

Essential Questions: What kind of a world do we live in? What kind of a world *should* we live in? Are we in debt to anyone or anything for the bare fact of our existence? If so, what do we owe, to whom, or to what? And how should we pay? How should we define and pursue justice—is justice a relative or absolute quality? How do we make our political, social, and economic life reflect our deepest values?

Texts:

Atwood, Margaret. Payback
Heyne, Paul. Are Economists Basically Immoral? (Excerpts)
Mayer, Jane. The Dark Side (Excerpts)
Weston, Anthony. A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox (Excerpts)

Film/Documentary:

PBS Frontline. "On Our Watch"
PBS Frontline. "Sex Slaves"
PBS Frontline. "The Torture Question"
Hurst, Brian. "A Christmas Carol"
Redmon, David. "Mardi Gras – Made in China"

Overview: Human beings increasingly find themselves living in a single global civilization as a result of broadly embedded telecommunication networks that not only transmit information of all kinds at lightning speed, but also convey conflicting models of social, political, economic, and moral behavior. The disparities in wealth and income between and among the world's people, famine and disease, the increasing degradation of the natural world (including the threat of global warming), the competition over and growing scarcity of essential natural resources (including water, oil, and top soil), ethnic and religious differences, lie at the heart of seemingly intractable world problems that are burning themselves deeply into the world's consciousness raising challenging questions of social, political, and economic justice.

As we examine the emerging responses to the global crises facing this and the next generation, this one-term seminar will explore mankind's ongoing search for a meaningful vision of a just society. The course will include work with current news sources, both national and international, web-based research, real-world case studies, and reflections by 21 century researchers and writers on the world's evolving challenges in science, economics, politics, and religion. Assessments are varied, including weekly journals, personal position papers, and individual research.

Methods:

The course is designed to give students the opportunity to explore and develop their own moral framework through a series of carefully selected and documented case studies that center on current and emerging 21st century global challenges. The goal is not to shape the students' morality with any set agenda but rather to foster their capacity for rigorous ethical discourse and thinking. Hopefully, as a result of the curriculum, each student will be a better informed and educated citizen with the capability to make better decisions in an increasingly complex world. Throughout the course, students will be learning to:

- Confront and examine ethical dilemmas which reflect and/or transcend various paradigms in society today.
- Utilize different ethical orientations to examine the moral complexity of different issues.

- Develop the ability to see historical, economic, and societal facts in context; distinguish underlying systemic movements and trends; and formulate potential solutions in moral, as well as, practical terms.
- Utilize research, journalistic, internet, and historical materials in a discriminating way.
- Develop the ability to weigh evidence and reach conclusions on the basis of facts and reasoned argument, not prejudice.
- Listen carefully and communicate effectively through debate and discussion.
- See the challenges of the 21st Century through a global perspective.
- Develop their capacity to create thoughtful, compassionate, and well-reasoned essays.

Core Units:

- a. **Ethical Discourse:** – Perspectives on Social Justice
- b. **Human Rights:** Rendition, Torture, and Detention
- c. **Global Poverty/Inequality:** Women, Property Rights, and Poverty
- d. **Peace:** Armed Conflict, Ethnic Genocide
- e. **Religious Freedom/Tolerance:** The Challenge of Religious Fundamentalism