**Sem. 1, 2015-16**

**RELS 0025**

**Wealth: Religious Approaches**

**Description**

This course will survey religious approaches to the acquisition and use of wealth: How do religious thinkers understand the notion of ownership and private property? Is the fact of ownership of significant possessions seen as a moral good or an impediment to the spiritual life? Are there better or worse ways to acquire wealth? To spend it? The course will focus primarily on Judaism and Christianity, although examples from Islam and perhaps eastern religions will be brought in as appropriate. Topics to be covered will include religious understandings of poverty, charity, finance, and the link between religion and capitalism. DPLL LILE WRIT

**Instructors**

**Professor Michael Satlow**

**Professor Susan Harvey**

**Goals**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Know how different religions value and treat the concept of wealth;
2. Be familiar with a variety of religious prescriptions about the best (and worst) ways of acquiring wealth;
3. Recognize how religious traditions use teachings about wealth in response to contemporary issues (e.g., ecology);
4. Know how different religious traditions frame the rights and responsibilities of the rich and the poor;
5. Recognize that faith communities have used and interpreted sacred traditions in light of their own historical circumstances;
6. Think critically about religion and wealth;
7. Improve their writing

**Required Books** (at Brown Bookstore, AND ALSO on reserve in the Rockefeller Library):

Norman Solomon, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction.* 2nd edition.

Linda Woodhouse, *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction.* 2nd edition.

Gary Anderson, *Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition*.

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

A Bible (any current scholarly translation: Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, New International Version, Catholic Standard). Copies are available in the Brown Bookstore; we recommend the *HarperCollins Study Bible,* Student Edition. There is also one on reserve at the Rock. Check with the instructors if you are unsure about what to read.

**Requirements**

This class is largely discussion based. You are expected to attend every class, prepared and read to participate. Should you have any extenuating circumstances, please consult one of the instructors. Multiple absences or repeated lack of preparation will result in a grade penalty.

There are eight **response papers**. These are just a few paragraphs and will usually center around a prompt or choice of prompts, submitted on Canvas and open to the entire class to read. They are meant to give you an opportunity to synthesize the readings and discussions on a topic. They are due Fridays (on the weeks indicated) by 4 PM on Canvas and will be worth 40% of your final grade.

There are two **short papers** (approximately 2000 words). The first is due on Sunday, October 4 and the second on Sunday, November 8, submitted on Canvas. The first paper is worth 10% of your final grade, the second 20%.

The **take-home fina**l will be made available on the last day of class and is due by December 18 at noon. It is worth 30% of your final grade.

**Course Plan and Assignments:**

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| **September 10** | **Introduction** |
| **September 15** | **No class (Rosh Hashanah)** |
| **September 17** | **Wealth and Religion Today**  *Readings*:   1. Anderson, *Charity*, Introduction. 2. R. Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* (OUP 2014), ch. 10, “Bible Bazaar”, pp. 193-208; Ch. 18, “Purpose Driven”, pp. 326-38. 3. Joseph Isaac Lifshitz, “Welfare, Property and Charity in Jewish Thought,” *Transaction Social Science and Modern Society* 44 (2007): 71-78.   *Weekly Response 1 due Friday Sept. 18* |
| **September 22** | **What is Wealth? (1)**  *Readings*:   1. Selections from Hebrew Bible: Genesis 1-3; Exodus 19:5; 23:9-11; 25; Deuteronomy 10:12-19, 14:27, 15:1-18; Deuteronomy 24:17-22; 2 Samuel 12:1-4; Psalms 24:1-2, 50:10-12, 89:11. 2. Geoffrey P. Miller, *Property in the Bible*, NELLCO Legal Scholarship Repository: <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2369435> 3. Michael Hellinger, “The Emerging Definition of the Poverty Line in Jewish Law,” *Jewish Law Association Studies*  14 (2002): 127-139. 4. [Highly recommended] Norman Solomon, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction*, esp. ch. 1-5, pp. 1-80. |
| **September 24** | **What is Wealth? (2)**  *Readings*:   1. Selections from New Testament: Luke 6:20-26; Matthew 5: 3-12; Luke 19: 1-27; Mark 12: 13-17; Mark 4: 13-20. (discipleship) Mark 1:6, 16-20; 6:8-9; Luke 8: 1-3; 9: 1-6, 23-27, 57-58. 1 Timothy 6: 3-10. 2. M. D. Meeks, “Economics in the Christian Scriptures,” *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*, ed. P. Oslington (OUP 2014). 3. [highly recommended] Linda Woodhouse, *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction*, esp. ch. 1-3, pp. 1-70.   *Weekly Response 2 due Friday Sept. 25*  *(short paper 1 assigned; due Sunday Oct. 4)* |
| **September 29** | **Rich or Poor? (1)**  *Readings*:   1. Anderson, *Charity*, pp. 1-52 2. Biblical selections: Proverbs 10:4-5; 11:16; 13:8, 22, 25; 10:15, 22; 14:20: 18:16; 19:4-7; 22:7; Psalm 72, 112; Mark 2: 14-17; Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 18:18-30; Matthew 19: 16-30; Luke 1: 46-55 (compare Hannah’s song, 1 Samuel 2: 1-10); Luke 4: 16-21 (Isaiah 61: 1-2); Luke 16: 1-31. 3. Michael Bonner, “Poverty and Economics in the Qur’an,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35 (2005): 391-406. |
| **October 1** | **Rich or Poor? (2)**  *Readings*:   1. Finish Anderson   *Short Paper 1 due Sunday Oct. 4 by 11:59 p.m.* |
| **October 6** | **Model Economies**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Epistle of James (=Jacob); Revelation 1, 13, 18, 21:1-22:5; Acts 2: 42-45, 4: 32-37, 5:1-11, 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15, 9: 6-15; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-31; Romans 12; Romans 13. 2. Pastor (Shepherd) of Hermas, Vision 3; Similtude 2. 3. S. Friesen “Injustice or God’s Will: Explanations of Poverty in Proto-Christian Communities,” in *A People’s History of Christianity*, Vol. 1: *Christian Origins*, ed. R.A. Horsley (2005), pp. 240-60. |
| **October 8** | **Alternative Economies**  *Readings*:   1. Monasticism: Palladius, *Lausiac History* (selections). 2. *The Man of God.* 3. S.A. Harvey, “The Holy and the Poor: Models from Early Syriac Christianity,” in *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare*, ed. E. Hanawalt and C. Lindberg, pp. 43-66. 4. Selections in A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, by Ber Borochov (pp. 352-367) and Samuel Hayyim Landau (432-439).   *Weekly Response 3 due Friday Oct. 9* |
| **October 13** | **Consumerism and Capitalism**  *Readings*:   1. Catherine Brekus, “ The Perils of Prosperity: some historical reflections on Christianity, capitalism, and consumerism in America,” in *American Christianities: a history of dominance and diversity*, ed. C. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin (2011). 2. Leigh Eric Schmidt, “Christianity in the Marketplace: Christmas and the Consumer Culture: Joy to [some of] the World,” *Crosscurrents* 42.3 (1992)   http://www.crosscurrents.org/schmidt.htm   1. Y. Y. Lifshitz, “Foundations of a Jewish Economic Theory,” *Azure Online* Autumn, 2004, no. 18. |
| **October 15** | **How Do You Get It? Inheritance**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Numbers 27:1-11; 36; Deuteronomy 21:15-17; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2; Matthew 6: 19-34; Luke 12: 13-34. 2. Arthur Silver, “May One Disinherit Family in Favor of Charity?” *Tradition* 28:3 (1994): 79-93.   *Weekly Response 4 due Friday Oct. 16* |
| **October 20** | **How Do You Get It? Labor**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Exodus 22:25-27; Deuteronomy 24:10-15; Luke 3: 10-14; Matthew 20:1-16. 2. Aaron Levine, “The Living Wage and Jewish Law,” *Tradition* 41 (2008): 8-32. 3. Jill Jacobs, “Work, Workers, and the Jewish Owner,” <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/20052010/jacobs-living-wage.pdf> |
| **October 22** | **How Do You Get It? Finance**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical Selections: Deuteronomy 15: 7-11;24: 10-15; Exodus 22: 25-27; Matthew 5:42; Luke 6: 34-5; Leviticus 25:25-36; Luke 16: 1-31, 19: 1-27. 2. D. Z. Feldman, “The Jewish Prohibition of Interest: Themes, Scopes, and Contemporary Applications,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Judaism and Economics.* 3. Arthur Silver, “The Prohibition against Interest Today,” *Tradition*.   *Weekly Response 5 due Friday Oct. 23* |
| **October 27** | **Finance and Usury (II)**  *Readings*:   1. “Usury”, Ian Harper and Lachlan Smiri, *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics.* 2. M. Fadel, “Riba, Efficiency, and Prudential Regulation: Preliminary Thoughts,” *Wisconsin International Law Journal* (2008). |
| **October 29** | **Splendor**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical Selections: Psalm 26:8; Mark 14:3-9, John 12: 1-8. 2. E. Siecienski, “Gilding the Lily: A Patristic Defense of Liturgical Splendor,” in S. R. Holman, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (Baker Academic/ Holy Cross 2008), pp. 211-20.   *Weekly Response 6 due Friday Oct. 30*  *(short paper 2 assigned; due Nov. 8)* |
| **November 3** | **Slavery**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Exodus 21:2-11, 20-21; Deuteronomy 15:12-18; Leviticus 25:39-55; 1 Corinthians 7: 20-24; 1 Timothy 6: 1-2; Ephesians 5: 21-6:9; Philemon; Colossians 3: 18-4:1; Romans 6: 15-23. 2. Yaron Ben-Naeh, “Blond, Tall, with Honey-colored Eyes: Jewish Ownership of Slaves in the Ottoman Empire,” *Jewish History* (20:3-4): 2006, 315-332. 3. Daly, John Patrick. *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War*. (University Press of Kentucky, 2002), Ch. 2, “The post-1831 birth of evangelical proslavery”, pp. 30-56. 4. [Recommended] “Evangelicalism, Abolitionism, and Pro-Slavery Christianity”, in R. Marie Griffith, *American Religions: A Documentary History* (OUP 2007), pp. 220-44. (Angelina Emily Grimké, Catherine Beecher, George T. Armstrong). |
| **November 5** | **Environmental Stewardship**  *Reading*:   1. Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, *Environment in Jewish Law*, 1-23, 75-55. 2. “Economic Religion and Environmental Religion,” R.H. Nelson, *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics.* 3. Pope Francis, Laudato Si (condensed version): <http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2015/06/laudato-si-condensed-version/>   *Short Paper 2 due Sunday Nov 8, by 11:59 p.m.* |
| **November 10** | **Who Should Give?**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Exodus 22:21-23: Leviticus 23:22; Luke 10: 1-12, 14: 7-34; Matthew 25: 31-46; Philemon 2:2-8; Luke 21:1-4, Acts 20:35. 2. Moses Maimonides, “Gifts to the Poor,” *Mishneh Torah* (trans. I. Klein, *The Code of Maimonides* (YUP, 1979), vol. 7, 48-93. Focus on chapters 7-10. 3. D. Buell, “ ‘Be Not One Who Stretches Out Hands to Receive but Shuts Them When it Comes to Giving’: Envisioning Christian Charity When Both Donors and Recipients are Poor,” in Holman, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society,* pp. 37-47. 4. [recommended] Clement of Alexandria, “Who is the Rich Man Who Can be Saved?” |
| **November 12** | **How Much Should I Give?**  *Readings*:   1. Biblical selections: Luke 16: 1-31, 18: 18-30. 2. Michael Broyde, “The Giving of Charity in Jewish Law: For What Purpose and Toward What Goal?” in Yosi Praeger, ed., *Toward a Renewed Ethic of Jewish Philanthropy*, 241-274. 3. James David Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty’s Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), Ch. 3 (on tithing), pp. 47-75; and Ch. 7 , “In America You Can Have as Much Religion as You Can Pay For,” pp. 199-227.   *Weekly Response 7 due Friday Nov 13* |
| **November 17** | **The Communal Obligation Toward the Poor**  *Readings*:   1. Mark R. Cohen, *Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Egypt*, chapter 8, “Charity”. 2. Elliott N. Dorff, “Donations from Ill-Gotten Gains.” Responsum. 3. “Economic Justice”, Albino Barrera, *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics.* |
| **November 19** | **Reward and Punishment**  *Reading*:   1. Tosefta *Pe’ah*, 4:18. 2. Alyssa Gray, “Redemptive Almsgiving and the Rabbis of Late Antiquity,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 18 (2011): 144-84. 3. Judah Galinsky, “Jewish Charitable Bequests and the Hekdesh Trust in Thirteenth-Century Spain,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35 (2005): 423-440.   *Weekly Response 8 due Friday Nov. 20* |
| **November 24** | **Case Study: Organ Donation**  *Reading*:   1. Madeline Kochen, *Organ Donation and the Divine Lien in Talmudic Law*, pp. 20-59, 121-177. 2. F. Rosner, “Payment for Organ Donation in Jewish Law,” in the *Oxford Handbook of Judaism and Economics*, 324-339. |
| **November 26** | **No class: Thanksgiving** |
| **December 1** | **Weber**  *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, selection to be announced |
| **December 3** | **Conclusions**   1. Ben Cooper, “Happiness,” in *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics* . 2. [Bowler, Kate. “Daily Grind: The Spiritual Workday of the American Prosperity Gospel.” *Journal of Cultural Economy* 0, no. 0 (February 16, 2015): 1–7. doi:10.1080/17530350.2014.982150.](http://brown.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMw1V1LSxxBEG5MBAkGiRrHqIE-eZtxXt3THYwQ1qyCHkRHIrks8-iGBV11XQ_-e6v6MbOICjnmtj3sNLv9zVR9VV1fNSFZGsXhC5sgWl1roN6xYonCpubAG8B1N6JuueYNM3FjVp4Vf4fsyh-Y3WUyohpDUmN7VfXw5Nb0f8H7sMJExdEUYmxfSXFxN4bQ_9GlxFHw4QoCum2as6npFI5M_Ag_Xb_BVQe-P4fVMfciCEzI-aoMNZ9BSIwi2wocndGDkCXEHUbrE-av2WNUnHFL5rxk8ar5tfWKeC9Oh4VzeSQFsIq4dzd-i_2FF-pqAxPXtNTPMsJZRm4W7Id-046b2U81CS8vPkCwLTDkLod_vP_lSFKNDNb9Ky-YFPHea79sjpAs9w6z_EJW3DLTXxbTVbKgJmtkq1MS0V1qNdTUtnR5WifnBmxqwP5BAWraQU0d1PRWU4Caeqjpfn3Qo72_Vx_gFQs6jr6Scvi7HByH7nCMsOGSh1nFK6Zi1hayUnkiVNpkSmrJWjDJmumGiURnGIzWQOBTDmGjlHnLsB9jVjRptkE-V6ihmMyM1rINyKKGF0AFSEICWIiALF3J00NxfDKww1U_jB6MIDC6nwWw5ub9CXlUbBLKcZs11XiEQJI3uhBMtgIoqi7yGHh39o2Efq1Hd7abyug9vLf-8fvb5FP_gO-Qj7Ppo_pOFo35eAaRHVym) |