality. Each faculty member approaches language in different ways depending on our areas of academic expertise and our individual theological perspectives and commitments. We write and speak with an awareness of the historical, political, and societal contexts out of which theological language emerges and how language can impact readers and listeners. Out of this diversity, faculty conversations about language are lively and vibrant. We invite students to participate in these intentional conversations and to learn to think theologically and creatively about language.

The following suggested practices represent academic expectations for language use in public speech and writing, including scholarly activity (lectures, presentations, discussions, handouts, and publications), communications (official and internal), and worship (sermons, liturgy, and music). The faculty offers these expectations in order to educate leaders who practice hospitality in a range of settings. Each faculty member is committed to discussing these expectations as they relate to course content and assignments and to including guidelines for classroom participation and written work in course syllabi.

Suggested Practices

Language about God

Theologians, ministers, and worship leaders have an opportunity to give voice to the variety and richness of God’s presence with God’s people. Language used in preaching and worship as well as in academic writing acknowledges and cultivates this richness when it explores diverse ways to write, speak, pray, and sing about and to God.

Examples:

1. Our language choices can reflect the richness of the divine. Varied metaphors can be used to speak to and about God. We can name God’s attributes. Examples: Rock of Salvation, Fountain of Life, the First and the Last, Refuge and Strength, Shelter from the Storm. We can address God out of our experience of God. Examples: Creator, Mother, Giver of All Good Things, Teacher, Father, Guardian, Redeemer, Friend, Healer.
2. Writers and speakers are encouraged to seek balance when using pronouns to refer to God, for example, alternating between gendered pronouns.

Language about Creation and Humanity

Hospitable language acknowledges and affirms the value of all creation and the humanity of all people. While language about God is a theological choice, language about people needs to reflect standard grammatical practices of inclusivity.

Examples:

1. Hospitable language should acknowledge and reflect connections between humans and the non-human context upon which life depends.
2. Words like “people,” “us,” “humanity,” “humankind,” etc., should be used in place of words that identify all human experience with the experience of men.

3. Non-gendered language should be used whenever possible; for example, writers and speakers should use “clergy” or “clergy person” instead of “clergyman.”
4. Writers and speakers should use person-first language such as “persons with disabilities” instead of “the disabled,” or “people who live in poverty” instead of “the poor.”
5. Language should affirm diverse and multiple racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and sexual identities by acknowledging varied life narratives. Writers and speakers should avoid language that generalizes human experience (e.g., “all” or “we”) and that stereotypes persons or groups. Writers and speakers should use specific examples, rather than generalizations about people or groups, when illustrating a point.

Course evaluation: On the last day of class, you are asked to bring your laptop computer and time will be granted in said class to fill out an online Course Evaluation. This evaluation is vital for improving this course and helping us comply with ATS requirements.

VII: Sakai Primer

This course uses a Sakai course site to collect course readings, the course syllabus, and other course materials. Writing assignments will also be submitted to the Sakai course site.

To access the course site on Sakai:

1. Log on to the following web page: <https://sakai.wfu.edu/portal/>.
2. Enter the same user ID and password that you use for your WFU email account.
3. At the top of the next screen, you will see a series of tabs, including one called “My Workspace,” and another called “THS 790B AD FA 2014.” Click on the “THS 790B” tab.
4. On the left side of the next screen, which is the course home page, you will see a vertical menu with a number of options, including “Home,” “Announcements,” “Syllabus,” “Resources,” etc.
5. To access the course syllabus, click on the “Syllabus” option in the menu. There you will find a link to the course syllabus.
6. To find course readings, click on the “Resources” option in the menu. There course readings will be listed by the author’s last name followed by a comma and then the title of the work.
7. To submit course assignments, click on the “Assignments” option in the menu. There you will find links to each assignment. Each link will allow you to submit an assignment to the course site. Please note that each assignment link in Sakai is set to close down by class time on the assignment’s due date. Sakai will not accept late assignments.

If Sakai is not cooperating on the day a writing assignment is due, you may send your paper to John via email attachment at seniorje@wfu.edu. However, we strongly prefer that you post your assignment to Sakai.