

BOSTON COLLEGE
Department of Economics

EC 234 - Spring 1997
Economics and Catholic Social Teaching

Catherine G. Schneider

The purpose of this course is to explore questions of economic justice in terms of Catholic social teaching. Our approach will be primarily historical; we will read and reflect on some of the major Church documents to identify the major themes in the teaching that apply to the development of economic policy. These themes will be linked to concepts in the history of economic thought and in the field of welfare economics.

The prerequisites for the course are EC131-132. An introductory knowledge of the role of prices in a market economy and familiarity with the concepts of utility and profit maximization will be assumed. A passing acquaintance with Latin may be helpful.

Catholic Social Thought - The Documentary Heritage, edited by David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, contains all the Church documents that we will be reading. A number of the commentaries that we will use are collected in *Building the Free Society*, edited by George Weigel and Robert Royal. The other readings are included in a coursepack prepared by BC Press. All of these can be purchased at the bookstore; one copy of each is also on reserve at O'Neill Library.

Course requirements and their weights in the course grade are:

- a couple of short papers (1-2 pages) on assigned topics and journals on the assigned readings (35%)
- a term paper (10-12 pages) on a topic of your choice (25%),
- participation in class discussions (20%)
- a final exam on Monday, May 5th (20%)

My office is Carney 144; the telephone number is 552-3786. My e-mail address is catherine.schneider@bc.edu. Office hours will be Tuesday, 9:00 - 11:30; Wednesday, 1:00 - 2:30; and by appointment. If you are unable to attend class for a prolonged period of time, please notify me as soon as possible.

Please read the attached statements on class attendance and academic integrity.

READING LIST

I. Introduction

- Arrow, "Moral Thinking and Economic Interaction," in *Social and Ethical Aspects of Economics*
- Wogaman, *Economics and Ethics*, Ch.1

II. Some Figures and Concepts in Economic Thought

- Landreth and Colander, *History of Economic Theory*, Ch. 2 (pp. 22-28)
- Landreth and Colander, Ch. 3 (pp.49-56)
- Billet, "Justice, Liberty, and Economy," in Glahe, ed., *Adam Smith and The Wealth of Nations*
- Pack, *Capitalism as a Moral System*, Ch. 8
- Landreth and Colander, Ch. 5 (pp. 138-148)
- Ekelund and Tollison, "The New Political Economy of J.S. Mill: the Means to Social Justice," *Canadian Journal of Economics*, vol. 9(2), May 1976
- Losman, "J.S. Mill on Alternative Economic Systems," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 30(1), Jan. 1971. Reprinted in John Wood, ed. *John Suart Mill: Critical Assessments*, vol. 1
- Landreth and Colander, Ch. 6 (pp. 162-170)
- Burt, *Social Perspectives in the History of Economic Theory*, Ch. 6 (pp. 145-148)
- Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*, Ch. 6 (pp 163-170)

III. Topics in Welfare Economics

- Atkinson, "Economic Transformation and Economic Justice" in *Social and Ethical Aspects of Economics*
- Gordon, *Welfare, Justice, and Freedom*, Ch. 3 (pp. 83-114)

IV. Background on Catholic Social Teaching

- Coleman, "Neither Liberal Nor Socialist," in Coleman, ed., *One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Thought*
- Curran, "Relating Religious-Ethical inquiry to Economic Policy," in Gannon, ed., *The Catholic Challenge to the American Economy*

V. The Early Encyclicals

- Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum," in O'Brien and Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought*
- McCarthy and Rhodes, *Eclipse of Justice*, Ch. 5 (pp. 151-162)
- Murphy, "In the Beginning," in Weigel and Royal, eds., *A Century of Catholic Social Thought*
- Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno," in O'Brien and Shannon
- McCarthy and Rhodes, Ch. 5 (pp. 162-166)
- Kohler, "In Praise of Little Platoons," in Weigel and Royal
- John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra," in O'Brien and Shannon
- McCarthy and Rhodes, Ch. 5 (pp.167 - 171)
- Sirico, "A Teacher Who Learns," in Weigel and Royal

- Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," in O'Brien and Shannon
 - McCarthy and Rhodes, Ch. 5 (pp. 171 - 174)
 - Royal, "Reforming International Development" in Weigel and Royal
- VI. The U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter
- U.S. Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All," in O'Brien and Shannon
 - Douglass, "First Things First: The Letter and the Common Good Tradition," in Douglass
 - Simon and Novak, "Liberty and Justice for All," in Finn, ed., *Private Virtue and Public Policy*
 - Benne, "Two Cheers for the Bishops," in Lutz, ed., *God, Goods, and the Common Good*
 - Green, "The Bishops' Letter - A Jewish Reading," in Gannon
 - U.S. Catholic Bishops, "A Catholic Framework for Economic Life," *Origins*, November 21, 1996
- VII. John Paul II
- John Paul II, "Laborem Exercens," in O'Brien and Shannon
 - McCarthy and Rhodes, Ch. 5 (pp. 174-181)
 - Destro, "Laborem Exercens," in Weigel and Royal
 - John Paul II, "Centesimus Annus," in O'Brien and Shannon
 - Hollenbach, "Christian Social Ethics After the Cold War," *Theological Studies*, March 1992
 - Weigel, "The Virtues of Freedom," in Weigel and Royal
- VIII. Conclusion
- Canavan, "The Popes and the Economy," *First Things*, October 1991