

GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Spring 2009**
Instructor: Bryan N. Massingale, S.T.D.
Course #: THEO 385
Section: 1001
Course Title: Special Questions in Moral Theology
Course Subtitle: Catholic Social Thought

Content:

(From the proposed Bulletin course description): A comprehensive examination of the engagement of Catholic faith with the public square. Detailed analysis of foundational themes within the Catholic Social Teaching tradition through a study of the documents of the papal encyclical tradition, social thought originating from and upon the U.S. context, and the various interpretations of the Catholic Social Teaching tradition. Consideration of Catholic socio-ethical engagement with emerging concerns in public discourse.

While the seminar gives pride of place to the documents arising out of the papal encyclical tradition, these are not the exclusive focus of the seminar. One of the concerns of the seminar will be the question of how these documents relate to, shape, and are influenced by broader currents of Catholic social ethical reflection and discourse . . . currents that can be collectively labeled “Catholic Social Thought.”

While this seminar is of immediate interest and relevance for budding Catholic theologians, I think it would also be of interest and value to students of other faith traditions as well, given the influence of the Catholic social tradition upon other forms of faith-based social reflection and the influence of the Catholic community in matters of social concern in the U.S.

Format:

In keeping with the expectations of a doctoral seminar, after the first two weeks, I will do little formal lecturing. I may take the beginning or the end of a session for a “mini-lecture” to either set the context for the topic, or deal with organizational matters. Otherwise, the “focus presenter” will begin by reading his/her paper, with the members of the seminar entering into a discussion of the ideas, insights, and questions that arise out of the assigned readings (the moderator facilitating). I will interject for points of clarification/emphasis, or to call us back to the topic at hand.

Assignments and/or Examinations:

- Two-three pages presentation of the seminar reading with critical questions posed (on a rotating basis); seminar paper of about 25 pages; perhaps a book review; tons of reading.

Language Pre-requisites:

Department of Theology

- Those necessary for the successful completion of one's research project.

Required Texts:

- David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Orbis, 1992).
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005).
- Kenneth Himes (editor), *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Georgetown Univ. Press, 2004).
- David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, 2002).
- Kristin E. Heyer, *Prophetic and Public: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism* (Georgetown Univ. Press, 2006).
- John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan (editors), *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope* (Orbis, 2005).
- Other texts to be determined.

Optional texts:

- Daniel G. Groody (editor), *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology* (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2007).
- Laurie M. Cassidy and Alex Mikulich (editors), *Interrupting White Privilege: Catholic Theologians Break the Silence* (Orbis, 2007).
- Other texts to be determined.