

PMIN 211: Catholic Social Teaching

Fall 2026

Instructor:

Professor Nicholas Hayes-Mota
Email: nhayesmota@scu.edu
Office: Kenna 300k
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 examines the vibrant and living tradition of Catholic social thought. It explores key features of Christian social responsibility through analysis of the official encyclicals and pastorals that comprise Catholic Social Teaching. In addition to surveying the encyclical tradition as it has developed over the past 125 years, its theological foundations, and its functions, it explores the pastoral implications of its key themes and core commitments. (A foundational Theological Ethics course; 4 units).

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, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. Unless they have a negotiated individual exemption with the instructor, students are requested to bring **hard copies** of the text (i.e. physical books, and printouts) to class.

2. Attendance & Participation (15% 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. Please see below for more details on the course attendance policy.

3. Weekly Reading Responses (25% of course grade): In preparation for each class meeting, you will fill-out a Weekly Reading Response. These reading responses function as **weekly mini-essays** that help you engage personally, intellectually, and pastorally with the course content. **You will submit them online through Camino on our course website.**

4. Midterm Reflection (20% of course grade): In lieu of a midterm exam, you will be asked to apply your learning from Weeks 1-5 of the course in the form of a 4-5 page reflection on a contemporary social issue through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. This essay will be due between Weeks 5 & 6 of the course.

5. Final Project & Reflection Essay (40% of course grade): Reflecting on the many topics we have studied this quarter and your own pastoral experience and expertise, the Final Project and Reflection Essay will ask you to 1) Draw on the readings used in this course to construct a parish program or resource that applies your learning to the community/communities you serve and 2) Write a Reflection Essay on how your learning from this course informs your project. This paper will be due the week *after* the final week of class (Week 10).

III. Required Texts

There are two required books for this course:

- *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations. Second Edition.* Kenneth R. Himes et. al., Washington, D.C.: Georgetown, 2018. [Please be sure to get the **second edition**, as this includes material on newer encyclicals!]
- *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times.* Anna Rowlands. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008.

While every week will include primary text readings from relevant magisterial documents, all of these documents are freely available online. All other secondary readings will be posted on Camino.

IV. Course schedule

Week 1: What is Catholic Social Teaching?

- Course Syllabus
- Introductory Readings from Massaro, Himes et. al.

Week 2: The Historical Development of Catholic Social Teaching

- Selections from *Rerum Novarum*, *Gaudium et Spes*, & *Magnifica Humanitas*
- Readings from Massaro, Himes, & Rowlands

Week 3: The Subject of Catholic Social Teaching: The Human Person

- Selections from *Pacem in Terris*, *Gaudium et Spes*, & *Magnifica Humanitas*
- Himes chapter on *Pacem in Terris*
- Rowlands chapters on “Dignity”

Week 4: The Objective of Catholic Social Teaching: Promoting the Common Good

- Selections from *Pacem in Terris*, *Gaudium et Spes*, & *Magnifica Humanitas*
- Himes chapter on *Gaudium et Spes*
- Rowlands chapters on “The Common Good”

Week 5: Defining the Common Good: Solidarity, Subsidiarity, & Further Core Principles

- Selections from *Quadragesimo Anno* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*
- Himes chapters on *Quadragesimo* and *Sollicitudo* (selections)
- Rowlands chapters on “Solidarity” and “Subsidiarity”

Week 6: Building Peace in a World of Violence: Ethics of War & Peace

- Selections from *The Challenge of Peace* (USCCB), *Pacem in Terris*, & *Magnifica Humanitas*
- Secondary Readings TBD

Week 7: Working for Justice & Prioritizing the Poor: Economic Ethics

- Selections from *Economic Justice for All* (USCCB), *Populorum Progressio*, and *Caritas in Veritate*
- Secondary Readings TBD

Week 8: Caring for Our Common Home: Ecological Ethics

- Selections from *Laudato Si*
- Secondary Readings TBD

Week 9: Protecting Dignity Across Borders: Migration Ethics

- Selections from *Strangers No Longer* (USCCB), *Fratelli Tutti*, and recent speeches of Leo XIV
- Secondary Readings TBD

Week 10: Safeguarding Humanity in the Age of AI: Technology Ethics

- Selections from *Laudato Si* and *Magnifica Humanitas*
- Secondary readings TBD