

CE 3230 CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS

Spring 2008

William O'Neill, S.J. JSTB

M/Th 11:10 am-12:30 pm; CDSP 222

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This course will consider the tradition of Roman Catholic Social Teaching and modern social ethics. Issues to be treated will include Christian interpretations of violence and non-violence, war and peace, global and domestic justice, human rights, bioethics, and ecological ethics. In assessing these issues, we will consider the interpretative perspectives of liberation theology and Christian feminism.

Objectives of course: After successfully completing the course, students will have acquired (i) foundational understanding of significant texts in Christian social ethics, and in particular, modern Roman Catholic social teaching; (ii) skills of critical appropriation in mediating the tradition of Christian social ethics to differing publics, e.g., those sharing belief in Christian Scriptures, those of secular persuasion, etc.; (iii) knowledge of specific issues, questions, and themes arising in pastoral ministry (see below); (iv) enhanced ability to offer concise oral analysis, assessment, and criticism.

Implementation: In the course (i) students will prepare case studies drawing upon their pastoral ministries (see syllabus); (ii) discuss these cases in light of assigned readings in small groups in the first part of the class; (iii) participate attentively in the plenary lecture. An oral midterm (iv) will provide an overview of issues, themes, and questions; and a final assessment entails (v) *either* a final open book examination based upon cases/questions similar to those of the M.Div. Comprehensives at JSTB or a research paper (10-15 pages) for students in other degree programs. A précis of the paper, for those so opting, is due after the Spring Break; this will allow professor to respond to proposed topic. The choice of final examination or paper allows students to adapt the course to their particular programs and pastoral/research interests. The course concludes (vi) with a discussion of student papers or case studies. Professor will write a one-two page evaluation of final research paper or examination, indicating principal strengths, lacunae, further steps to strengthen argument, etc.

Evaluation: (i) Evaluation will be based upon informed discussion, regular participation, the midterm oral examination and final examination or paper. (ii) Students' success in the relevant M.Div. comprehensive examination will demonstrate success of course itself. (iii) Evaluation forms permit formal feedback to instructors, and JSTB Dean.

Requirements: An introductory course in moral theology or Christian ethics is presumed.

Texts:

Cahill, Lisa Sowle. Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Donahue, John. What Does the Lord Require (revised ed). St. Louis, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.

Himes, Kenneth, ed. Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations. Washington, D.C. Georgetown University, 2005.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. We Drink from Our Own Wells. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984.

Massaro, Thomas and Thomas Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War. Lanham, MD: Sheed and Ward, 2003.

O'Brien, David, ed. Catholic Social Thought. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992.

Reader containing selected texts will be available at Copy Central on 2483 Hearst Ave.

Recommended Texts in Roman Catholic Social Teaching:

Curran, Charles. Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis

Mich, Marvin L. Krier. Catholic Social Teaching and Movements. Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998.

Recommended Texts for General Review of Moral Theology:

Gula, Richard M. Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality. Mahwah, New York: Paulist, 1989.

Mahoney, John. The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Other articles in multiple copies will be placed on reserve at JSTB under course title.

Syllabus (minor adaptations may be made):

Feb. 4 Introduction

Nonviolence, War, and Peace in Christian Tradition

- Feb. 7 Ethics in Scripture: Texts: Carrol Stuhlmueller, "The Prophetic Combat for Peace"; John Donahue, "The Good News of Peace"; Robert Daly, "The New Testament: Pacifism and Non-Violence" (texts in Reader). Donahue, What Does the Lord Require, 68-72. Recommended: Walter Wink, "Jesus and the Nonviolent Struggle of Our Time" (text on reserve).
- Feb. 11 Christian Assessments of Violence and Non-Violence: Texts: Cahill, Love Your Enemies, chaps. 1-3. Massaro and Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, vii-38. Recommended: Ambrose, Augustine and Thomas (texts on reserve). Case study due (see below).
- Feb. 14 Jus ad bellum: Texts: The Challenge of Peace in Catholic Social Thought, pp. 492-518. Cahill, Love Your Enemies, chaps. 4-6. Todd Whitmore, "The Reception of Catholic Approaches to Peace and War in the United States" in Modern Catholic Social Teaching, 493-521. Massaro and Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, 39-66. Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 497ff.
- Feb. 21 Jus in bello: The question of terrorism. Texts: Michael Walzer: "Noncombatant Immunity and Military Necessity" in Just and Unjust Wars (text in Reader); Cahill, Love Your Enemies, chaps. 7-9. Massaro and Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, 67-86. Recommended: James Childress, "Just-War Criteria" in War in the Twentieth Century (text on reserve).
- Feb. 25 Humanitarian Intervention: Texts: The Harvest of Justice Is Sown In Peace (U.S. Bishops' commemoration of The Challenge of Peace); Kenneth Himes, "Intervention, Just War, and U.S. National Security" (texts in Reader). Massaro and Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, 87-106.
- Feb. 28 Christian Feminist Interpretations: Texts: Cahill, Love Your Enemies, chaps. 10-11; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Reflections on War and Political Discourse: Realism, Just War, and Feminism in a Nuclear Age" in War in the Twentieth Century; Selections from the writings of Dorothy Day (texts in Reader). Recommended: Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminism and

Peace” in Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience (text on reserve).

March 3 Civil Disobedience and Conscientious Objection: Texts: Gula, Reason Informed by Faith, chap. 17; Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (texts in Reader). Massaro and Shannon, Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, 107-35. Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 393ff.

March 6 Capital Punishment: Texts: “A Call to Discipleship: Statement of the California Catholic Conference on Capital Punishment”; John Paul II, selections from Evangelium Vitae; John Langan, “Capital Punishment” (texts in Reader). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 405.

Justice, Human Rights, and the Common Good

March 10 Introduction: Justice in the World in Catholic Social Thought, pp. 287-302; Himes, “*Justitia in mundo*,” in Modern Catholic Teaching, 333-62. Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 124ff.

March 13 Ethics in Scripture: (Old Testament) Texts: Donahue, “The Bible and Catholic Social Teaching” in Modern Catholic Teaching, 9-24; Donahue, What Does the Lord Require, 1-41; Stuhlmüller, “Option for the Poor: Old Testament Directive in Economic Justice (texts in Reader).

March 17 Ethics in Scripture (New Testament) Texts: Donahue, “The Bible and Catholic Social Teaching” in Modern Catholic Teaching, 24-40; Donald Senior “Called to Be Disciples” in Economic Justice (texts in Reader); Donahue, What Does the Lord Require, 41-62. Recommended: Simon, “The Biblical Roots of Social Concern” in Christian Faith and Public Policy: No Grounds for Divorce (text on reserve).

March 20 Justice and Human Rights: Texts: Economic Justice for All in Catholic Social Thought, Introduction, chaps. 1-2, pp. 572-608; Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Modern Catholic Social Teaching in Modern Catholic Teaching, 72-98. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, “A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American-Catholic Dialogue” (text in reader). Recommended: Pope, “Natural Law in Catholic Social Teaching” in Modern Catholic Teaching, 41-71. Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 152ff.

March 22-28 Spring Break

March 31-April 4: Midterm Examinations for all students (Oral); NB. no class meeting on March 31, April 3

- April 7 Justice and Human Rights: Texts: Economic Justice for All, chaps. 3-5, pp. 608-664; Curran, "The Reception of Catholic Social and Economic Teaching in the United States," in Modern Catholic Teaching, 469-92. Recommended: Hollenbach, "*Gaudium et spes*," in Modern Catholic Teaching, 266-91.
- April 10 Liberty and the Common Good: Texts: Mahoney, "The Basis of Human Rights" in Moral Theology: Challenges for the Future; Murray, "E Pluribus Unum" (recommended) in We Hold These Truths (texts in Reader), "The Civilization of the Pluralist Society (Introduction)," "Civic Unity and Religious Integrity" (Recommended; texts on Reserve). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 107ff.
- April 14 Religious Liberty: *Dignitatis humanae* (in Reader); Griffin, "*Dignitatis humanae*" in Modern Catholic Teaching, 244-65.
- April 17 Work and Property: Texts: John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* in Catholic Social Thought, pp. 352-92; Lamoureux, "*Laborem exercens*" in Modern Catholic Teaching, 389-414. Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 255ff. 176ff.
- April 21 Ethics and Inculturation: Susan Moller Okin, "Inequalities Between the Sexes in Different Cultural Contexts"; Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Feminist Theology in an African Perspective" (texts in Reader). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 523, 532.
- April 24 Social Liberation, Equitable Development. Texts: *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* in Catholic Social Thought, pp. 393-436; Curran, Himes, Shannon, "*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*" in Modern Catholic Teaching, 415-35. Gustavo Gutiérrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, xiii-89.
- April 28 Poverty/Immigration/Refugee Policy: Texts: We Drink from Our Own Wells, 91-137. Diasy Machado, "The Unnamed Woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman" in María Pilar Aquino, Daisy Machado, Jeanette Rodríguez, eds., A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice; O'Neill, "Rights of Passage: The Ethics of Forced Migration" (distributed in class). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 100, 289-309, 505.
- May 1 Racism: Cornel West, Race Matters, introduction, chaps. 1-2 (texts in Reader). Jamie T. Phelps, "Inculturating Jesus," and Diana L. Hayes, "And

When We Speak: To be Black, Catholic, and Womanist,” in *Taking Down Our Harps*; M. Shawn Copeland, “Tradition and the Traditions of African American Catholicism,” in *Theological Studies*, Vol. 61, no. 4 (Dec. 2000) (texts distributed in class). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 144, 431ff., 557.

May 5 Gender Discrimination: Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Feminism and Christian Ethics” (text in reader). Donahue, What Does the Lord Require, 66ff.
Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 295.

Special Topics

May 8 Bioethics: Thomas Shannon, “Ethical Issues in Genetics” (text in Reader).

May 12 Medical Ethics: Abortion and Public Policy: Text: Lisa Sowle Cahill, “The Embryo and the Fetus: New Moral Contexts” (text in Reader). Recommended: Lisa Cahill, “AIDS, Justice and the Common Good” (text on reserve).

May 15 Ethics and Ecology: Texts: “Renewing the Earth” (U.S. Bishops); “Creation and an Environmental Ethic” in Michael and Kenneth Himes, Fullness of Faith (texts in Reader). Recommended Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 255ff.

May 19 Review and Pastoral Application. Text: Coleman, “The Future of Catholic Social Thought,” in Modern Catholic Social Teaching, 522-44.

May 23 *Final Examinations and Papers Due*

Case Studies

I. *In preparation for our small group and plenary discussions, please prepare a one-paragraph case study on one of the following topics/issues drawn from your own ministerial experience (e.g., field-education placement or service-learning). Due: Feb. 11th.*

Violence: overt/covert/personal/structural

War/Peace: Jus ad bellum (the justice of waging war)

War/Peace (terrorism): Jus in bello (waging war justly)

Humanitarian Intervention/Genocide

Just post bellum/Social Reconciliation

Civil Disobedience

Capital Punishment

Abortion

Ethics and Culture (Contextualization/Inculturation)

Immigration/Refugee Policy

Welfare Reform

Domestic/Global Inequities: Poverty/Hunger

Racism

Gender Discrimination/Sexism

Bioethics: genetics

Ecological Ethics

Ecclesial responses to HIV/AIDS pandemic

II. Insofar as possible, I will try to incorporate your case, or one similar, in the small-group discussions. When presenting the case in your small group, reflect upon:

A. The ethical implications of the case (consider the differing perspectives of the parties involved).

B. The resources upon which you might draw in responding to the case:

a. First-order interpretation: The experience/wisdom (both personal and collective) of the parties involved, e.g., expressions of popular religiosity.

b. Second-order interpretation: The tradition of Christian social ethics (e.g., Roman Catholic Social Teaching) as “critical [systematic] reflection upon praxis in light of the the word of God” (Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation , rev. ed. xxix. Consider, in particular, analyses of the assigned readings.

C. Your pastoral response, all things considered.

III. Consider the following case for class on Feb. 7th. You have been invited to offer a Scriptural reflection on Jesus' teaching on non-violence by a group of adult members of your parish. Several are members of Pax Christi and are committed to non-violence; others accept the legitimate use of violence under certain circumstances, e.g., self-defense. The proposed Scriptural text is from the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5: 38-42 (cf. also, Lk. 6:29):

You have heard how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer no resistance to the wicked. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him/her the other as well; if someone wishes to go to law with you to get your tunic, let him/her have your cloak as well. And if anyone requires you to go one mile, go two miles with him/her.

(i) In light of your reflections on the use of Scripture in Christian ethics, how would you interpret this pericope (e.g., are Jesus' words to be understood as an action-guiding norm or ideal)?

(ii) In the course of your reflections, one of the group argues that Jesus himself accepts the legitimate use of violence by representatives of the State when he says "pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar and God what belongs to God" (Mt. 22:21; cf. also Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20: 20-26). In light of the assigned readings, how would you respond to such an objection? (Consider the context of the passage, its theological implications, and the significance of other related Scriptural passages.)

