THEO 3349: Christ and the Moral Life
Fall 2016

Sections:  A - MW 3:10PM - 4:25PM – Doherty Library 030
          N - M 5:30PM - 8:15PM – O’Rourke 101

Instructor: Mikail Whitfield
Department of Theology
Office Location: Hughes House 2nd Floor
Email: whitfim@stthom.edu
Phone: 713-525-3840

Office Hours:
MW: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
TuTh: 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
I am frequently in my office outside of these hours as well. Feel free to stop by to see if I’m in, or you are welcome to email me to schedule an appointment.

Course Description

A study of fundamental Catholic teaching on the moral life, founded upon the truth that the power to live the moral life flows from Christ and the divinizing power of his grace, particularly in the sacraments. Course content includes the beatitudes, freedom, the morality of human acts and passions, moral conscience, the theological virtues, sin, social justice, and the Ten Commandments.

Prerequisites: THEO 1301 or 3301, THEO 2301 or 3311, and PHIL 2314 or 2316

Required Course Texts


(4) Mark Lowery. Living the Good Life: What Every Catholic Needs to Know about Moral Issues. This text is out of print and will be made available by pdf on Blackboard. Abbreviation: “LGL.”

*Other supplemental readings will be provided by the instructor mostly in the form of electronic “handouts” made available on Blackboard. These handouts are abbreviated in the Course
Calendar as “HO.” It is the responsibility of the student to access and read these handouts as part of the required reading. On the rare occasion that a handout is distributed in hardcopy form in class, students are responsible for obtaining a copy of the handout even if they are absent.

Student Outcomes and Assessment Strategies

1. **Knowledge** - Appropriate a penetrating knowledge that would be characterized by an ability to see the ultimate principles and highest causes, the kind of knowledge that is properly called *sapientia* or wisdom.
2. **Habits** - Grow a fuller, habitual knowledge exhibiting a mastery of theological truths and central points presented in the Catholic moral tradition, and implications of these points.
3. **Skills** – Develop the ability to articulate the foundational elements of Catholic moral theology both orally and in writing, strengthening the student's communication and critical thinking skills.
4. **Writing** – an ability to compare and contrast specific moral arguments in writing.
5. **Practical Application** – develop and show a knowledge of how the basic principles of Catholic moral theology apply to current moral issues

Course Policies

*Academic Integrity as Outlined in the University 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. Any instance of plagiarism or any violation of the UST Policy on Academic Integrity is grossly incompatible with the standards and expectations of the Theology Department and the University community. Violations of these standards may result in failure of the course.

**Definition**

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating on an examination or test; for example, by copying from another’s work or using unauthorized materials before or during the test, including the use of electronic devices;
2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
3. Participation in the academic dishonesty of another student, even though one’s own work is not directly affected;
4. Any conduct which would be recognized as dishonest in an academic setting.

The professor reserves the right to require, at his discretion, an oral exam based on any written work submitted for course credit. This oral exam, evidencing the student’s actual knowledge of written work submitted for a grade, will be used to evaluate any suspected plagiarism or cheating and to modify the assignment grade accordingly.
In-Class Rules and Etiquette

1. Please arrive for class prepared and on time. Three unexcused late appearances (defined as arriving after class has begun) will equal an absence.

2. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. The use of cell phones during class time will result in the student being marked absent for that class period. No headphones may be worn during class at any time.

3. Studies have shown that students remember more and have longer retention when taking handwritten notes. Therefore it is strongly recommended that students avoid electronic means for note taking. Furthermore, laptops/tablets/etc. provide a very real temptation for students to cruise around the internet during class (e.g., checking email, Facebook, websites, etc.). This reduces the student’s learning and engagement in class and is a distraction for other students nearby. Therefore students are only permitted to use laptops or tablets in class for (1) taking notes, and (2) looking at electronic versions of class texts and handouts. All other uses are absolutely prohibited.

Exams and Quizzes

4. Keep your eyes on your own work during exams and quizzes. If a student is caught with a cheat sheet or looking at another student’s exam or quiz (or if a student is caught displaying his or her exam or quiz in a conspicuous way), the exam or quiz will be given an automatic grade of “zero” and you may fail the course.

5. Absolutely no talking during exams and quizzes. If a student is caught talking during an exam or quiz in order to cheat, that student’s exam or quiz will be given an automatic grade of “zero” and you may fail the course.

6. All bags and purses must be zipped and placed under the desk or to the side away from the student during exams and quizzes.

Course Requirements & Assignments

Class Attendance

Class Attendance Policy. Students are expected to attend class. Missing classes will make it very difficult to do well on exams and quizzes. More than a a week’s worth of unexcused absences totaled throughout the semester (3 classes for a MWF course, 2 classes for a TuTh course, etc.) without a valid, verified excuse, will adversely affect the student’s final grade. Further absences may significantly reduce one’s ability to pass the class.
Changes or clarifications of assignments may be announced orally in class. Students not present are still responsible for anything announced in class, it is the student’s responsibility to get all pertinent information that may have been missed while not in class.

**Participation and Preparedness (25%)**

Being properly prepared for, and engaged in, class sessions is vital to a student’s success.

**Pop Quizzes (15%)** Students should complete the assigned reading before each class. There will be unannounced quizzes given at the beginning of certain class sessions. These timed quizzes will begin *promptly* at the beginning of class. Part of the expectation for the quizzes is that the student will be present and on time to class in order to take and complete the quiz. Therefore, *make up quizzes will not be offered without either a doctor's note, or a verified excused absence approved by the instructor in advance.* Because events do occur outside of one's control, students are permitted to miss one quiz without it counting against their grade; students who do not miss any quizzes will receive the same points as extra credit. Quizzes may cover content from the day’s readings and/or lecture content from the previous class session.

**In Class Discussion (10%)** Classroom discussion is paramount to engaging the course content and reaching higher levels of learning. One of the duties of all Christian faithful is to help each other on the road to truth. Therefore, students are expected to engage in collaborative discussion both for their own learning, and to help foster a learning environment for their peers. All students will be expected to regularly and actively participate in class discussions. Both the quality and quantity of a student’s discussion will be considered as a factor for the participation grade.

**Papers (30%)**

*Papers.* Papers will be accepted only via turnitin.com. Students who do not yet have an account will need to make an account. All students will need to add themselves to this course. For help in how to use turnitin, click *here.* To add yourself to the course you will need the following information:

For Section A:

Class ID: 13241465  
Enrollment password: Whitfield

For Section N:

Class ID: 13261299  
Enrollment password: NightClass

For papers to be considered on time they must be uploaded no later than 11:59pm the day they are due. No extensions will be granted to individuals for full credit (unless you provide *proof* of a valid, serious, and *verified* excuse, such as a serious medical problem/hospitalization, family emergency, auto accident, etc.). A late paper may be turned in *up to 48 hours* after the paper due date, but the grade will automatically be reduced commensurately.
In accord with department policies all papers should adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Before being submitted, the final draft of the paper should have been read over critically by both the student, and another person of the student’s choosing (tutor, classmate, etc.) to ensure that it is sufficiently polished as a final product. This requires the student to complete the paper early enough that after being read by someone else there is still time for further revisions if necessary.

All papers must have: (1) a clear title; (2) a clear and coherent introduction and conclusion; (3) a highlighted thesis statement contained on first page of the paper; (4) a well-organized argument in the main body of the paper that supports the thesis statement; and (5) accurate and proper citations. Papers should contain at a minimum three academic sources, which may include readings assigned in this course.

Research Paper (30%) This paper will be an argumentative essay that compares and contrasts opposing sides on a moral topic assigned by the professor. This paper will be required to be 5-6 pages in length.

Exams (45%)

Oral Exams. During the semester there will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Both exams will be given orally covering the material of the course up to the exam date. During the oral exam, the professor will ask questions of the student for approximately 15 minutes on the content of the course, and/or ask the student to draw on course content to formulate responses to related questions. Timeslots for the exam will be scheduled over a period of days based off the instructor's availability. Students will have their choice of timeslots on a first come, first serve basis.

Midterm Exam (20%) will cover all the material covered in class and in the readings up to the exam date.

Final Exam (25%) will focus mainly on the material covered in class and in the readings after the Midterm Exam, but may include certain fundamental themes from the first half of the semester as well.

Extra Credit

During the semester there may be opportunities for students to submit extra credit work. If assigned, these extra credit opportunities could consist of such things as writing assignments based on attending guest lectures or performing extra readings outside the normal class assignments. In general extra credit opportunities will provide fewer points, for more work, than standard class assignments. Extra credit may provide a small boost to the student’s final grade,
but it cannot replace the hard work that must be done in the ordinary course of the class upon which the final grade is based.

**Grading Scale and Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100%-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92%-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89%-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86%-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82%-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79%-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76%-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72%-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69%-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66%-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60%-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Class Participation 10%
- Reading Quizzes 15%
- Paper 30%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 25%

**Course Calendar & Schedule of Assignments**

The calendar for course assignments and readings is found on Blackboard. The calendar will have different dates for assignments depending on whether the course is a regular daytime course, or a night class. *Make sure you follow the correct calendar for your course.*

**Academic Assistance**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Tutorial Services provided by the Mendenhall Achievement Center. Tutorial Services provides university tutors to assist students in specific study areas. Tutorial Services are found on the second floor of the Crooker Center.

**Special Needs/Accommodations:** Students with documented learning disabilities who are in need of special accommodation should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

**N.B. Change Notice:** The instructor reserves the right to change or modify this course and the syllabus for justifiable reasons, subject to appropriate and timely notice given to the students either orally or in writing.