Morality and the Virtuous Life

Spring 2015

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Description: This course presents the moral teaching of the encyclical Veritatis Splendor and a general description of the Catholic teaching on the virtues. The objective of this course is to acquaint the student with the centrality of Jesus Christ in the Moral teaching of the Church. This focus will also enable the student to see the connection between the person of Christ, the Church, contemporary culture and the moral life as exemplified in the practice of the virtues. The course also connects the foundational moral concepts given in the first semester and shows how these apply to major pastoral problems related to freedom and truth, faith and morality that are presented in the Encyclical Veritatis Splendor.

Envisioned Outcomes: Students will have a comprehensive understanding of Veritatis Splendor. They will be able to explain, articulate and apply its teaching to the pastoral concerns of today especially the separation between freedom and truth, faith and morality. Students will be able to name and describe in detail the virtues in the moral life of the Christian and how they help a person live out their Christian life in the contemporary culture of relativism.

Requirements and Grading.

- Read all Assigned material.
- complete successfully two partial and one final exam. The partial and final exams and any other grades from class quizzes will be averaged together. Quizzes will be given each week on the material presented,
- Items marked with an asterisque in the Bibliography can be used as subjects of a written twelve page single spaced research paper in lieu of the final exam. You must follow NDS style requirements. If you choose an article instead of a book you must choose another article as well.
- We will have periodic discussions in class on the readings in DiNoia and Cessario led by the students.
Textbooks:

Pope St. John Paul II. The **Splendor of the Truth**. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1993. (abbreviated as VS). Also available on the Vatican site.


N.B. Pieper's books on the virtues are not an obligatory purchase but are optional.

Lecture Schedule.

**Nota Bene. Some days require less reading than others. Please be advised that you should use the early part of the course to advance in the required readings especially those of Di Noia's and Pieper's books. The exam on March 25 and Final exam will contain a question or two about the readings.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-Jan</td>
<td>Introduction to V.S. (cf. Pinckaers' article in Di Noia book.)</td>
<td>VS 1-27</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-Jan</td>
<td>VS 1-27 moral good + fulfillment</td>
<td>VS 28-53</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-Jan</td>
<td>VS 28-53 God's law + freedom</td>
<td>VS 54-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-Jan</td>
<td>VS 54-64 conscience + truth</td>
<td>VS 65-83</td>
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<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>VS 65-70 fundamental option</td>
<td>VS 84-120</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>VS 71-83 moral act</td>
<td>Di Noia 11-71</td>
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<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>VS 84-120 freedom and truth</td>
<td>Di Noia 73-127</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>Di Noia 143-160</td>
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<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>Intro. to Di Noia</td>
<td>Di Noia 161-193</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 23+25.</td>
<td>MacIntyre article - Prof. Jacobs</td>
<td>Di Noia 195-208</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>Rhonheimer's first article, group 1</td>
<td>Di Noia 211-239</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Rhonheimer first article, group 2</td>
<td>Di Noia, 1-10</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td>Moral Absolutes article, group 3</td>
<td>Pieper Faith 15-41</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Meaning of object May article, group 4</td>
<td>Pieper Faith 42-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>May article (cont) group 5</td>
<td>Pieper Hope 89-138</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Desire for happiness Di Noia article, group 6</td>
<td>Pieper Love 141-186</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>Introduction to virtues</td>
<td>Pieper Love 187-232</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Exam -on readings of Di Noia and Pieper</td>
<td>Pieper Love 233-259</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Virtue of faith</td>
<td>Pieper Love 260-281</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
<td>Virtue of Hope</td>
<td>Pieper prudence</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>Virtue of Charity</td>
<td>Pieper justice</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td>Prudence</td>
<td>Pieper temperance</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Pieper fortitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Temperance</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Fortitude</td>
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Symbols: In the reading assignment column. The symbol DiNoia refers to the book by DiNoia and Cessario cf. bibliography Veritatis Splendor and the Renewal of Moral Theology.

VS refers to Veritatis Splendor. Nota Bene: the VS numbers are for paragraph numbers, not pages. The word Pieper refers to the book on the virtues of faith, hope and charity and also to the book on the moral virtues.

Bibliography.


Di Noia, J. Augustine.”*Clearing Away the Barriers: Preaching to Young Adults Today.*”  


Glossary of Terms for MT502 Spring 2015

**Acts of humans**- acts that do not come under the will and intelligence of the person. The person has no control over these acts.(actus hominis)

**Common Good**- the sum total of social conditions, which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily. G.S #26)

**Consequentialism**- a moral system that determines the good or evil of an act chiefly from its consequences or effects.

**Correct(or true) Conscience**- judges as good that which is truly good and as evil that which is truly evil.
**Culpability**- what the person has when they knowingly and willingly commit evil, i.e. when they are considered guilty of or at fault for an evil act. Also called imputability.

**Erroneous Conscience**- judges as good that which is evil and as evil that which is good. It can be erroneous either due to vincible ignorance or invincible ignorance.

**Fortitude**- the virtue that strengthens us in the performance and perseverance in the doing of good. Vigor in arduis, strength when the going gets rough.

**Freedom for excellence**- the ability to act freely in the pursuit of human perfection and live a moral life that leads to true happiness and our final end which is God.

**Freedom of indifference**- the view that regards freedom of choice between contraries as the exclusive and only kind of freedom. It regards freedom as based on a power that one possesses rather than as stemming from the desire for true good. Freedom is based on the will only.

**Human act**- an act that is done with free will and intelligence, knowledge and consent. The two main gifts of the human, reason and will, act together to perform an act. This is a moral act. It can be good or evil in accordance with the sources of the moral act. (actus humanus)

**Invincible Ignorance**- Ignorance that is not recognized as such by the moral subject and from which a person cannot be freed by his own effort.

**Justice**- the virtue which gives to another what is due him. It is focused on the rights of the other. It is one of the cardinal (moral or human) virtues.

**Natural Law**- is the unwritten law in the heart of each human being placed there by God whose divine providence guides human reason in its search for the good.

**Magisterium**- consists of the Pope and the Bishops teaching in the name of Christ and handing down and defending the true meaning of Christ’s message as received in the Gospel and apostolic tradition. It acts as the guardian of Revelation for the sake of the faithful.

**Moral act**- any human act that is done with freedom and intelligence.

**Mortal sin**- when a person with clear knowledge of what he is doing and full consent of the will disobeys God and his commandments in a grave and serious matter.

**Proportionalism**- an ethical system that holds that the moral object of the act by itself alone cannot qualify an act as bad or good. Proportionalism maintains that if the intention of the person is a good one and the effects of the act are good, then the moral act can be
licit. The moral act is not qualified as good or evil until the intention and the end are brought into consideration; the moral object alone cannot determine the moral character of the act.

**Prudence**- the virtue that helps us choose the correct means in order to attain the good. It is close in its meaning to what is discernment. It is the form of all the cardinal virtues.

**Relativism**- is the moral theory that regards the autonomous individual as the supreme authority over concrete moral judgments. Its proposal is that there are no universally objective moral values that are binding on all peoples, each culture has its own set of moral rules. For many it is the basis of democracy.

**Situation Ethics**- the moral theory that does not accept that there exists a universally valid set of moral truths that bind all people; this theory holds that it is the set of circumstances and situation alone that has to be given priority in passing moral judgment. The norm of love as a general ideal must be applied by each person to the situation in which he finds himself. The concrete norms and rules for action are made up by the individual conscience.

**Temperance**- the virtue which helps us control our human desires for food, drink and sexual urges; i.e. those appetites that concern personal survival and reproduction of the race. Along with prudence, justice and fortitude it comprises the moral or cardinal virtues.

**Theological virtues**- these the virtues are faith, hope and charity. They are called theological because their origin is from God and they have God as their object.

**Tradition**-Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church.

**Venial sin** - when the offence committed against God or neighbor is not a grave or serious matter. It does not cause death to the life of God in us.

**Vincible Ignorance**- lack of knowledge due to lack of diligence and concern to inquire after the truth. The person is morally responsible for this negligence.

**Virtue**- A constant disposition or habitus, that is, a stable disposition of character, which makes moral conduct for doing good easy and joyful.

**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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade Number</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>100 – 94</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>93 – 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>89 – 88</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>87 – 84</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>83 – 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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See Academic Catalog for Grading Guidelines Policy Narrative.

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.