

*****This is a preliminary syllabus. A final syllabus will be distributed on the first day of the class.*****

Issues and Methods in Ethics

RSCE 4872

Spring 2006

Thursday 2:10-5 pm., CDSP A

Instructors:

William O'Neill, SJ

Lisa Fullam

Course Description:

A number of contemporary ethical issues bridge the usual divides between moral theology and social ethics and among different ethical methods. This seminar will address 4 issues: abortion, HIV/AIDS, euthanasia, and refugee/immigrant concerns, from both the moral theological and social ethical perspectives, highlighting some of the differing methodological approaches to which each is amenable. The course format will be discussion of assigned readings. Evaluation will be based on leading/participating in discussion and a 15-20 page research paper. [An introductory course in moral theology/philosophy or Christian ethics is presumed; 15 max enrollment; Auditors with permission of Faculty]

Course Objectives:

This course aims to:

1. Assess four significant social issues at both the personal and social levels of concern, including international aspects of the issues discussed.
2. Provide an opportunity for students to engage and challenge various arguments on these issues from within and outside the Catholic moral tradition.
3. Employ virtue and rights theories as an integrated ethical methodology.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the salient moral and social aspects of the issues discussed
2. Analyze an issue of the student's choice at both the moral and social-ethical levels of assessment.
3. Recognize and employ the ethical methodologies offered, and to recognize the strengths and limitations of these methodologies.

This course will be taught seminar-style, with students responsible for facilitating discussions after the first three weeks of the term. There is a Blackboard site for this course. In order to help the day's discussion facilitator to organize the discussion, students are to post on the Blackboard site two or three questions for discussion no later than 8 a.m. on the Tuesday prior to class. Student discussion leaders will post to the site (and e-mail to all participants) a précis of the salient points of the arguments of the day's

readings, an assessment of those arguments, and a series of questions compiled from other students' papers by 9 a.m. on the day of class.

The task of the discussion facilitator is exactly that: if class discussion proceeds smoothly, there is no need for the facilitator to intervene. The facilitator is responsible for helping the class to cover the range of topics raised by the readings, and to (gently!) guide us back on track if we should stray from the topic, or if we become enmired in a peripheral issue.

Texts:

Lloyd Steffen, ed.. *Abortion. A Reader*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1996

James F. Keenan, S.J., ed. *Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention*. New York: Continuum, 2000

David Hollenbach, S.J. *The Global Face of Public Faith. Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003

Richard M. Gula, S.S. *Euthanasia. Moral and Pastoral Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1994

In addition there is a reader available for purchase at Copy Central.

NB. Making multiple copies of copyrighted works requires payment of a copyright fee. The cost of the reader includes those fees. However, individuals making single copies for their private use are not required to pay copyright fees. A copy of the reader will be on reserve at the library.

Calendar (subject to change):

Feb. 2: Introduction

Feb. 9: Method 1: Virtue: The Thomistic-Aristotelian Tradition

Feb. 16: Method 2: Theories of Rights

Feb. 23: Method 3: Case—Hollenbach? Religion and Public Life—the intersection of the personal and the public. Catholic Politicians

March 2: Physician Assisted Suicide/Euthanasia 1:

Donum vitae

Classic Concepts: Killing vs. Letting die

March 9: Physician Assisted Suicide/Euthanasia 2:

March 16 Abortion 1:

Evangelium vitae

Question: What is personhood?

March 23: Abortion 2

March 30: Reading Week: Enjoy!

April 6: AIDS 1

Classic concepts: cooperation

April 13: Holy Thursday

April 20: AIDS 2

April 27: Immigration 1

“Strangers No Longer

Classic concepts: Membership and Solidarity

May 4: Immigration 2

May 11: Student Presentation

May 18: Conclusion