



## Capstone Seminar for Politics, Philosophy, & Economics

Theme: **Capitalism and Virtue**

We will investigate what, if anything, is ethically suboptimal about capitalistic transactions.

We will address the following questions, among others:

- What kinds of social transactions are virtuous in general?
- What kinds of social transactions are virtuous in 'invisible hands' contexts?
- What is a market transaction?
- What range of motivations are compatible with market transactions in contemporary capitalist society?
- What is the broader relationship between the ethics of individual actions in larger social structures, in particular in the case of oppressive structures?

Instructor: Professor Barry Maguire

Class: Tuesdays (CW103) / Wednesdays (SM 107) from 3:05 – 5:35

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 5:35 – 6:35 in Caldwell Hall 215C

Course Description: This class will be run like a graduate seminar. It will consolidate your understanding of Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. Discussions will deliberately range across disciplines. You will develop your expertise in an extended essay. Classes meet once a week to discuss one or two papers. You will be required to write a short response in advance of each class.

Prerequisites: All other requisite PPE courses

- Evaluation: Your overall grade will be determined as follows:  
10% for participation  
This will be for your contributions to discussion and your attendance at the seminar (on which see below).  
20% for short responses  
Each week you are required to write a 200 word response to the reading in advance of class, and to post this to the course website.  
25% for first assignment (roughly 2000 words; 8 pages double-spaced)  
45% for research paper (roughly 5000 words; 20 pages double-spaced)
- Attendance: You will lose 5% of your grade if you miss more than one class without a formal explanation.  
If you arrive more than ten minutes late for class, or leave more than ten minutes early, without a formal explanation, that counts as missing the class.
- Electronics Policy: Phones and Laptops are not allowed in class without explicit permission.
- Email: Please be professional. Do not ask anything you can find out without asking. Keep your questions brief and accept my apologies in advance for terse replies. Please send a short follow-up email if you do not receive a reply within two business days.
- Honor Code: All students are expected to abide by the honor code.  
- <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/students/rights-responsibilities>  
Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. It is in your interest to keep a careful record of any resources you use in research and writing. Always cite any resource that you use, including friends with whom you have worked in cooperation is permitted on an assignment. Do not re-use papers written for past classes.
- Texts: Available online (e.g. jstor.org) or in library or on course website. Do not email me for readings without ensuring that you cannot find them yourself.
- Reading: Everything on this syllabus has been carefully chosen. I expect you to read everything carefully. Read each piece a few times. Read once, quickly, to get the structure of the argument, the main claims, and the conclusion(s). Read a second time to study the argument more carefully, to formulate the argument in your own words, to think up your own examples to illustrate the main claims, and to think of counterexamples to these claims. Read a third time to soak up any remaining details. Some excellent reading advice can be found online here: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

You are welcome to read anything else that interests you. Feel free to ask me for further reading suggestions. In general, the more you read, the better a sense you will have of the strengths and weaknesses of prominent views in any given topic, and of typical forms of argument in the area.

Writing: An important goal of this course is for you to further develop your skills in philosophical writing. There will be occasion to practice every week with the short writing assignments. Please also read Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, and Jim Pryor's *Guide to writing philosophy papers*.

### Topics and Readings (subject to change)

**Week beginning:    Topic:**

17-Aug    *Introduction*

Jaworski & Brennan, 'Markets without symbolic limits'

Erik Olin Wright, 'What's so bad about capitalism?'

Schweickart, *After Capitalism* pages 22-24

24-Aug    *Care and Respect*

Stephen Darwall, *Welfare and Rational Care*, chapters 1 and 2

31-Aug    *Motivating Reasons and Virtue*

Julia Markovits, 'Acting for the Right Reasons'

7-Sep    *Ethics in Systemic Contexts Part One: Education*

**Harry Brighouse visits**

Brighouse & Swift, *Family Values*, chapter five: *Conferring Advantage*

14-Sep    *Endogenous Preferences*

Samuel Bowles, *Endogenous Preferences: The Cultural Consequences of Markets and other Economic Institutions*

Samuel Bowles, *Policies Designed for Self-Interested Citizens May Undermine "The Moral Sentiments"*

21-Sep    *Invisible Hands*

Edna Ullmann-Margalit, 'Invisible Hand Explanations.'

Optional: Nozick, 'Invisible Hand Explanations'

- 28-Sep *Ethics of Competition*  
Arthur Applbaum, *Ethics of Competition*, chapters six and eight
- 4 Oct **BOOTCAMP: Pizza, Caffeine, and Paper Writin'**
- 5-Oct *Capitalism & Alienation*  
**Robert Paul Wolff visits**  
Bertell Ollman, *Alienation and the Law of Value*
- 10-Oct **First Assignment Due**
- 12-Oct **Fall Break**
- 19-Oct *On the Nature and Ethics of Market Transactions*  
Joseph Heath, *Morality, Competition, and the Firm*, chapters 4 and 11
- 26-Oct *Capitalist Virtues*  
**Jonathan Anomaly visits**  
Jonathan Anomaly, 'Trust, Trade, and Moral Progress'
- 2-Nov *Ethics in Systemic Contexts, Part Two: Sexism*  
**Kate Manne visits**  
Kate Manne, 'How to Get Away with Murder: Hyper-Privileged Men and Excessive Credibility'
- 9-Nov *Ethics in Systemic Contexts, Part Three: Race*  
Sally Haslanger, 'Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?'  
  
Arundhati Roy interview, 'I Don't Believe There Are Only Two Genders, I See Gender As A Spectrum And I'm Somewhere On It'  
  
Jelani Cobb, 'Black Like Her' (New Yorker piece on Rachel Dolezal)
- 16-Nov *Essay Presentation*
- 23-Nov **Thanksgiving Holiday**
- 30-Nov *Essay Presentation*
- 1-Dec **Gene Nicol Talk: North Carolina's Greatest Challenge**
- 10-Dec **FINAL PAPERS DUE**