COURSE SYLLABUS

HON 340                                                                                                                        Spring 2013
Social Justice: Mirage or Oasis?

Catalog Description:
Prerequisites: acceptance into the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. Also, the disposition to be challenged and to wrestle with new ideas. This course attempts to clarify our understanding of the pervasive and yet obscure concept of social justice in the modern world. F.A. Hayek contends that the concept, despite well-meaning intentions, is meaningless, incoherent, and harmful to the prosperity of a free society. David Miller argues that when considered contextually the principles of desert, need, and equality can be used to delineate a theory of social justice as a viable political ideal. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Course Outcomes:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts.
2. Understand how rules and socioeconomic orders form in human intercourse.
3. Explicate the role of rules and order in creating human prosperity.
4. Articulate a coherent difference in the concepts of justice and social justice.
5. Present, explain, and evaluate how your thinking on the concept of social justice has evolved.

Content:
The course begins by asking what are the origins of liberty and justice in human development. Is justice a rational ideal, an instinct, or a moral tradition? What makes a civilization of strangers possible and what roles do justice and liberty play in the development of trade and a prosperous civilization? Then we will explore critiques of a world of trade and how these criticisms are rooted in a newer notion of justice. Through the lens of this broad perspective of human history, the course will explore the philosophical and jurisprudential foundations of social justice. Is social justice a relief for economic distress or an illusionary cure for a misidentified economic disorder?

Required Texts:

Students are expected to bring the texts of the day to class with them.

**Essential Facility:**
Access to computer lab; seminar setting.

**Instructional Methods:**
This course uses a combination of hands-on learning in Socratic roundtable discussions of readings, laboratory experiments, journaling, and four expository papers.

**Evaluation:**
Because of the interactive nature of the class, attendance is an essential component. Excessive tardies constitute absences; six absences may result in failure (Undergraduate Catalog, “Academic Policies and Procedures”). Please keep this in mind. Missed in-class work cannot be made up.

1. **Participation in Class Discussions** [15%]
   Students must enter the discussion with specific questions generated by texts as well as a desire to probe and reevaluate ideas. It is essential that students bring texts, journal, and questions to each class session.

2. **Laboratory Experiments** [5%]
   Part of the experiential learning in this class involves participating in two laboratory exercises involving concepts that we will discuss in a future class. All you need to do is show up on time and make the decisions you deem to be in your own interest for the situation presented to you.

3. **Questions** [20%]
   Shared inquiry is a process for exploring the central ideas of the course. For each class period with a reading assignment, students will *type up* in advance two questions to be handed in before class starts. Asking a good question is harder than providing a good answer. The readings for this course will be challenging to digest. Your questions will be expected to reflect a level of depth from wrestling with the ideas.

4. **Journal** [10%]
   The class journal is a space for students to reflect on class ideas, to capture text references, thoughts, questions, areas for further inquiry—their thinking about the concept of social justice. This is not a place to take notes per se; rather, it is a place to work through ideas, to generate questions for class discussion and connections that will serve in writing the expository papers. Students will select a journal (bound) and bring it to each class session. While it is personal writing, it is not private writing; the journal will be shared and/or collected at times throughout the semester; it is important that it be
current.

5. Expository Papers [30%]
You will write 4 expository essays in which you discuss an original connection that you have made or are attempting to make in exploring the texts. Develop this connection with references to the texts in approximately 750 words. Specific guidelines will be discussed in class.

6. Final Examination [20%]
Students will consider the course objectives and respond to questions posed by the professor in an individual oral examination.

Students with Disabilities
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. The Disability Services Office will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy
Chapman University is a community of scholars, which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

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