

Course Syllabus
Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary
3535 Indian Trail
Orchard Lake, MI 48324

I. Course Number and Title: MT 531 Fundamental Moral Theology

II. Instructor: Gregory A. Banazak; Phone: (248) 683-0419 (direct line to office); e-mail: gabanazak@yahoo.com (=best way to reach me).

III. Semester: Winter, 2018

IV. Day, Time And Place: The course runs from the week of January 8 through the week of April 30. It will close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 29. Every week, there will be online activities in which the student will be expected to participate.

V. Credit Hours: 3

VI. Delivery System: This course will be entirely on line. We will never meet as a class. Basically, the course is organized to alternate between (1) weeks with readings and a quiz on the readings and (2) weeks with case studies which each member of the class will address. There will be no final exam or paper.

VII. Course Description: Introduction to the basic principles of morality in the Roman Catholic tradition. Foundational concepts, Christian understanding of personhood, objective morality, and methodologies for moral discernment. Particular attention to human act, knowledge and freedom, sin and conversion, virtue and character, nature of conscience, natural law, and values and norms for moral decision-making. Focus on code of ethics for pastoral ministry within the context of Roman Catholic priesthood and lay ecclesial ministry.

VIII. Course Objectives

1. understand the nature and history of moral theology and fundamental moral theology
2. comprehend the human being in terms relevant to moral theology
3. understand the nature of conscience and conscience formation
4. grasp the importance of freedom and knowledge for evaluating actions
5. identify and understand the sources which inform moral theology and decision-making
6. identify, understand, and employ different approaches to using sources for moral theology and decision-making
7. identify, understand, and employ different methods for thinking about moral issues
8. comprehend the nature of sin and its various types
9. understand the nature of virtue and its various types
10. analyze case studies for well-reasoned moral decisions

IX. General Thematic Outline of the Course

This is an overview of the *content* of the course and the order in which it will be examined. For an overview of the *structure* of the course (that is, how it will proceed each week) see ¥ below.

1. Introduction to Moral Theology
 - 1.1 The Nature of Moral Theology
 - 1.1.1 The Principal Reference Point of Moral Theology: The Good
 - 1.1.2 Definition of Moral Theology
 - 1.2 The History of Moral Theology
2. The Moral Subject
 - 2.1 The Nature of the Human Being
 - 2.2 Freedom
 - 2.3 Knowledge
 - 2.4 Conscience
3. Moral Truth
 - 3.1 The Nature of Moral Truth
 - 3.2 Expressions of Moral Truth (with special attention to moral norms)
 - 3.3 Sources For Moral Truth
 - 3.3.1 Scripture
 - 3.3.2 Tradition
 - 3.3.3 The Magisterium
 - 3.3.4 Other (with special attention to Natural Law)
4. Thinking in Moral Theology
 - 4.1 The Human Act
 - 4.2 Ethical Methods
5. The Moral Life
 - 5.1 Sin
 - 5.1.1 The Nature of Sin
 - 5.1.2 Types of Sin
 - 5.2 Virtue
 - 5.2.1 The Nature of Virtue
 - 5.2.2 Types of Virtues

XI. Required Texts There is no one required text for this course. Readings for the course will be provided to the students under "Lessons" in the Populi course.

XI. Magisterial Documents Read in This Class:

Pope John Paul II, "Veritatis splendor: Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching." (1993)

Vatican II. Gaudium et spes.

XII. Learning Methodologies: A basic cycle of activities will be followed in this course. The cycle will alternate between two different "kinds" of weeks. In one "kind" of week, students will be required to read a scanned article or chapter or set of notes and then answer questions about it in a quiz; in the next "kind" of week, students will be required to discuss a case study in light of the previous week's reading material. For instance, one week students might be required to read a section of John Paul II's encyclical, Veritatis splendor and will be quizzed on their reading. The next week, students would discuss a case study in light of the pope's encyclical. In this way, students will be able to combine personal study with class interaction.

Students should be aware that online classes require a different set of skills than presential classes required. For example, online classes require students to be self-motivated, self-monitoring, capable of budgeting time well, and able to communicate with other students and the instructor in clear and appropriate language. The attitude that an online class is simply a different "delivery" of the same class in a classroom --- or that it is somehow easier in content or expectations --- should be carefully avoided.

The instructor will be attentive to the diverse learning styles of the students and will adapt his teaching style to accommodate them.

XIII. General Guidelines

1. **Guidelines for Academic Study:** Students are expected to devote at least 2 to 3 hours of study per week, per credit hour. A normal reading load is about 500 pages per credit.

2. **Standards for Written Assignments:** Class assignments must be proofread for proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and form. In preparing research papers requiring documentation, students are to follow the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (latest edition). The manual is available in the Library. Students are required to reference the *Student Writing Guide* posted on the Seminary Web Site. The Writing Center is available to aid students in preparing written and/or oral assignments.

3. **Disabilities Accommodation:** Students enrolled in this course who have documented disabilities should notify the professor at the first class session. Reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that students with disabilities have access to course material and interaction in modes in which they can receive them.

4. **Respect For Others:** As a matter of course, the students and instructor are expected to show respect for all members of the class at all times. In particular, the instructor will tolerate absolutely no language or behavior, during class and/or in written assignments, which disparages race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, or sex. Christian charity would seem to require that problems regarding this matter should be brought directly to the attention of the offending party. If this is ineffective or impossible, please call the instructor's attention to the matter and he will talk with the matter to the offending party. Failure to respond to repeated requests may result in a conference with higher authorities and / or an academic penalty. In addition, students are urged to use inclusive language in speaking and writing as a means of expressing and fostering respect for the dignity of all persons.

5. **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to maintain personal honesty and professional integrity in examinations, assigned papers, and research projects. Source materials and citations used in the preparation of papers are to be indicated by proper documentation. Copyright laws should be honored when duplicating materials. Plagiarism and cheating are a breach of academic integrity. Plagiarism is defined as: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (a created production) without crediting the source vi: to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 9th ed, Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1981, p. 870). Violations in this area are considered a serious offense. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. When the instructor *suspects* a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor may confront the student.
2. If the instructor has *evidence* that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor should confront the student with the evidence. The student has an opportunity to explain what happened.
3. If the instructor is convinced that plagiarism has occurred, the instructor may suggest a course of action: e.g. rewrite the assignment and receive a grade or the student may take a "0" for the assignment and not rewrite the assignment.
4. The Academic Dean should be informed of the outcome of this discussion and a note will be placed in the student's file. The respective formation mentor is informed by the Academic Dean.

5. If there are repeated offenses, the student will fail the course.
6. The student who fails a required course must repeat it.
7. A student who plagiarizes or cheats consistently in the academic program will be dismissed from the program.
8. For dismissal from the academic program, a board consisting of the Rector, Academic Dean, the student's mentor, the faculty member(s) affected by the student's plagiarism and a faculty member of the student's choosing will be convened and a decision rendered. This decision will be communicated to the student by the Rector.

Cheating is defined as "to deprive of something valuable by the use of deceit or fraud; to influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice; to elude or thwart by or as if by outwitting <cheat death> intransitive verb: to practice fraud or trickery; to violate rules dishonestly <cheat at cards> <cheating on a test> ("cheat." Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. 5 May, 2010.<http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/cheat>). In short, "cheating is defined as the intentional act of breaking the rules, or attempting to achieve personal gain through fraud or deceit. With children, cheating usually refers to academic fraud, such as copying answers from another student while taking an exam, or breaking the rules in a game" (Dianne K. Daeg de Mott, Thomson Gale, Detroit, Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence, 1998).

Examples of cheating in an academic setting include, but are not limited to:

- a. copying answers for an exam from another student;
- b. writing out the answers to an exam beforehand and turning them in at the time of the exam;
- c. obtaining the answers to an exam prior to the exam and using them during the exam in some way;
- d. having another person take an exam or write a paper for you;
- e. continuing to write answers to an exam after the time has expired (timed examinations);
- f. obtaining copies of an exam or answer key to aid in studying for the exam;
- g. passing notes to another student during an exam;
- h. asking another student for help during the writing of an exam;
- i. using another person's paper, presentation, reflection, etc. and handing it in as your own work;
- j. using electronic devices such as computers or mobile phones to obtain answers during an exam.

(The term "exam" may be substituted with "quiz," "paper," or "presentation" as the case may be.)

XIV. Assignments

1 Readings: Readings will be assigned for all class sessions. Since they form the basis for participation in the blogs and successful completion of the quizzes, such readings are essential. You are expected to *finish* the readings assigned to you *before* the date on which they are due. As an aid to students' planning, I have list assigned readings for the semester in the below course calendar.

I suggest that you read in order to find main ideas rather than to memorize all details. For instance, after reading an assigned text, try to express to yourself, briefly and simply, the main ideas the author attempted to communicate. You might also express to yourself, briefly and simply, your opinion on those ideas.

2. Quizzes: One type of graded assignment for this course will be quizzes. Every other lesson / week, a quiz will be given. In total, there will be 8 quizzes. Each quiz will be focused exclusively on one week's worth of course material. The quizzes will examine the student's comprehension of that course material. In total, there will be 8 quizzes. While students must take all the quizzes and pass them (passing means 70% minimum), the lowest quiz score is dropped. The grade for each quiz will count for 10% of the final grade. Students must finish the quiz by the end of the lesson /week in which is it contained in Populi (11:59 p.m. on Sunday of that lesson / week)

In regards to their format, each quiz will be exclusively multiple-choice, consist of approximately 10 to 20 questions, and forced-finish and timed for one hour (that is, after opening a quiz the student must finish the quiz within one hour). Beforehand, students will be given a study sheet for each quiz; the questions for each quiz will be taken from that quiz's study sheet.

When taking the quizzes, students may use no notes, books, other individuals, the internet, or anything other than the understanding in their heads. In any event, the amount of questions given and the amount of time allotted would make impracticable use of any resource other than the understanding of course material in one's own head.

3. Case Studies: A case study is a story with a moral dilemma. The student will usually be asked to "solve" the moral dilemma by explaining what a figure / figures in the case study should do and why that is the right/good thing to do.

Students will discuss case studies by first reading them and then by discussing them on a blog on Populi. Almost every other week --- according to the below course calendar --- students will find on Populi a lesson / week containing a document in which the case study appears. In that same lesson / week, students will find a blog for discussing the case study. Students must finish discussion by the end of that lesson /week (11:59 p.m. on Sunday of that week).

Students will discuss case studies with other students and the instructor in four ways: (1) stating what a figure/figures in the case study should do; (2) explaining clearly and thoroughly, especially in light of material from the previous week, what that is the good / right thing to do; (3) questioning other students and/or the instructor about their answers to the case study; (4) responding to questions about one's own answer to the case study or comments on other's answers.

Case studies will be graded according to the following criteria: engagement in all the four ways of discussion on the case study (detailed in the above paragraph); comprehension of the facts of the case study; clarity, thoroughness, and logic; use of course material from the previous week. There will be 5 case studies. Each case study counts for 6% of the final grade for the course.

XV. Grading

Your final grade will be calculated according to this breakdown:

- 7 Quizzes --- 10% ea. --- total of 70% of final grade
- 5 Case studies --- 6% ea. --- total of 30% of final grade

XVI. Notice of Change: The information in this syllabus is subject to change. The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes.

XVII. Course Calendar

Week 1 (week of Jan. 8): Introduction: Student will participate in activities to familiarize themselves with the structure of the course, how to take quizzes, how to discuss a case study, and each other. *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 14.*

Week 2 (week of Jan. 15): Do a reading on the nature of moral theology and take quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, January 21.*

Week 3 (week of Jan. 22): Case Study --- what should be done? *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 28.*

Week 4 (week of Jan. 29): Do a reading on The Good and take a quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, February 4.*

Week 5 (week of Feb. 5): Case Study --- what should be done? *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 11.*

Week 6 (week of Feb. 12): Do a reading on the moral subject and take quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 18.*

Week 7 (week of Feb. 19): Case Study --- what should be done? *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 25.*

Week of Feb. 26 --- break; no activities

Week 8 (week of Mar. 5): Do a reading on the nature and expression of moral truth and take quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Mar. 11.*

Week 9 (week of Mar. 12): Case Study ---- what should be done? *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Mar. 18.*

Week 10 (week of Mar. 19): Do a reading on Scripture and Tradition and take a quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Mar. 25.*

Week of Mar. 26 – break; no activities

Week 11 (week of Apr. 2): Do a reading on Magisterium and Natural Law and take a quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 8.*

Week 12 (week of Apr. 9): Case Study --- what should be done? *All activities must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 15.*

Week 13 (week of Apr. 16) : Do a reading on human acts and method and take a quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 22.*

Week 14 (week of Apr. 23): Do a reading on sin and virtue and take a quiz on that reading. *The quiz must be finished by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 29.*

The course officially ends at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Apr. 29.