

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE SYLLABUS

ECON/ENG/PHIL 357

Fall 2021

Topics in Humanomics: Justice-fying Property

Catalog Description:

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

What is property, and why do we have it? Do we possess objects, or do objects possess us? Under what circumstances, if any, is property compatible with justice? What trade-offs does the law face when choosing the rules that govern people and their things? This course dialogically explores Richard Epstein's *Simple Rules for a Complex World*, Lionel Shriver's *Property: Stories Between Two Novellas*, and Bart Wilson's *The Property Species* to shape how we understand relationships between people regarding things when we consider the possibility that conflict begets property and, simultaneously, property begets conflict.

Humanomics classes (like this one) adopt a distinctively interdisciplinary approach. Throughout the term, we will address these questions through the lenses of economics, philosophy, and art. We will not just ask what these disciplines have to say about our topic independently of one another; we will also ask how these disciplines interact, enrich each other, and have unique ways of capturing parts of reality. The overarching idea is that there are many ways of expressing important ideas and that focusing on any one form of expression (social scientific, philosophical, artistic) in isolation is bound to leave important aspects of those ideas unstated, or incompletely expressed. Moreover, by working with media situated in a variety of historical contexts, we will necessarily ask why a set of ideas have been expressed in different ways in different times and places, and how this form of expression affects what's being said.

(Offered Interterm & Fall.) 3 credits. (GE categories: VI, SI, AI)

Artistic Inquiry Learning Outcome

Composes critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a baccalaureate / pre-professional level.

Social Inquiry Learning Outcome

Students identify, frame and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions in the world today.

Values and Ethics Inquiry Learning Outcome

Students articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures, and behavior.

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.

Program Learning Outcomes (English):

- Skill in critical reading, or the practice of identifying and interpreting the formal, rhetorical, and stylistic features of a text.
- Skill in crafting a compelling thesis-driven essay, with substantiating evidence.

Program Learning Outcomes (Philosophy):

- Critical Reasoning: Ability to construct and analyze complex arguments and distinguish good reasoning from bad.
- Ethical Reasoning: Ability to reason logically, effectively, and respectfully about ethical matters.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Articulate Richard Epstein's simple rules of private law.
2. Analyze the form and beauty of Lionel Shriver's short stories.
3. Explain and critique Bart Wilson's claim that "property is a universal and uniquely human custom."
4. Integrate Lionel Shriver's themes of property into a creative story applicable to economics, ethics, or law.
5. Propound their own theory of justice and apply it to a conception of property.
6. Challenge and deconstruct the perceived tension between economics and the humanities.
7. Ask cogent, thought-provoking questions based upon critical reading of texts across a range of genres and disciplines—short stories, non-fiction biology, economics, law, and philosophy.
8. Apply experience in economic experiments to ideas in literary, social, and philosophical texts.

Required Texts to Purchase (physical book, not e-book):

Epstein, Richard. *Simple Rules for a Complex World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Shriver, Lionel. *Property: Stories Between Two Novellas*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2018.

Wilson, Bart J. *The Property Species: Mine, Yours, and the Human Mind*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Other Text (Handout):

Forster, E. M. "My Wood," in *Abinger Harvest*, 22– 26. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926 [1936].

Essential Facility:

Seminar setting

Instructional Methods:

This course uses a combination of hands-on learning in Socratic roundtable discussions of texts, economic experiments, question development, and demonstration of discovered meaning 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 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. *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 Google drive by 12:30 p.m. (sharp) the day of class.

3. *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.

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

For the first half of the semester, students will write 250 polished words nearly each week. More details will be discussed in class. The short weekly essay will either (1) analyze the social structures of justice and property in Epstein, Shriver, and Wilson; (2) analyze conceptually the form of Shriver's short stories when read as part of a collection of stories with thematic unity; or (3) articulate how values and ethics inform our understanding of property in Epstein, Shriver, and Wilson. [7 essays @ 2%/essay]

For the third quarter of the semester, your writing will culminate in a 750-word creative work inspired by an argument in Epstein and Wilson that embodies the short story form as exemplified by Shriver. [1 essay @ 18%]

For the fourth quarter of the semester, your writings will culminate in a 750-word expository essay on the values and ethics of justice and property using ideas on social structures and institutions in Epstein, Shriver, and Wilson. [1 essay @ 18%]

Due in class Google drive 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; *three* absences may result in failure (Undergraduate Catalog, "Academic Policies and Procedures"). Please keep this in mind. Missed in-class work cannot be made up.

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/administrator and referral to the University Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at:

<https://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.aspx>.

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 Disability Services Office. 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 visit <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/index.aspx> if you have questions regarding this procedure or for information or 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 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 <http://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx> 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: Jan Osborn & Bart J. Wilson, Interterm, 2020

Last revised by: Bart J. Wilson, Summer, 2021

Tentative Course Schedule and Outline

	<i>The Property Species</i>	<i>Property: Stories Between Two Novellas</i>	<i>Simple Rules for a Complex World</i>	<i>Other</i>
M, 8/30				Exhortation Experiment
W, 9/1	Epigraph Prologue Ch. 1			Weekly Essay Due
M, 9/6		<i>Labor Day Holiday</i>		
W, 9/8		Epigraph "The Standing Chandelier" pp. 1–40		"My Wood" (E.M. Forster) Weekly Essay Due
M, 9/13			Introduction	
W, 9/15	Ch. 2			Weekly Essay Due
M, 9/20		"The Standing Chandelier" pp. 40–79		
W, 9/22			Chs. 1-2	Weekly Essay Due
M, 9/27	Ch. 3			
W, 9/29		"The Self-Seeding Sycamore" "Domestic Terrorism" "The Royal Male"		(no weekly essay)
M, 10/4				Experiment
W, 10/6	Ch. 4			Weekly Essay Due
M, 10/11		"Exchange Rates" "Kilifi Creek"		
W, 10/13			Ch. 3	Weekly Essay Due
M, 10/18	Ch. 5			
W, 10/20			Ch. 4	Weekly Essay Due
M, 10/25		"The Standing Chandelier"		
W, 10/27				Story Workshop
M, 11/1	Ch. 6			
W, 11/3				Experiment Short Story Due
M, 11/8	Chs. 7-8			
W, 11/10		"Repossession" "The Chapstick" "Negative Equity"		
M, 11/15	Ch. 9, Epilogue			
W, 11/17		"Vermin" "Paradise to Perdition"		
		<i>Fall Break</i>		
M, 11/29				Thesis Workshop
W, 12/1			Ch. 5	
M, 12/6		"The Subletter" pp. 242–277		Expository Paper Due
W, 12/8		"The Subletter" pp. 277–317		
F, 12/17		Oral Final Exam: 10:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.		