



Religious Studies 2238F/G (570)
Fundamental Moral Theology
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: J. Kuntz

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

An exploration of the fundamental concepts of the Catholic moral tradition in light of the Second Vatican Council: scriptural foundations, conversion and discipleship, the role of the Magisterium, natural law and the law of Christ, conscience, the moral act, sin and virtue.

Antirequisite(s): [Religious Studies 2207E](#).

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at Western
University**

**Fundamental Moral Theology
(Moral Theology 5132A / Religious Studies 2238F)**

Course Outline – Fall 2025

[Updated July 4th 2025]

Instructor: Fr. Jason Kuntz

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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exploration of the fundamental concepts of the Catholic moral tradition in light of the Second Vatican Council: scriptural foundations, happiness, freedom, the moral act, virtue, sin and conversion, law, the formation of conscience. A particular emphasis will be given to the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

B. GOALS

For all students (MTS, M.Div. and Religious Studies):

By the end of the course the student should know and understand:

1. The most important biblical texts related to Moral Theology.
2. The fundamental concepts of the Catholic moral tradition along with the “inherent values” that underly them (see John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, 33).
3. The relationship between Catholic moral theology and dogmatic, spiritual and pastoral theology.
4. How the teaching of the Catholic Church on moral issues contributes to the flourishing of individuals and society.

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

1. Read, analyze, and explain texts of moral theology.
2. Discuss moral issues persuasively and make effective theological arguments.
3. Identify and understand contrary positions, responding to them with intelligence and charity.

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. An appreciation of Holy Scripture as the “soul of theology” and the most important source for moral theology (Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, 16).
2. An awareness of the “loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world.” (Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, 16)

For those students preparing for ministry in the Church (M.Div.):

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

1. Make prudent decisions and assist others in prudent decision making: “we have been called to form consciences not to replace them.” (Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 37).
2. “[A]ccompany with patience and mercy” those who find it difficult to live a moral life along “eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur.” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 44)

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. A sense of moral theology as an “ecclesial science” which “grows in the Church and works on the Church.” A feeling of belonging to the Church and contributing to her prophetic mission (See John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 109).
2. Religious docility towards the Magisterium of the Church as a teacher of moral norms and the authentic interpreter of the Word of God (See Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 25).
3. The desire to become “joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 168).

C. REQUIRED TEXTS

All of the texts for this course are freely available online. Students are not required to purchase any texts.

The Holy Bible.

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. Edited by John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón. Translated by Lawrence Shapcote O.P. 8 vols. Lander, Wyoming: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012.

[Students are not required to purchase this text. We will be reading short selections. This edition is available online at <https://aquinas.cc/> A very similar translation is available at [New Advent](#) or [Aquinas 101](#)]

John Paul II. Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*. August 6th, 1993. Print edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [available online](#).

Other readings will be distributed to students via OWL.

D. CLASS SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

1) September 9 – What is Moral Theology?

Luke 10:25-37; Deuteronomy 5-6; Leviticus 19
[ST I, q93, a4](#)

2) September 16 – The Moral Teaching of the Gospels

Mark 1:14-15
Matthew 5:1-7:29; Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 16:19-31; Luke 18:9-14
John 13:1-20; John 13:31-35
Handout: “Augustine and the Beatitudes”
Handout: “Aquinas on the Beatitudes”

3) September 23 – Happiness and Holiness.

Matthew 19:16-30; John 17:1-5; 1 John 3:1-3
[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 1-27](#)
[ST I-II q2 a1-8](#)
[ST II-II q23 a1](#)

September 30 – National Day of Truth and Reconciliation No classes

4) October 7 - The Moral Act. Absolute Moral Norms.

1 Corinthian 6:12-20; Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Maccabees 6:18-31
Fernández, Aurelio, and James Socías. “Chapter VI: Morality and Action.” In *Our Moral Life in Christ: A Basic Course on Moral Theology*, 105–25. Princeton, N.J. : Chicago, Ill: Scepter Publishers ; Midwest Theological Forum, 1997. [Uploaded to OWL]
[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 71-83](#)
[ST, I-II, q18, a8 & a9](#)

5) October 14 – The Moral Act: Double Effect and Co-operation

First Paper Due Today

Matthew 13:24-30; John 17:10-19

[ST, II-II, q64, a7](#)

Kaczor, Christopher. "Double-Effect Reasoning from Jean Pierre Gury to Peter Knauer." *Theological studies* (Baltimore) 59, no. 2 (June 1, 1998): 297–316. [Uploaded to OWL]

Handout: "Cooperation in Evil"

William, Newton. "Avoiding Cooperation with Evil: Keeping Your Nose Clean in a Dirty World." *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, September 21, 2012.

<https://www.hprweb.com/2012/09/avoiding-cooperation-with-evil-keeping-your-nose-clean-in-a-dirty-world/>.

6) October 21 – Passions and Virtue

Matthew 14:13-21; John 2:13-25; John 11:17-37; Luke 10:17-24.

Handout "Some Terms used by Saint Thomas in Reference to the Passions" [Uploaded to OWL]

Handout "The Eleven Passions" [Uploaded to OWL]

[ST I-II, Q24 a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, Q56 a4](#)

[ST I-II, Q59 a1-5](#)

7) October 28 – The Cardinal Virtues

Wisdom 8:1-8; Colossians 3:1-17

Mattison, William C. "Why Virtue?" In *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues*, 57–73. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008. [Uploaded to OWL]

Aquinas, Thomas. "2. Christ's Passion as a Model of Virtues." In *The Aquinas Catechism: A Simple Explanation of the Catholic Faith by the Church's Greatest Theologian*, 43–46. Manchester, N.H: Sophia Institute Press, 2000. [Uploaded to OWL]

[ST I-II, q55, a4](#)

[ST I-II, q61, a1-5](#)

[ST I-II, q65, a1](#)

Handout: "Jesus Christ as the Exemplar of Virtue" [Uploaded to OWL]

Handout: "The Four Cardinal Virtues and the Virtues subordinate to Them" [Uploaded to OWL]

November 4 – READING WEEK – No Class

8) November 11 – The Theological Virtues, Infused Moral Virtue, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 2:15-21; Isaiah 11:1-3

[ST I-II, q62, a1-4](#)

[ST II-II, q23, a7 & a8](#)

[ST I-II, q65, a3](#)

[ST I-II, q63, a1-a4](#)

[ST I-II, q68, a1, a2, a4](#)

9) November 18 – Vice and Sin

Exodus 32:1-14; 2 Samuel 11:1-12:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 65-70](#)

[Reconciliation and Penance Paragraphs 14-18](#)

[ST I-II, q71, a2 & a6.](#)

[ST I-II, q84, a3 & a4](#)

[ST I-II 88, a1 & a2](#)

10) November 25 – Law

Second Paper Due Today!

Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Psalm 19:1-14;

[Veritatis Splendor Paragraphs 28-53](#)

[ST I-II, q90 a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, q91 a1-5](#)

[ST I-II, q92 a1](#)

[ST I-II Q94 a2](#)

[ST I-II, q98 a1-2](#)

[ST I-II, q99 a2](#)

[ST I-II, q100, a1](#)

[ST II-II q120 a1](#)

11) December 2 – Conscience

Genesis 4:1-16; Romans 2:12-16

[Veritatis Splendor, Paragraphs 54-64, 109-113](#)

[ST I, q79 a12-13](#)

[ST I-II, Q6, a8](#)

[ST I-II, Q19, a5-6](#)

Fernandez, Samuel. "Towards a Definition of Abuse of Conscience in the Catholic Setting." *Gregorianum* 103, no. 2 (2021): 557–74. [Uploaded to OWL]

Handout: "Important Magisterial Texts on Conscience" [Uploaded to OWL]

12) December 9 – The New Law; Moral Theology and Evangelization.

Romans 8:1-17; Jeremiah 31:31-34.

[Veritatis Splendor Chapter 3, Paragraphs 84-120](#)

[ST I-II, q106, a1](#)

[ST I-II, q107, a1-4](#)

[ST I-II, q108, a2](#)

E. ASSESSMENT

1) 20% Participation - Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussion. They may be called upon to share their thoughts on the readings. Students should expect approximately 2-3 hours of reading each week. Reading questions will be given in advance of each class to assist students to prepare for the discussion. Students may also participate through the online forum.

NOTE: Students are expected to attend all classes. Students must attend a minimum of eight lectures to pass the course. Students are asked to inform the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class.

2) 40% Two papers [1250 words each] - Students will be given a problem to resolve in the format of a disputed question. Students will be graded upon their ability to argue for their position, make necessary distinctions, identify objections, and respond to these objections. More details will be given in class.

3) 40% Final Exam – A written exam will be scheduled during the exam period. It will consist of both short answer and essay questions.

F. Academic Integrity, Use of AI and Turnitin Analysis

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Within this course, generative AI tools are permitted only for those purposes indicated within each assignment. Please speak with the instructor if you are uncertain. If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Notice of Turnitin Analysis

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

King's University College
General Course Policies
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Considerations for Absence/Missed Assessments

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration using the extranet portal (www.extranet.uwo.ca). Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs and further consideration may be denied. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Academic consideration for examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar always requires documentation.

The policy on academic consideration is found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the final examination, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup final examination).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

For policy on accommodation for religious holidays, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools are permitted in the course, including generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools). Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright of their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.