

STP 461 Introduction to Moral Theology

Summer Semester, 2019

Course Outline

Class Start Date – July 2, 2019 - End Date – July 12, 2019

Daily – 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at Bethlehem High School, Saskatoon

Instructors Name: Mark Miller, C.Ss.R.
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Course Description

The basic elements of moral theology since Vatican II. Biblical and theological themes that define the person in Christ. The Christian meaning of sin, virtue, conscience, law, and moral discernment. The Christian experience of conversion and reconciliation in the way of discipleship.

Course Objectives

(Project goals for MRE from NTC are:

- a. Theological Instruction
- b. Religious Education Instruction
- c. Cultural Context
- d. Personal and Spiritual Formation
- e. Integrating Theory and Praxis

These are identified by letter(s) after each of my course goals and assignments.)

The following are the proposed goals for this course:

1. To introduce students to moral terminology and concepts in order to provide the student with a working knowledge of basic terms and concepts with which they may be able to read critically, and discuss intelligently, issues within the field of moral theology. (a. b. e.)
2. To explore the rich Catholic tradition(s) in the discipline of moral theology and understand something of contemporary stances. (a. c. d.)
3. To pay attention to one's own moral reasoning, moral discernment, communal influences, and moral decision-making so that a process of moral-theological reflection will develop. This is not just a personal goal; it is also a communal goal. (a. e. and especially d.)

4. To move beyond moral theology as a system of ideas and rules to the lived reality of the convinced Christian. (a. b. d.)
5. To understand the complexity of moral discernment and decision-making for oneself, for others, for communities, and for society. (a. b. c. d. e.)

Course Assignments and Evaluation

1. **Three two- to three-page reflections** on each of the two course texts & Pope St. John Paul II's *Veritatis splendor*:
(This will be 10% for each paper—total, 20%—of the final grade.) (a. d.)

2. Prepare alone or with one or more other students, **a class presentation** on one article that you are assigned (after discussion & mutual consent) or on a topic that particularly interests you (please have it approved beforehand).

The presentation should aim at the moral arguments presented with a closing assessment of your own about their possible strengths and weaknesses. The student(s) may take one side of an argument or present both sides. Additional articles may be researched to help with clarity, but the point is not to present a thorough discussion of the topic. Rather it is to understand something about moral reasoning and argument.

These presentations will take place during the second week of the course and **MUST NOT GO OVER 30 minutes**, including discussion time (due to the number of participants in the course). You may be shorter—15 minutes would be fine for a presentation and a few questions. Your written presentation must be handed in (and should be no longer than four pages with a 10 or 12 font).

(This will account for 40% of the final grade.) (a. b. e.)

Alternative to Public Presentation – A 15-20 page paper on a moral topic to be approved by the professor. The paper must be handed in by Thursday, July 11th. (a. b. e.)

3. **Final Exam** – This will be a two-hour written exam on the last day of classes. (This will account for 40% of the final grade.) There is a possibility of making the final exam an oral exam for those who choose to do so; this will be discussed together in class. (a. b. c. d. e.)

Textbooks

Harrington, Daniel, SJ & James Keenan, SJ. *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges Between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology*. Lanham, MD/Chicago, IL: Sheed & Ward, 2002.

Either:

Zalot, Jozef D. & Benedict Guevin, OSB. *Catholic Ethics in Today's World*, revised edition. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2008, 2011. (A good, basic introduction with a clear sketch of official Catholic moral teaching and the controversies around these teachings.)

Or:

Kline, Scott. *The Ethical Being: A Catholic Guide to Contemporary Issues*. Montreal/Toronto: Novalis, 2013. (Another very good introduction, using a more Canadian context, and while clearly outlining official Catholic moral teaching, being somewhat more questioning.)

John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor (The Splendor of Truth)*. Available on line.

Recommended Reading

This is a two-week summer course. I have a bibliography for further reading (see below) but I do not expect extra reading except in support of assignments.

Course Requirements

Attendance, evidence of reading the class assigned material, class participation, and completed assignments will all be part of the Grade evaluation.

Course Schedule

- I. July 2 Fundamental Moral Theology
 - A. What is Moral Theology? A Brief History – from Confession to Discipleship
 - B. How does it relate to ethics?
 - C. (Theological) Anthropology & Ecclesiology
 - D. The Catholic Foundation: The Person
 - E. Moral Reasoning
 - F. Law Ethics - Virtue Ethics

- II. July 3 Part I: Catholic Moral Theology
 - A. Two Fundamental Traditions in Catholic Moral Theology
 - B. Underlying Philosophical Perspectives (Pinckaers)
 - C. The Role of Scripture
 - D. The Role of the Teaching Office of the Church (*Veritatis splendor*)
 - E. The Place of Reason & Experience
 - F. The Social Context
 - G. Conscience & Discernment

Part II: Followers of Jesus

 - A. Discipleship & Ethics
 - B. Imitatio Christi
 - C. Jesus as Teacher
 - D. Jesus as Lord
 - E. Sin & Forgiveness
 - F. Scripture & Ethics

- III. July 4 Sexual Ethics in the Catholic Tradition
 - A. The Place of Marriage
 - B. Sexual Acts
 - C. Homosexuality
 - D. The Challenge of Our Society

- IV. July 5 Peace, Non-Violence, Justice
 - A. The Gospel Guidance
 - B. Pacifists & Just-War Theorists
 - C. Nuclear Realities
 - D. Prisons & Punishment
 - E. Social Context (mental health)

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- A vertical decorative strip on the left side of the page, featuring a colorful mosaic pattern of small squares in shades of red, orange, yellow, and purple.
- V. July 8 Part I: Medical Ethics – Beginnings of Life
- A. Life in the Womb
 - B. IVF, Reproductive Issues
 - C. Contraceptives, Abortion, Sterilization
- Part II: End-of-Life Care
- A. Palliative Care
 - B. Ethical Issues at the End of Life
 - C. Euthanasia, Physician Assisted Suicide
 - D. What is Healthcare?
- VI. July 9 Medical Ethics – Other Issues
- A. Transplantation, Xenotransplantation
 - B. Genetics
 - C. Resource Allocation – Justice
 - D. Healthcare for the Poor
 - E. Possible Student Presentations (max 3)
- VII. July 10 Return to Scripture – Biblical Bases for Moral Reasoning
- A. The “Law” – Old Testament – New Testament
 - B. Proof-Texting
 - C. Parables & Story-Telling
 - D. The Bible & Context; the Bible & Interpretation
 - E. Foundations: Healing Mission of the Church; Social Justice Mission of the Church; Communal Dimension of the Church (i.e., being Church)
- VIII. July 11 Social Justice & The Option for the Poor
- A. The Church’s Social Teaching
 - B. The Preferential Option for the Poor
 - C. An Example: Prosperity & Armaments
 - D. Evolutionary Ethics – A Note
 - E. Possible Student Presentations (max 3)
 - F. Social Justice & the Global Family
 - 1. Money, Capitalism, Global World, Business Ethics & Justice
 - 2. Ecological Ethics
 - 3. Possible Remaining Student Presentations
- X. July 15 Final Exam
- A. Two-hour written exam. Or oral exams.

General Academic Information

Late Submission Policy.

Late submissions are not acceptable without an exceedingly good reason, discussed and approved beforehand by the instructor.

On-Campus Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade "F" may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the Student Handbook in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the Student Handbook in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.

Grading System

Undergraduate Studies C.Th., Dip.Th., B.Th.			Graduate Studies M.T.S., M.Div., M.Th., G.C.C.S.A., M.R.E.		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point	Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0	Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0		A	4.0
	A-	3.7		A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3	Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0		B	3.0
	B-	2.7		B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3	Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0		C	2.0
	C-	1.7		C-	1.7
Marginal	D+	1.3			
	D	1.0			

Fail	F	0.0	Fail	D+	1.3
				D	1.0
				F	0.0

Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

Regulations

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5" x 11" paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:

1. Kate Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Aichters, eds., "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers" (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work
- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the Student Handbook for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Services, contact Doreen Bloos at 780-392-2450 ext. 2212; Email doreen.bloos@newman.edu.

Bibliography

My Further Suggestions:

The following are suggested texts if you wish to pursue further readings in moral theology at some time. Please note that there are also excellent bibliographies in the two course textbooks (Harrington/Keenan & Zalot/Guevin).

Historical Approaches to Moral Theology

1. Mahoney, John. *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
A superb study on the meaning and use of moral theology throughout the history of the Catholic Church. Historical perspectives are essential to keep us from absolutizing moral rules and losing the social context for many of them.
2. Gallagher, John A. *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology*. New York & New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990.
Another fine historical study, a bit more weighted to the American tradition. From the penitentials to the manuals to law & Magisterium.
3. Pinckaers, Servais, O.P. *The Sources of Christian Ethics*. (Trans. From the 3rd edition by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P.). Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985, 1990, 1993.
Do not attempt to read this unless you are a masochist or like headaches or are in a doctoral program in moral theology. I mention it because of its superb historical treatment of the philosophical theories that underpin current perspectives in moral theology. A master work.

Introductions to Moral Theology

4. O'Connell, Timothy E. *Principles for a Catholic Morality, rev. ed.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1990. (Updated from 1976 edition.)
This is an excellent introduction to moral theology as practiced in the Catholic Church in the last half of the 20th century. It provides an excellent analysis of the components of moral theology and moral reasoning. It was a standard textbook for years.

5. Gula, Richard, SS. *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality*. NY & NJ: Paulist Press, 1989.
 Similar to O'Connell as a text book.
 See, however, his follow-up books, especially *Moral Discernment* (on conscience), *The Good Life: Where Morality and Spirituality Converge*, and *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*. (One catches a glimpse of history just in the progression of his topics.)
6. Hoose, Bernard, ed. *Christian Ethics: An Introduction*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
 A series of articles that give excellent perspectives on the topics found in fundamental Catholic moral theology.
7. Keating, James, ed. *Moral Theology: New Directions and Fundamental Issues*. (Festschrift for James P. Hanigan.) NY & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004
 We begin to see the strong move away from law as the fundamental category for Catholic moral theology to be superseded by the character and virtues of Christian discipleship. (Keenan has been very prominent in his writings concerning the move to virtue ethics.)
8. Hamel, Ronald P. & Kenneth R. Himes, OFM. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. NY & NJ: Paulist Press, 1989.
 A bit dated as it deals with the huge moral issues debated at the end of the 20th century. Nonetheless, there are fine articles on fundamental moral theology, the person, making moral choices, conscience, moral norms, and moral discernment. A gem.
9. Curran, Charles, ed. *Conscience*. Readings in Moral Theology No. 14. NY & NJ: Paulist Press, 2004.
 A small volume with some of the best articles on conscience in the Catholic world. See especially O'Connell's article on the three different meanings of 'conscience.'

The Bible & Ethics

10. Spohn, William C. *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 1999.
 This is simply the best moral book that I have ever read on both the ethics of Jesus and how we absorb his ethical teaching as disciples. It is an academic work and presumes considerable background in Scripture and theology. It goes far beyond 'reason' (as dispassionate rationality) to include the power of emotion and the use of analogy in our thinking. Well worth an in-depth study. (See also Spohn's brilliant little work "What Are They Saying About the Bible and Ethics?")
11. Harvey, A.E. *Strenuous Commands: The Ethic of Jesus*. London: SCM Press; Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990
 Just how far do the demands of Jesus push us? Is what Jesus asks an 'impossible' ethic? Read on!

12. Harvey, Nicholas Peter. *Morals and the Meaning of Jesus: Reflections on the Hard Sayings*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1993. (Originally, *The Morals of Jesus* London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1991)
This is a little masterpiece on the way Jesus approaches morality in his era. One phrase might catch your attention: "Jesus was scandalously uninterested in morality." Read slowly and attentively to let it sink in.
13. Furnish, Victor Paul. *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues*. Second edition, revised. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979, 1985.
Excellent & brief treatment of St. Paul on the fundamental Christian approach to morality; on sex/marriage/divorce; homosexuality; women in church; relationship to governing authority.
14. Schragge, Wolfgang. *The Ethics of the New Testament*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988.
A classic Protestant presentation of the ethics of Jesus and the New Testament writers. A strikingly different approach to Catholic moral theology, but with significant overlap and cross-fertilization.

Church Teaching & Commentaries

15. The social teaching of the Church in Papal encyclicals deserves its own course. A great richness begins with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* and continues through to Pope Benedict XIV's *Caritas in veritate*. Pope John Paul II's work can be considered mostly masterpieces. His presentation on work, *Laborem exercens*, is a gem on the meaning and profundity of human labor.
16. However, Pope John Paul II's moral encyclicals, especially his first, created something of a firestorm in the Church. *Veritatis splendor* is a work of fundamental moral theology with a great deal of truly profound content and insight; but it also tends to follow one tradition, a very rigorous one, in the Catholic approaches to moral theology. See, for example, Allsopp, Michael E. & John J. O'Keefe, eds. *Veritatis splendor: American Responses*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995.
Pope John Paul II's second moral encyclical, *Evangelium vitae*, tackled many controversial issues, but is a profound piece on the sacredness of life from its inception to a natural death.
17. You may notice that I am not using, and seldom reference, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Much of the Church's moral teaching is summarized there. And with the emphasis on "The New Evangelization" there is supposed to be considerable use of the Catechism for teaching morals, among other things, both to Catholics and for those interested in the faith of our Church. I simply point out that this is one style of catechetical teaching; however, it is not an exercise of moral theology. We are attempting to understand why the Church teaches what is found in the Catechism.
18. There are also some significant textbooks written by Catholic authors such as Germain Grisez, John Finnis, William E. May, and Joe Boyle which I have not included in this bibliography, despite the fact that they represent a powerful voice within the Catholic

tradition, one that often resonates with official Catholic teaching. Their works are readily available for those with the time and interest to pursue their thought.

19. For excellent articles on moral theology in the Catholic tradition, please refer to the series *Readings in Moral Theology*, often edited by Richard McCormick and Charles Curran. These are very topical with a broad range of perspectives, covering most of the hot topics in the Church over the past 50 years. There are at least 20 volumes. Eg, Curran, Charles & Julia Hanlon Rubio. *Marriage: Readings in Moral Theology, No. 15*

Julia Hanlon Rubio is an up-and-coming moral theologian reflecting on marriage, family life, and sexuality within the Catholic tradition. See her marvelous book, *Family Ethics*, which gives a great insight into the family as a model of Christian discipleship.

See also works by Richard Gaillardetz (*A Daring Promise: A Spirituality of Marriage*) and David Matzko McCarthy (*Sex and Love in the Home: A Theology of the Household*, with some great reflections on the social influences on marriage in North America).

20. We also now have encyclicals from Pope Francis which are profoundly moral in that they seek to encourage Christians to follow Christ in the pathways of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, joy and love. See, especially, *Caritas in veritate* (Love in Truth) and *Amoris laetitia* (The Joy of Love) and, of course, *Laudato si!*. In my (humble) opinion, Pope Francis moves us from a concern with morality as laws and rules to the way we live moral truth in our relationships with God and other human beings.