

Senior Religion
Catholic Social Teaching
TH 155

Number of credits: 3
Cost per credit: \$
Total cost: \$

Deadline for Registration:

Course Description:

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the (people) of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts” (Gaudium et Spes #1). This course explores the body of literature known as Catholic Social Teaching as the voice of the Church raised to address social problems in the world. Often described as “the Church’s best kept secret” the documents of Catholic Social Teaching offer insight into the profound revelation of God’s justice demanding the dignity of persons who suffer injustice and the challenge to address injustice in social structures that threaten the mystery and dignity of persons and communities.

Course Objectives:

- The student will learn the theological vocabulary that articulates mystery and revelation through the dignity of persons and the potential of social structures
- The student will become familiar with the documents of Catholic Social Teaching and the methodology of the Church’s social analysis
- The student will recognize critical questions that raise an awareness of the depth of the dignity of the human person, social structures that oppress human dignity, and the Church’s response to such structures and critiques of the Church’s response.
- The student will develop a framework for reflection and responding to current social structure that oppress human dignity and raise theological questions that can offer hope for transformation through justice and mercy.

Core Themes:

The documents of Catholic Social Teaching address the world and interconnections that exist in the most hopeful of challenges, as well as the most dire expressions of human misery caused by world events and practices. In this way “expanding world view” comes to the fore in this course. “Value and respect for self and others” is evident in the major themes of Catholic Social Teaching, primarily in the Church’s consistent repetition and call for “the dignity of the person” and the participation of every member of the community in shaping the common good.

Assessment:

Assessment will be based on five primary categories: participation, quizzes, essay questions, presentations, and a major paper. Participating in the classroom discussion is expected from each student. The quizzes will check for understanding. The essay questions provide opportunity for the student to demonstrate completion of the reading assignment as well as provide opportunity for real-world application. The presentations will open the door for creativity in response to Catholic Social Teaching topics. The major paper will challenge the student to demonstrate understanding of the document as well as application of the material.

Text:

- Catholic Social Teaching, by Michael Pennock. Ave Maria Press, 2007
- Gaudium et Spes, promulgated by Pope Paul VI. Vatican Council II, 1965
- Laborem Exercens, Pope John Paul II, 1981
- Economic Justice for all, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Octogesima Adveniens, Pope Paul VI, 1971
- Contributions to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2001
- Nostra Aetate, proclaimed by Pope Paul VI. The Catholic Church, 1965
- Exploring the Religions of the World, by Nancy Clemmons, SMN. Ave Maria Press, 2008
- Evangelium Vitae, promulgated by Pope John Paul II, The Catholic Church, 1995.
- Laudato Si, proclaimed by Pope Francis. The Catholic Church, 2015

Course Outline:Week 1:

Introduction and major ideas

Background on The Church's approach to Social justice and modern history

Week 2:

The origin of CST and its foundation in Scripture.

The major themes of CST

Wheel of Justice in Pennock

Quiz #1 on Origin and Purpose of CSTWeek 3:

Introduction to Gaudium et Spes: On the Church's Role in the Modern World and the dignity of the human being

Gaudium et Spes discussion

Pennock Chapter 2

Week 4:**Gaudium et Spes - Essay Questions #1 assigned**

Introduction to and application of Octogesima Adveniens

Week 5:

Introduction to Laborem Exercens: on the Dignity of Work.

Laborem Exercens - Essay Questions #2 assigned

Pennock Chapter 9

Week 6:

Continuation of Laborem Exercens discussion
Responsibility of Church, family, and government

Week 7:

Introduction to Economic Justice for All and Octogesima Adveniens and the topic of Justice and Poverty.
Pennock Chapter 7

Week 8:

Introduction to "Contribution to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance"
Pennock chapter 6

Quiz #2 on highlights from Gaudium et Spes, Laborem Exercens, and Contributions...

Week 9:

Introduction to Nostra Aetate: On The Catholic Church's Approach to Non-Christian Religions
World Religions Presentation assigned

Week 10:

World Religion Presentations
Nostra Aetate discussions
Nostra Aetate - Essay Questions #3 assigned

Week 11:

Introduction of Evangelium Vitae: On Issues Pertaining to the Sanctity of Human Life
Major Paper assigned (students are to outline one of the five attacks on life (i.e. murder, abortion, contraception, euthanasia, and capital punishment) as discussed in Evangelium Vitae and compare it to dignity of human life identified in Gaudium et Spes as well as modern interpretations of the attacks on life. Papers are to be between 750 - 1250 words)

Week 12:

Continuations of Evangelium Vitae and implications
Pennock chapter 4

Week 13:

Introduction to Laudato Si: On Humanity's Duty Towards the World and Each Other
Laudato Si discussions

Laudato Si - Essay Questions #4 assigned

Week 14:

Continuation of Laudato Si

Laudato Si - Essay Questions #5 assigned

Week 15:

Pennock chapter 8: On Just War

Final Presentation Assigned (Students are to put together a presentation highlighting a major historical figure that exemplified the principle of nonviolence. Presentations are to summarize the figure's role in creating social change and apply it to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching).

Week 16:

Continuation of Pennock chapter 8

Week 17:

Peace in the world and the fundamental values of Christianity
Leaders in nonviolence

Week 18:

Final Presentations on Peace and Leaders in Nonviolence