

Contemporary Philosophers and Problems: Wendell Berry and Economy

Professor: Dr. Corey Beals
Office: Hoover 233
Office Hours: M, (most Weds) 1:30-3pm
Phone: ext. 2661

Course Number: PHIL 415
Semester: Fall 2009
Place: Newberg, Oregon
Time: Tu/Th 1:20-2:35pm

Course Description:

This is a seminar that will require active participation. We will be reading and discussing and reflecting upon the works of Wendell Berry with a focus on his understanding of the economy. We will examine what led to current practices and theory in American economics. We look deeply into Mr. Berry's criticism of our current understanding of the economy and study his positive vision for a healthier economy. We will then turn to theorists and practioners attempting to carry out this alternate economic view, and assess the vision based on these practioners. We will also take several field trips throughout the semester to visit with members of our community who are interacting locally with the real-life variables of our economy. All members of the seminar will be expected to engage in our discussions, which requires being present, being prepared, and being ready to engage the works we're reading and engage with others present.

Course Goals:

We will be seeking to encounter the philosophy of Wendell Berry which is expressed in his essays, fiction, poetry and life. Before we can understand this work, we will attempt to 'stand under' these writings. We will start with this goal and finish with this goal. In between, we will attempt to analyze and critique the work, placing it in conversation with other thinkers (including ourselves). But analysis is neither the first nor the last word.

Mr. Berry has written that "Two epidemic illnesses of our time...are the disintegration of communities and the disintegration of persons" (*Standing by Words*, p. 24). We will seek to understand these diseases and his vision of wholeness—both of community and persons.

Required Texts:

Essay Collections by Wendell Berry

The Art of the Commonplace (AOC) (Selected essays from 1970-2001)

Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community: Eight Essays, (SEFC)1993

Fiction by Wendell Berry

That Distant Land: The Collected Stories, (TDL) 2004

Other works

Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire, by William Cavanaugh, Eerdmans, 2008

Choose one from the following books (Understanding how we got here)

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, by Naomi Klein, 2007

The Essential Adam Smith, ed. Robert L. Heilbroner, W.W. Norton & Co., 1987

Choose one from the following books (Options for where we go from here)

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, by Bill McKibben, 2007
Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet, by Francis Moore Lappe and Anna Lappe, 2002

Requirements:

Presence: 25%

Be Present, Prepared, Involved, Engaged

Reflections (on reading): 25%

- Keep journal of thoughts and reflections about reading
- Pick excerpts from your reflections to submit (daily) to the professor on FoxTALE
 You have 3 'byes' when you do not need to submit an excerpt

Praxis Projects 25%

- Study of your home economy 5%
- Case Study of a local economic problem 10%
- Case Study of a local economic solution 10%

Final Paper (25%) 12-15 pages

Plagiarism

Please avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism includes the obvious cases of using another person's writing without citing them, but it also includes using someone's ideas without citing them. The consequences for plagiarism could include failing the course or even expulsion from the university, as specified in the student handbook. I look forward to reading your honest grappling with the ideas and issues raised in the course.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC)

provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, academic coaching, and learning strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). The ARC hours of operation are from 1:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:00-4:00 p.m. on Friday. Call ext. 2327 or email the _arc@georgefox.edu to schedule an appointment. Visit www.georgefox.edu/arc/ for information about ARC Consultants' areas of study, instructions for scheduling an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at ext. 2314 if you have questions.

Reading Schedule First Two weeks:

DAY READING

The Problem

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| Tues, 9-1 | "The Hurt Man" in <i>TDL</i> , 3-11 |
| Thur 9-3 | "A Native Hill" in <i>AOC</i> , 3-34 |
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| Tues, 9-8 | "The Unsettling of America" in <i>TDL</i> , 35-46
"Racism and the Economy" in <i>TDL</i> , 47-64 |
| Thurs, 9-10 | Begin Reading from Klein or Smith |