



Religious Studies 2239F (570)
Christian Bioethics
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: J. Kuntz

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

A specialized course concerning Catholic moral principles with clinical/ pastoral applications for a pluralistic world. Topics: reproduction issues, abortion, organ transplants, genetics, death and dying, resource allocation, and global ethics. Expert guest speakers included. Many applications to health care institutions.

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**

Christian Bioethics

(Moral Theology 5432B / Religious Studies 2239G)

Course Outline – Fall 2025

Instructor: Fr. Jason Kuntz

Office Hours by appointment: 519-432-1824, ext. 226 e-mail: jkuntz4@uwo.ca

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a specialized course concerning Roman Catholic moral principles with clinical/pastoral applications for a pluralistic world. Topics include: birth control, abortion, human reproductive assistance, organ transplants, stem cell research, death and dying. Applications to pastoral situations will be made.

B. GOALS

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

1. The principles employed in bioethical reasoning from a Catholic perspective.
2. Important theological themes that influence how Christians view the human body, health, sickness and suffering, human sexuality, life, and death.
3. The teaching of the papal magisterium on specific bioethical issues: Abortion, Contraception, In-vitro Fertilization, Organ Transplant, Medical Assistance in Dying, Research on human embryos etc.
4. The main arguments presented by theologians and philosophers in disputed questions within bioethics.

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

1. Read, analyze, and explain bioethical texts.
2. Discuss bioethical issues from a theological perspective.
3. Identify and understand contrary positions, responding to them with intelligence and charity.
4. Apply course content to individual cases.

This course aims to foster the following attitudes:

1. Respect for the dignity of human life from conception until natural death.
2. Compassion for those who suffer from illness, disability, or disease.
3. Respect for the unique and special vocation of the laity to sanctify the secular sphere, including the environments of health care and biomedical research (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 31).
4. Appreciation of the contribution of the Catholic Church to contemporary bioethical discourse.

C. REQUIRED TEXT

AUSTRIACO, NICANOR PIER GIORGIO, O.P. *Biomedicine & Beatitude: An Introduction to Catholic Bioethics Second Edition*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2021.

The Textbook costs \$46.90 at Dellelce Family Bookstore. Students must purchase the Second Edition; older editions are not sufficient.

All other required readings will be distributed to students via OWL.

Recommended Texts:

CATHOLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE OF CANADA. *Health Ethics Guide*, 3rd Ed. Ottawa: Catholic Health Alliance of Canada, 2012. ([Available Online](#))

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL ASSISTANCE TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS. *New Charter for Health Care Workers*. Trans. by The National Catholic Bioethics Center. Philadelphia: National Catholic Bioethics Center, 2017. ([Available Online](#))

D. CLASS SCHEDULE

- 1) September 5 – Introduction to Christian Bioethics
- 2) September 12 – Principles of Catholic Bioethics
- 3) September 19 – The Dignity of the Human Embryo and Abortion
- 4) September 26 – Contraception and Sterilization
- 5) October 3 – Artificial Methods of Reproduction
- 6) October 10 – Bioethical Decision Making and Refusal of Treatment
- 7) October 17 – The Christian Meaning of Suffering; Palliative Care

8) October 24 – Medical Aid in Dying

9) October 31 – Modifications to the Human Body

November 7 – READING WEEK – NO CLASS

10) November 14 – Organ Transplants

11) November 21 – Research on Human Subjects; Stem Cell Research; Genetic Therapy

12) November 28 – Cooperation and Conscientious Objection

13) December 5 – Public Health Care; Social Aspects of Health Care

E. ASSESSMENT

1) 15% Attendance and Participation – Students are expected to participate in class discussion and may be called upon to share their thoughts on the readings. Reading questions will be given in advance of each class to assist students to prepare for the discussion. Students may also participate by posting on 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) 50% Five Short essays (500-600 words each) Students will be asked to submit five short responses to the assigned readings. Each response will be worth 10% of the final grade. Reading responses must be submitted before class the week the reading was assigned. At least two of the responses must be submitted by October 10th. Further details will be given in class.

4) 35% Final Exam – The written exam will consist of two or three short essays that require the student to synthesize, explain and/or apply material from the course.

CHICAGO STYLE

According to the policy adopted by the faculty of St. Peter's Seminary, all citations, references and bibliographies in written assignments must follow the formatting prescribed in the Chicago Manual of Style (Footnotes and Bibliography). Footnotes are to be used, rather than author-date references in the body of the text. For further information, please review and consult the summary provided by Kenrick-Glennon Seminary at the following web address:

<https://www.kenrick.edu/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Academic-Papers-and-Citations.pdf>

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](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.