

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

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

**Course Outline – Fall 2024**

*[Updated July 11<sup>th</sup> 2024]*

Wednesdays 9:30 AM – 12:20 AM

St. Peter's Seminary, Room 143

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](#).

Other readings will be distributed to students via OWL.

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

Classes will be offered in person on Wednesdays from 9:30am – 12:20pm.

### **1) September 11 – What is Moral Theology?**

Luke 10:25-37; Deuteronomy 5-6; Leviticus 19

[ST I, q93, a4](#)

### **2) September 18 – 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 25 – 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 2 – The Moral Act. Absolute Moral Norms.**

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 9 – The Moral Act: Double Effect and Co-operation**

**First Paper Due Today**

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/>.

## **October 16 - Reading Week – No Class**

### **6) October 23 – 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 30 – 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]

### **8) November 6 – 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 13 – 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 20 – 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 27 – 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 4 – 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](#)

## **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.

NOTE: Students are expected to attend all classes. Students must attend a minimum of nine lectures in order to pass the course.

## **F. Academic Integrity, Use of AI and Turnitin Analysis**

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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Within this course, generative AI tools are permitted exclusively for checking grammar and spelling. If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

**Notice of Turnitin Analysis**

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>).