Course Syllabus for MT 501 Principles of Moral Theology – 3 credit hours

Principles of Moral Theology
Instructor: David C. Kelly, MM

SEM/YEAR 2014
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Office Hours: appointment
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I. Course Description

The course serves as an introduction to Moral Theology and is specifically designed to acquaint the student of theology with the moral tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. This course will cover the history of Moral Theology and also specific basic moral notions such as: conscience, freedom, values, norms, and natural law. The basic connection between Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition will also be explained, as well as how Moral Theology relates to other theological disciplines.

II. Course Rationale

Faith in the person of Jesus Christ as gift from God, teacher, strength and goal of humanity is the very basis of Christian conduct. The essential structure of Moral Theology and how it is defined takes its inspiration from this religious truth. This course shows how such an understanding of Moral Theology has been expressed over the centuries and how this expression includes both change and continuity in accordance with the challenges presented by each epoch. Emphasis will be centered on how Moral Theology is defined and how it relates to the other theological disciplines and to philosophy.

The Tradition of the Church and Holy Scripture form a basis for an understanding of the fundamentals of Moral Theology. The student will be able to see the organic unity of the discipline and its connection with other areas of theology. Today, one of the challenges for the faith of the Church is the problem of ethical relativism. This course purposes to set out the basic building blocks that will help the student understand the importance of the connection between morality and faith, freedom and truth and thus equip him to bring these truths to the people.
III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

Goal 1: The student will develop an appreciation of the history of Moral Theology and its connection to theological thought and development.

Goal 2: The student will be able to articulate the difference between moral theology, human sciences and the other theological sciences.

Goal 3: The student taking this course will be able to understand and articulate fundamental principles related to Moral Theology. These would include freedom, conscience, natural law, natural inclinations, and moral norms. All these principles are demonstrated so as to show how Moral Theology can meet the pastoral needs and challenges of contemporary Catholicism.

IV. Instructional Methods

1. Lecture
2. Question and Answer. Discussion.
3. Oral exams each class.

V. Texts (Required and/or Recommended)


_____________. "Relativism, the Central Problem for Faith Today." http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/RatzRela

Primary Texts: Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Thomas Aquinas, John Paul II, Benedict XVI

VI. Bibliography:


VII. Professional Vocabulary

Amorality- Literally, without a moral sense; a lack of any moral principles.

Extrinsicism- A moral view that sees the moral dimension of human life as autonomous and extrinsic to faith and grace. Faith and morality are external to each other. In contemporary
American culture this tendency is evident where the effectiveness of morality takes the place of moral truth. Where practical reason alone decides the morality of an action. Christian behavior loses its proper obligations and is seen as an appendage to the faith. In such a situation, Christian morality is challenged to find its source in the living reality of faith and grace. Therefore the need to redimension moral theology so that its bonds with Christology, theological anthropology and ecclesiology are strengthened. The Second Vatican Council pointed out this problem when it said in Gaudium et Spes, #43, "One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy of the faith which many profess and their day-to-day conduct."

**Formal Sin**- Sin that is deliberately and freely committed.

**Freedom for Excellence**- that freedom which is based on moral truth and acts so as to please God who is the source of our final happiness. It is a freedom that perfects the acting person, contributes to the good of others and leads us to God.

**Fundamental Morality**- That subdivision of moral theology that studies the nature of freedom and moral acts and the conditions that make for moral responsibility and the growth of virtue. Special moral theology studies particular moral themes such as sexuality, bioethics, social ethics, and life science questions.

**Material Sin**- An act that is sinful but does not cause culpability because of ignorance.

**Moral theology**- That science of theology that studies human actions and conduct in the light of Revelation. Communion with God is regarded to be man’s supreme happiness, an end that is unattainable without God’s grace.

**Magisterium**- The teaching authority of the Church, entrusted to the pope and bishops in communion with him.

**Materialism**- an excessive and unhealthy attachment to material goods and wealth.

**Moral Relativism**- the belief that there are no objective moral truths that are universal and binding on all human beings. Each individual conscience or culture decides their own basic moral code.

**Natural Law**- A participation of human reasoning in the plan of God. Human reason in search of the good.

**Passions, Moral**- The emotions or dispositions that incline us to good or evil actions: such as love, hate, hope, fear, joy sadness amd anger. In themselves passions are neither good nor evil. They are good when they incline one to good actions, evil when they incline one to sin.

**Philosophical Anthropology**- that branch of philosophy that studies the nature and essence of what it means to be a human being. (human nature) in the light of reason.
Secularism (secular humanism)- The view that morality should be based solely on well being in the present life, paying no heed to transcendental realities as basis for conduct. Also this view advocates the reduction of morality and religion to the individual's private life. Virtue, moral values are totally subjective and individual, as well as relative.

Secularity- the term that is used to denote that there are positive values present in the modern process of secularization. Also that there are other positive processes in it that can be directed to the good.

Secularization- The process whereby the human is defined as a creature of this world and God is seen as a far distant figure. The human uses this world as an object of his advance and human reason is seen as totally autonomous. Man is independent and responsible for himself since God has left him in charge of the world. He must live "as if God did not exist"

Sin- a human act in thought, word, deed or omission that is contrary to God’s law and is committed with knowledge and full consent.

Social sin- The effect of sin over time. It effects society and institutions in such a way that social structures arise to facilitate and perpetuate an immoral way of living. These are called "structures of sin"

Sources of morality - The morality of human acts depends on three factors: the object chosen; the end in view or the intention; and the circumstances of the act( who, what ,where, why, when,etc.).The moral object is the proximate end of a deliberately and rationally chosen action.

Special Morality- The term used to signify that part of Moral Theology which studies the application of moral principles to particular kinds of human conduct, e.g. social conduct, human sexuality, bioethics, end of life decisions, ecology, etc.

Theological Anthropology- That dimension of theology that studies the essence of the human being in the light of God’s reality and Revelation.

Theological Virtues- Faith, Hope and Charity. These are gifts of God's grace. They are supernatural virtues.

Virtue- an habitual and firm disposition to do good. A conviction that directs one’s attitudes. The virtues open us up to realities beyond ourselves and to communion with our brothers and sisters. They encourage a more integrated way of life based upon "the kind of person I want to be".

Virtues, Cardinal- Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude.
VIII. Lecture, Presentation, and Reading Schedule

The professor reserves the right to change and adapt these dates and contents according to new and relevant materials that need to be introduced for the good of the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Aug. 23, 2014 | Introduction: truth/freedom  
Definition .moral theology, Human  
Aspects of moral theology. 
History moral theology, St. Paul | Pinckaers, 1-94;  
Also pp.95-190 |
| Sept 13, 2014 | Sermon on Mount, patristic period.  
History penitentials X, XI, XII. centuries  
Thomas Aquinas, Ockham  
Nominalism. | Pinckaers, 191-297  
Pinckaers, 298-323  
NCE article |
| Oct. 25, 2014 | Manuals of moral theology  
Modern Epoch, Vatican II  
Secular Christianity.  
Freedom of indifference  
Freedom for Excellence | Pinckaers, 327-378;  
Also, pp.379-399 |
| Nov. 8, 2014 | Aquinas and Freedom  
Natural Inclinations  
Sin, Conscience, cooperation in sin | Pinckaers, pp. 400-456  
Also pp. 457-468  
Dulles and Ratzinger articles;  
Reconciliatio et Penitentia, #14-18 |
| Dec. 6, 2014 | Church Magisterium, virtues and review.  
Conclusions |                                    |

IX. Course Requirements:

- Read all assigned readings.
- Study and organize notes from class lecture after each Saturday.
- Oral quiz at the beginning of the first hour of class.
- Maintain good attendance.
- Final Exam
X. Important Dates

Dec. 6, 2014  Final Exam

All dates are subject to change if circumstances warrant them.

XI. Evaluation Criteria

Grades will be calculated from:

- At the beginning of every class session there will be an oral quiz based on the notes of the previous lecture.
- During the last class a final exam will be given.
- Final grade is the total average of all exams including class quizzes.

XII. Attendance Policy

Notre Dame Seminary observes the following policy regarding class attendance: Regular class attendance is expected and required of all students who intend to receive credit for course work in the graduate school. Inevitably, extraordinary circumstances will arise that make class attendance impossible on occasion; therefore, a formula for determining regular attendance has been established as policy for the convenience of both seminarians and instructors. A student is permitted to be absent from class no more than twice the number of times the class meets per week. (You are considered absent if you are not present when attendance is taken). Thus, if a student is absent for seven classes from a course that meets three times a week, the student is in violation of school policy in this regard. The normal penalty for such a violation is the grade FA (failure due to absence).

The number of absences includes those due to illness, late registration, or any other cause. Absence from class immediately before or after holidays and free weekends is considered a double cut. Only the Academic Dean may waive penalties for absence. In absences due to illness, you must inform the instructor and your formation advisor prior to the class.

XIII. Academic Integrity

Seminarians of Notre Dame Seminary are required to commit themselves to responsible scholarship in every aspect of priestly formation, including academics. It is expected that every seminarian works and studies to the best of his ability for every course.

Seminarians also accept responsibilities and obligations as students, which include commitments to honesty, disciplined study, and integrity in their academic work. They will be expected to
respect academic scholarship by giving proper credit to other people’s work, while at the same time preparing well for assigned materials and examinations in such a way that their academic integrity will never be questioned.

Those needing assistance with writing papers, or who would like tutoring, should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) for assistance. All students are encouraged to seek the direct assistance of their instructor whenever any questions arise regarding assignments, grading, course expectations, etc.

XIV. Disability Accommodation Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Notre Dame Seminary provides disability accommodations for students with identified and/or diagnosed disabilities. Students with disabilities need not inform their instructors about the nature of their disabilities, but they are responsible for contacting and providing appropriate documentation to the Academic Resources Center. Requests for accommodations must be made each semester for which the student wishes to receive service; the Academic Resources Center will then distribute a letter of accommodation to the faculty. It is the student’s responsibility to meet with each faculty member to discuss how his/her accommodation(s) may be met within each course. Notre Dame Seminary will attempt to meet reasonable accommodations requested. A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a non-essential aspect of a course, program, or facility which does not pose an undue burden and which enables a qualified student with a disability to have adequate opportunity to participate and to demonstrate his or her ability. Such accommodations are determined on an individual basis depending upon the nature and extent of the disability. For more information, contact the Academic Dean’s Office.

XV. Extension Policy

Instructors are never obligated to grant a student’s request for a due-date extension on a paper/project if they judge the request to be without sufficient merit or not in keeping with the fair requirements articulated in the course syllabus.

XVI. Audit Policy

For academic course audits at Notre Dame Seminary, the amount of work required of seminarians will be decided on a case by case basis by the instructor, the Academic Dean and the seminarian’s Formation Advisor.

XVII. Probation and Grading Policy

Passing grades for seminarians are A, B and C. A seminarian is put on academic probation for the following:
A seminarian who obtains a D+ or lower in any course is automatically placed on probationary status and must repeat the course in order to get credit for the course. Seminarians will be allowed to repeat a course only once and the course must be repeated at NDS. Seminarian status is then subject to review by the Dean.

A seminarian whose semester grade point average (GPA) in coursework is below a 2.30 at any time is placed on academic probation. Two or more consecutive semesters may subject the seminarian to be dismissed from academic formation at Notre Dame Seminary. To be removed from probationary status, the seminarian must complete a semester with a GPA of 2.30 or higher.

After each semester, the seminarian’s Bishop will receive a copy of his transcript and a review of the seminarians’ status.

If a seminarian fails to meet the passing grade point average requirement then he forfeits his eligibility for financial aid under Title IV Federal Regulations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade Number</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>87 – 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>83 – 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>79 – 78</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>77 – 74</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
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See Academic Catalog for Grading Guidelines Policy Narrative.

XVIII. Syllabus Contract

This syllabus obliges the student to adhere to all policy requirements and to fulfill all academic expectations herein stated; it also entitles the student to a reasonable opportunity to learn the
material specified in the course description in order to accomplish for himself the educational goals of the course. In order to optimize the learning process the course instructor reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to the syllabus requirements during the semester, in response to unforeseen developments or circumstances. All adjustments made must be communicated clearly to students.