

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE SYLLABUS

ECON-ENG-PHIL 357

Spring 2024

Topics in Humanomics: Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation

Catalog Description:

Prerequisites: Permission of instructors.

To be human is not to be an angel, but to know good and evil. To be human is to have the liberty to decide. To be human is to be limited, to face trade-offs. This course dialogically explores John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, F.A. Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*, and Thomas Sowell's *Knowledge and Decisions* to shape one of the most fundamental questions of economics outside the Garden of Eden—not what must be decided, but who shall decide. How do we apply the knowledge of good and evil in a society of strangers? What does the human constitution—"sufficient to [stand], though to free to fall"—mean for responsibility and liberty in the creation of wealth? "The world [is] all before [us], where to choose."

(Offered Interterm/Spring.) 3 credits. (Artistic Inquiry, Social Inquiry, Values Inquiry)

Program Learning Outcomes (Economics):

Knowledge of Economics: Each student will demonstrate knowledge of modern microeconomic theory and apply it to analyze economic policies and problems.

Communication: Each student will be able to communicate clearly, concisely and professionally in both written and oral forms.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate Milton's concept of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. Explain Sowell's argument that "the most fundamental question is not what decision to make but who is to make it."

3. Integrate Milton's and Hayek's concepts of responsibility and liberty into an idea applicable to economics.
4. Complicate the popular tendency to moralize economic decisions and their results.
5. Challenge and deconstruct the perceived tension between economics and the humanities.
6. Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts across a range of genres—epic poem, non-fiction, and documentary.
7. Apply experience in economic experiments to ideas in literary and economic texts.

Required Texts:

Hayek, F.A. 1945. "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *American Economic Review* 35(4): 519-530.

Hayek, F.A. *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Milton, John. *The Complete Poems*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1999.

Sowell, Thomas. *Knowledge and Decisions*. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Essential Facility:

Seminar setting

Instructional Methods:

This course uses a combination of hands-on learning in Socratic roundtable discussions of texts, question development, experiments, and demonstration of meaning making through expository and creative papers.

Evaluation:

1. *Participation in Class Discussions* [15%]

Class discussion provides an opportunity for students to explore questions about exchange and the human condition, challenging the common perception of economics as distinct from the humanities. Through this shared inquiry, students gain experience reading for meaning and communicating complex ideas; thinking reflectively about an interpretive problem; and supporting and testing thoughts through dialogue with peers. Class discussion fosters the flexibility of mind to consider problems from multiple perspectives and the ability to analyze ideas critically. Students must enter the discussion with specific questions generated by all of our texts as well as a desire to probe and reevaluate ideas. It is essential that students bring texts and questions to each class session.

2. *Laboratory Experiments* [5%]

Part of the experiential learning in this class involves participating in 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 the best for the situation presented to you.

3. *Written Questions* [15%]

Shared inquiry is a process for exploring the central ideas of the course. This means

students must read for meaning, identifying possible interpretative problems they would like to address in discussion. For each class period with an assignment, students will word process in advance two questions to be handed in before class starts. Asking a good question is harder than providing a good answer. The student's task is to delve into a claim that doesn't appear correct or consistent with the human condition. Explore with your question why the claim is surprising, unexpected, just plain unsettling. Why is there a clash? Such questions will prepare the student for their daily writing. Due in class OneDrive folder by 12:30 p.m. (sharp) the day of class.

4. *Expository and Creative Writing* [50%]

For the first seven weeks, students will write 250 polished words that either (1) analyze the social structures of responsibility and liberty in *Paradise Lost*, Hayek, and Sowell; (2) analyze critically the epic poem *Paradise Lost*; or (3) articulate how values and ethics inform our understanding of responsibility and liberty. [7 essays @ 2%/essay]

For the third quarter of the semester you will compose a 750-word critical work that conceptually analyzes *Paradise Lost* or a 750-word short story that pays homage to *Paradise Lost* on a theme from Sowell or Hayek. [1 essay @ 18%]

For the final quarter of the semester, you will compose an expository essay on the values and ethics of wealth creation using ideas from both Milton and Hayek. [1 essay @ 18%]

Due in class OneDrive folder by 1:00 p.m. (sharp) the day of class.

5. *Oral Final Examination* [15%]

The oral final examination will involve dice. Other details will be discussed in the final week of the course.

Because of the interactive nature of the class, attendance is an essential component. Excessive tardies constitute absences. Undergraduate Catalog, Academic Policies and Procedures: "The University recommends as a minimal policy that students who are absent 20 percent of the course should be failed." Please keep this in mind. Missed in-class work cannot be made up.

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 Office of Disability Services. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or (<https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/>) if you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once

formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. 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 that 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 be subject to sanction by the instructor and referral to the University's Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion.

Equity and Diversity Policy

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at <https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/files/harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-policy.pdf>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

Prepared by: Katharine Gillespie Moses & Bart J. Wilson, Interterm, 2018

Last revised by: Katharine Gillespie Moses & Bart J. Wilson, Fall, 2023

Tentative Course Schedule and Outline

	<i>Paradise Lost</i>	<i>Knowledge and Decisions</i>	<i>The Constitution of Liberty</i>	<i>Other</i>
M, 1/29				Exhortation, Experiment
W, 1/31	Book I			Weekly Essay Due
M, 2/5		Chapter 1		
W, 2/7	Book II			Weekly Essay Due
M, 2/12		Chapter 2		
W, 2/14	Book III			Weekly Essay Due
M, 2/19			Chapters 1 – 2	
W, 2/21	Book IV			Weekly Essay Due
M, 2/26			Hayek, <i>AER</i> (1945)	
W, 2/28	Book V			Weekly Essay Due
M, 3/4		Chapter 3		
W, 3/6	Book VI			
M, 3/11				Experiment
W, 3/13	Book VII			Weekly Essay Due
		<i>Spring Break</i>		
M, 3/25			Chapters 3 – 4	
W, 3/27	Book VIII			Weekly Essay Due
M, 4/1		Chapter 4		
W, 4/3	Book IX			
M, 4/8				Story Workshop
W, 4/10	Book X			
M, 4/15			Chapters 7 – 8	Short Story Due
W, 4/17	Books XI – XII			
M, 4/22			Chapters 9 – 10	
W, 4/24			Chapters 11 – 13	
M, 4/29				Thesis Workshop
W, 5/1			Chapters 14 – 16	
M, 5/6				Thesis Workshop
W, 5/8			Postscript	Expository Paper Due
T, 5/14		Oral Final Exam: 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.		