

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at *The University of Western Ontario*
Winter/Spring 2017

T-5542B
The Art of the Confessor
Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
St. Peter's Seminary: St. Thomas Aquinas House Building, Room AH-0

Instructor: Fr. Pio Beorchia
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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a preparation for transitional deacons to become ordained ministers of the Sacrament of Penance in the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church. We will gather insights from the great confessors of the Christian tradition along with specific pastoral material from moral and sacramental theology and canon law. Application to contemporary concerns and issues will be made through and role playing, examining catechetical preparation programs and reviewing diocesan practices.

B. GOALS

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge:

1. To be familiar with some of the teachings of the great spiritual guides in the Christian tradition regarding bringing understanding and healing to those dealing with their human situations of sin and guilt;
2. To understand the various models used in the Christian tradition in describing how confessors are to minister to those coming to them for healing and mercy;
3. To know the liturgical requirements for celebrating the various rites dealing with sacramental forgiveness and healing;
4. To know the appropriate canonical instructions pertinent to the role of the confessor;
5. To know the various categories of penitents coming for healing and sacramental forgiveness and where to turn when further expertise may be required in dealing with these individuals;
6. To know the various themes covered in other areas of moral theology or spiritual theology which impact on someone coming to confession, i.e., in fundamental moral theology including conversion, sin, and guilt; in marriage and sexuality such as struggles in living out one's commitment in love and fidelity, in relating to self and others in a chaste and Christian manner; in justice, areas of commutative justice, social justice, and respect for the environment; also includes healing of memories, deliverance, etc.

7. To know the various pastoral solutions for difficult situations;

Skills:

1. To be able to assess individual penitents according to their specific needs;
2. To be able to apply adequate, prudential and pastoral discernment to these needs in order to be instruments of God's Mercy through various role-playing situations;
3. To be able to use the various liturgical requirements for celebrating sacramental reconciliation in a prayerful and prudent manner in both individual and communal settings;
4. To apply canon law to specific situations with great care and respect;
5. To be able to encourage Catholics to see the great value of sacramental reconciliation;
6. To be able to integrate all the areas of his theological studies pertinent to individuals coming to confession so that these concepts and distinctions can be interwoven in sound, balanced and pastoral application for the good of each person;

Attitudes:

1. To enable the student to appreciate how the paschal mystery underpins all conversion and reconciliation and in this way to be able to take on the attitude of Christ the Redeemer and Healer in his celebration of this sacrament.
2. To engender the spirit of compassion and love for the sinner and those struggling to live a holy life amidst all the temptations of the world today;
3. To foster a deep personal love and regular practice of sacramental reconciliation so that he will appreciate the maxim "Good penitent, good confessor";
4. To encourage a good liturgical sense and practice in the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation;
5. To develop a yearning to continue to read and to discover new insights and approaches to the various categories of people coming for sacramental healing and consolation;
6. In all of this to respect the ultimate purpose of canonical law, namely "the salvation of souls, which is always the supreme law of the church" (Canon # 1752).

C. ASSESSMENT

The following will assess the student's fulfillment of the requirements of the course:

1. Research on a Confessional Issue:

The student is asked to research a contemporary issue that they will encounter as Confessors and Spiritual Directors. The product of this research may begin to form a Handbook for Confessors as the student's ongoing future resource. The student will be graded on the research work on this issue. The research could include aspects of theology and psychology, it could identify community resources, it could draw from the experience of seasoned confessors or other professionals who have dealt with the issue, it could also draw from the tradition and from the writings of the saints. The issue could include: addictions, use of pornography, scrupulosity, occult practice, healing of memories, or a topic approved by the instructor.

2. Research on a Vice and its contrary Virtue:

Each student is to choose one of the seven deadly sins, define it, relate it to the Decalogue, identify the virtue contrary to that vice, define that virtue, suggest a penance-satisfaction

that might develop that virtue. Once again the fruit of this work can serve to form a Handbook for Confessors.

3. Interview:

Each student is to conduct an interview with a priest. Speak with a priest about what the priest has learned that has made him a better confessor. Submit a one-page point-form list of advice.

4. Faculties Exam:

A two-hour oral exam for Faculties will be held at the end of the course. Two students will meet with two faculty members appointed by the course instructor.

5. Class participation:

Each student is expected to come with a good attitude, be present, respectful and attentive, and be prepared and participate in the discussions in class.

Marks:

Research on a Confessional Issue	15
Research on a Vice & Contrary Virtue	15
Interview of Priest	10
Class Participation	10
Faculties Exam	<u>50</u>
	100

D. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

1. Highly Recommended:

- *The Code of Canon Law*, 1983.
- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, MN., Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum for Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life*, Vatican City, 1997.
- *Rituale Romanum, Ordo Paenitentiae*, Rome, 1974; (USCCB updated 2010).
- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook, Revised and Expanded Edition*, N.Y., Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press, 2010.

2. Recommended:

- Ashley, Benedict, O.P., *Living the Truth in Love – A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology*, N.Y., Alba House, 1996, pp. 271-92; 323-340; (for justice section)
- Cuschieri, Andrew, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation – A Theological and Canonical Treatise*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1992;
- Peschke, Karl H., S.V.D., *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, Alcester, C. Goodliffe Neale, 1985 (revised ed.), Vol. II, 513-73 (justice section)
- Woodgate, Fr. Michael, *A Priest's Guide to Hearing Confessions*, London, Catholic Truth Society, 2008.

E. SCHEDULE, TOPICS & READINGS

**Please note that the following schedule may be subject to fluctuation as the semester progresses.*

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
Unit One: Theology and Rites of the Sacrament			
1	Jan. 11	Introductory remarks: A Confessor's Handbook The Sacrament of Penance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theological, Pastoral, and Liturgical Aspects 	Contact your Chancery to obtain copies of your Diocesan Priestly Faculties.
2	Jan. 18	The Rites of Penance	Coffey, David M., <i>The Sacrament of Reconciliation</i> . Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001. Cf: p. 126-171.
Unit Two: The Confessor			
3	Jan. 25 Inter- view of a Priest Due	The Confessor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models, Roles, Virtues • The Formation of the Confessor 	Studzinski, R. "The Minister of Reconciliation: Some Historical Models", in <i>The Rite of Penance: Commentaries, Background and Directions</i> . Washington: The Liturgical Conference, 1978. Cf: p. 58ff.
Unit Three: Canon Law			
4	Feb. 1	Canon Law and the Sacrament of Penance (Fr. P. Baillargeon): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculties (Canons 965-982) • The Sacramental Seal (Can. 983-984) 	The Code of Canon Law: Canons 965-984.
Unit Two Continued: The Confessor			
5	Feb. 8 Confess ional Issue Paper Due	The Confessor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office • Qualities • Obligations 	Stasiak, Kurt. <i>A Confessor's Handbook</i> . New York: Paulist Press, 2010. Cf. p. 18-23, 28-59, 60-84.
Unit Three Continued: Canon Law			
6	Feb. 15	Canon Law and the Sacrament of Penance (Fr. P. Baillargeon): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecclesiastical Penalties (Can. 1321-1325; 1331-1333; 1355-1359) 	The Code of Canon Law: Canons 1321-1325; 1331-1333; 1355-1359)

	Feb. 22	<i>Second Term Reading Week No Class</i>	
7	Mar. 1	Canon Law and the Sacrament of Penance (Fr. P. Baillargeon): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Absolution (Can 961-963) • Internal Form Solution 	The Code of Canon Law: Canons 961-963. John Paul II. <i>Misericordia Dei</i> . Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002. (found on Vatican site)
Unit Four: The Penitent			
8	Mar. 8	The Penitent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Penitents The Penitent's Point of View	Stasiak, Kurt. <i>A Confessor's Handbook</i> . New York: Paulist Press, 2010. Cf. p. 85-125.
9	Mar. 15	The Human Person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bioethical Issues 	Pontifical Council for the Family. <i>Vademecum</i> , Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997. (found online on Vatican website and in Stasiak)
Unit Five: Sin and Reparation			
10	Mar. 22 Vice-Virtue Paper Due	General Principles of Moral Theology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Human Act: knowledge, and consent. • Conscience The Decalogue: 1-3	Pinckaers, Servais. <i>Morality: The Catholic View</i> . South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2001 Coffey, David M., <i>The Sacrament of Reconciliation</i> . Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001. Cf: p. 1-31. Ashley, Benedict. <i>Living the Truth in Love</i> . New York: Alba House, 1996. Cf: p. 28-38.
11	Mar. 29	The Decalogue: 4-10 Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restitution 	Peschke, Karl H., <i>Christian Ethics</i> , vol. 2. Birmingham: C. Goodliffe Neale Ltd., 1981. Cf. p. 513-573

			Ashley, Benedict. <i>Living the Truth in Love</i> , New York: Alba House, 1996. Cf: p. 271-92; 323-340.
12	Apr. 5	Dealing with the Problem of Evil Other Issues	

F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

Students are responsible for knowing the University’s academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

Submission of Assignments: It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Selection and Registration of Courses: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Services for Students with Disabilities at King's is available at

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-departments/dean-of-students/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see specifically:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/currentstudents/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The web site for Academic Services at King's University College is

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/currentstudents/academic-support/>

These services are not meant to replace those offered at the Seminary, but may be beneficial to our students after consultation with the appropriate instructors, administrators, and formators.

G. BIBLIOGRAPHY**1. Official Texts**

- *Rituale Romanum, Ordo Paenitentiae*, Rome, 1974; (English Text: *The Rite of Penance*, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2010.
- *The Code of Canon Law*, Ottawa, CCCB, 1983;
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Ottawa, CCCB, Revised 1999, #1420-98;
- Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life*, Vatican City, Feb. 12, 1997; (published in Kurt Stasiak, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook*, N.Y., Paulist, 2010 revised)

2. Some Further References (annotated):

- Ashley, Benedict, O.P., *Living the Truth in Love – A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology*, N.Y., Alba House, 1996, pp. 271-92; 323-340; (good update on commutative justice);
- Brennan, Patrick J., *Guidelines for Contemporary Catholics: Penance and Reconciliation*, Thomas More Press, 1986;
- Chappell, Arthur Barker, *Regular Confession: An Exercise in Sacramental Spirituality*, N.Y., Peter Lang, 1992, 202pp.; (Good textbook, but, at \$96.00 is costly. Excellent bibliography for this subject, pp. 181-96;)

- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 2001 (Good commentary on the rite of penance in Ch. 3 and 4)
- Cuschieri, Andrew, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation – A Theological and Canonical Treatise*, Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1992: (a good list of the classical and canonical sources for this sacrament; good for technical aspects;)
- *Chicago Studies*, Vol. 34, no. 2 (August, 1995):
 - Rev. Thomas Ventura, “Old Wine in New Wineskins”, 111-21 (with remarks by Cardinal Bernardin);
 - Kenan B. Osborne, O.S.B., “The Ambiguity of Communal Penance”, 123-35;
 - L. Örsy, S.J., “The Revival of the Sacrament of Penance: A Proposal”, 136-43;
 - O. E. Cummings, “Reconciliation and Penance: Some Needed Distinctions”, 145-7;
 - D. Headley, “Sin and Reconciliation in the Consciousness of Christians”, 158-71;
- Halligan, Nicholas, OP, *The Sacraments and Their Celebration*, N.Y., Alba House, 1986, pp. 81-120; (good canonical points; juridically oriented)
- Häring, Bernard, C.Ss.R., *Shalom: Peace, The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, N.Y., Image, 1969; (tremendously pastoral; needs updating, but much solid material)
- John Paul II, *The Sacrament of Penance: Dogmatic, Moral and Canonical Aspects*, edited by the Apostolic Penitentiary, Rome; (I have not yet been able to get this source. It is referred to in an address of the Pope to Roman Confessors, “Treat sinners with understanding”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, n. 14 – 7 April, 1993, p. 3 (weekly edition); see also *The Pope Speaks*, TBS 88:261-265, S-O 1993)
- Kennedy, Robert, ed., *Reconciliation: the Continuing Agenda*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1987, pp. 131-284; (updates *Ordo Paenitentiae* of 1973)
- Morneau, Robert F., *Reconciliation*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 2007; (a literary and prayer-filled source)
- Peschke, Karl H., S.V.D. *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, Alcester, C. Goodliffe Neale, 1985 (revised ed.), Vol. II, pp. 513-573 for intensive treatment on justice and restitution; and 574-614 for truth, fidelity and honour;
- Pinckaers, Servais. *Morality: The Catholic View*. South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001;
- Pinckaers, Servais. *The Sources of Christian Ethics*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1995;
- “Reconciliation” in *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, Vol. 26, no. 135 (Winter, 1993): good articles on the following: questions regarding sacramental reconciliation; the human need for reconciliation; reconciliation and the life of the Church; the gospel of reconciliation; justice, injustice and the Sunday worship; liturgy, justice and daily life.
- Scalone, Jonathon M., “Reconciliation: Rite II Revisited”, *Liturgy*, (90:Feb.-March, 1994), 14-5; (a parish experience with the “root sin” concept)
- Shaw, Russell, *Why We Need Confession*, Princeton, N.J., Sceptre Publishers, 1985

- (Solid, popular approach to pastoral questions regarding confession)
- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook*, N.Y., Paulist, 1999
(filled with good practical tips which we will allude to in the course)
- Vaillancourt, Raymond, "La Pénitence dans l'Éexistence Contemporaine", *Études Canadiennes en Liturgie*, Année 1993, n. 5; (French bibliography: pp. 97-8)
- Weinandy, Thomas, O.F.M. CAP., *Sacrament of Mercy – A Spiritual & Practical Guide to Confession*, Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 1997; (short history of penance and many scriptural meditations to help to go to confession)

3. Further Materials on Sacramental Reconciliation:

- Carrubba, Sandra J., "Why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is Meaningful Today", *Our Family*; January, 1995, 16-18;
- Coffey, David M., *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 2001 (Solid theological commentary and good comments on the *Ordo Paenitentiae*)
- Forest, Jim, *I Confess– Doorway to Forgiveness*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2002; (Good biblical reflections from an Eastern Orthodox perspective)
- Gestrich, Christof, *The Return of Splendor in the World--The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Forgiveness*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 1989 (reprinted 1997); (reformulates doctrine of sin and forgiveness in light of feminist theology, liberation theology, and economic ethics;)
- Gilbert, Binford W., *The Pastoral Care of Depression--A Guidebook*, N.Y., Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998; (sections dealing with "The Pastor: Unique Caregiver" and "The Minister's Own Mental Health" are helpful for our course;)
- Grace, Madeleine, "The forgotten sacrament: The life-giving power of Confession needs to be proclaimed", *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Vol. XCV, no. 5 (Feb. 1995), 54-8;
- Kelly, Liam, "Reconciliation" in *Sacraments Revisited--What Do they Mean Today?*, N.Y., Paulist, 1998, 97-117; (good popular summary of Penance)
- Kennedy, Robert J., ed., *Reconciling Embrace--Foundations for the Future of Sacramental Reconciliation*, Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 1998; (good essays on alienation, history of P., anthropological crises, etc.)
- Linn, Dennis, Linn, Sheila Fabricant, Linn, Matthew, S.J., *Don't Forgive Too Soon— Extending Two Hands That Heal*, N.Y., Paulist, 1996; (good material integrating the five stages of death and dying, healing processes, etc.)
- McCarrick, Bishop Theodore, "Pardon and Peace", *Origins*, Vol. 25, no. 38 (March 14, 1996), 637-43;
- McGowan, Phelim, SDB, *Welcome Home – A Prayerful Reflection on the Sacrament of Reconciliation*, & McCarthy, Flor, *Services of Reconciliation*, Dublin, Ireland, Betaprint, 2001; (very practical and wonderfully illustrated)
- Monbourquette, John, *How to Forgive – A Step-by-Step Guide*, Ottawa, Novalis, 2000. (An excellent and practical "How-to" manual)
- Sanford, Agnes, *The Healing Light*, N.Y., Ballantine Books, 1983 (orig. 1947); (good insights on the healing of emotions, the healing power or forgiveness, etc.)
- Schlenker, Richard J., "Are We Missing the Boat on Reconciliation?", *America*, Feb. 17, 1996, 22-24; (Stresses the communal dimension of Penance)

- Stasiak, Kurt, O.S.B., *A Confessor's Handbook – Revised and Expanded Edition*, N.Y./Mahwah, N.J., Paulist, 2010.
- Wintz, Jack, O.F.M., "Guilt--A Tool for Christian Growth", *Catholic Update*, Feb. 1986;
- Woods, Walter J., "Faith and Repentance in a European Church", in *Walking With Faith*;
- *New Perspectives on the Sources and Shaping of Catholic Moral Life*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1998, 187-232; (extensive summary of history and development of the sacrament of reconciliation)

4. Classical Works

- Borromeo, St. Charles, *Les Instructions aux Confesseurs*
- Francis of Sales, St., *Avis de S. François de Sales aux Confesseurs*;
-----, "On confession", *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1959, 79-81
- Gaume, Abbé Jean Joseph, *Manuel des Confesseurs*;
- John of the Cross, St., *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Washington, D.C., ICS Publications, 1973 ed., 28-9; 621-34;
- Leonard of Port Maurice, Blessed, *Le Prêtre Sanctifié*;
-----, *Les Avertissements aux Confesseurs*;
-----, *Un Traité de la Confession Générale*
- Liguori, St. Alphonsus, *Praxis Confessarii*; (Translated into English: D. Lowery, C.Ss.R., ed., *Guide for Confessors*, Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, N.Y., 1978;
-----, "The Sacrament of Penance" in *Dignity and Duties of the Priest or Selva*, ed. By Rev. Eugene Grimm, Brooklyn, N.Y., The Redemptorist Fathers, 1927, 271-88;
- Teresa of Avila, St., *The Way of Perfection*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1964, 60-2;
- Xavier, St. Francis, *Avis de S. François Xavier aux Confesseurs*;

5. Enduring Works:

- Berggren, Eric, *The Psychology of Confession*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1975;
- Broccolo, F. E., "Ten Characteristics of the Presidential Style of a Good Confessor", Liturgy Training Program, Archdiocese of Chicago, 1974;
- Fink, Peter, S.J., ed., *Alternative Futures for Worship: Vol. 4: Reconciliation*, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1987;
- Häring, Bernard, C.Ss.R., *Shalom: Peace, The Sacrament of Reconciliation*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1969;
- Harris, Clifford, *On Hearing Confessions*, London, Faith Press, n.d.
- Kelly, Gerald, *The Good Confessor*, N.Y., Sentinel Press, 1951;
- Studzinski, Raymond, OSB, "The Minister of Reconciliation: Some Historical Models", in Nathan Mitchell, OSB, *The Rite of Penance: Commentaries, Background and Directions*, Washington, D.C., The Liturgical Conference, 1978, 58ff.