Instructor: Dr. Isabel Fernandez  
Email: isabelef15@gmail.com  
Note: Dr. Fernandez is an adjunct 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. 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.

**Required Texts**


*Order this text as soon as possible from a local bookstore or from an online source such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://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. 3

**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"). Generally, there will be 2 discussion items for each session. 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 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. Please consult LIM’s *Guide to Written Theological Reflection* (available in Resources→General Resources→Writing) for assistance with writing. **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:**

- **A = 93-100**
- **A- = 90-92.9**
- **B+= 87-89.9**
- **B = 83-86.9**
- **B- = 80-82.9**
- **C+= 77-79.9**
- **C = 70-76.9**
- **F = 0-69.9**

**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. 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. 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://researchguides.loyno.edu/ministry](http://researchguides.loyno.edu/ministry)

**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.

**OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES**
Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. If you perceive disability-related barriers in a course, please let the ODS know immediately. ODS welcomes your feedback that will assist in improving the usability and experience for all students. Loyola is committed to offering classes that are inclusive in their design. ODS contact information is as follows:

Marquette Hall, Room 112
TELEPHONE
504-865-2990 (front office)
ods@loyno.edu

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2018

Week of Jan. 15: Session 1
- Read
  - Bourg, Chapter 1 (Available on Blackboard or from instructor)
  - Keenan, pages 1-4 and 67-70.
- Recommended:
  - Mahoney, "The Influence of Auricular Confession" (Available on Blackboard or from instructor)
  - Acts of the Apostles
  - 1 Corinthians
- Notify Dr. Fernandez by email ASAP if there are dates you hope to avoid when discussion leaders are assigned.
- 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.

Week of Jan. 22: Session 2--Cuba Week
Dr. Fernandez will be visiting Cuba this week, and we will discuss some of the ethical implications at the personal, ecclesial, and political levels of Cuba-Church and Cuba-US relations.
- Read (Available on Blackboard):
  - Settle, Heather, "The Coca-Cola of forgetting": reflections on love and migration in a post-Castro age. Transforming Anthropology; Oct 2008; 16, 2; ProQuest, pg. 173.
Discussion questions will be posted to Blackboard with further instructions.

Week of Jan. 29: Session 3
Week of Feb. 5: Session 4
Week of Feb. 12: Mardi Gras Holidays
Week of Feb. 19: Session 5
Week of Feb. 26: Session 6
Week of Mar. 5: Session 7
Week of Mar. 12: Session 8
Week of Mar. 19: Session 9
Week of Mar. 26: Easter Holidays
Week of April 2: Session 10
Week of April 9: Session 11
Week of April 16: Last week- Session 12
Week of April 23: Prepare Papers
Friday, May 4—Research paper due!
Monday, May 14—Grades due