

Social Justice: REL 2886T9 World Religions

Summer 2019 Intensive Term 2

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Tuesdays, 6:00-10:15 pm, 6/26/19-8/7/19

Location: Tracy Campus (classroom TBD)

Three credit hours. This course explores the way the major world religions teach and advocate for social justice. Central to the study is an investigation of the way theological thought, as well as economic, political, and legal decisions, impact our understanding of social justice, their implementation, and adjudication. We consider the concept of Social Justice from the ethical teachings of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in particular.

The course also focuses on the application of social justice to particular cases, which changes each semester as the news of the world changes. After successfully completing the course, students have acquired an understanding of the principal teachings of the world religions as they relate to social justice.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Investigate and understand how religious and theological traditions can work effectively for social justice and for the good of humanity and the environment. (PLO 1)
2. Make illuminating comparisons between the approaches of different thinkers and traditions with respect to basic ethical, theological, and historical questions. (PLO 4)
3. Students will engage in and absorb diverse perspectives and appreciate and value human diversity. (Mission ILO)
4. Students will develop the tools, habits and intellectual curiosity to become lifelong learners. (Mission ILO)
5. Students will consider alternative systems of thought impartially, recognizing and assessing assumptions, implications and practical consequences. (Critical Thinking ILO)

Required Texts:

- Max Tegmark, *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Knopf, 2017).
- Darrell M. West, *The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation* (New York: Brookings Institution Press 2018).

Available new or used from Amazon.

Attendance: Intensive classes require a stringent absence policy since even one absence may significantly affect achievement of course learning objectives. With only 28 class contact hours as opposed to the traditional 45 contact hours, all class time is critical. A student who misses more than one class period or the equivalent (for accumulated hours) must withdraw from the class and will be assigned a failing grade for the class unless officially dropping the class. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the drop or withdrawal.

Average Student Workload Expectations: Class time consists of 28 hours and students are expected to attend. Students are expected to engage in approximately 80 hours of out-of-class homework over the seven-week term, or approximately 11 hours per week. Course assignments are made in accordance with this expectation.

Workload	Hours in Class	28 (Includes 2-3 breaks [25 min. total (per session.)
Distribution:	Reading and Reflecting	60 (30hrs. reading, 30 hrs. writing 6two-page reflections.)
	<u>Oral Presentation (10-min.) Prep</u>	<u>20(requires 2h per 1' presentation.)</u>
	28 + 80 =	108

Academic Honesty: NDNU's core values include learning, integrity, and honesty, values we live out in all areas of our learning community. Academic honesty means you are able to demonstrate your own knowledge and skills and

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receive feedback on your learning that can help you improve. By taking responsibility for your own work and avoiding actions that could give you an unfair advantage over others, you are contributing to the NDNU learning community and developing professional skills and values that will serve you well into the future. Academic honesty is one of the most important values of a university community, and breaches of this trust have serious consequences. Please see the Student Handbook for a detailed discussion of Academic Conduct expectations.

(Instructor's note: In addition to consequences described in the Student Handbook, students who fail to demonstrate academic honesty will lose eligibility for extra-credit points.)

Student Success Center: The Student Success Center (SSC), located in the [Main Campus Center](#), is dedicated to supporting students' academic success at NDNU. The SSC includes writing and subject tutoring, test proctoring for students with accommodations, and facilitates the math placement test (MPT). The goal of the Student Success Center is to promote student learning and academic innovation. Professional staff members, peer tutors, academic advisors, and faculty work together to promote a supportive educational environment. Services are available both on a drop-in basis and by appointment.

Tutorial assistance is offered in lower and upper division English courses. Rudimentary English language assistance is offered to international students who may need assistance writing papers or general English assistance. Some subject tutoring is offered at the Student Success Center. Please check your NDNU student e-mail account for subjects and schedules. These are also posted on the Student Success Center and Writing Center doors.

Disability Resource Center: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. Accommodations are not provided retroactively. The Disability Resource Center is located at St. Joe's 117. Please contact us by email at DRC@ndnu.edu or by phone at 650-508-3670.

Counseling Services: The mission of Counseling Services is to promote and enhance the overall wellbeing of students so that they may reach their potential for personal growth and academic success. Counseling Services is open Monday-Friday from 9am to 5pm, and currently enrolled students are welcome to call, email or drop-by to schedule an appointment. (650) 508-3714. Counselingservices@ndnu.edu. Located at New Hall E18/E19.

Course Evaluations/Teaching Effectiveness Surveys: Teaching Effectiveness Surveys (course evaluations) will be available online through Campus Portal during the last few weeks of Summer Term 2. Your feedback regarding courses and faculty is very important to Notre Dame de Namur University, to your faculty, and to as the instructor for this course. Your feedback helps us review and improve teaching, helps departments/programs review and improve program content, and is used by the university in making decisions about tenure, promotion, and hiring decisions for part-time faculty.

Directions: To access, please enable pop-ups in your browser (uncheck pop-up blocker), then in Campus Portal look for the "**You have an active survey**" link in the left sidebar. Click that link to open the Course Evaluation Surveys page, which has a link to a survey for each course in which you're enrolled. Your feedback is very important! Please complete your evaluations for all your courses promptly. Remember: Your responses are anonymous.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices: As a courtesy to your instructor and class mates, please turn off phones during class. Use of computers/tablets in class must be focused on enriching your participation in this course.

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Course Requirements:

- **Attendance and active participation -- Worth 40% of your final grade.** Prepare for class by **highlighting** the assigned texts. Highlighting the main points, and taking time to review these before class, should help you join the conversation.

Student Responsibility:

- 1. **BEFORE EACH CLASS:** to read the relevant chapter in the textbook prior to EACH class. The quality of class interaction and learning experience is directly related to how many and how much students participate and shape the in-class discussion. Identifying current news relevant to class topics will make the class more interesting and relevant, and bring discussion closer to your own topic of interests. Bringing up examples of relevant work experience too. In short, be prepared to contribute and get the most out of the class.
- 2. **AFTER EACH CLASS:** to review the instructor's slides posted online, and assignments discussed.
- 3. **TO BE PROACTIVE AND ASK FOR SUPPORT AS SOON AS NEEDED FROM:** • their peers, especially their group members • the instructor: students are invited to make an appointment with the instructor should they experience any difficulty or feel they are falling behind.

Note: Regular work is essential to manage course load. Leaving it all to the week prior to the midterms and final will not be effective to assimilate the information required.

- **Six Reflections on Textbooks -- Worth 40% of your final grade.** Please use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type (double-spaced) in your six reflection papers. To begin 7/3/19, on the Tuesday at the beginning of Class Sessions 2-6, students will turn in a hard copy of a 2-2.5 page **reflection paper** on the assigned readings. Exception: In recognition of the challenges inherent in starting any new class, the first class comes with no reflection. Please plan to write at least 2 pages, as it's not possible to produce an essay of sufficient depth in less than two double-spaced pages. See Page 4 below for one simple approach.
- **One Presentation – Worth 20% of your final grade.** A 10-minute **individual presentation on a work of nature writing, presented orally but with accompanying text**, is due by each student during the course. See more details below.

Individual Presentation: Students will give 10-minute presentations on a current event associated with the chosen topic and analyzing that event in light of our readings and discussions. Each student will do one current presentation of no less than 10 minutes and no more than 10 minutes. The presentation must be related to one topic only (i.e., technology, AI and social justice, catholic social justice, etc.) depending on the date the student has chosen. Student must describe the current topic. Analyze the implications of the current event. Relate it to the readings we have done and experiences we have had concerning this theme. They must also suggest a solution. Students must use at least five news sources for this and give a copy of the resources to professor on the date of presentation

On Grading, including Late Assignments and Extra Credit:

- Your grade for class participation (see breakdown below) is based on your active engagement with in-class lectures, discussions and activities. This includes demonstration of your grasp of the main points in the assigned reading and lectures. While you are encouraged to jot notes onto your group discussion worksheets, you do not need to turn these in to me.
- Please check that your writing: (1) includes both a subject and a verb in each sentence; (2) shows “agreement” between subject and verb, e.g., the cloud *moves*, but the clouds *move*; (3) uses a complete set of quote marks (“ ---”) for each direct quote, and (4) offers a parenthesized citation whenever you cite a fact from a particular source.
- **Regarding late work:** I teach most effectively when I have had a chance to read your reflection papers before the class session on a given topic. Therefore (with the exception of the first class period – see above):

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- If you miss the email deadline and bring a hard copy of your reflection to class, I will deduct 1 point from your total grade for the class.
- Reflections turned in later than class time will result in the loss of 2 points from your total grade for the class.
- **Up to 8 points of extra credit are possible.** Three points can be earned for perfect attendance. Two points can be earned by writing one or more (quality) extra reflection(s) on a chapter of Erin M. Brigham, *See, Judge, Act: Catholic Social Teaching and Service Learning* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013). Yes, you can propose other possibilities.

Point Breakdown

Participation	40 points
Six Reflections	40 points
<u>Presentation</u>	<u>20 points</u>
Total	100 points

Grade/Point Conversion

A+ 100-97	A 96-94	A- 93-90
B+ 89-87	B 86-84	B- 83-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-74	C- 73-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-64	D- 63-60
F 59 or below		

A Simple Way to Write a Reflection Paper: These reflection papers must be 2 typed pages, single-spaced, one-inch margins, 12pt Times New Roman font. The paper needs to be well organized, using correct grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. For every time a paper is due, you must bring 2 hard-copies, one to keep and one to turn in.

CLASS SESSION:

STUDENTS WILL HAVE READ:

Note: Each class session will include a “chalk talk” designed to surface and unpack the most important themes in the assigned reading. Except for Week 1, please bring your comments and questions to this time.

No reflection is due on June 26.

1. June 26. INTRODUCTION

Lecture: Social Justice and World Religions

Group Time 1: Discuss Social Justice

Video on what is Social Justice

Group Time: Discuss World Religions.

Video: A Short Intro to World Religions

Reflection essay #1 due by 6pm on July 3.

2. July 3. TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE 1

Individual Presentations

Lecture: Bridging the Technology Divide

Group Time: What is the Technology Divide

Video on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tegmark Ch. 1 (Welcome to the ...).

Tegmark Ch. 2 (Matter Turns Intelligent)

Reflection essay #2 due by 6pm on July 10.

3. July 10. TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE 2

Individual Presentations

Lecture: The Notion of Singularity

Group Time: Machine Intelligence

Video on Singularity

Tegmark Ch. 3 (The Near Future).

Tegmark Ch. 4 (Intelligence Explosion?).

Reflection essay #3 due by 6pm on July 17.

4. July 17. TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE 3

Individual Presentations

Lecture: AI and Space Mission

Group Time: Space and Species

Video on Intelligent Space Machines

Tegmark Ch. 5 (Aftermath).

Tegmark Ch. 6 (Our Cosmic Endowment).

Reflection essay #4 due by 6pm on July 24.

5. July 24. TECH DIVIDE AND WORK 1

Individual Presentations

Lecture: A Global Crisis

Group Time: A Jobless World?

Video on AI and Work

Darrell Ch. 4 (Rethinking Work).

Darrell Ch. 5 (A New Social Contract).

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Reflection essay #5 due by 6pm on July 31.

6. July 31. TECH DIVIDE AND WORK 2

Individual Presentations

Lecture: The Role of Religion 1

Group Time: Tech Divide and Religion 1

Video: AI and Employment

Darrell Ch 6 (Lifetime Learning).

Reflection essay #6 due by 6pm on August 7.

7. August 7. TECH DIVIDE AND WORK 3

Individual Presentations

Lecture: The Role of Religion 2

Group Time: Tech Divide and Religion 2

Video: AI and Social Justice

Darrell Ch.7 (Is Politics Up to the Task?).

Darrell Ch. 8 (Economic and Political Reform).

Recommended Sources

Kirstie Ball and Laureen Snider, *The Surveillance-industrial Complex: a Political Economy of Surveillance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

Erin M. Brigham, *See, Judge, Act: Catholic Social Teaching and Service Learning* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013).

Stephen R. Prothero, *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World and Why Their Differences Matter* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

Philip Novak, *The World's Wisdom. Sacred Texts of the World's Religions* (New York: HarperOne, 1995).

Daniel R. Headrick, *Technology: A World History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Noreen L. Herzfeld, *Technology and Religion: Remaining Human in a Co-created World*. Bryn Mawr PA: Templeton Press, 2009.

Romano Guardini, *Letters from Lake Como. Explorations in Technology and the Human Race*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.