Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Ethics for Ministers

RELM-C334-YA1
Syllabus

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. Your email was included in your acceptance letter. Contact Information Technology if you cannot locate your Gmail address: support@loyno.edu / 504-865-2255. Read Gmail FAQs at http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/infotech/faq-gmail

Because this is an online course and the instructor is a part-time faculty member, **the best way to reach your instructor is by email.** Feel free to contact your instructor with questions and suggestions. You may post questions of general concern to the **Question Board** accessed in Canvas on the course homepage. 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

This course examines ethical practice in Christian ministry. While resources are drawn primarily from the Catholic community, topics to be covered are relevant for current and aspiring ministers from other faith communities. Students will examine how Christian ministers are called to love God, themselves, and their communities through virtuous and responsible ministry.

Topics will include: ecclesial leadership and (mis)use of power; maintaining safeguards and boundaries to protect vulnerable persons and public trust in the Church's ministers; hospitality toward marginalized groups; confidentiality and its limits; financial stewardship; and providing ethical guidance through teaching, preaching, advocacy, advising, or spiritual direction.

Key Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- understand ministry as both a personal vocation and as a profession; understand

how ministers are therefore accountable (through their consciences) to God, their Church communities, and the larger human community.

- appreciate how ministry calls for exercise of core or 'cardinal' virtues including charity, justice, fidelity, self-care, and prudence, and many others such as hospitality, compassion, gratitude, patience, humility, creativity, and courage.
- recognize various groups of people who have not always felt welcome or fully included in Christian communities; develop capacity to respond to their needs.
- use a full range of Christian and secular resources to inform their consciences and develop their capacity for virtuous, responsible ministry.
- become familiar with ethics codes, ethical vocabulary, and ethical norms articulated by the Catholic magisterium, by professional ministry associations, and by civil law.
- apply course learning to anticipate and resolve ordinary and extraordinary ethical challenges relevant to their ministry.
- identify situations which present heighted risk of ethical impropriety; establish habits, practices, and policies which prevent unethical and/or illegal behavior in ministry roles.

Required Texts

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

Richard Gula, *Just Ministry: Professional Ethics for Pastoral Ministers*. Paulist Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-8091-4631-4 (paperback) This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Additional readings available in Canvas and through the Monroe Library.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1: 10/21 – 10/27	Ministry as a Profession and a Vocation: virtues for ministry, role models for ministry	- Personal Introduction - Prayer Leader Posting - Assigned readings/media - Discussion Questions 1 and 2
Week 2: 10/28 – 11/3	Dynamics of Power: Prevention of Abuse, Professional Codes of Ethics	- Prayer Leader Posting - Assigned readings/media - Discussion Questions 1 and 2

Week 3: 11/4 – 11/10	Conscience, the Magisterium, and Ir/Responsible Dissent (Nov. 5, Federal Election Day holiday)	• Prayer Leader Posting • Assigned readings/media • Discussion Questions 1 and 2
Week 4: 11/11 – 11/17	Hospitality and Inclusion of Marginalized People	• Prayer Leader Posting • Assigned readings/media • Discussion Questions 1 and 2 • Complete 2 assigned interviews by week 4
Week 5: 11/18 – 11/24	Confidentiality and Its Limits	• Prayer Leader Posting • Assigned readings/media • Discussion Questions 1 and 2 • Interview project due 11/24 • Optional synchronous class meeting
Week 6: 11/25 – 12/1	Providing Ethical Guidance: Teaching, Preaching, Political Advocacy, Advising (Nov. 27–29, Thanksgiving Holiday)	• Prayer Leader Posting • Assigned readings/media • Discussion Questions 1 and 2
Week 7: 12/2 – 12/8	Financial Stewardship	• Prayer Leader Posting • Assigned readings/media • Discussion Questions 1 and 2
Week 8: 12/9 – 12/15	Final Exam	• Prayer Leader Posting • Optional video exam review • Complete final exam on 12/12

Tuesday, December 22: Deadline for posting grades (by 11:59 pm CT)

Week One Assignments

- By **Friday, October 25,** in the Week 1 module in Canvas, post your personal introduction; describe your past, current, or hoped-for ministry; post a photo if possible. If you wish, describe your hopes or expectations for this course.
- Respond to **at least 3** classmates' introductory posts by **Sunday, October 27.**
- **Read Course Syllabus and Syllabus Part II, learning agreement for online course participation, and instructions for assignments,** all available by clicking on the Syllabus navigation link. Post any questions of general concern in the Question Board accessible from the course homepage in Canvas.
- Begin preparing course materials for Week 1.
- Contact your instructor if you have scheduling constraints that impact your availability to serve as a discussion leader or prayer leader for a certain week.
- Contact your instructor if you'd like to volunteer to be a discussion leader for week 1. Otherwise, leaders will be randomly assigned.

Assessment

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

		Percentage of Grade
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	45%
2	Prayer Leadership and Reflection	5%
3	Interview Project	25%
4	Final Exam	25%

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (45%)

Assigned readings, videos, and discussion items are provided in the weekly modules of the Canvas course. Each new week will **begin on Monday and end on Sunday.**

Each week, students should review all assigned texts and videos, and should participate in discussions and activities in Canvas. Conversation in this online course will take place through asynchronous Canvas discussions. To take full advantage of learning opportunities, read all comments from your instructor and classmates, and respond thoughtfully to as many participants as you can.

There will be 2 discussion prompts each week. All students are expected to submit **at least 4 substantive postings per week, at least 2 postings for each prompt**.

Students will be assigned turns as **discussion leaders** who will submit the first post for each prompt. Each leader should submit this first post by **Wednesday** (11:59 p.m. Central Time). Depending on the number of students enrolled, each person should **expect to take multiple turns as a discussion leader.** A list of discussion leaders will be posted in Canvas**.**

Everyone else who is not a discussion leader should submit an **initial response to each of the 2 prompts by Friday each week by 11:59 p.m.** Central Time. Two more posts should be submitted by **Sunday each week by 11:59 p.m.** Central Time.

Each of the 4 required posts should be a *substantive* statement of at least 150 words (600 words per week). Please try to complete these posts within 350 words each. There is no penalty for a longer post, but your classmates may not have time to read them.

To earn maximum credit, each of the 4 required weekly posts should have these features:

- is submitted **on time**
- meets the expected **length** (150-350 words)

- **is substantive:** demonstrate familiarity with **course materials** and careful thought.

  - Each of the 4 required weekly posts must include at least **one specific connection** to course materials for the week, with a **source cited**.

  - The **discussion leader's initial statement** must **respond fully** to the entire prompt. Continuing posts may respond to some portion of the original prompt, or some portion of a classmate's statement.

  - Besides referring to course materials, responses to classmates should contribute constructively to conversation. For example: ask for clarification, pose questions, provide additional examples or evidence, share recommendations for further learning, or identify connections with prior lessons.

  - Statements such as, "I like your ideas" or "this author is really smart" are not enough for a substantive post—please elaborate to explain!

- **Avoid plagiarism:** quotes MUST be put in quotation marks, with the source cited; distinctive paraphrased material should also be cited. Provide the author's name and a page number or section number if available (ex: Gula 50; Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, #250). For online course materials without page numbers, the author's name or video title will suffice. If you introduce sources which were not assigned, plus provide citations which will allow your classmates and instructor to locate the sources.

- **Professional academic writing:** use complete, succinct, polished sentences. Avoid slang, sentence fragments, rambling, and mistakes in grammar or spelling.

- **Professional, courteous tone**—constructive critique is appropriate and expected. However, anything said on the discussion board should be something the student would be willing to say face-to-face in a public conversation.

If you are unsure of what qualifies as a substantive, professional, or courteous post, ask your instructor for clarification.

Beyond the 4 required substantive posts, students are encouraged to reply to classmates' posts with shorter comments and recommendations for further learning.

During our 8-week course, **please respond to all classmates** regularly, rather than concentrating your attention on a few classmates. This is a way to practice ministry

skills.

Partially-complete discussion postings should be submitted by their scheduled deadlines for partial credit. For example, if the 4 required posts are less than 150 words, or lack a specific/cited connection with weekly course materials, partial credit will be earned.

Students will be expected to share highlights of their interview projects on Canvas, and will be asked to give feedback on classmates' projects. If students' schedules permit, this feedback may be conducted in a real-time video chat. Details TBA.

Students should check Loyola email and course announcements frequently, and ask for clarification of instructions if needed.

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

2) Prayer Leadership and Reflection (5%)

Each student will be assigned to take at least one turn as a prayer leader. A schedule of prayer leaders will be posted in Canvas**.** By **Wednesday** each week (11:59 p.m. Central Time) the designated prayer leader should post a prayer prompt in the weekly module in Canvas. Late submissions are subject to reduced grade or to a grade of 0. Full directions will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of October 14th.

3) Interview Project (25%)

Each student will conduct and analyze two interviews: one with an experienced minister and one with a person representing a marginalized group. Interview analysis should demonstrate understanding of course materials. There will be a **5 point deduction for each day late**, including weekends**.** Full directions will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas by the week of October 14th.

4) "Open Book" Exam

The exam will assess students' mastery of objective components of the course material. A study guide and instructions for testing on Canvas will be provided. Students can use course materials to complete the exam, but they are ethically obligated not to consult with classmates or anyone else to complete the exam questions. Full directions will be included in the Canvas course.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D	65-69.9	F	64.9 or below
A-	90-92.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9				
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9				

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.

Tentatively, there will be two **optional video conferences** during the course. To

participate, students will need access to a computer with a web camera and microphone, and earphones or earbuds. More information will be included in the Canvas course.

University Policies

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