

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
Spring 2023**

**RELS5273: CATHOLIC SOCIAL ETHICS**

Instructor: Dr. LAM Wing Kwan Anselm  
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Classroom: ELB\_203

Office: LKK Rm 220 (3943 1055)

Time: Wed 7:00PM - 9:30PM

**OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE**

This course introduces Catholic Social Ethics. First, it gives an overview of its theological foundations, its relation to broader traditions of Catholic ethical thought, and its historical development from the early Church to the present. Then, it considers particular topics in Catholic Social Ethics such as: marriage and family; the meaning of work and its relation to the economy; immigration; the political community; the international community; the environment; war and peace.

**READINGS**

Most of the required readings are from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSD), or the document *Gaudium et Spes*. They can be found in both English and Chinese on the Vatican website, [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va). Other readings will be distributed electronically.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC): <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm>

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSD):

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_compendio-dott-soc_en.html)

*Gaudium et Spes* (GS): [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm)

| <i>WEEK</i> | <i>DATE</i> | <i>TOPIC</i>                                                           | <i>READINGS</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1           | Jan 11      | <b>Introduction to Catholic social ethics</b>                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2           | Jan 18      | <b>The Bible, Natural Law, Theology and Magisterium</b>                | CCC, no. 355-421; no. 1766-1802; no. 1950-1960.<br><i>[Recommended: Servais Pinckaers, The Sources of Christian Ethics, chap. 2]</i>                                                                                                       |
| 3           | Jan 25      | <i>No Class: Chinese Lunar Year Holiday</i>                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 4           | Feb 1       | <b>Care for the poor, Christian teaching, and the Eucharistic life</b> | Readings: CCC, no. 1803-1845; Robert Louis Wilken, <i>The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity</i> , chap. 16.<br><i>[Recommended: Gary Anderson, Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition, chap. 1]</i> |

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|----|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 5  | Feb 8  | <b>History of Catholic social ethics I</b>         | CSD, chap. 2, section III.                    |
| 6  | Feb 15 | <b>History of Catholic social ethics II</b>        | <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , no. 1-45.            |
| 7  | Feb 22 | <b>Principles of Catholic social ethics</b>        | CSD, chap. 4.                                 |
| 8  | Mar 1  | <b>Human Dignity and Human Rights</b>              |                                               |
| 9  | Mar 8  | <b>Family, work, economy, &amp; immigration I</b>  | CSD, chap. 5, 6, 7.                           |
| 10 | Mar 15 | <b>The political community</b>                     | CSD, chap. 8.                                 |
| 11 | Mar 22 | <b>Care for our common home</b>                    | CSD, chap. 10.                                |
| 12 | Mar 29 | <b>War, peace, and the international community</b> | CSD, chap. 11.<br>[Recommended: CSD, chap. 9] |
| 13 | Apr 5  | <i>No Class: Ching Ming Festival</i>               |                                               |
| 14 | Apr 12 | <b>Presentation I</b>                              |                                               |
| 15 | Apr 19 | <b>Presentation II</b>                             |                                               |

### Assessment

#### **1. Attendance and Class Discussion (10%+15%)**

It is expected that you will have no more than two absences in this course. You are also strongly encouraged to participate in class. Students who participate in class discussions to a high degree (asking questions, answering questions, showing knowledge of reading, etc.) will receive extra credit applied to their final grade in the class.

#### **2. Group Presentation on Ethical Issues (35%)**

3-4 students in a group give a 25-minute ppt presentation on an ethical issue; examine and discuss the place and function of Catholic Social Thought on the particular ethical issue studied.

#### **3. Final Paper (40% grade)**

Pick any of the following documents (all available on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)):

*Rerum Novarum* (1891)  
*Pacem in Terris* (1963)  
*Populorum Progressio* (1967)  
*Laborens Exercens* (1981)  
*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987)  
*Centesimus Annus* (1991)  
*Evangelium Vitae* (1995)  
*Caritas in Veritate* (2009)  
*Laudato Si'* (2015)  
*Fratelli Tutti* (2020)

In your paper, identify points that you found interesting in this document. Apply those principles of Catholic Social Ethics to an ethical issue. Discuss and evaluate them: what do you agree with, what do you disagree with, what seems insightful, what seems to raise questions, etc., and why. Cite or quote specific passages of the document in your paper. Also, at least in one paragraph, relate your discussion to some idea(s) found in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

**Essay Length: 3500-4000 words.**

Papers will be graded according to its content, focus of argument, discussion, and academic referencing style. The main objective of this reflection paper is to have students familiarize themselves with the original source materials and the extensive literature available on this topic. The marking rubrics are uploaded on the Blackboard.

Papers should be handed in soft copy **via VeriGuide before 5:00 pm on 28 April (Fri), 2020.**

Late submission will be penalized: 10 marks will be deducted for one day of late submission.

**Submission after 10 days will be given a zero mark.**

**4. Feedback for evaluation**

- End-of-term university course evaluation will be conducted in class.
- Students' comments and feedback on the course through e-mails or personal meeting with the instructor are always welcomed.

**5. Facility for Posting Course Announcements**

- Related course materials are delivered via the platform **"BLACKBOARD"** (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eLearning/>)

**6. Academic honesty and plagiarism**

- Students must submit their papers in **soft copy via VeriGuide**. Relevant information on academic honesty and plagiarism can be allocated at: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>.
- When you use other writer's ideas or findings, you are advised to represent them in your own words. Simply copying of full sentences or parts of sentences from the source article is not allowed.

**References:**

Anderson, Gary (2013) *Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Curran, Charles E. (1985) *Directions in Catholic Social Ethics*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Krier Mich, Marvin L. (2011) *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching*, revised edition, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Pinckaers, Servais (1995) *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press.

Pinckaers, Servais (2003) *Morality: The Catholic View*, South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press.

Wilken, Robert Louis (2012) *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.