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CS 640 Christianity and Social Justice

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CS 640: Christianity and Social Justice
Asbury Theological Seminary, Spring 1999
Dr. Christine Pohl, Professor

Purpose: To enable students to understand the meanings and practical implications of various historical and contemporary conceptions of justice. To help students identify and utilize significant components of justice in interpreting and addressing social issues in church and society.

Objectives:

1. Introduce students to historically significant biblical, theological, and secular conceptions of justice.
2. Enable students to analyze and evaluate those conceptions of justice.
3. Help students to articulate a biblically and theologically responsible conception of justice and to utilize it in interpreting a contemporary issue.

Office Hours and Location: Office hours are posted on office door weekly.
Call 858-2284. McPheeters Center, Level 3, Room 308.

Student Responsibilities:

This course is designed as a seminar. It is therefore essential that students come to class having read the assigned material carefully and critically. Class attendance and active participation are expected. Students will maintain a record of weekly readings.

There are several key issues which we will try to identify in the readings.

1. What is the writer's understanding of justice?
Who is responsible for the implementation of justice?
2. What is the writer's vision for society?
How does he/she view the relation between the individual and society?
3. How does the writer understand the relationship between justice and love?
4. How does the writer understand the relationship between justice and equality?
5. What groups of persons are included and excluded from discussion and consideration?
6. What biblical, theological, or practical problems do you identify in this writer?
What problematic assumptions is the writer working with?
7. Are there insights in this writer that can help us interpret contemporary issues?

Not every question will be answered in every reading. Most, however, will be addressed in some way. As you read, have these questions in mind.

Written Work and Class Presentations:

1. For four sessions during the course, students should turn in written responses to the readings using four of the above questions. Each assignment should be no more or less than two typewritten pages (double-spaced). These reflection papers are due at the beginning of the session in which that writer will be discussed.
2. Each student will have responsibility to introduce a session. This will involve a 15 minute class presentation (using a manuscript) which will provide some brief historical background on the writer, identify his or her key arguments and place them in social-historical context, and raise several questions for class discussion. The manuscript (5 pages-typed/double spaced) is due by 10 am, Monday of the week of the presentation.
3. The final paper will be a take-home essay in 3 parts. Students will choose 3 of 5 integrative questions. The questions will be distributed one month before the end of the term. Each question will require a 4-5 page typewritten response.

Grading:

Introduction to session	20%
4 two-page reflection papers	20%
Final essays	45%
Class participation	15%

Sources for Assigned Readings:

Available in bookstore:

Karen Lebacqz, Six Theories of Justice
Stephen C. Mott, Biblical Ethics and Social Change
Robert Solomon and Mark Murphy, What Is Justice?
Michael Walzer, Spheres of Justice

Other readings will be available on reserve in the library.

Feb. 9 **Introduction**

Feb. 11 **What Is Justice:** Identifying Some Questions

Read: What Is Justice?, pp. 3-8
“Five Faces of Oppression”

Feb. 16 **Introduction to Biblical Themes of Love and Justice**

Read: Biblical Ethics and Social Change, chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 39-81)

Feb. 18 **The Greeks on Justice**

Read: What Is Justice? (Plato: pp. 23-37; 71-74,
Aristotle: pp. 38-48; Lucretius: pp. 75-79)

Feb. 23 **The Old Testament and Justice**

Read: Exodus 20:1-23:13; Leviticus 19:1-18, 33-34; 24:17-25:55; Deuteronomy
1:16-17; 10:12-22; 15:1-11; 23:19-20; 24:10-22.
Psalms 72; 82; 146; Proverbs 22:22-23; 23:10-11; 31:8-9; Job 22-24; 29;
31.

Feb. 25 **Old Testament Prophets and Jesus: Love and Justice**

Read: Isaiah 1; 55-59; Jeremiah 12; 22:1-17; Amos 1-9.
Matthew 5-7; 20:1-16; 23:23-24; 25:31-46.
Luke 10:25-37; 14:1-24; 15:11-32; 19:1-10.

March 2 **Acts and New Testament Epistles: Equality and Recognition**

Read: Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37; II Corinthians 8-9;
Galatians 3:26-29; James 2:1-13; 5:1-6.

March 4 **New Testament and Writings of the Early Church**

Read: Acts 5:25-32; Romans 13; Revelation 13
Epistle of Barnabas, ch. 18-21
First Apology of Justin Martyr, ch. 1-4, 14-17, 27
The Epistle to Diognetus, ch. 5-6
Tertullian: Apology, ch. 1-5, 39
 Against Marcion, ch. 11-13
Origen Against Celsus, ch. 69-76.

March 9, 11 **4th-5th Century Writings on Equality, Recognition and Justice**

Read: Lactantius, The Divine Institutes, Book, 5, ch. 15-18; Book 6,
 ch. 11-12 (ANF Vol 7, pp. 150-154, 174-178)
 The Epitome of the Divine Institutes, ch. 56-60 (ANF Vol
 7 pp. 245-247)
Chrysostom, Homily 66 on Matthew (NPNF1, Vol 10, pp. 407-
 409)

Homily 72 on Matthew (NPNF1, Vol 10, pp. 438-439)
Homily 79 on Matthew (NPNF1, Vol 10, pp. 474-477)
Homily 45 on Acts (NPNF1, Vol 11, pp. 276-277)
Homily 21 on Romans (NPNF1), Vol 11, pp. 504-506)
Homily 1 on Colossians (NPNF1, Vol 13, pp. 260-263)
Augustine Of The Morals of the Catholic Church, ch. 15,19-
27(NPNF1, Vol 4) (48,51-56)
City of God, Book 14, ch. 28
Book 19, ch. 4-28

March 16, 18 **Thomas Aquinas on Law and Justice**

Read: George Forell, Christian Social Teachings, ch. 10: Thomas Aquinas (pp. 115-143)
Summa Theologica I/II Questions 61-62

March 18, 23 **Martin Luther on the Two Kingdoms**

Read: “The Freedom of a Christian”
“Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed”
“Admonition To Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia”
“Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants”
“An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants”
“Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved”

March 25 To be announced

March 30, April 1 **John Calvin on Civil Government, Law and Justice**

Read: Institutes of the Christian Religion,
Book 2, ch. 2, Sections 12-16, 22-24
Book 2, ch. 7, Sections 6-13
Book 2, ch. 8, Sections 8-11, 39-40
Book 3, ch. 7, Sections 5-7
Book 3, ch. 14, Sections 2-3
Book 4, ch. 20

April 3 -11 Reading Week

April 13, 15 **John Wesley on Freedom, Power, Riches and Recognition**

Read: “Thoughts Upon Liberty”
“Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power”
“Thoughts Upon the Present Scarcity of Provisions”

“Thoughts Upon Slavery”
“Calm Address to Our American Colonies”
“The Danger of Riches”
“Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity”

Apr. 20 **Utilitarianism and Justice (John Stuart Mill)**

Read: What Is Justice?, pp. 193-201, 258-260.
 Six Theories of Justice, pp. 15-32

Apr. 22 **Social Contract Theory and Justice (John Rawls)**

Read: What Is Justice?, pp. 123-129; 305-312
 Six Theories of Justice, pp. 33-50

Apr. 27 **Contemporary Catholic Teaching on Justice**

Read: “U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Message and Letter:
 Economic Justice for All” (Pastoral Message, chapters 1,II,
 and III through section 137)
 Six Theories of Justice, pp. 66-82

Apr. 29 **Reinhold Niebuhr on Justice and Love**

Read: R. Niebuhr, Love and Justice, pp. 25-40, 46-54, 282-283
 Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. 2, pp. 244-286
 Six Theories of Justice, pp. 83-99

May 4 **Liberationist Interpretations of Justice**

Read: Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”
 Gustavo Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, rev. ed. pp. XVII-
 XLVI.
 Allan Boesak, Farewell to Innocence, pp. 1-7, 46-56.
 Six Theories of Justice, pp. 100-115

May 6 **Michael Walzer on Justice and Equality**

Read: What Is Justice?, pp. 340-347
 Spheres of Justice, pp. 312-321

May 11, 13 **What do We Know About Justice and What Difference Does It Make?**

Read: Six Theories of Justice, pp. 116-123

Name _____

CS 640: Reading Record
Spring 1999

Readings for: Read on time Completed late Not done

2/11	What is Justice			
2/16	Biblical Themes			
2/18	Greeks on Justice			
2/23	Old Testament Readings			
2/25	Prophets and Jesus			
3/2	Acts & Epistles			
3/4	New Testament and Early Church			
3/9	4th & 5th Century			
3/16	Thomas Aquinas			
3/18	Martin Luther			
3/30	John Calvin			
4/13	John Wesley			
4/20	Utilitarianism			
4/22	Social Contract			
4/27	Contemporary Catholic Teaching			
4/29	Reinhold Niebuhr			
5/4	Liberationist Interpretations			
5/6	Michael Walzer			
5/11	What Do We Know About Justice			