

**St. Peter's Seminary/King's University College at
The University of Western Ontario**

**Pastoral Theology 5576A
Ethical Issues and Pastoral Ministry**

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Course Description:

This course aims to heighten students' awareness concerning specific aspects of pastoral ministry in which ethical decision-making is necessary. It serves to facilitate students' integration of their theological and pastoral studies as well as previous pastoral experiences. The course will provide students with foundations, principles and practical resources from which they may make prudent judgments in their ministry and thereby represent Christ and the Church responsibly. The course will highlight effective means of ministering ethically to the needs of individual persons, parish communities and to the minister him/her self.

Goals:

This course will assist students' growth in the following areas of knowledge, skill and attitudes:

Knowledge:

1. To understand theological foundations (from scripture and church documents) which underpin ethically based practices for decisions of pastoral ministry.
2. To gain a base of knowledge regarding ethical principles that inform decision-making and ministry practice in the day-to-day exercise of ministry (i.e. principles regarding: maintaining proper boundaries, the use and limits of confidentiality, collaboration in ministry, conflict resolution methods.)
3. To be aware of legal requirements legislated by Church and civil authorities regarding specific aspects of ministry (i.e. confidentiality in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the duty to disclose information about sexual impropriety toward minors, copyright laws)

Skills:

1. To recognize when proper boundaries are being challenged or violated in circumstances of ministry.
2. To develop the skill of dealing with parishioners' projections onto oneself (based on the parishioners' feelings toward God and Church) in a healthy and mature way.
3. To perceive challenges to the effectiveness of counseling, such as instances as transference or counter-transference, and to be able to address these appropriately.
4. To maintain proper human resources management methods in the workplace (i.e. through proper job postings, development of job descriptions, maintenance of contracts of employees, annual personnel appraisals.)
5. To establish norms within one's ministry for the monitoring of parish volunteers

- (i.e. through proper screening, vulnerable persons checks, ensuring team rather than individual supervision and chaperoning of minors.)
6. To be able to respond properly to allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace and allegations of sexual abuse, following proper legal prescriptions and diocesan protocol.
 7. To facilitate the resolution of inter-personal conflict with others, and to mediate between individuals or groups who are in conflict with one another.
 8. To develop time management skills which will serve the needs of the community to which one is assigned, as well as the minister's personal needs for health and balance.

Attitudes:

1. To recognize each person who seeks services in ministry as deserving respect and esteem by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God.
2. To thirst for justice so that no one within his/her community is treated with special preference or consideration because of economic, intellectual, or professional status.
3. To accept all persons as ends to be served in themselves, and never to use parishioners as means toward the end of the minister's personal gain, pleasure or advancement.
4. To accept that, as a minister, the student has his/her own needs, and should feel comfortable about ensuring that these needs (for rest, relaxation, friendship, and leisure) are cared for - outside of pastoral relationships.
5. To desire the maintenance of a healthy workplace, wherein each staff member is supported, appreciated, and given ample opportunity to receive guidance and support in their work.
6. To appreciate the calling to be part of a collegiality of ministries, involving others in professional pastoral ministry (i.e. priests, deacons, pastoral ministers, CYM's) as well as the many volunteers who share their expertise, knowledge, and pastoral zeal.

Assessment:

1. Class participation 15%.
Students will only gain from the course as much as they contribute to it. It is important for those preparing for ecclesial ministry to develop a common vision and appreciation for ethics in ministry through dialogue. Students therefore are encouraged to openly share their insights and experience with one another.
2. Reading Journal 40%.
Students shall maintain a journal, noting insights gained from the assigned reading materials, together with questions or comments raised by the reading. At two designated dates during the term, these journals shall be submitted for review and grading.
3. Personal Code of Ethics 45%
As a way for students to personally integrate the many themes discussed in this course, they shall prepare a personal code of ethics (a paper of five to seven pages). This code is to be developed in such a way that it may be used later (during annual retreats or on anniversaries of ordination or mandating for ministry) as a self-reflection and examination of how one has utilized the principles and practices taught in this course during their life and ministry.

Required Reading:

A number of journal articles and excerpts from texts will be assigned (as outlined on the supplementary Reading Schedule) to help prepare students' reflection on topics being discussed in each class. In addition to these texts, the first document to be read is:

CCCB. *Responsibility in Ministry. A Statement of Commitment.*
Ottawa: Concacan, 1996.

Outline of Class Topics

Date	Theme
Sep. 7	Overview and expectations of the Course and Reflection on Pastoral Experience
Sep. 14	Theological foundations for Ethical Pastoral Ministry
Sep. 21	Honesty and Confidentiality in Ministry
Sep. 28	The Use of Power in the Pastoral Relationship
Oct. 5	Setting Boundaries: in Counseling and Relationships with Parishioners
Oct. 12	Fall Reading Week – No Class
Oct. 19	The Harm Caused by Sexual Abuse
Oct. 26	Awareness of and Response to Sexual Harassment
Nov. 2	Leisure and Entertainment in the life of Ministry
Nov. 9	Supervision of Staff (hiring, evaluation, discipline, and ongoing support)
Nov. 16	Stewardship of Parish Resources
Nov. 23	Leadership Skills in <i>Families of Parishes</i> I: Co-responsible Ministry and the Role of Leadership
Nov. 30	Leadership Skills in <i>Families of Parishes</i> II: Resolving Conflict and Responsible Pastoral Planning

University Policies:

Policy on Accommodation regarding Medical Illness:

Students are directed to *Western University's* Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

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 Accessibility Services (formerly 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:

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

The website for Academic Services at King's University College is

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

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

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

The use of laptops by students during lectures and seminars shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using laptops for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct.

Inappropriate use of laptops [or smart phones] during lectures creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings.

Statement on Academic Offences:

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 where appropriate and by reference to the author using footnotes or citations.

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 webpage:

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>

Copyright re Course Material:

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, 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 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. See Commercial use of Course material - <http://umd.edu/legal/commercial.html>