SOCIAL ETHICS & ECONOMICS – REST231/REST320PP/SOC320PP

Fall 2012

Dr. Mar Peter-Raoul (Professor Mar) – FN 203

Contact: Office Hours & marforpeace@gmail.com

Hours: T & W 9-10p; W 4:20 – 6:20; R 5:20-6:20; Friday afternoons by apt.

Course Quotes:

What the poor need is not charity, but capital, not caseworkers, but co-workers. And what the rich need is a wise, honorable & enjoyable way of divesting themselves of some of their overabundance. Habitat for Humanity philosophy

The only real policy questions have to do with society’s own standards of dignity and fairness...Unless the social-welfare system is permeated by a concern for humanity, its ‘efficiency’ is hardly of much importance. Leslie Dunbar in Common Interest.

Some people are so poor that God can only appear to them in the form of bread. Mohandas Gandhi

COURSE INTENTIONS

This course intends to gain a broad realization of the harsh socio-economic conditions plaguing much of the world, and which is at the heart of great human misery. It will inquire into the socio-political & economic structures & root causes of extreme poverty, and the extent of this poverty. What are the implications of policies & globalization for the 19,000 children who die every day for preventable reasons; for the nearly one billion people who lack clean water, for ‘illegal’ immigrants willing to work all day bent over in the hot sun in order to make survival money for their families back home; for impoverished women & girls (as young as 6) trafficked into prostitution, for those in slavery in India, Mauritania, & other countries; & those sick & suffering without even basic care or medicines.
Analysis of the *WHY* of these realities, will also ask, “What changes are possible,” remembering Nelson Mandela’s remark, “Things are impossible, until they are done.” Further, we will acquaint ourselves with what is already happening to alleviate poverty, to change enslaving & exploitative practices, & the very outpouring of a plethora of people who are taking on these seemingly insurmountable human catastrophes. To this end, we will look at multiple examples both in the U.S. & globally of inhumane, socio-economic conditions, their structural causes, & as well, the multiplicity of efforts to counter & change these realities. Among serious efforts today to alter the course of abject poverty, we will learn about social entrepreneurship, micro-financing, the fair trade movement, & the Millennium Goals of the United Nations.

The course will include a Citizen Praxis Project that will tackle a substantive socio-economic issue. This work will include layered analysis, *praxis/public work*, research, constructing a working plan with subjects experiencing the conditions to be changed, a written Citizen document aimed at contributing to public consciousness, & a public presentation of the Project.

What are the values operating in socio-economic policies & structures that subject with crushing economic hardship so many without power or wealth. And what would be the ideals of an economically *just* world? We will consider who makes the policies & regulations & wage disparities & rigged rules that make unimaginable wealth for 1/10th of 1 per cent, and impoverish millions who do the actual labor.

We will look seriously at the Occupy movement & identify its economic core.

**OBJECTIVES & EVALUATION OF COURSE**

1. to gain a broad, layered knowledge of the socio-economic conditions, both historically & today, of structures of serious poverty & inequality within the U.S. & globally; & the consequences of this catastrophe for literally billions on the planet.
2. To become cognizant of the major economic-related institutions & events with world influence; the UN Millennium goals, the UN Declaration of Human Rights & Economic Covenant, & of significant *praxis* economists.
3. To become familiar with the plethora of efforts, both historically & today, to change the course of economic misery, including social
entrepreneurship, micro-financing, the fair trade movement, social movements, songs.

4. To experientially participate in a Citizen Project that tackles all aspects of a socio-economic issue.

5. To contribute to public consciousness through one’s Citizen work.

Objectives 1/2/3 will be assessed through reading & media tests, creative work, the written Journal & presentation of the Citizen Project.

Objectives 4 & 5 will be assessed through the experiential component of the Citizen Project; critical reflection on the experience, integration with research, & public writing & presentation.

REQUIRED WORK discussed in class. It will include Portfolio of tests, creative & written work, an advocacy letter & a Citizen Project.

REQUIRED READINGS

- *The Price of Civilization: ReAwakening American Virtue & Prosperity* by Jeffrey Sachs
- *This Changes Everything: The 99% Movement* by Sara van Gelder
- *Occupy the Economy* by Richard Wolff
- *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of the Slave Trade* by Siddharth Kara

  OR - IF YOU HAVE NOT READ THE FOLLOWING – READ INSTEAD:
- *Not For Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade* by David Batsone

- PICK ANY RECOMMENDED BOOK OF YOUR CHOOSING

  OR – IF YOU HAVE NOT READ THE FOLLOWING – READ INSTEAD:
- *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracy Kidder

- *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurship* by David Bornstein

- Articles: Christopher Hedges columns found on TruthDig.com – choose your interest

- Website: CommonDreams.org

- *The New York Times*

REQUIRED COURSE WORK

1. *Participatory Attendance* – NO CELL PHONES/TEXTING/OPEN COMPUTERS. Bring text to class; be ready to interpret, reflect upon,
analyze, & respond. One missed class/grade decreased a plus/minus for each missed class thereafter.  20% of grade

**Keep a Portfolio** of returned tests & returned assignments for possible collection &/OR revisions

1. *Short reading/media tests* – highest three grades counted – see schedule for dates.  20% of grade

2. *Creative Praxis*
   Choose *four* of the following assignments – highest three counted  30% of grade
   a) With graphics make flyer/broadsheet for distribution on substantive issue related to the course.
   b) Write a Letter of Advocacy addressed to a person with the position & power to advance your request. This item can be done twice.
   c) Write a publishable article to increase public consciousness on a serious issue.
   d) Write a children’s book OR booklet on a serious topic related to the course.
   e) Make a short documentary related to the course, could be on protest, an expose on an economic issue, OR on a social movement (Occupy movement or such).
   f) Give a workshop to a public group on a relevant issue. Could be for the Lifetime Learning project.

3. *Citizen Public Praxis Project*

   **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – November 29, 2012** (to be confirmed)

   We will brainstorm in class, related to Human Rights Day & alternative Projects.

   The Public Praxis Project will be evaluated according to the following weights:

   - Quality of Experience 30%
   - Quality of Research & Course Connections 30%
   - Quality of Written Work & Appearance 30%
   - Public Presentation 10%
Public Praxis1: Social Ethics & Economics  Fall 2012  Schedule of readings & media – subject to adjustment

August 30, 2012

Survey of course/Syllabus/praxis-oriented economists/JeffreSachs/economics at heart of hard poverty & other social maladies/MEDIA: The Internationale

September 6

TEXT: The Price of Civilization: Reawakening American Virtue & Prosperity 1st three chapters 1-65/MEDIA “Inside Job”

September 13


September 20

TEXT: This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street & the 99% Movement through page 84/MEDIA Bill Moyers with Economists on Inequality: poverty in America & stratospheric wealth/TEST 1

September 27

TEXT: The Price...., “The Rigged Game” & “Distracted Society” 105-158/MEDIA Bill Moyers with Benjamin Barber on rigged rules & inequality/TEXT: select Chris Hedges column – TruthDig.com

October 4

TEXT: The Price of Civilization “The Mindful Society”/MEDIA Wobblies

October 11

TEXT: Civilization..185-163/key points/MEDIA Chris Hedges/TEST 2
October 18
TEXT: *Sex Trafficking OR Not for Sale* 1-72/MEDIA World Slavery/DUE Creative Praxis (1)/UN Covenant on Economic, Cultural, Social Rights

October 25
TEXT: *Sex Trafficking OR Not for Sale* Bonded Laborers/MEDIA Kailish rescues enslaved workers/Brainstorm on Human Rights Day/TEST 3

November 2
TEXT: *Sex Trafficking OR Not for Sale* – Child soldiers/MEDIA Freetown/MEDIA Saul Alinsky/DUE Creative Praxis (2)

November 9
TEXT: Choice of Recommended OR *Mountains Beyond Mountains*/DUE

November 16 TEXT: As above Nov 9/DUE Creative Praxis (3)/MEDIA CONVERSA: Paul Farmer & Gustavo Gutierrez on Liberation Theology

November 23  THANKSGIVING

November 29/30 Human Rights Day OR Public Praxis Event/TEXT: *Occupy the Economy OR Mountains Beyond Mountains*/DUE Citizen Public Praxis Project/MEDIA Social entrepreneurship

December 7
TEXT: *Occupy the Economy & Changing the World* –select two chapters & Bill Dryden chapter/MEDIA social entrepreneurship

December 14
SONG Sugarland/TEXT: select one article from CommonDreams.org/MEDIA John Lewis & the Beloved Community/Share article & Praxis Project