

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

**Fundamental Moral Theology**  
**(Moral Theology 5132A / Religious Studies 2238F)**

**Course Outline – Fall 2023**

**[Updated May 31<sup>st</sup> 2023]**

Wednesdays 9:30 AM – 12:20 AM

St. Peter's Seminary, Room 147

Instructor: Fr. Jason Kuntz

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

**A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An exploration of the fundamental concepts of the Catholic moral tradition in light of the Second Vatican Council: scriptural foundations, happiness, freedom, the moral act, virtue, sin and conversion, law, the formation of conscience. A particular emphasis will be given to the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

**B. GOALS**

**For all students (MTS, M.Div. and Religious Studies):**

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

1. The most important biblical texts related to Moral Theology.
2. The fundamental concepts of the Catholic moral tradition along with the “inherent values” that underly them (see John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, 33).
3. The relationship between Catholic moral theology and dogmatic, spiritual and pastoral theology.
4. How the teaching of the Catholic Church on moral issues contributes to the flourishing of individuals and society.

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

1. Read, analyze, and explain texts of moral theology.
2. Discuss moral issues persuasively and make effective theological arguments.
3. Identify and understand contrary positions, responding to them with intelligence and charity.

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. An appreciation of Holy Scripture as the “soul of theology” and the most important source for moral theology (Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, 16).
2. 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)

### **For those students preparing for ministry in the Church (M.Div.):**

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

1. Make prudent decisions and assist others in prudent decision making: “we have been called to form consciences not to replace them.” (Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 37).
2. “[A]ccompany with patience and mercy” those who find it difficult to live a moral life along “eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur.” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 44)

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. A sense of moral theology as an “ecclesial science” which “grows in the Church and works on the Church.” A feeling of belonging to the Church and contributing to her prophetic mission (See John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 109).
2. Religious docility towards the Magisterium of the Church as a teacher of moral norms and the authentic interpreter of the Word of God (See Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 25).
3. The desire to become “joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 168).

## **C. REQUIRED TEXTS**

*The Holy Bible.*

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. Edited by John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón.

Translated by Lawrence Shapcote O.P. 8 vols. Lander, Wyoming: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012.

[Students are not required to purchase this text. We will be reading short selections. This edition is available online at <https://aquinas.cc/> A very similar translation is available at [New Advent](#) or [Aquinas 101](#)]

John Paul II. Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*. August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1993. Print edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, available online: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_06081993\\_veritatis-splendor.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html)

Other readings will be distributed to students via OWL.

## **D. CLASS SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS**

### **1) September 13 – What is Moral Theology?**

Luke 10:25-37; Deuteronomy 5-6; Leviticus 19  
[ST I, q93, a4](#)

### **2) September 20 – Happiness and Holiness**

Matthew 5:1-12; Matthew 19:16-30; John 17:1-5; 1 John 3:1-3  
[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 1-27](#)  
[ST I-II q2 a1-8](#)  
[ST II-II q23 a1](#)

### **3) September 27 – Freedom and Obstacles to Freedom.**

Sirach 15:11-20; John 8:31-38; Galatians 5:1-15  
[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 28-53](#)

Pinckaers, Servais. “[Freedom of Indifference](#)” and “[Freedom for Excellence](#)” in *The Sources of Christian Ethics*. Translated by Mary Thomas Noble. 327-378. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001. [Available online via [ProQuest Ebooks](#) and [UWO Libraries](#)]

### **4) October 4 – The Moral Act. Absolute Moral Norms.**

**First Paper Due Today**

1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Maccabees 6:18-31

Fernández, Aurelio, and James Socías. “Chapter VI: Morality and Action.” In *Our Moral Life in Christ: A Basic Course on Moral Theology*, 105–25. Princeton, N.J. : Chicago, Ill: Scepter Publishers ; Midwest Theological Forum, 1997. [**Uploaded to OWL**]

[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 71-83](#)  
[ST, I-II, q18, a8 & a9](#)

### **5) October 11 – The Moral Act: Double Effect and Co-operation**

Matthew 13:24-30; John 17:10-19

[ST, II-II, q64, a7](#)

Kaczor, Christopher. “Double-Effect Reasoning from Jean Pierre Gury to Peter Knauer.” *Theological studies* (Baltimore) 59, no. 2 (June 1, 1998): 297–316. [**Uploaded to OWL**]

Handout: “Cooperation in Evil”

William, Newton. “Avoiding Cooperation with Evil: Keeping Your Nose Clean in a Dirty World.” *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, September 21, 2012.

<https://www.hprweb.com/2012/09/avoiding-cooperation-with-evil-keeping-your-nose-clean-in-a-dirty-world/>.

## 6) October 18 – Passions and Virtue

Matthew 14:13-21; John 2:13-25; John 11:17-37; Luke 10:17-24.

Handout “Some Terms used by Saint Thomas in Reference to the Passions” [**Uploaded to OWL**]

Handout “The Eleven Passions” [**Uploaded to OWL**]

[ST I-II, Q24 a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, Q56 a4](#)

[ST I-II, Q59 a1-5](#)

## 7) October 25 – The Cardinal Virtues

Wisdom 8:1-8; Colossians 3:1-17

Mattison, William C. “Why Virtue?” In *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues*, 57–73. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008. [**Uploaded to OWL**]

Aquinas, Thomas. “2. Christ’s Passion as a Model of Virtues.” In *The Aquinas Catechism: A Simple Explanation of the Catholic Faith by the Church’s Greatest Theologian*, 43–46. Manchester, N.H: Sophia Institute Press, 2000. [**Uploaded to OWL**]

[ST I-II, q55, a4](#)

[ST I-II, q61, a1-5](#)

[ST I-II, q65, a1](#)

Handout: “Jesus Christ as the Exemplar of Virtue” [**Uploaded to OWL**]

Handout: “The Four Cardinal Virtues and the Virtues subordinate to Them” [**Uploaded to OWL**]

## November 1 - Reading Week

## 8) November 8 – The Theological Virtues, Infused Moral Virtue, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 2:15-21; Isaiah 11:1-3

[ST I-II, q62, a1-4](#)

[ST II-II, q23, a7 & a8](#)

[ST I-II, q65, a3](#)

[ST I-II, q63, a1-a4](#)

[ST I-II, q68, a1, a2, a4](#)

## 9) November 15 – Vice and Sin

**Second Paper Due Today!**

Exodus 32:1-14; 2 Samuel 11:1-12:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 65-70](#)

[Reconciliation and Penance Paragraphs 14-18](#)

[ST I-II, q71, a2 & a6.](#)

[ST I-II, q84, a3 & a4](#)

[ST I-II 88, a1 & a2](#)

## 10) November 22 – Law

Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Psalm 19:1-14;

[ST I-II, q90 a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, q91 a1-5](#)

[ST I-II, q92 a1](#)

[ST I-II Q94 a2](#)

[ST I-II, q98 a1-2](#)

[ST I-II, q99 a2](#)

[ST I-II, q100, a1](#)

[ST II-II q120 a1](#)

## 11) November 29 – Conscience

Genesis 4:1-16; Romans 2:12-16

[Veritatis Splendor, Paragraphs 54-64, 109-113](#)

[ST I, q79 a12-13](#)

[ST I-II, Q6, a8](#)

[ST I-II, Q19, a5-6](#)

Fernandez, Samuel. "Towards a Definition of Abuse of Conscience in the Catholic Setting." *Gregorianum* 103, no. 2 (2021): 557–74. [Uploaded to OWL]

Handout: “Important Magisterial Texts on Conscience” [Uploaded to OWL]

## 12) December 6 – The New Law; Moral Theology and Evangelization.

Romans 8:1-17; Jeremiah 31:31-34.

[Veritatis Splendor Chapter 3, Paragraphs 84-120](#)

[ST I-II, q106, a1](#)

[ST I-II, q107, a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, q108, a2](#)

This class will be offered **in person** from 9:30-12:20 on Wednesdays as indicated above. If Pandemic restrictions change or if a large number of students are unable to assist in person, some classes may be offered remotely via Zoom. In this case, some elements of the course may be offered asynchronously. All students should ensure they have a computer with camera and microphone as well as a stable internet connection.

### E. ASSESSMENT

**1) 20% Participation** - Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussion. They may be called upon to share their thoughts on the readings. Students should expect approximately 2-3 hours of reading each week. Reading questions will be given in advance of each class to assist students to prepare for the discussion. Students may also participate through the online forum.

**2) 40% Two papers** [1250 words each] - Students will be given a problem to resolve in the format of a disputed question. Students will be graded upon their ability to argue for their position, make necessary distinctions, identify objections, and respond to these objections. More details will be given in class.

**3) 40% Final Exam** – A written exam will be scheduled during the exam period. It will consist of two or three short essays that require the student to synthesize, explain and apply material from the course.

### F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

#### 1. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessibility, Counseling, and Student Development at King’s (at Western, Accessible Education) 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**

Instructors are encouraged to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility (e.g., by grading based on the best n–2 of n quizzes or assignments) to reduce the number of requests for academic considerations and consequent burden on both instructors and academic counsellors. Where academic considerations are required, the student should be given clear direction.

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. In such cases, students should be directed as follows.

For work totalling 10% or more of the final course grade, you 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.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.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, please 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, 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](#)).

**Note:** Missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and 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)

## **2. 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](#).

## **3. 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/>

## **4. 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/>

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

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.

## 5. 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.

## 6. 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.

## **7. Use of 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.

## **8. 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.

## **9. Remembrance Day Policy**

Two minutes of silence observed on November 11 at 11 am throughout the university and that, where this is not possible, two minutes of silence be observed between 11 am and 12 noon. Students are permitted to be absent from class to attend Remembrance Day Services, provided the instructor is informed in advance of the intended absence.

## **10. Contingency Plan for an In-Person Class Pivoting to 100% Online Learning**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e. at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (i.e. posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.