

I. The course will offer a philosophical and theological investigation into the meaning of poverty within human life: both in terms of everyday conceptions of poverty, e.g., socio-economic, and religious conceptions of poverty, e.g., ascetic renunciation of the world. Topics will include:

- 1) The nature of human life as purposeful action in the world;
- 2) Human dignity;
- 3) Defining socio-economic poverty (e.g., inequality, relative deprivation, insufficiency)
- 4) Conceptual/qualitative issues in measuring poverty;
- 5) The relation between poverty and needs, especially basic needs;
- 6) The stigma of poverty; poverty and social marginalization;
- 7) Conceptions of poverty within the Bible;
- 8) Various theological interpretations of poverty: ontological dependence upon God; human sinfulness; renunciation of possessions; poverty of spirit, etc.
- 9) Ethical responses to poverty

Texts: I will be completing a book length manuscript on poverty in the fall. We will also use: Bradley Schiller, *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*; Deepa Narayan, *Voices of the Poor*; as well as various articles and selections from books and journals. I will also direct you to a wide range of contemporary literature on poverty drawn from sociology, psychology, economics, etc as well as a number of texts in the Christian tradition: St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great; St. Gregory (Nazianzus) the Theologian, St Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, etc.

- II. Course Learning Objectives: With regard to each of the topics above, the student will be able to
- a) define relevant critical terms;
 - b) state and explain various positions studied with respect to them;
 - c) compare and contrast, where relevant, various positions about these topics;
 - d) take and defend a position on some subject matter developed in the course.

III. Requirements: regular class participation; a joint research project/class presentation with another students. A final written project of about 12-15 pages. As part of your participation in class, you may also be asked to prepare questions to facilitate discussion of particular readings in class. The final paper will be a research paper on a topic of your own choosing, subject to my approval, that is related to the course. I am open to subject matter and approach provided that there is significant philosophical content and that you take and defend a position about your subject. You will submit a draft of the paper to me by Nov. 17. I will make comments on the draft and return the paper w/comments by Nov. 30. The final draft of the paper will be due to me by Wednesday, December 13 at noon. As for the research project: I will divide the class into research teams (2 for each team at present). I will assign a list of topics (e.g., defining and measuring poverty). The team assigned to that topic will be responsible for developing a research summary for that topic: a bibliographic review; summary of scholarly treatment of the topic; significant areas of disagreement; areas for research, etc. The team will present the results of the research in a class presentation. The length of the research summary, exclusive of the bibliography, should be about 10-12 double spaced pages. The research summary and the class presentation will be co-authored and graded accordingly. The final paper is worth 100 points; the written research summary 75 points; the class presentation for the research summary 50 points, and class participation 25 points. Grade levels will be spread out by 4 points for the final paper; 4 points for the research summary; 3 points for the presentation; and 2 points for class participation.

IV. Course Schedule: Very Tentative

Aug 29 – Intro

Aug 31- Sept. 5 – Schiller 1-3

Sept. 7 – Schiller 4-5

Sept. 12 – Schiller 8

Sept.. 14 – Schiller 12-13

Sept. 19 – Schiller 14 and 16

Sept. 21 – October 3: Voices of the Poor – Specific Readings TBA

October 5-10 Readings on Stigma of Poverty

October 12-17: Poverty Sermons by SS. Basil the Great, John of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa

October 24-November 30 – Selected chapters from Jones's manuscript

Dec. 5-7 Research Group Presentations

V. SOME GENERAL COMMENTS:

(A) My Office is in Coughlin Hall 137; tele. Ext is 5938. My EMAIL john.jones@marquette.edu. My academic website is at: <http://academic.mu.edu/phil/jonesj/>. Office hours will be TTH 10-10:45 AM and 1-1:50 PM. I am available at other times during the week for appointments. If my office hours are not convenient for you, please let me know in person or by E-MAIL and we can set up an appointment.

(B) You are expected to complete assignments on the due dates.

(C) It will be necessary for you to complete readings in a timely manner. Remember that in philosophy, we are very concerned with defining and justifying positions through careful argumentation and precise use of language. It is not enough to know just what positions people hold; you must also know why they hold those positions and how and for what reasons one position differs from others.

(D) The use of cell phones in class is prohibited.

(E) Attendance is required.