Note: Dr. Bourg is a part-time Loyola faculty member and does not keep regular office hours. The best way to reach her is by email. If you have concerns that are best communicated by a phone call, please provide your phone number through email and suggest evening or weekend times that you could receive a phone call.

Course Description

The Catholic moral tradition will be examined, including historically-significant biblical and theological sources, Vatican II texts, and more recent Catholic teaching. Key themes followed throughout the course will include virtue, conscience, personal sin and social sin. Students will engage in the process of conscience formation by consulting scripture, reason and the natural law, moral norms, the Catholic magisterium, local and global religious communities, and research in other fields, such as science and economics. Christian living will be placed in the context of personal spirituality and the call to community and discipleship. Catholic social teaching, sexual ethics, and medical ethics will receive thorough coverage in the course.

Learning Outcomes

Our intended goal for the course is to deepen participants' consciousness of themselves and others as moral agents responsible for living virtuously and for contributing to the common good in their personal, professional, and ministerial contexts. It is our hope that participants will move beyond this course to translate Christian vision and values into virtuous decisions, and into prudent, compassionate, and just social structures.

More specifically, goals of the course are to enable students to:

- Appreciate the scope, distinctiveness, and historical development of Catholic moral tradition;
- Examine significant contemporary ethical issues in light of Catholic moral tradition;
- Make ethical decisions and assist others in arriving at ethical decisions using resources provided in the Catholic moral tradition.
Online course format

The heart of the conversation in this on-line course will take place by way of a discussion board, an asynchronous or time-independent application. This means you will have no set times when you must be in class; however, it is expected that you will ‘visit’ class three times a week. At these times you will be able to read comments of your instructor and fellow students, and you will be able to share your comments as well.

Important! You will be notified by email when your Blackboard course web site is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your Loyola email account for instructions. To find your Loyola email address, go to the Loyola home page: www.loyno.edu. At the upper right section of the home page, go to ‘People,’ then select ‘Find People.’ Enter your first and last name and select ‘student,’ then hit return. You should see your email address. In the same area of the home page, select ‘Wolfmail’ to access your Loyola email. Additional help is at: http://studentaffairs.loyno.edu/residential-life/accessing-wolf-mail-first-time. If you experience difficulties in finding your email address, contact Diane Blair: dblair@loyno.edu.

Please reply to the instructor’s email when you receive it to confirm that you are ready to begin the course.

On-line students will need a computer with high-speed internet access. Check requirements: http://library.loyno.edu/browser_check.php. You will need sound and video capability to listen to weekly videos and a variety of applications, such as a free version of "Quicktime." (To download the free Quicktime program, install the latest version: http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/). You may find links to these applications in ‘Resources’ > General Resources>Plug-ins, on the left side of the Blackboard course web site. Use Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome as your browser for this course; Microsoft Explorer and other browser programs do not activate all the features in Blackboard. Please be sure you have downloaded the most recent version of the free programs listed in the “Plug-Ins” section.

Required Texts

Bourg, Florence Caffrey. Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics. Loyola Institute for Ministry, 2012. (This book will be available on the Blackboard web site).


*Order this text as soon as possible from a local bookstore or from an online source such as www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com

Be certain to get the new 3rd edition of the Keenan book.

Web links to other required readings and videos will be provided on Blackboard.
Course Evaluation

- Class participation (40% for graduate degree students; 100% for CEU students)
- Conscience formation project (25%, graduate degree students only)
- Research paper on a social policy (35%, graduate degree students only)

Class Participation

Assigned readings, videos and discussion items are provided in the ‘Weekly Sessions’ section of the Blackboard course web site. Students should review all assigned texts and videos, and should participate in weekly class discussions using the Discussion Board.

Students are expected to read all posts and respond substantively to colleagues (more than "I agree" or "I like your ideas"). There will be 2 discussion items for each of 10 topic areas. Students will take turns as discussion leaders. Students are expected to submit at least 2 substantive postings for each discussion item (= 4 total per week). Further instructions, including deadlines for weekly posts, are provided on Blackboard.

Students will be expected to discuss the conscience formation project on Blackboard, and will be invited to give optional feedback on other students’ topics for the social policy paper. Graduate students will submit preliminary steps for the two major assignments.

Students are expected to practice courtesy toward the teacher and fellow students. They should check Loyola email and course announcements frequently, and ask for clarification of instructions if needed. Students who are not strong writers should seek help with proofreading and editing their work, especially the 2 major assignments. Dr. Bourg will review drafts of the 2 major assignments if they are submitted early.

Responsibility in all of these areas will be considered in evaluation of class participation.

Conscience formation project

This project is targeted at a key learning outcome: to “assist others in arriving at ethical decisions using resources provided in the Catholic moral tradition.” Each graduate student will work with a partner such as a relative, friend, parishioner, or professional colleague. Each student will correspond with his or her partner on several occasions, and will accomplish the following tasks. Further instructions will be provided on Blackboard.

- Invite the partner to choose a moral issue which is personally significant, about which the partner would like to educate his/her conscience. Guide the partner to identify aspects of this issue which s/he would like to learn more about.
- Guide the partner to identify stakeholders besides him/herself who are impacted, directly or indirectly, by this moral issue.
- Guide the partner to identify stereotypes, biases, assumptions, or experiences which may affect his/her attitudes about this issue.
- Locate resources provided by the Catholic magisterium to guide decisions about this issue. Select resources appropriate for the partner, based on considerations such as
age, level of religious education and involvement, language, and prior experiences/assumptions.

- Guide the partner through a careful examination and discussion of these magisterial resources.
- Guide the partner to identify other sources (beyond these Catholic magisterial sources) which could be consulted to further educate one’s conscience on this issue.
- Submit a written analysis of what was learned through the conscience-formation exercise, both by the student and by his/her partner. Discuss outcomes on Blackboard.

Research paper: Analysis and critical evaluation of a social policy

The research paper will analyze moral dimensions of a social policy. In a 10-12 page paper, each student will identify, analyze, and critically evaluate a policy that impacts many people. It may be an existing policy or a proposed policy. It may be a government policy, the policy of a church or church-related institution, the policy of an employer, corporation, or professional group, etc. The policy should be considered morally controversial or ethically problematic, at least by some people. Further instructions will be provided on Blackboard.

To assist in developing this paper, preliminary assignments will be due on dates TBA:

- Required: submit topic for research paper, along with a preliminary bibliography.
- Recommended: submit draft of research paper.

Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-69.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Deadlines/lateness and emergencies

It is assumed that adult students are dedicated to making this course a priority in their lives. It is assumed that adults will not enroll or remain in a course if it can be foreseen that other responsibilities will repeatedly prevent them from completing scheduled course requirements.

A routinely busy life is not an appropriate reason to move deadlines. (All students are busy!) Partially-completed discussion postings and smaller written assignments (ex: preliminary research bibliography) should be submitted by their scheduled deadlines for partial credit.

For the research paper and conscience formation project, there will be a 3 point deduction for each day late, including weekends.

Adjustment of a deadline may be warranted if an unforeseen crisis situation occurs. If a crisis beyond your control prevents you from submitting a weekly discussion post, or from meeting a deadline for a written assignment, contact Dr. Bourg by phone or email as soon as you are
aware of the conflict—before the deadline, not afterward. If the crisis continues (or multiple crises occur) such that multiple deadlines are impacted, the student should explicitly discuss each assignment and deadline with Dr. Bourg. The student should not presume ‘entitlement’ to an extension; it is a favor offered in exceptional circumstances. Once an adjusted deadline is agreed upon for either of the two major assignments, late penalties will apply to the new deadline.

University Policy on Incomplete Grades: Grades of “I” (incomplete) change to “F” automatically if the course is not completed and the grade changed by the sixth week of the subsequent term, excluding summer terms.

Library and Technical Assistance

For help with the Loyola library, see http://library.loyno.edu/help/ or http://library.loyno.edu/help/contact.php, or call 504-864-7111. For research resources, see http://library.loyno.edu/research/.

If you have questions about Blackboard, you may:
- Visit the Learning Commons desk at the Monroe Library (in person).
- Consult online resources at http://researchguides.loyno.edu/blackboard.
- Call our 24/7 Blackboard assistance numbers: 1-866-562-7278 or 504-864-7168.
- Consult “Bb Help and FAQs” on the Blackboard site.

To Contact Loyola Institute for Ministry

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Campus Box 67
6363 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118
Email: lim@loyno.edu
Phone:
Toll Free in the U.S. and Canada: 1 (800) 777-5469
Toll Free in the U.K. 0800-896-344
OR: (504) 865 3728

University Policies

Statement on Intellectual Honesty: Intellectual honesty is simply acknowledging, through documentation, all those sources that the writer has used in preparing any written work. Plagiarism, the obverse of intellectual honesty, is the use of any form of material, whether written or verbal, without formal indebtedness through documentation. The paraphrasing of any work, either written by other students or found in print or in an electronic form, without acknowledgement, is plagiarism. Not properly identifying the source of a quotation, even though the quotation is enclosed in quotation marks, is also plagiarism. Not only the exact language of a sentence or phrase, but any material falsely presented as one’s own—an ideal, a concept, data, graphs, or a line of argument—constitutes plagiarism. Any material that neither
originates with the student nor is common knowledge among educated persons must be formally acknowledged.

It must be remembered that written work stands on its own, not on the intention of the writer. The burden of academic honesty rests on the student, not on the instructor. If students have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism or what is required, they should inquire before the work is submitted. Otherwise, they open themselves to charges of plagiarism.

The penalties for plagiarism are severe: a student who is found to have plagiarized or to have assisted another student in plagiarizing may be given a failing grade for the course on the first violation; a second offense may result in exclusion or dismissal from the university.

Disability Statement: Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2017

Introductory Week (Jan. 16—Jan. 23, 2017):
- Notify Dr. Bourg by email ASAP if there are dates you hope to avoid when discussion leaders are assigned.
- By Wednesday Jan. 18, post your personal introduction; describe your past, current, or hoped-for ministry; post a photo if possible. (See Weekly Sessions > Session One Assignments > Introductions.) If you wish, describe your hopes or expectations for this course.
- Respond to others’ introductory posts by January 23.
- Carefully read course syllabus, learning agreement for online course participation (see Weekly Sessions > Session One > Discuss Assignments), instructions for conscience formation project and research paper, and instructions for upcoming weeks. Post any questions in the ‘Question Board’ area of Blackboard by January 23.
- Determine whom you will invite to be your partner for the conscience formation project. Schedule initial meeting with partner to discuss items which will be submitted by January 29.
- Begin preparing readings and videos for lesson 1.

Lesson 1 (Jan. 23-30): Christian spirituality & Catholic moral analysis: from the beginnings through the mid-20th century
  - Finalize partner and topic for conscience formation project; submit by Sunday, Jan. 29.

Lesson 2 (Jan. 30-Feb. 6): The era of Vatican II and beyond

Lesson 3 (Feb. 6-13): Human nature and virtue

Lesson 4 (Feb. 13-20): Conscience and the Catholic magisterium

Discussion/research time (Feb. 20-27)
  - Submit conscience formation project by Wednesday, Feb. 22
  - Discuss results of conscience formation project on Blackboard.
• Possible optional video chat (arrangements to be discussed).
• Strongly recommended: Contact Dr. Bourg if you need individual guidance for selecting research paper topic and bibliography sources.

Feb. 27-Mar. 5: Mardi Gras Holidays

Lesson 5 (Mar. 6-Mar. 13): A Consistent Ethic of Life
• Submit topic and preliminary bibliography for research paper by Monday, March 6th.
• Invite optional feedback on research paper topic from classmates on Discussion Board.

Lesson 6 (Mar. 13-20): Marital spirituality and sexual ethics

Lesson 7 (Mar. 20-27): Faith and citizenship

Lesson 8 (Mar. 27-Apr. 3): Economic justice and stewardship

Lesson 9 (April 3-10): Health care ethics
• Recommended: submit draft of research paper by April 9.

Apr. 10-17: Easter Holidays

Lesson 10 (April 17-April 24): Mercy and punishment; peace and war

Friday, May 5—Research paper due!

Monday, May 15—Grades due