DRAFT v1
Subject to change. Full syllabus available in Canvas
January 13, 2027

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics
LIM-G704-Y1G0E

Spring 2027

Important! You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

Course Description

The Catholic moral tradition will be examined, including historically significant biblical and theological sources, Vatican II texts, and more recent Catholic teachings. Key themes followed throughout the course will include virtue, conscience, personal and social sin, the common good, preferential care for the poor and vulnerable, and the consistent ethic of life. Catholic social teaching, sexual ethics, and medical ethics will receive thorough coverage in the course.

Students will engage in the process of ethical analysis through reflecting on both personal and communal moral dilemmas and social policies. With a goal of lifelong conscience formation, students will practice consulting scripture, reason and the natural law, the Catholic magisterium, holy role models, local and global religious communities, and research in other fields, such as science and economics. Christian discipleship will be examined in the context of personal spirituality, intentional lifestyle choices, and the call to community.

Key Learning Outcomes

Our goal is to deepen participants' critical consciousness of themselves and others as moral agents responsible for contributing to the common good in personal, professional, volunteer, and ministerial contexts. It is hoped 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, the course will enable students to:

- appreciate the scope, distinctiveness, and historical development of the Catholic moral tradition.

- examine significant contemporary ethical issues in light of the Catholic moral tradition.
- make ethical decisions and assist others in making ethical decisions using resources provided in the Catholic moral tradition.

Required Readings

Please order the required text by Keenan as soon as possible from the bookstore of your choice.

Bourg, Florence Caffrey. *Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics*. Loyola Institute for Ministry, 2016. (This book is available in Canvas).

Keenan, James F., S.J. *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition*. 3rd edition, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1-4422-4711-6 $36.00 ***Be certain to get the 3rd edition.***

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Weekly sessions in this course run from Tuesday–Monday. Please note that all assignments must be completed by Midnight on Monday, the last day of the weekly session, except for Week 1; you must complete your personal introduction by Sunday, 1/24 by 11:59 pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course and your discussion questions by Monday, 1/25, by 11:59 pm Central Time.

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/18 – 1/25	Christian Spirituality & Catholic Moral Analysis: From the Beginnings through the Mid-20th Century (1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday)	Introduce self, complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 2 1/26 – 2/1	The Era of Vatican II and Beyond	Complete readings, media, attend synchronous course meeting (optional)
Week 3 2/2 – 2/8	Human Nature and Virtue	Readings, media, discussion questions, Ethical Analysis Paper proposal due 2/8 by 11:59pm CT
Week 4 2/9 – 2/15	Mardi Gras Holiday	

Week 5 2/16 – 2/22	Conscience and Catholic Magisterium	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 6 2/23 – 3/1	A Consistent Ethic of Life	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, Prayer Journal 1 due 3/1 by 11:59pm CT
Week 7 3/2 – 3/8	Faith and Citizenship	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend synchronous course meeting (optional), Ethical Analysis Paper due 3/8 by 11:59pm CT
Week 8 3/9 – 3/15	Economic Justice and Stewardship	Complete readings, media; attend small-group meeting (required)
Week 9 3/16 – 3/22	Marital Spirituality and Sexual Ethics	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 10 3/23 – 3/29	Holy Week and Easter Holiday (no class)	
Week 11 3/30 – 4/5	Health Care Ethics	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Research Paper Topic & Bibliography due 4/5 by 11:59 pm CT
Week 12 4/6 – 4/12	Mercy and Punishment; Peace and War	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend small-group meeting (required)
Week 13 4/13 – 4/19	Environmental Justice	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend synchronous course meeting (optional)
Week 14 4/20 – 4/26	Discussion/Writing/Research	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Prayer Journal 2 due by 4/26 at 11:59pm CT
Week 15 4/27 – 5/3	Final Assignment Preparation	
Week 16 5/4 – 5/10	Final Assignment and Course Evaluation	Submit final assignment

Tuesday, May 18, 11:59 pm CT: due date for posting final grades

Week One Assignments

1) View videos and read overviews in Canvas
2) Participate in Discussions on Canvas:
   - Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students (Complete by 11:59 pm CT on 1/24 to avoid being administratively dropped from the course.)
   - Respond to two Discussion Questions after reading and viewing videos
3) Read:
   - Bourg, *Spirituality, Morality and Ethics*, chapter 1 (in Canvas)
   - Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, pp. 1-4 and 67-70
   - Optional, But Recommended
     - 1 Corinthians and Book of Acts (browse)
     - *The Rule of St. Benedict* (browse)

All other weekly assignments will be noted on Canvas.

Assessment

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	35%	90%
2	Topic for Ethical Analysis Paper	2%	–
3	Ethical Analysis Paper, 5–7 pages	20%	–
4	Topic and Preliminary Bibliography for Research Paper	3%	–
5	Social Policy Research Paper, 8-10 pages	30%	–
6	Spiritual Formation: Prayer Reflection Journals	10%	10%

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (35% of graduate student evaluation; 90% of CEU evaluation)

Each week of this course includes assignments for reading, audio segments (where applicable), videos, and discussion questions. These are provided in the weekly modules in Canvas. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and watching assigned videos, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions.

This course also offers a combination of the traditional asynchronous online course and synchronous webinars using Zoom. The majority of interaction will take place through threaded discussion, with a number of occasions for live webinars for all students over the course of the semester. Several times throughout the course, you will be invited to enter into a video class discussion in lieu of the written discussion board postings. Note: participation in the whole class video discussions are optional. You are also asked to participate in two

required small group sessions, which is part of the participation grade.

Directions for Weekly Posting in Discussions

Please note: All times are Central Time.

For each Discussion assignment, students are required to make three (3) posts: a major post of 200-400 words in which they respond to the question posted, and two (2) minor posts of no more than 150-200 words each in which they respond to two (2) of the major posts made by their fellow students. In weeks where there are two discussion board questions, students are required to make one major post and two minor posts for each question (totaling 2 major, 4 minor posts). Our weekly sessions will run from Tuesday to Monday.

Beginning Each Tuesday

- Read the overview for the week's work and begin individual work for the week. Questions that arise about the material may be addressed to the professor in the Question Board or via email.
- Contributions to Discussions should reflect critical engagement with both the required readings as well as any other assigned material and should demonstrate itself as such.

By Thursday, 11:59pm CT.

- When there is an assigned group leader, beginning several weeks into the semester, the first major post to the weekly discussion question is due by Thursday night for group leaders and by Saturday night for everyone else. Some weeks require students to answer more than one question as a major post.
- Groups will be created and assigned several weeks into the semester. When this occurs, the group discussion leader posts a response to the discussion question by Thursday night. This initial post by the group discussion leader should also raise a question for the group to consider and be between 200- 400 words (Major post).

By Saturday, 11:59pm CT.

- Other members of the group respond to the discussion question by the end of Saturday night with a major post between 200-400 words. Either this initial post or a subsequent minor post should also address the group leader's question.

By Monday, 11:59pm CT.

- All students respond to two other member's posts in 150-200 words by Monday night (Minor posts).
- All members should have a total of three discussion posts by Monday night (one Major, two Minor) for each discussion board question.

Contents of Discussion Post

To earn full credit, you should do the following things:

- post and respond by the deadline;
- adhere to word length requirements;
- refrain from inappropriate posts (words/tones that diminish the character and community of the course) Practice using "I-statements," avoid generalizations by qualifying your words;
- provide content of substance based on the course material—that is, not comments such as "I agree wholeheartedly," but rather content that offers an original and informed contribution to the discussion, either as an opening or as a response, and reference course material;
- integrate (reference/cite) what you have read, how you understand the material, your experience, the remarks of your colleagues, and the course material;
- posting fully addresses the weekly questions and stimulates substantial follow-up postings;
- write in accessible prose—that is, not necessarily formal academic prose, but prose that is as clear and correct as you can make it, citing material not your own, and avoiding "text-speak" (using complete sentences rather than abbreviations and emoji to make your point, for example).

For a detailed explanation of the grading policy, please see the Rubric for Discussion Posts in Canvas on the course Home page under Groups & Discussions. I look forward to seeing your comments and insights in the discussions.

Small Group Meetings (required):

During our class you will be organized into smaller groups to host your own virtual learning sessions in weeks 8 and 12. This is a wonderful way to help build community and contextualize our discussions. You will meet within the same small group two different times during the semester. Small group assignments will be announced during Week 3 and also posted in Week 3 on the groups and discussions page.

You should plan to meet for at least one hour with other members of your group to discuss this week's assigned material in light of the discussion questions on Canvas. Once you have met, you should complete the Small Virtual Group Assignment and submit it by Monday night of the weekly session.

Synchronous Virtual Classes (optional):

There will be **three** optional opportunities to meet synchronously as a whole class through Zoom, available through Canvas during the course of the semester. These will be scheduled in weeks 2, 7, and 13. Plan for each session to last 1 ½ hours. In a page in the week one

module you are invited to fill out an availability survey so that we can find times that work for the majority of the class. After the surveys are complete I will send out an announcement to share the exact dates and times for these sessions.

If you attend the synchronous virtual class, you do not have to write your weekly major/minor posts on discussion board. Attendance and active participation in the virtual class will count for your weekly participation grade.

2) Topic Proposal for Ethical Analysis Paper (2% or graduate student evaluation)

Early in the course, identify a moral dilemma or a conflicted moral situation upon which to reflect. In a moral dilemma, several values are in conflict, and thus a number of outcomes are possible. Ideally, your dilemma should be one you have experienced or one with which someone close to you has grappled. Full details are found in Canvas.

3) Ethical Analysis Paper (20% of graduate student evaluation)

This is a paper of 5-7 pages in length and is based upon reflection on a personal experience. Assignment is found in Canvas.

4) Topic and Preliminary Bibliography for Research Paper (3% of graduate student evaluation)

The topic should be stated concisely as a single question or a set of related questions about a specific social policy and will be accompanied by a bibliography of sources to help you address the question. Full details are found in Canvas.

5) Social Policy Analysis Research Paper (30% of graduate student evaluation)

The final assignment will be a research paper of 8-10 pages you will develop over the course of several weeks. This assignment asks you to identify and reflect on a social policy issue. Full details are found in Canvas.

6) Spiritual Formation (10% of graduate student evaluation; 10% of CEU evaluation)

In response to this course's spiritual formation, you will complete 2 journal entries, each of which will offer a synthesis of your experience in the form of a 300+ word posting. Full details are found in Canvas.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	**B-**	80-82.9	**D+**	67-69.9
A-	90-92.9	**C+**	77-79.9	**D**	60-66.9

B+	87-89.9	**C**	73-76.9	**F**	0-59.9
B	83-86.9	**C-**	70-72.9		

Overall Grading Scale

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Characteristics of Student Work
A	**4.0**	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.
A-	**3.7**	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.
B+	**3.3**	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.
B	**3.0**	The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.
B-	**2.7**	The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C+	**2.3**	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C	**2**	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C-	**1.7**	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.
D+	**1.3**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
D	**1**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
F	**0**	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time.

Course Policies

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible,

by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located on LORA and in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.