

Economics 33150 (Theology 40646)
Introduction to Economics and Catholic Social Thought
SPRING, 2022

Instructor: Joe Kaboski, Nanovic 3039, email: jkaboski@nd.edu

Time and Location: M, W, 12:30 - 1:45 p.m., (Section 01) or 2:00 - 3:15 p.m. (Section 02), Nanovic B052

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment

Webpage: through Sakai system

Material:

The course will cover the relationship between the principles of economics and the principles of Catholic social doctrine. The first part of the course will introduce key principles in both fields, evaluate the relationship or coherency between these principles, and introduce important empirical facts of living standards in the world. The second part of the course will give an overview of the integration and application of economic research and Catholic social principles including issues related to poverty, inequality, and development

Required Readings:

The readings are all provided through Sakai or e-reserves, or available on-line (Vatican documents). Nevertheless, for the Scripture readings, I recommend purchasing the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible* (Mitch and Hahn), which has detailed and illuminating supplementary notes and commentary that not only provide academic resources (e.g., important Hebrew and Greek words explained) but also explain passage links between the Old and New Testaments (the OT concealing the NT, while the NT reveals the OT), how passages have been interpreted in the writings of the saints and the Catholic tradition, and how passages pertain to Church doctrine. Also, for works where you will write the short paper, I recommend purchasing and reading the entire book, rather than simply the assigned chapters.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will learn the foundations of Catholic social thought (e.g., principles such as human dignity, solidarity, freedom) as a framework for normatively evaluating the implications of economic and social policy. Students will be able to distinguish these norms from a secular framework, both in their assumptions and their conclusions.
2. Students will be challenged to reflect on the foundations of Catholic social thought, and/or their own moral assumptions, and evaluate extent to which various claims are supported by faith and/or reason.

3. Students will critically and constructively engage source materials from both Catholic and secular sources surrounding economics and Catholic social thought
4. Students will be able to reflect on their own faith (or lack of faith) and/or reason to defend a position on specific issues of faith or normative questions raised by economic and social policy. This ability will be nurtured and evaluated through normative response and exam essay questions relating to:
 - ethical implications of a Catholic view of man vs. a utilitarian view of human behavior
 - the role and limitations of markets in a just society
 - the importance of measurable empirical outcomes for normative analysis of economic policy
 - the facts of material living standards and poverty today and historically
 - the patterns and issues of increasing economic inequality
 - the value of human labor and labor policies
 - the role of the family in society
 - ethical business behavior
 - the roles and consequences of property rights, finance, and wealth inequality
 - the impacts of globalization
 - an ethical approach to poverty alleviation and development
5. Students will demonstrate this reflection, criticism, evaluation, and integration through their own writing and will work to improve their writing, including through revision.

More generally, the first four learning goals will be central to class discussion, daily responses, short papers, and exam questions. The fifth is central to all written work.

Course Organization and Grades:

The course will consist of both lecture and discussions, typically mixed throughout the class. Both are essential parts of the course. The course will be VERY intensive in reading. Readings will include papal writings, recent works on economic questions, and scriptural passages with particular bearing on the course. The discussions will focus on readings for the week.

Your grade will be based on a class participation, a series of short papers, a midterm, and a cumulative final exam, as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Class Participation | 25% |
| Short Papers | 30% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 25% |

This is a writing-intensive course and grades will be based heavily on writing. Each student will submit by the end of the course approximately 20 pages of written work and will have revised at least one assignment in response to feedback

Class Participation: Class participation is extremely important in a course like this. It will be evaluated along multiple dimensions: The first dimension is class attendance, the second dimension is preparation, and the third is class engagement. You are expected to attend every class and have read the required reading in order to actively participate in discussions. For (almost) every reading (see below), there will be either a 1-page reflection or a 1-page response due. These must be turned in via Sakai **by 9 am** the day of class in which we discuss the reading. ‘Reflections’ are just personal reactions to the reading, while ‘responses’ critically address a particular question. For the readings requiring a ‘response’, a series of five study questions will be posted on Sakai, and you should respond only to the last question. I will randomly grade a sample of the classes submissions of these each day, and otherwise give credit for having turned it in. (If sampled, you will lose credit for having turned in an inadequate response or reflection.) **If you would like to extend a response into a “short paper” (see below), or have a specific question in a reflection please tell me at the top of the assignment. I will be sure to read, grade it, and give feedback.** Class engagement is also necessary. There is no quota on comments, but if you have a pattern of not joining in discussions, your participation grade will suffer. Finally, at some point I may ask you to briefly summarize the reading for the class.

Short papers: You will also write two longer (4-page) guided responses to the readings (of your choice) over the course of the quarter. There are three stages of writing to these short papers.

1. The first stage is the original response described above. Short papers will be extensions of your original responses, revised and extended based on comments received, class discussion, etc. If, in anticipation of revising extending your one-page response into a short paper, you wish to extend the response beyond one page, offer an outline, etc. that is encouraged.
2. The second stage is the submitted paper. These short papers should be written as formal papers with outside sources, bibliographies, etc. You will be graded on how well you show and apply knowledge from the reading and class, how well you exhibit critical higher level thinking, and how well organized and written your paper is. Your analysis will be expected to go well beyond what is covered in class. These short papers are due two weeks after the graded initial one-page response is returned. **(Remember, this is a writing-intensive course. These papers are short, but they should be well researched, well written, and insightful. See Grading Criteria below.)** In order to pace the semester out, at least one paper needs to be written on the material in weeks 1-8.
3. The third stage is a submitted revision. Students will revise one graded assignment based on the feedback received on the initial submission. Students will meet one-on-one with me in order to discuss the revision (Tuesday, Thursdays, and Fridays are most open for scheduling meetings.) Resubmissions must be submitted within one week of receiving your graded initial

submission. Your overall grade for the assignment will be the average of the grade for the initial submission and the grade for the revision.

Exams: The class will contain one midterm and a final exam. The exams will test your knowledge and understanding of material from both lectures and readings. The first midterm will cover all the material through Week 7 of class. The final will be cumulative, but it will focus on applications of concepts to domestic and global issues. The format will be essentially short answer, definitions/identifications, and short (1-page) essay, with the final being particularly intensive in essays. Before each exam, I will provide a review/practice exam that will give you a better sense of the format and content of the actual exam, including a larger set of essay questions which you can prepare for ahead of time. The exams will be closed notes, but a subset of the provided essay questions will be on the actual exam. Students who are absent for a midterm exam will not be given a make-up exam for any reason. Students with a valid excuse (e.g. personal illness, death in the family, service to the university) will have the weight of the midterm placed on the final exam.

Grading Criteria:

1. Participation:

Criteria for a grade of B:

- prepares well for each class by completing all daily assignments;
- does not miss classes for any unexcused reasons and comes to each class on time;
- reflects honestly and independently on the assigned readings in assigned reflections in a way that shows thorough knowledge of the reading;
- responds thoughtfully to the assigned question in assigned responses with a clear thesis, organizational structure, and brief, yet well-formed and supported, arguments, in a way that shows thorough understanding of the reading;
- turns all assignments in on time;
- engages fully in class lectures by taking appropriate notes, asking questions, etc.;
- makes contributions that show thorough familiarity with the assigned material and thoughtful reflection on it;
- is willing to engage an issue from multiple points of view, draw connection across works, draw interesting comparisons;
- integrates real-world observation and personal experience as well as scholarly information;
- is more interested in the group dynamic of truth seeking through dialogue than in demonstrating his or her own intelligence or winning an argument. This involves: (a) exhibiting respect and tact toward others, while maintaining an honest reflection of one's position; (b) recognizing and questioning one's assumptions; (c) willingness to withdraw ideas in the face of decisive counterarguments and the confidence to retain a position when counterarguments fail;

Criteria for a grade of A: Participation satisfies the criteria for a B. In addition, the student: develops and initiates meaningful discussion threads, fascinating or unexpected questions, or unusually rich and intelligent observations. These contributions, rather than being haphazard, enable the discussion to delve into richer territory and unexplored heights.

Criteria for a grade of C: Attends class regularly, prepares well for class, turns in the vast majority of assignments satisfactorily and on time, attempts to contribute to class discussion although comments may not always be as enriching. Is nonetheless, polite, thoughtful and respectful of others in class demeanor, comments, and attitude toward others. In short, satisfies much of the criteria for B, but not all.

Criteria for a grade of D: Has no more than five unexcused absences. Contributes to class discussion in ways that are uninformed, irrelevant, or contradictory. Turns in most assignments, but a large segment are either late, missing, or show little effort or preparation.

Criteria for a grade of F: Any participation below that of the criteria for D, including (but not exclusively) failure to contribute regularly to discussions, failure to attend and prepare regularly, and showing little respect for the class and discussion objectives.

2. Short Papers:

Criteria for a grade of B:

- **Structure:** The paper is a well-organized essay with an introduction, body, conclusion, and bibliography. It contains a clear thesis, and the supporting arguments are stated and developed in a way that builds and supports the thesis. It should be structured logically and coherently.
- **Knowledge/understanding:** The essay demonstrates mastery over the relevant material surrounding the thesis. This involves both the material presented in class, material covered in the readings, and relevant outside sources.
- **Higher level analysis:** The substance of the essay goes well beyond what is presented in class or readings. The thesis is novel, complex, and challenging, not simplistic. The essay draws important connections across ideas, readings, and lectures. It analyzes, re-applies, evaluates, and synthesizes ideas into a new, and novel thesis with strong arguments that both defend the thesis and address important counterarguments, nuances, or caveats, including but not limited to those directly addressed in class discussions.
- **Writing:** the writing is clear, grammatically correct, and flowing. It avoids awkward, wordy stylistic constructions, clichés, informal language (including the first person),

spelling errors, and typos. There is an appropriate variety and maturity of sentence structure. The arguments are concise. Although the paper is short, this does not mean the essay should be short on research and thought. Rather the essay should go through great pains to crystallize material that could cover a much longer essay into the strongest argument possible given the length limits.

- **Completeness:** The essay should answer the assigned question, and it should address all aspects of the assigned question.

Criteria for a grade of A: The paper satisfies all the criteria for a B. In addition, it is unusually thoughtful, deep, nuanced, and far-reaching in its analysis and evidence. The paper is ambitious, creative, and engaging. The language is elegant.

Criteria for a grade of C: The thesis of the paper is clear, and the paper takes a stand on a complex issue. The writer shows some competence in exploring the issue but exhibits some weaknesses; these might include, for example, a thesis that lacks clarity, insufficient or unconvincing evidence, simple summary of readings, repetition, spurious assumptions, simplicity, surface-level deliberations as opposed to depth, a derivative quality, or avoidance of alternative perspectives that should be considered. Most of the essay is well-organized, and the logic is for the most part clear and coherent. Some evidence is given for the points made in the essay. The argument is sustained but not especially imaginative or complex. It may read in stretches as highly derivative of class discussion without going beyond it. In short, the essay satisfies much of the criteria for a B, but not all. The language may be informal at points, perhaps using the first person.

Criteria for a grade of D: The paper does not satisfy the criteria for a grade of C, but the assignment is complete, and shows some understanding of the material, including outside sources. The thesis may be jarbled and the arguments and evidence may be poorly structured, but there is nonetheless some argumentation and supporting evidence presented.

Criteria for a grade of F: Any paper below that of the criteria for D, including: showing no thesis; little understanding; basic grammatical, spelling errors, and typos; little to no organization of the essay, e.g., no introduction, conclusion, poor paragraphing, no use of outside sources.

3. Exams:

- Exams will be graded on a percentage system with the standard percentage cutoffs of 92 (A), 90 (A-), 88 (B+), 82 (B), 80 (B-), 78 (C+), 72 (C), 70 (C-), and 60 (D).
- Partial credit will be given. Questions of knowledge, e.g., definitions must be precise and complete for full credit. Short responses must again be accurate and precise, but ideally not regurgitated for full credit.
- Short essays are graded using the same criterion as those for short papers, except: there is no need for precise citations or a bibliography; the expectations on structure are lower given the limited space (e.g., the essay should still be organized, but a simple introductory or concluding sentence can replace full paragraphs in the essay and bullet points can be used to organize ideas), and the writing expectations are not as high, given limited time to proof read, etc. The knowledge/understanding, higher level analysis, and completeness criteria still hold, though naturally the depth is limited given the limited space. Focusing on a narrower argument in depth is preferred to a superficial idea covering many ideas, and a mere regurgitation of class notes or discussion will not suffice for a B.

Student Conduct: Students are expected to adhere strictly to the **Academic Code of Honor** (<http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code/docs/handbook.pdf>) in all ways. Please make yourself aware of the Code, especially those rules regarding plagiarism and internet material. All papers will be fed through **turnitin.com**, a plagiarism detection software company. Serious violation of the Code of Conduct will lead to automatic failure and/or removal from the course. During discussions, all behavior and comments should be civil and constructive. **I am committed to pursuing all judicial procedures against student who violate these rules, including failure, removal from the course, or expulsion.**

Course Schedule and Reading List:

Unit 1: Foundations

Week 1:

Topics: Intro & Catholic Social Principles

For Wednesday, Jan 12: Genesis 1 (1-page reflection) and read syllabus!

Week 2:

Topics: Catholic Social Principles I

****Monday, Jan 27, MLK, Jr. Day, no class**

For Wednesday, Jan 19: Watch movie, choose either: (1) “A Man for All Seasons”; (2) “Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story”; (3) “The Drop Box”; or (4) “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” (1-page response)

Week 3:

Topics: Catholic Social Principles II

For Monday, Jan 24: Ephesians 5 (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Jan 26: Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1-page response)

Week 4:

Topics: Economic Concepts I

For Monday, Jan 31: Matthew 6; Luke 12 (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Feb 2: Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C. *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008 (Chapters 1, 2, 6) (1-page response)

Week 5:

Topic: Economic Concepts II

For Monday, Feb 7: Selections on Markets from *Centesimus Annus*, *Laudato si’*, and *Fratelli Tutti* (1-page reflection).

For Wednesday, Feb 9: Blank, R. and McGurn, W. *Is the Market Moral? A Dialogue on Religion, Economics, and Justice*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004 (Ch. 2 and 3) (1-page response)

Week 6:

Topics: Material Living Standards in the World: I

For Monday, Feb 14: Matthew 25, Isaiah 65, James 2 (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Feb 16: Malthus. T.R. “Essays on the Principle of Population” (Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 19) (1-page reflection)

Week 7:

Topics: Material Living Standards in the World II

For Monday, Feb 21: Selections from *Laudato si'* on the environment (1-page reflection)

Monday, February 21: Guest Lecture, Msgr. Peter Schallenberg, Chair of Moral Theology, Paderborn University

For Wednesday, Feb 23: Banerjee, A. and Duflo, E. *Poor Economics* (Chapter 5) and Anscombe, G.E.M. "Contraception and Chastity" (1-page response)

Unit 2: Poverty, Inequality, and Inequity in Society

Week 8:

Topics: Poverty, Inequality, Inequity the Rights of Labor

For Monday, Feb 28: 2 Thessalonians 3 **and** Selections on "just wages" from *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, and *Laborem Exercens* (1-page reflection)

****Tuesday, Mar 1, 8:00 a.m., Midterm Exam in Nanovic B062**

For Wednesday, Mar 2: Neumark, D. and Wascher, W., *Minimum Wages* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008 (Intro, Ch. 3 and 5) (Optional 1-page response)

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10:

Topics: Unions, Wage Inequality, and the Future of Work

For Monday, Mar 14: Selections on inequality, unions from *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Populorum Progressio*, and *Caritas in Veritate* (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Mar 16: Dorn, D. "The Rise of the Machines: How Computers Have Changed Work." (1-page response)

Week 11:

Topics: Family Structure and Family Life

For Monday, Mar 21: Genesis 2, Matthew 19 (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Mar 23: Heckman, J. "Schools, Skills, and Synapses" (1-page response)

Week 12:

Topics: Property, Wealth, and Taxation

For Monday, Mar 28: Leviticus 25 (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Mar 30: Saez, E. and Zucman, G. "How Would a Progressive Wealth Tax Work? Evidence from the Economics Literature." (1-page response)

Week 13: Topics: Business and Business Opportunities

NOTE: 2 RESPONSES DUE!

For Monday, Apr 4: Yuengert, A. "Two Barriers to Moral Agency in Business Education " and Parkin, S. "Gaming Your Brain " (1-page response)

For Wednesday, Apr 6: Rajan, R. and Zingales, L. *Saving Capitalism From the Capitalists*, New York: Crown Business Press, 2003 (Introduction and Chapters 3, 4, and 13) (1-page response)

Unit 3: Economic Development and Integral Human Development

Week 14:

Topics: Economic Development and Poverty: Macro and Micro

For Monday, Apr 11: Selections on integral human development from *Populorum Progressio*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Fratelli Tutti* (1-page reflection)

For Wednesday, Apr 13: Banerjee, A. and Duflo, E. *Poor Economics* (Chapters 2-4) (1-page response)

Week 15:

Topics: Development in a Globalized World

Monday, Apr 18, Easter Monday, no class

For Wednesday, Apr 20: Selections on growth and inclusion from *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* (1-page reflection)

Week 16:

Topics: Development in a Globalized World

For Monday, Apr 25: Selections on globalization from *Populorum Progressio*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Fratelli Tutti* (1-page reflection)

For Tuesday, Apr 26: NOTE DAY CHANGE: Borjas, G. *We Wanted Workers* New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016 (Chapters 1 and 10) (1-page response)

****Final Exam, Online**