

DRAFT
Subject to change. Full
syllabus available in
Canvas Wednesday,
August 13th.

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Catholic Social Teaching

RELM-C346-YA1

Fall 2025

Important: Please check your Loyola email account for an email from the instructor alerting you the course is open, then reply to that email confirming you are ready to begin the course. You received your Loyola Gmail address and how to access it in your welcome email from Loyola. Additional help on email is available at: <http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/infotech/faq-gmail>. If you experience difficulties in finding your email address, please contact Loyola's Information Technology Help Desk ASAP: (504) 865-2255.

Course Description

This course will examine the sources of Catholic social teaching (CST), including biblical sources, papal encyclicals, synodal and other church documents, and reflections of theologians on social ethics. The course tracks key developments in CST, and its focus on the basic rights of each person, the responsibilities that we owe one another in light of the gospel (especially those most vulnerable in society), our relationship with Creation, and our responsibility to care for our common home, the Earth.

Key Learning Outcomes

Our intended goal for the course is to deepen participants' ability to share and educate others on the importance of Catholic social teaching for Christian living. Moreover, as participants gain awareness of how Catholic social teaching connects with their own congregation's roots and charism as well as with secular goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they will become more adept at communicating their mission and forming partnerships with those who share their Christian perspectives and others who may express similar goals for the common good in more secular terms.

More specifically, goals of the course are to enable participants to

- integrate Catholic Social Teaching principles with ministerial practice.
- analyze social issues through the lens of Catholic tradition.
- develop practical ministerial skills guided by Catholic Social Teaching.

- foster personal spiritual formation rooted in justice and charity.

Required Texts

The texts included indicate the type of readings that will be required. *Do not* purchase texts for this class until you receive a communication about required texts from the professor teaching the class.

Francis, *Laudato Si'*. Vatican, 2015,
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Kammer, Fred, S.J., *Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought*. Paulist Press, 2004. This book is available to read online at the [Internet Archive](#) after creating a free account.

Massaro, Thomas. *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*. (3rd edition). Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4422-3092-7. This book is available to read online at the [Internet Archive](#) after creating a free account.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Vatican, 2004,
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_p_c_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html,.

Additional readings available in Canvas and through the Monroe Library.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Week	Topic
Week 1: 8/18 – 8/24	The Social Mission of the Church
Week 2: 8/25 – 8/31	Biblical Roots of Catholic Social Teaching September 1, Labor Day Holiday
Week 3 9/1-9/7	History of Catholic Social Teaching
Week 4: 9/8 – 9/14	Major Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Week 5: 9/15 – 9/21	Catholic Social Teaching and the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals
Week 6: 9/22 – 9/28	From Charity to Social Justice
Week 7: 9/29 – 10/5	Promoting Peace and Integral Development
Week 8: 10/6 – 10/12	Trends and Future of CST
Final Exam 10/13 – 10/19	Final Exam and Course Evaluation Fall Holiday (10/13 – 10/14)

Midterm Grades Due: Wednesday, September 17, 11:59 pm Central Time

Final Exam: Complete in a three-hour block of your choosing between 6:00 pm Central Time on Wednesday, October 15, and Thursday, October 16, 11:59 pm Central Time.

Final Grades Due: Tuesday, October 21, 11:59 pm Central Time

Week One Assignments

- 1) Read overview, view video, read assigned texts
- 2) Participate in Discussions on Canvas:
 - Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students
 - Respond to Discussion Questions 1 and 2
- 3) Other task as assigned

Assessment

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

		Percentage of Grade
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	40%
2	Reflective Essay on Praying with Scripture	10%
3	Final Student Reflective Essay	50%

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (40%)

As in all RELM courses, the strength of our program is the intentional learning

community and its ongoing invitation to disciplined conversation. Through the online courses you will be part of an intentional learning community that will carry on extended and disciplined conversation by way of the internet.

A discussion is an “asynchronous” or time-independent application. This means that generally you will have no set times or schedules when you must be in class on any particular day. It is up to you to determine when to log in and post during the course of a week, within the parameters of the given weekly deadlines. You are expected to log in to this class several times a week to read the comments of your instructor and fellow students and to post your required comments. Except for the last week, each weekly session runs from 12:01 a.m. US Central Monday until 11:59 p.m. Central the following Sunday. The final session ends at 11:59 p.m. Central on October 17. Late posts are subject to reduced grade or to a grade of 0. Please consult with your professor about any foreseen or unforeseen absence from the course.

Each week several Discussion Leaders will help initiate the flow of the conversation. The task of the Discussion Leader is simply to post first. S/he will essentially begin the conversation around the given question(s) for the week by posting her response to the session question; everyone else assigned to that group will respond on that same thread. In at least one of your responses, you will also offer your own reflections on the question (perhaps in addition to your response to the discussion question). Each week you will be able to earn four points for each question, for your weekly participation; this includes your response to the assigned question(s), as well as the thoughtful replies you are asked to make to your colleagues’ posts.

All students are expected to contribute at least three substantive responses for each question. Lead students post their initial reflections by Wednesday; everyone who is not a lead student should post at least once by Friday.

Posting

Contributions to Discussions should be the fruit of, and therefore demonstrate, a critical engagement with the course assignments. To achieve this, you are asked to note comments, questions, observations, reflections, insights that surface as the natural result of thoughtful reading. Your weekly postings should be substantive and respect the word limit posted for each week’s questions. A substantive response will include both your own reflections on the question and some interaction with course materials you’re your fellow students’ reflections.

Please include references to the course materials to indicate this interaction; include a parenthetical reference with at least the name of the material or the author and, if possible a page number (e.g., Groome 15; Hahnenberg video). Please also alert your readers when you refer to other outside sources, such as other books or websites.

Your replies to your colleagues should also be substantive: “I agree” or “I like what you posted” or something similar is not a substantive comment. Please articulate what about their posting is compelling to you, the connections you make with the assigned material for the week, and why you consider their comment relevant, challenging, important, etc. Ideally, each discussion thread will become a conversation. (If you have a comment that you would like to make to a colleague that is not related to the discussion, you may either post it in the “Student Lounge” Discussion (accessible from the course homepage) or send an email to the student via the People section of the course.)

Asking Questions

One of the most effective tools of a good online discussion is the question. Communication in the online medium can be easily misinterpreted. It can be challenging to effectively convey tone and nuance in an online discussion. This can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, conflict and frustration in the learning group. But this does not have to be the case! When in doubt about the meaning of a posting, please ask questions before making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Even if the meaning seems straightforward, it is good practice to ask follow-up questions and/or questions for clarification. Questions will also help to discussions deepening our conversations and reflections.

In sum, what should your Discussion posts look like?

- Your posts should always be substantive, meaning focused, succinct, and worth reading. Keep in mind that we all have to read these posts!
- Your posts should bring your own experience into conversation with our course materials and with what the other members of the learning community are saying, and they should always directly address the question at hand.
- Your responses should also be critical, meaning that the conversation should also generate questions, requests for clarification, and other methods of deepening the discussion. As you can see, remarks like “I loved your post” or “I agree wholeheartedly” are NOT substantive posts!
- In addition to being substantive, our online conversations should also be authentic—that is, anything that you say online should be something that you would say if we were all sitting around a table in a physical room.

2) Reflective Essay on Praying with Scripture (10%)

Throughout this course, Scripture passages were offered for your prayerful reflections each week. In a 2-3 page essay, reflect on several passages that stirred your heart. Describe what was significant for you about these prayer experiences and what responses they call forth from you.

3) Final Paper (50%)

Students will complete a reflective essay, integrating the course material and the student's ministry experience. As in other LIM courses, students should follow the guidelines provided in the *Guide to Written Theological Reflection* for proper writing and citation style. The assignment is to write a 6 to 8-page essay addressing "integral human development" and the commitments it involves. Full instructions are located in the Canvas course.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	65-69	F	64 or below
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76				
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72				

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 in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, accessible education, and more.