NOTRE DAME SEMINARY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Course Syllabus
MT 506 Catholic Social Teaching

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Office Hours: By appointment    Place: Shaw 217-F

I. Course Description

This course offers a complete overview of the doctrinal corpus of Catholic social teaching. It explains the basic principles and norms for discernment and judgment as well as offering criteria for action. The course will show how these principles are connected with a correct and integral understanding of the human person; and how these teachings are intimately related to revelation Church tradition and theology. The main social encyclicals of the Church will be a constant reference point in explaining the meaning of the dignity of the human person in light of contemporary social challenges.

Envisioned Outcomes: Students will be able to see how the social doctrine of the Church relates to Sacred Scripture, Tradition and to the discipline of Moral Theology. Students will be expected to articulate the basic content of the encyclicals and show how Catholic social teaching applies to pastoral situations as well as to contemporary social problems. Students will be enabled to see how a series of pastoral theological reflections have been done by the Magisterium over the years.

II. Course Rationale

This course purposes to give an overall study of the development of social teaching of the Catholic Church. The various papal documents have been written as responses to historical social problems; serious conflicts that were analyzed in the light of Revelation and the Church’s theological moral tradition. We are now encouraged by these teachings to face present social conflicts in the light of the transcendent and foundational truths that God’s revelation has given us. The Church’s social teaching, grasped in its dynamic wholeness as an ever developing body of moral knowledge, will encourage all the faithful and to understand the importance of developing and living out those permanent and universal values contained in the social teaching: truth, freedom, justice, mercy and love. These values can meet the lack of ethical principles and norms that our present global society needs. Catholics need to see the great contribution to humanity and the world that the social teachings have made, judging them not from an economic framework but from what they are namely, basic moral teachings in the midst of a globalization process that lacks a moral order.
III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

- Students will become familiar with the basic truths and theological anthropology that underlies the church’s social teaching.
- Students will be challenged to acquire a critical social conscience that will allow them to go beyond their own cultural boundaries so as to perceive other peoples’ needs and difficulties.
- Students will be able to articulate how the social teachings of the Church are distinct from ideological, political and economic realities; and how the social teaching finds it proper autonomy within a faith commitment and as a part of reasoned religious freedom and morality.
- Students will be enabled to see how theological reflection has been done by the Church over the course of its history in facing the religious, moral, social, economic and political challenges of the world through the years.

IV. Instructional Methods

- Lecture (5 Saturdays)
- Discussion
- Weekly Quizzes and Final Exam

V. Texts

Required


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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Readings</th>
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<td>God’s Plan Trinitarian focus</td>
<td>CSD, Numbers 20-59</td>
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<td>Church’s Mission and SD</td>
<td>CSD, Numbers 60-86</td>
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<td>7/12/14</td>
<td>History of Social Doctrine, Beginnings</td>
<td>CSD, 87-104 O’Brien, RN, QA</td>
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<td>Pope Leo XIII, Pius XI,</td>
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<td>Pius XII, John XXIII, Vatican II Council</td>
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<td>7/19/14</td>
<td>Paul VI,</td>
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<td>John Paul II,</td>
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<td>Benedict XVI</td>
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<td>7/26/14</td>
<td>Human Person, Basic Principles, Basic Values. Family, Human Work.</td>
<td>CSD, Numbers 105-159; Numbers 160-322.</td>
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<td>8/2/14</td>
<td>Economic, Political Life. Environment.</td>
<td>Numbers 322 - 574</td>
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<td>Ecclesial Action.</td>
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Abbreviations: CSD=Compendium of the Social Doctrine  
O’Brien=Catholic Social Thought David J.O’Brien and T.A.Shannon  
The encyclicals are named using their Latin titles. You must read the encyclicals named in their entirety.

VII. Course Requirements

Read all assigned readings  
Study notes from class lectures  
Maintain good attendance

VIII. Important Date

Final Exam: August 2, 2014

IX. Evaluation Criteria

Grades will be calculated from quizzes and final exam. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class each Saturday on the previous material. The final grade will be calculated from quizzes and final exam. 50 % each
X.  Attendance Policy

Students must attend every class. Unexcused absences will mean a deduction in grade. Please ask permission for unplanned absences.

XI.  Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be responsible for their own work assignments and their academic exams. Copying results in a failing grade.

XII. Bibliography for Social Doctrine Course


DeGeorge Richard T. “Neither the Hammer and Sickle Nor the Eye of the Needle, One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Thought on Economic Systems.” in, Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order. Oliver F. Williams and John W. Houck (Eds.) Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1993


Murphy, Charles M. “Charity not Justice as constitutive of the Church’ Mission.” Theological Studies 68, June, 2007: 274-86.


For many more terms and definitions see: Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Analytical Index, pp. 283.

**Justice, Commutative** - fairness and justice in relations between individuals and private groups.

**Justice, Distributive** - the fair distribution of created goods so basic needs are met.

**Liberation theology** - A theology that is based on the notion of liberation as based on a Marxist analysis of political and economic oppression and Christian Revelation. It is a theology that has influenced a large section of Latin American pastoral thinking. It has been critiqued by two major documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. 1984 and 1986. Available on Vatican.va. Curia, Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

**Medellin, Colombia** - the 1968 conference of Latin American bishops that produced an important document on the ecclesial, social and political-economic situation of the continent. They are called the Medellin Documents. The post-Medellin assimilation of these documents led to a concern on the part of some that Church social activity was being co-opted by certain political and ideological movements.

**Principle of Common Good** - The sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more full and more easily. MM65.

**Puebla, Mexico** - In 1979 CELAM(Latin American Bishops’ Conference) met in Mexico and produced a document that incorporated a view of the Latin America reality that was influenced by Pope John Paul II’s visit to Mexico and his concerns for the post-Medellin tendencies in Latin American Catholicism which were being influenced by a socialist humanism not compatible with Catholic theological Tradition.

**Solidarity** - The duty of cooperating and harmonizing all the rights of the in individual and the demands that are derived by the sociability of man. It is the entire joint effort to reach the good of the individual and society.

**Social Justice** - The mode of action that requires from each person what is necessary for the common good.

**Stewardship** - the responsible and just use of the world’s resources.

**Subsidiarity** - The principle that a higher unit of society should not do what a lower unit of society could do just as well by itself.

**Universal Destiny of Goods** - The principle that the goods of creation are meant to be used to supply the needs of all human beings in an equitable way.