Expectations and Guidelines for Law and Religion: Catholic Social Thought and Justice

My name is Bill Quigley. You can reach me at the Loyola Law Clinic, which is on the first floor of the school. My phone number is 861-5590 at Loyola and 288-7652 at home. My email address is quigley@loyno.edu.

Law and Religion: Catholic Social Thought and Justice is a seminar. The text will be David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, Catholic Social Teaching: The Documentary Heritage (Orbis 2001) and other materials which will be distributed in class.

Students will be expected to keep current on the readings and to participate in class discussion each week. At the beginning of each class, every student is expected to turn in one written question for discussion by the class. I expect you to be prepared for each class. You have the right to expect the same from me. I will add or subtract from a student's grade for class participation and have done so in every semester I have taught.

I will be away from New Orleans for a number of classes this semester. In order to cover all the material, I will ask others to teach the class in my absence and I will probably schedule an extra class or extend the class period on occasion. If this presents a problem for you, I want to let you know that now so you can consider signing up for another class.

Students are required to write a major paper and make a brief presentation to the class on their paper. Those who are taking the course for 2 hours of credit will do a 25 page paper. People seeking to fulfill the writing requirement must complete a 30 page paper. Those taking the course for 3 hours credit must complete a 40 page paper. There is another handout with more specifics on the paper requirement in a later class.

I will treat you like people who will soon be vigorous, ethical legal advocates. I ask you to treat me and each other with respect. The subject matter of this class is one about which people have many differing opinions and can be controversial. Lawyers must be able to respectfully and vigorously disagree with each other without being disagreeable. I ask for and expect respectful disagreement in this class. I learn from students every time I teach a class. I look forward to learning with you.

The documents we are going to study in Catholic Social Teaching are different from any of the others you have examined in law school. They will challenge you. You should approach these documents patiently. Use the skills you are developing as a lawyer to analyze the documents. Read them slowly. Take them apart sentence by sentence.

First determine what the document actually says. What themes about law and justice are raised in the document? How do the various themes fit together? Then we will discuss what the document means. For what purpose was the document written?

At the beginning of each class, every student has to pose one question for discussion by the class. I will ask you to turn in your discussion question at the beginning of each class.
In each class we will discuss many of the following questions:

What are the justice principles contained in this document?
How is justice defined?
What are the implications of this vision of justice for our world? Regionally? Nationally? Locally?
How does this vision of justice coincide with law?
What is the role of law and government in this vision of justice?
What principles are in conflict or tension in this document?
What in this document is idealistic? realistic?
What is the role of the legal profession in this vision of justice?
What is the role of the individual lawyer in this vision of justice?
What does this document say about social and political responsibility?
Is there a theme or themes developing?
Are there current events or social problems that are challenged by the themes in this document?
Action. What ways can people see, judge, and act as a result of this document?