

**ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at Western  
University**

**Christian Social Teaching**  
(Moral Theology 5233B / Religious Studies 2234G)

**Course Outline – Winter 2024**

Instructor: Fr. Jason Kuntz

Office Hours by appointment: 519-432-1824, ext. 226 e-mail: jkuntz4@uwo.ca

**A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we will read the principal papal documents on social issues from 1891 to the present. The fundamental principles of Catholic Social teaching will be explored as well as the relationship between Catholic social teachings and evangelization.

**B. GOALS**

By the end of the course the student should know and understand:

1. The nature and purpose of Catholic Social Teaching.
2. The fundamental principles of Catholic Social Teaching: Human Dignity, the Common Good, Solidarity, Subsidiarity, Participation, and the Universal Destination of Goods.
3. The principle papal documents about social questions from the last century.
4. The teaching of the papal magisterium on several specific issues: Human rights, the dignity of work, Colonialism, Religious Freedom, Just War, Immigration, Care for the Environment, etc.

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

1. Read, analyze, and explain magisterial documents on social issues.
2. Discuss social questions from a theological perspective.
3. Identify and understand contrary positions, responding to them with intelligence and charity.
4. “..help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly...” (Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 28).
5. Make prudent application of the Church’s social teaching to local problems, distinguishing the “principles that are always valid” from “contingent judgments” made in a particular historical and social context (See *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Christian Freedom And Liberation*, 72).

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. Respect for the proper autonomy of the social, economic, and political spheres as well as their relationship to God (see Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 36).
2. Respect for the unique and special vocation of the laity to sanctify the secular sphere (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 31).
3. A recognition that “the task of evangelization implies and demands the integral promotion of each human being.” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 182)
4. An awareness of the “loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world.” (Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, 16)
5. An appreciation of the unity that exists between a Christian’s social and spiritual life: “[L]et there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation.” (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 43).

## C. REQUIRED TEXTS

All of the readings for this course are freely available online or will be provided by the Instructor via OWL. It is not required to purchase a textbook.

If students wish to have a physical copy of the documents discussed, some of the assigned readings can be found in this collection:

O’Brien, David J., and Thomas A. Shannon, eds. *Catholic Social Thought: Encyclicals and Documents from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Francis*. 3rd Revised Edition. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2016.

Francis, Pope. *Fratelli Tutti*. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2020. [Any edition is acceptable]

## D. CLASS SCHEDULE

[Tentative – some adjustments may be made to the reading assignments]

- 1) January 11 – Introduction: Church and Society
- 2) January 18 – *Rerum Novarum*: The “social problem”, Worker’s Rights, Private property  
READ: Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*
- 3) January 25 – Christmas Addresses of Pius XII: Democracy and the New Social Order.

READ: Pius XII, Christmas Radio Address 1942

Pius XII, Christmas Radio Address 1944

4) February 1 – *Pacem in Terris*: Human Rights and Duties, The Common Good.

READ: John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*

5) February 8 – *Dignitatis Humanae*: Religious Freedom, Church and State

READ: Handout: “Religious Freedom in the Magisterium before *Dignitatis Humanae*”

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. *Dignitatis Humanae*. December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965.

Benedict XVI. *Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings To The Roman Curia*. December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005.

6) February 15 – *Populorum Progressio*: International Development, Solidarity

READ: Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*

February 22 - READING WEEK

7) March 1 – Colonization and the Doctrine of Discovery

READ: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The “Doctrine of Discovery” and Terra Nullius: A Catholic Response*

Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the “Doctrine of Discovery”

Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Appendix 4: Statements from Roman Catholic orders of men and women religious who worked in Residential Schools.

Pope Francis, *Apostolic Journey to Canada: Meeting with indigenous peoples, First nations, Métis and Inuit*, July 25, 2022.

8) March 8 – *Centesimus annus*: The Economy and Christian Anthropology

READ: John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, paragraphs 22-52.

9) March 15 – *Caritas in Veritate*: Justice, Charity and Virtue in Society

READ: Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, especially paragraphs 1-19, 34-67, 78-79.

**RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL DUE TODAY**

10) March 22 – *Fratelli Tutti*: Human Fraternity, Solidarity, Immigration.  
READ: Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, paragraphs 1-153.

11) March 30 – *Fratelli Tutti*: Dialogue, Just War, Capital Punishment  
READ: Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, paragraphs 154-287

12) April 6 – *Laudate Deum*: Climate Change and Ecology  
READ: Francis, *Laudate Deum*.

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE TODAY**

## **E. ASSESSMENT**

**1) 15% Class Participation**– Students are expected to participate in class discussion and may be called upon to share their thoughts on the readings. Reading questions will be given in advance of each class to assist students to prepare for the discussion.

**2) 50% - Responses to the Readings** – Students will be asked to submit five short responses (400-500 words) to one of readings assigned. Each response will be worth 10% of the final grade. Reading responses must be submitted before class the week the reading was assigned. At least two of the responses must be submitted before February 15<sup>th</sup>. Further details will be given in class.

**3) 5% - Research Paper Proposal** – Students will be required to submit a proposal for their final paper which includes the question considered, an initial bibliography and outline.

**4) 30% Research Paper [1500-2000 words]**- Students will analyze a current social problem in light of the social teaching of the Catholic church. The paper will be organized in the format of a disputed question. Students will be graded upon their ability to identify the facts, argue for their position, make necessary distinctions, identify objections, and respond to these objections. More details will be given in class.

## **F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **1. Accommodation, Illness Reporting, and Academic Considerations**

#### **Academic Accommodation**

Students with disabilities work with Accessibility Services which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

#### **Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:**

For work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, the instructor is empowered to grant academic considerations without referring the student to their academic counsellors. If an instructor chooses to do so, the mechanism for dealing with missed work (e.g., an extension, make-up opportunity, or reweighting) must be specified on the course outline to ensure fair treatment for all students. Note that in all cases where documentation (medical or otherwise) is required, it can *only* be collected by the Academic Dean's Office.

#### **Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:**

By policy, academic considerations for work totalling 10% or more of the final course grade can be granted only by the Academic Dean's Office. Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Dean's Office as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical%2015JUN.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical%2015JUN.pdf).

The Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

### **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Dean's Office as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness – Undergraduate Students](#).

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

## **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

## **2. Support Services**

- Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>
- Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/personal-counselling/>
- MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help: [https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)
- Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-support-and-resources/academics/>
- University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>

## **3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

### **Use of Electronic Devices**

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

### **Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom**

King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices – such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones – can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students jointly share the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices

for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

#### 4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to Academic Integrity.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

#### 5. Copyright re: Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. **Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create.** Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member is interested in posting a student's answers or papers on the course web site, he/she should ask for the student's written permission.

#### 6. Use of Recordings

**Remote learning sessions for this course may be recorded.** The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs, and personal

identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

**Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions**, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

## **7. Policy on Attendance**

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.