NOTRE DAME SEMINARY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Course Syllabus for MT 501
Principles of Moral Theology

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer E. Miller
Email: jmiller@nds.edu
Office Hours: SJ 109/M, W 1:30-3:30 pm
Phone: 866-7426, ext. 114

Semester: Fall 2014
Time: Th. 1:30pm – 4:15 pm
Place: Classroom # 1

I. Course Description

The course serves as an introduction to Moral Theology and is specifically designed to acquaint the seminarian 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

Optatam Totius states that in priestly formation, “Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on 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”. (OT, 16) Hence, this course focuses upon that call to holiness which exhorts all men to the heroism of the saintly life and culminates in beatitude. Such sanctity is best understood and most attractive to the human person when it is a call to the beauty and the good of the virtues lived in Christ, instead of a mere opposition to the mediocrity of the world. Our exposition of moral theology will thus be framed in this light, to provide future priests with those tools enabling them to preach and to correct in a manner coherent with the joy of the new evangelization.

III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

- The seminarian will develop an appreciation of the history of Moral Theology and its connection to theological thought and development.
- The seminarian taking this course should also be able to understand and articulate fundamental principles related to Moral Theology.
- These fundamental principles would include natural law, moral norms, and how Moral Theology relates to other theological disciplines and the human sciences.
IV. Instructional Methods

1) Lecture
2) Socratic Question and Answer
3) Reading and Elaboration Based Upon Primary Texts

V. Texts (Required)

To Buy:


Available online:

4. Enrique Colom & Angel Rodriguez Luño, *Chosen in Christ to Be Saints I: Fundamental Moral Theology*, EDUSC, Rome 2013. (This has yet to be published in the States. The author, the dean of moral theology at The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, has provided us with a pdf version to use and diffuse.)

VI. Bibliography

Abbà, Giuseppe, *Quale impostazione per la filosofia morale?*, LAS, Roma 1995.


Other relevant sources will be indicated in class.

VII. Professional Vocabulary

**Moral Theology:** the study of human acts in the light of Christ as directed to beatitude, man’s last end. (cfr. *Veritatis Splendor*, 29)

**Fundamental Moral Theology:** the subdivision of moral theology that studies the nature of moral acts and the conditions that make for moral responsibility and growth in virtue. Specific moral theology studies particular moral themes, such as sexuality, bioethics, and social ethics.

**Freedom for excellence:** that freedom, based on moral truth, which perfects the acting person, contributes to the good of others, and leads us to God, the source of our final happiness.

**Virtue:** an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. (*CCC* 1803)

**Concupiscible passions:** the passions of the concupiscible appetite or the pleasure impulse, which has as its object the good which is pleasing to the senses; these are love, hatred, desire, joy and sadness. (Colom-Rodríguez-Luño, 146, 147)

**Irascible passions:** the passions of the irascible appetite or the aggressive impulse, which has as its object the pleasing good which is difficult to reach or the evil which is difficult to evade, and which therefore requires effort and battle; these are hope, desperation, audacity, fear, and anger. (Colom-Rodríguez-Luño, 146, 147)

**Prudence:** the fundamental (cardinal) virtue of the practical reason; starting from the stable desire for virtuous ends, prudence can identify the action which here and now accomplishes the virtuous end, in a way that can be chosen and taken to completion. (Colom-Rodríguez-Luño, 222, 219)

**Human act (actus humanus):** a voluntary act of the human person, whose principle is found within the agent and which implies knowledge. (cfr. *ST I-II*, q.6, a.1, *respondeo*)
Sources of morality: the object, the intention, and the circumstances of an actus humanus. (CCC 1750)

Object (of the actus humanus): the action itself, as deliberately chosen and willed on the part of the acting person. (cfr. CCC 1751)

Natural Law: a participation of the rational creature in Divine Providence, or right reason in its search for the good. (cfr. ST I-II, q. 91, a.2, respondeo)

Conscience: a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed; (CCC 1778) the more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn away from blind choice and try to be guided by objective standards of moral conduct. (CCC 1794)

Invincible ignorance: “an ignorance of which the subject is not aware and which he is unable to overcome by himself” (Veritatis Splendor, 62; cfr. ST I-II, q.76, a.2 respondeo)

Privatio boni: the lack of goodness necessary for fullness of being, which is also known as evil. (cfr. ST I-II, q.18, a.1, respondeo; a.4, ad 3)

Sin: a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. (CCC 1849)

Intrinseece malum: intrinsically evil acts, concrete behaviors (adultery, abortion, etc.) which are morally evil “always and per se, in other words, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances”. (Colom-Rodríguez-Luño, 171, citing Veritatis Splendor, 80)

Principle of double effect: acts which, beyond their desired effects, have also consequences which are not desired, but tolerated for love of the good effect which is sought, can licitly be performed under the following conditions: 1) the act is good in itself or at least indifferent; 2) the good effect is not accomplished by the evil action; 3) the good effect, and not the evil, is directly willed; 4) there is a proportion between the good intended and the evil tolerated. (Colom-Rodriguez-Luño, 188, 189)

VIII. Lecture, Presentation, and Reading Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 28</td>
<td>Introduction: Call to sanctity</td>
<td>Colom-Rodríguez-Luño, 15-51, 85-106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>History: St. Paul</td>
<td>Pinckaers: 104-167, St. Augustine’s Commentary on the Sermon on the</td>
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IX. Course Requirements

- Read all assigned readings.
- Prepare for the daily quizzes.
- Participate in class and maintain a good attendance record
- Elaborate a 10-page paper on one of the virtues in the *Summa Theologica* II-II.

X. Important Dates

Midterm – October 16
Paper – November 20
Final Exam – December 9-11
All dates are subject to change if circumstances warrant them.

XI. Evaluation Criteria

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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Quizzes and Participation</td>
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Paper: Each student is required to elaborate a 10-page paper based on one of the virtues in the *Summa Theologica* II-II. The theme of this paper should be submitted to the professor for approval by e-mail no later than October 9. Such an elaboration should include an introduction that indicates why this virtue is particularly pertinent in the new evangelization; a section of theological elaboration which draws upon the *Summa Theologica* and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (if the virtue is found therein); and a section which, using two or three fonts from more popular sources, indicates how this virtue is viewed and being developed in contemporary culture and can be part of the call to sanctity in the new evangelization. As St. Justin Martyr reminds us, “All truth wherever it is found belongs to us as Christians”. (*Second Apology*, 13) A conclusion should summarize and draw together all of the aforementioned sections.

The format of the paper should be the Turabian indicated for the seminary.

Possible popular sources will be indicated in class, but students are also encouraged to seek them out independently.

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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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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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.