

PMIN 211: Contemporary Issues in Moral Theology

Winter 2026

Instructor:

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Office Hours: TBD

Course Logistics:

Thursdays
6:00-9:00 PM
Location TBD

***Note:** This is an initial draft syllabus, and remains subject to change and further elaboration. A complete, final syllabus will be provided closer to Week 1 of the course.

I. Course Description: This course is an introduction to contemporary Catholic moral theology. In the first part of the course (Weeks 1-5), students will learn foundational concepts in moral theology, and examine how the field has revolved since its revitalization at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). In the second part of the course, students will apply what they have learned to explore concrete ethical issues and engage some of the debates currently associated with them. Consistent with the approach of the Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministry, this course will be concerned to integrate moral-theological ideas with pastoral practice.

II. Academic Course Components & Requirements

1. Reading: The syllabus indicates the texts to be read for each class session. Students are expected to read the assigned texts before each class, to bring them to class (**in hard copy**, unless exemptions are granted), and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

2. Attendance & Participation (25% of course grade): We learn best in community, and in this course, the contribution of every student is critical to deepen our shared learning. Beyond attending classes regularly and on time, “participation” means being engaged and actively contributing members of our course learning community. This grade is subdivided into two components: regular discussion participation (15%) and discussion facilitation (10%).

3. Midterm Exam (35% of course grade): In the first part of the course (Weeks 1-5), we will consider more foundational concepts, frameworks, & questions within Catholic moral theology. To assess your learning in this part of the course, you will be asked to complete an online midterm exam between weeks 5 & 6. Further guidelines for this exam will be provided in the initial weeks of the course.

4. Final Integration Paper (40% of course grade): To integrate your learning from the entire course, you will be asked to submit a final paper, bridging academic moral theology with concrete pastoral concerns on a topic of your choice. This paper will be due on **Tuesday, March 17**. Further guidelines for the paper will be provided in the initial weeks of the course.

III. Required Texts

There are two required books for this course:

- *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality*. Richard Gula, SS. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1989.
- *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues*. William C. Mattison III. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008.

All other readings will be made available through the course website (Camino).

IV. Course schedule

Week 1 (Jan 8): What is Moral Theology?

- Course Syllabus
- Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, Chapters 1-4
- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapter 1
- Pinkaers, “What is Christian Ethics?”
- Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I.II.1 (selections)

Week 2 (Jan 15): The Subject of Moral Theology: The Human Person

- Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, Chapters 5-7, 9
- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapter 2
- *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 12-24

Week 3 (Jan 22): The Virtues I: Virtue Ethics & the Cardinal Moral Virtues

- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapters 3-6 & 9
- Salzman & Lawler, “Virtue Ethics” (recommended, but not required)

Week 4 (Jan 29): The Virtues II: The Theological Virtues & the Christian Vision

- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapters 10-15

Week 5 (Feb 5): The Four Sources of Moral Theology: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, & Experience

- Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, Chapters 11-12, 14-16
- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapter 16

Week 6 (Feb 12): Issues in Sexual Ethics: Chastity, Marriage, & Same-Sex Relations

- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapter 17
- Salzman & Lawler, “Hookup Culture,” “Cohabitation & the Process of Marriage,” “Homosexuality”
- Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (selections)

Week 7 (Feb 19): Issues in Biomedical Ethics: Beginning & End of Life

Tues, Nov. 4: Is There a Common Good? Church & State in Medieval Europe

- Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology*, Chapter 18,
- Salzman & Lawler, “Beginning of Life,” “End of Life”
- John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (selections)

Week 8 (Feb 26): The Person & the Common Good: Catholic Social Teaching

- Massaro, “Social Justice & the Mission of the Church” & “Inheriting the Tradition of Catholic Social Teaching”
- Whitmore, “Starting with the Common Good”
- *Gaudium et Spes* (selections)
- Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (selections)

Week 9 (Mar 5): Issues in Economic Ethics: Economic Justice & the Vice of Luxury

- USCCB, *Economic Justice for All*, Chapters 2 & 3
- Cloutier, *The Vice of Luxury* (selected chapters)

Week 10 (Mar 12): Issues in Ecological Ethics: Caring for Our Common Home

- Salzman & Lawler, “Ecology & Climate Change”
- Francis, *Laudato Si*