

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS

The Righteous Mind

First-year Foundation Course 100A.19 Fall 2026

Tuesday/Thursday: 11:30 – 12:45 p.m. Wilkinson Hall 220

Kyle Hampton, Economics Department
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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1 pm or by appointment. Wilkinson Room 232. Please contact me beforehand to let me know you are coming.

I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them, not to hate them, but to understand them. - Spinoza, *Tractatus Politicus*, 1676

Catalog Description:

Prerequisites: Disposition to inquire and be challenged.

Human societies are complex, encompassing a plurality of ideas and ideals, of cultures and languages, of beliefs and points of view. This course explores moral monism in a world of pluralities, questioning political, religious, and ideological polarization, asking “Why are good people divided by politics, by religion, by ideological extremism?”

In addition, we will be applying our understanding to the question of why people martyr themselves and make sacrifices for strangers.

(Offered fall semester.) 3 credits.

Program Learning Outcome:

Students will be able to critically analyze and communicate complex issues and ideas.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Challenge conventional thinking about morality, politics, and religion.
2. Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts across a variety of genre.

3. Present, explain, and evaluate economic and philosophical arguments orally and in essay format.
4. Challenge and deconstruct the perceived tension between economics and the humanities.

Required Texts:

Haidt, Jonathan. ***The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion***. Vintage Books, 2013.

Other materials will be available for purchase electronically. Students are expected to bring major texts and have access to other materials for each discussion. Kindle versions are fine and, in my opinion, preferred due to the ease of taking notes.

This syllabus will be your primary source for accessing these other materials through hyperlinks.

A concerted effort will be made to also post materials to the course Facebook group to provide a place for discussion.

Instructional Methods:

This course uses a combination of roundtable discussions of texts, including film, novel, expository texts; laboratory experiments, written essay, video essay, debate, and an oral final examination.

Evaluation:

1. in class on online participation (45%)
2. Written/Video Essay (15%)
3. AI Activities(15%)
4. Oral final examination (10%)
5. Questions (15%)

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 2018-2019, "Academic Policies and Procedures"). Please keep this in mind. Missed in-class work cannot be made up.

Facebook: Please request access to [our course's FB group](#). This course does not begin and end

with the class session. The Facebook group for this course will be a space where discussion and exploration spill out. When evaluating your participation in the class, your engagement with other students online in the group will be considered alongside your in-person, in-class engagement.

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy

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 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.

Equity and Diversity Statement

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](#). Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the [Dean of Students](#) and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

Course Schedule

(subject to change)

Week One: August 25, 27

Introduction to the Course
Laboratory Experiments

Week Two: September 1, 3

Read Righteous Mind Chapters 1-2
Watch Everything Everywhere All At Once

Week Three: September 8, 10

Read Righteous Mind, Chapters 3-4
Watch: Children of Men or Zone of Interest

Week Four: September 15, 17

Read Righteous Mind, Chapters 5-6
Watch Junebug

Week Five: September 22, 24

TBA

Week Six: September 29, October 1

Read The Psychology of Victim Blaming

Week Seven: October 6, 8

Read Baby in the Well by Paul Bloom

Week Eight: October 13, 15

Read The Insurrection Problem by Jeffrey Rosen
Watch either Alabama Solution or The Running Man.

Week Nine: October 20, 22

Read Righteous Mind, Chapter 7
Watch My Octopus Teacher

Library sesh on Thursday, October 22

Room LL305 of the Leatherby Libraries (third floor).

- **Preparation:** Please remind students to complete the “Information Literacy Module – 2025-2026” Canvas module before the session.
- **Timing:** during a regular class meeting

Week Ten: October 27, 29

Read Righteous Mind, Chapter 8
Watch Gran Torino

Week Eleven: November 3, 5

Read “How The Bobos Broke America” by David Brooks

Watch Parasite

Week Twelve: November 10, 12

Read Righteous Mind Chapter 9

Watch Freaky Tales OR Inglorious Basterds OR Django Unchained

Week Thirteen: November 17, 19

Read Righteous Mind Chapter 10

Watch an episode of How to Change Your Mind on Netflix

Week Fourteen: November 24, 26

Thanksgiving Break (No Class)

Week Fifteen: December 1, 3

Watch Her or Eighth Grade AND Wall-E

ORAL FINAL EXAMINATION by appointment