

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT. THE OFFICIAL COURSE SYLLABUS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE FIRST CLASS.

TITLE: Fundamental Christian Ethics I

TERM: September – December 2018 [20189]

PROFESSOR: Dr. Patricia Murphy

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO _____

UNLIMITED _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the foundations of a renewed Catholic moral theology in light of today’s new evangelization. *Veritatis Splendor* provides the point of departure and will guide consideration of various topics, including: the moral life as born of an encounter with Christ and sustained by his accompaniment; the beauty (splendor) of the moral life; the relationships among faith, morality, happiness and holiness; Scripture; the moral teaching of the Fathers of the Church; the roles of the old law, natural law and new or evangelical law in the moral life; casuistry, magisterium, etc. Readings, lectures, discussions, quizzes, journal work and final written exam

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

- Explain what it means to say that the Catholic moral life involves a “holding fast to the person of Christ” (VS Chapter 1).
- Articulate a positive vision of Catholic moral theology which can respond to the desires of the human heart and to ethical questions in the contemporary cultural context.**1
- Discuss the connections between the moral life, happiness, and growth in holiness.**
- Identify important moments, persons, and sources in the religious heritage of the Catholic Church, especially its official teaching** regarding fundamental moral theology.
- Discuss the historical context, central teachings, and pastoral relevance of *Veritatis Splendor* (Chapter 1).
- Discuss core elements of a Pauline ethics and explain how Paul’s teaching differs from a morality based primarily on “Jewish law” or “philosophical wisdom”.
- Discuss the structure and central teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and explain why it has been called the “perfect charter” of Christian morality.
- Discuss what the moral teaching of the Fathers of the Church can teach us about bringing Christ to culture today.

¹ **Course outcomes are designed to assist students in meeting various program outcomes, especially MDIV outcomes in the areas of: “cultural context,” “personal-spiritual growth,” “religious heritage,” and “capacity for ministerial and public leadership”.

- Discuss key features of Aquinas’ moral vision (especially his teaching on natural law) and its relevance for contemporary moral theology.
- Define and explain the relationships among: the eternal, natural, human, old, and new (or evangelical) laws.
- Discuss key features of casuistry and explain the difference between a “morality of obligation” and a “morality of happiness” and between “freedom of indifference” and “freedom for excellence”.
- Explain the distinctive – and complementary – roles of reason, revelation, and the Magisterium in Catholic moral teaching.
- Demonstrate understanding of pastoral dimensions of Catholic moral teaching, thereby demonstrating capacity for ministerial and public leadership.**

PREREQUISITES: none

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Pinckaers, Servais. *Morality: The Catholic View*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2003. (You may be able to purchase a copy from other students; it will be on reserve at SAS library).
2. Encyclical Letter of John Paul II. *The Splendor of Truth (Veritatis Splendor or VS)*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1993. (This can also be downloaded for free)
3. *A course reader* (Available at cost from Instructor).
4. Recommended: Colom, Enrique and Angel Rodriguez Luno. *Chosen in Christ to be Saints. Vol, 1: Fundamental Moral Theology*. Translated by Thomas Daniel Howes and Gerald Malsbary. Rome: Eidzioni Santa Croce, 2014. (**Please note: It will be necessary to acquire a copy for Ethics II – Available on Amazon).

POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS/PRESENTATIONS/TESTS:

Class participation, quizzes, journal work and final written exam

ABRIDGED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Available on the first day of class