

Saint Leo University

**REL 330
Christian Morality**

Course Description:

Christian morality is concerned with the ethical principles grounding Catholic morality and charged with envisioning an “ethics of being” in the Christian context. The course examines the theoretical foundations of morality (ethics), the practical level of human conduct, rule-keeping, virtues, and attitudes.

Prerequisite:

REL 123, REL 124, REL 201, or REL 223

Textbooks:

Crossin, John W, O.S.F.S. *Everyday Virtues*. 2002. New York: Paulist Press, 2002. Print.
ISBN-13: 9780809140879

Mattison III, William C. *Introducing Moral Theology*, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008. Print.
ISBN-13: 9781587432231

Stivers, Laura, Christine E. Gudorf, and Martin-Schramm, James B. *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach. 4th Edition*. New York: Orbis, 2012. Print.
ISBN-13: 978-1-57075-966-6

Various essays supplied.

Supplemental Papal Documents (these can be accessed on the internet at www.vatican.va):

- John XXIII. *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), April 1963. Web. 16 August 2014.
- The Vatican. *Vatican Declaration on Euthanasia*, May 1980. Web. 16 August 2014.
- John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth), August 1993. Web. 16 August 2014.
- John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), March 1995. Web. 16 August 2014.
- Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate*, June 2009. Web. 16 August 2014.

Websites: <http://www.osjspm.org/>; <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/>; <http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/>;
<http://www.cis.org.uk>.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to explain the meaning of integrity on a personal level as well as on a societal or cultural level.
- Students should be able to discuss the process of moral decision making in everyday situations as well as in the process of discernment of contemporary social issues.
- Students should be familiar with the sources for a Christian Code of Ethics and Morality; i.e., Scripture and Tradition. This includes the teachings of the Church, writings of theologians, and the example of faithful Christians in history.
- Students should have an understanding of the role of conscience in decision making and the roles of faith and culture on the development of one’s personal conscience.
- The student will reflect on the Catholic and Christian understanding that a morally good character means entering into loving relationships with others, reaching out to strangers, and treating our enemies with compassion and empathy.
- Students will be able to explain the relationship between the virtues, good habits, attitudes and beliefs that lead to genuine human fulfillment on the personal and social levels.

- Students will be able to discuss a number of contemporary moral issues and develop analytical skills. In the Catholic tradition, following one's conscience is more than following feelings. It involves more than intuition or divine command. It presupposes the appraisal of objective reality through the use of reason or analytical skills informed by faith, which leads to the formation of principles or rules of conduct for the "good life," the wisdom of Christian community through the ages. This involves developing a historical critical approach to learning.
- Students will develop an understanding of elicited moral responsibility: Christian Moral Theology is concerned with character, human behavior, and building up of just community. It is concerned with answering three inquiries: "Who we ought to become," "What we ought to do," "What sort of communities we ought to build."
- The student will be encouraged to realize that nations, institutions and corporations have their own character, which elicits our judgment about their moral goodness. At some point, moreover, to be a disciple of Christ, to be on the quest for Christian moral goodness, involves developing a social consciousness and committing oneself to personal and social action.

Core Value:

Integrity: The commitment of Saint Leo University to excellence demands that its members live its mission and deliver on its promise. The faculty, staff, and students pledge to be honest, just, and consistent in word and deed.

Evaluation:

Assessment	Points Each	Points Total	Percentage
Exams (3)	50	150	30%
Writing Assignments (4)	20	80	25%
Research Paper		100	25%
Discussions (8)	10	80	20%
Total		410	100%

Exams:

There will be three exams worth 50 points each. These exams will include both essay and objective questions that cover the issues and language of ethics.

Writing Assignments:

Writing assignments are included in Modules 1, 2, 4, and 6 and consist of responses to a selection of questions. Each answer should be approximately one paragraph long. Each writing assignment is worth 20 points.

Research Paper:

Students will write a research paper on a moral or ethical issue, giving an accurate discussion of the position the Catholic Church has on the issue and also bringing forth alternative or opposing views. The Church's official position can be obtained by searching the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Correct format for citing peer reviewed journal articles must be followed. Your research paper will involve critical analysis of the issue. You must take a position and defend it with logic and reason. Writing is a way of learning. None of us knows exactly what we think about a topic or issue until we put our views on paper. The research paper is worth 100 points.

Discussions:

Students will participate in and monitor class discussions and engage in ethical dialogue utilizing fairness and critical thinking while so engaged. Participation in discussions will be factored into the overall grade.

Course Schedule:

Module 1 Conscience, Action, and Moral Decision Making

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Discuss the influence of culture, authority, and education on our moral foundation.
- Define the terminology used to describe various methods of moral decision making.
- Explain the difference between a morality of obligation and a morality of happiness.

Assignment	Due no later than
Post an introduction to the class	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Writing Assignment 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 2 Norms, Values, and Virtue

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Explain the relevance of object, intention, and circumstance in the determination of morally good or evil acts.
- Define and identify various classifications of norms, and recognize the values these norms protect.
- Define virtue and explain how virtues shape character.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Writing Assignment 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Research Paper topic	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 3 **Temperance, Prudence, and Living the Virtues**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Define temperance, prudence, incontinence, continence, intemperance, erroneous conscience, cognitive manipulation, docility, and solertia.
- Explain the difference between invincible and vincible ignorance.
- Explain how humor is a virtue.
- List ways in which our personal freedom, and thus our ability to truly make moral decisions, can be limited.
- Outline ways in which alcohol can be used virtuously.
- Define and identify cardinal virtues and theological virtues.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 4 **Justice, War, and Violence**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- List and discuss the rules of Just War theory and the rules for Justice in Fighting a War.
- Use the Just War theory to analyze the Iraq war and Hiroshima.
- Define justice as a virtue.
- Define the doctrine of double effect.
- List Aquinas' four characteristics of a law.
- Discuss the use of the death penalty through the lens of justice and the Christian tradition.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
View the Decalogue: Part V "Thou Shalt Not Kill"	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Writing Assignment 3	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 5 Fortitude, Faith, and Sin

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Define fortitude, faith, sin, mortal sin, venial sin, envy, anger, pride, greed, gluttony, lust, and sloth.
- Explain how fortitude, prudence, temperance, and justice work together in moral decision-making.
- Identify “big picture beliefs” and explain how these beliefs affect one’s moral outlook.
- Compare Lucretius’ Epicurean understanding of sexual behavior to the teaching of the Irish Catholic Bishops in “Love is for Life.”
- Explain how faith and reason are complementary.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 6 Hope, Charity, Jesus Christ, and Grace

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Define hope, charity, grace, despair, heaven, hell, purgatory, incarnation, and corporal works of mercy.
- Explain what C.S. Lewis describes as the “fool’s way” and the “disillusioned sensible man.”
- Discuss why it is that love (or charity) is the greatest and most enduring of the virtues.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Writing Assignment 4	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 7**Euthanasia****Objectives**

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Explain the Catholic Church's position on Euthanasia.
- Define the following terms or concepts: doctrine of double effect, palliative care, active euthanasia, and passive euthanasia.
- Use material from previous modules on methods of moral decision-making to analyze the actions of characters involved with issues of euthanasia and medical ethics.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Research Paper	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 8**Integrity, Business Ethics, and the Environment****Objectives**

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Provide two definitions for integrity.
- Define equity, sufficiency, sustainability, and solidarity.
- Discuss the responsibilities of businesses both to communities as well as to stockholders.
- Discuss how rights are extended to plants and animals in discussions of environmental issues.
- Explain various perspectives associated with discussions of water rights.

Assignment	Due no later than
Read the assigned materials	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Final Exam	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

