Instructor: Brian Jones, M.A.

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Office Hours: Since I will not have office hours, you may schedule to meet with me by either calling or emailing me with an appropriate time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This foundational course seeks to introduce students to the moral teachings of Sacred Scripture and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that God is Happiness itself, and has created the human person for nothing other than happiness. This desire for God and fulfillment in His Trinitarian life is precisely why Augustine states that “our hearts are restless, Lord, until they rest in You.” However, this treasure of Catholic moral teaching has not been tapped, due in large part to a hostile anti-Catholic culture that portrays Catholicism as rule-based, archaic, anti-science and modern psychology, and opposed to “freedom.” Moreover, Catholics have failed to live, in a concrete way, the new evangelization and the universal call to holiness, thereby denying the modern world an authentic witness of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and His Church. This course is designed to help students better understand the fundamental principles of Catholic moral doctrine in order to facilitate application in their own personal and social lives. The goal of the course is to assist students in seeing the moral life as a path to greater intimacy with our loving Father. The only way for us to come into an intimate union with God the Father is to follow His Son, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian moral life is nothing other than the living out of this desire and goal. Hopefully, students will come away experiencing the truth expressed by the French novelist Leon Bloy, which is what Catholic moral teaching is really all about, namely, that the only sadness in the world is not to become a saint.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

A student should be able to:
1. Describe what faith and reason reveal about the nature of human personhood, especially man as created in the image of God, as bodily and spiritual, and as social.
2. Explain how Christian moral teaching responds to the basic human question, “How does one attain happiness?”
3. In the light of metaphysical and moral realism, analyze the prevailing ideology of moral relativism, and the error of making freedom an absolute.
4. Explain how baptismal insertion into new life in the Spirit of Jesus Christ transforms one interiorly, in terms of both the natural law and the New Law of grace.
5. Discuss how the virtues perfect the powers of the human soul, enabling the spontaneous embrace of the goods concretely indicated by the Ten Commandments.
6. Articulate the Christian understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and how they can be lived out in one’s daily life.
7. Provide a brief overview the Second Vatican Council’s call for a renewal in the discipline of moral theology.
8. Explain the theological and infused moral virtues and how these are related to natural virtues, but also how they are purified and elevated by the light of grace.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Participation & Attendance—10%

Participation will take into account your attendance, coming to class on time, as well as your willingness to engage in class discussions. Attendance in class is expected. Students who are frequently absent will have difficulty passing the examinations. If you are going to be absent, notify me by e-mail on the day of the absence. Unexcused absences (i.e., absences for which I do not have notification via email) will count negatively toward the participation/attendance grade. Students who miss two classes without an adequate excuse or proper notification fail automatically.

Writing Assignment for Lessons—20%

Students will be required to answer a take-home essay question that is grounded in the class readings and the lectures notes from each class over the 5-week course. There will be a total of 5 essay questions, one following each Wednesday class. The length of each response should be approxiametly 2-3 pages. Students will be able to use notes and reading material from the class in order to facilitate better comprehension and articulation of a high quality response. Since the response is relatively short, I do not expect an exhaustive knowledge of the material, but I am looking to see that students have demonstrated a solid grasp of the material covered in the question. Each response will be collected at the beginning of the following class period. Responses must include citations from the relevant texts that have been read for class.

Two Exams—Each worth 35%

The exams will cover material from your readings and the class lectures. The midterm examination will be a take-home essay, consisting of a number of essay questions. Since it is a take-home exam, you are required to include citations from your assigned readings in the content area of the particular question. You can draw upon ideas and discussions from class, but you cannot cite or refer to class notes. Any citations from the assigned readings must flow smoothly into your written/typed response in order to demonstrate that you have not only read the text, but have thought about it in greater detail outside of class. The exam will be distributed on a Thursday, and you will be required to turn it in on the following Tuesday. Students are obligated to work on their exams on their own, and any similarity discovered in responses among students will result in a failing grade, as well as a possible write up for cheating that would appear on your permanent records. The final exam will cover material only from the last half of the course and will be an essay exam. This is not a take-home exam, but will be taken by students in the classroom.

Normally there are no make-up examinations. In the case of illness or some other personal emergency the student may request a make-up examination.

Criteria for Grading Standards

- A range = Superior, exceptional, outstanding.
- B range = Good.
- C range = Acceptable.
- D range = Below average.
- F = Unsatisfactory.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus—due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Counseling and
Disability Services (C&DS). Please telephone the office at 713-525-3162 or 713-525-6953, email them at jones-dm@stthom.edu, or visit them on the second floor of Crooker Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Academic Integrity
Students should be acquainted with the University's "Policy on Academic Dishonesty" found in the Undergraduate Catalog. According to that catalog:

Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously according to the following criteria.

The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the faculty member, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of “F” for the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS


3. Each student will also need a copy of the Bible. If you do not already own one, then they are readily available in the library. Any translation is fine; although, you may want to avoid old translations like the King James Version.

4. All other readings will be emailed as an attachment to students or easily accessed online.

5. Summa Theologiae. St. Thomas Aquinas. An excellent English translation is on newadvent.org. In the upper right hand corner of the home page, you will find a link that says “Summa.”

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. Tuesday, July 7- Setting the Stage of Modern Man. The Moral Life and the Beatific Vision-an integration on natural and supernatural happiness.

   Required Readings:
   -St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, Q.1-3; 5 “On Man’s Last End.”
   -Christian Smith, Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood, "Introduction" and “Chapter 1: Morality Adrift”

2. Thursday, July 9- Moral Theology and its Biblical Foundations

   Required Readings:
   -Living the Truth in Love, pp. 3-38
   -Morality: The Catholic View, pp. 7-17, and 42-64
   -Scripture: Matthew 5-7, 22:34-40; 25:14-46; Romans 1-2, 12-15.
3. Tuesday, July 14 - Vatican II and the Renewal of Moral Theology

- Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum, Chs. II and III.
- Joseph Pieper, "On the Virtues."

4. Thursday, July 16 - The Father's Loving Plan for Our Happiness

**Required Readings:**

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1691-1869
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2052-2141

5. Tuesday, July 21 - Moral Realism and the Life of Faith

**Required Readings:**

- Living the Truth in Love, pp. 41-87
- Veritatis Splendor, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, nos. 31-41
- St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae, Q.2, A.3, 4, and 7.

6. Thursday, July 23 - Living Wisely: Ordering All Things According to the Loving Will of the Father

**Required Readings:**

- Living the Truth in Love, pp. 88-117; 118-120, 131-133, 141-144, 146-147.

7. Tuesday, July 28 - Living the Virtue of Hope

**Required Readings:**

- Living the Truth in Love, pp. 151-175
- Veritatis Splendor, nos. 84-89; 95-99; 102-108
- St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae, Q. 17, A. 1, 2, and 5.

8. Thursday, July 30 - Transformation in Desire


**Required Readings:**
- *Living the Truth in Love*, pp. 177-224

9. **Tuesday, August 4**- Living Out the Justification of Christ

**Required Readings:**
- *Living the Truth in Love*, pp. 271-284; 293-339
- CCC 1877-1896; 1897-1927
- Aristotle’s *Politics*, Bk. I, chs. 1 and 2.

10. **Thursday, August 6**- Justice fulfilled and completed in Love; Summary of Moral Theology

**Required Readings:**
- *Living the Truth in Love*, pp. 423-462
- Christian Smith, "The Shadow Side of Sexual Liberation"