

Department of Cultural & Religious Studies
Chinese University of Hong Kong
Fall 2024

RELS5273: Catholic Social Ethics 天主教社會倫理

Course Description:

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, in particular the formation of the Catholic Social Teaching. In turn, the four fundamental ethical principles, human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good are discussed. It then 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.

Learning Outcomes:

Enable Students to

1. Understand and analyze the sources and principles of Catholic Social Ethics
2. Understand and evaluate the historical development of Catholic Social Ethics
3. Evaluate the Catholic ethical principles applied in contemporary ethical issues

Course Syllabus:

Topics	Contents
Introduction to Catholic Social Ethics	Social Ethics and Social Teachings,
The Sources of Catholic Morality	The Bible, Natural Law, Conscience, and Magisterium
History of Catholic Social Ethics	The Catholic Social Ethics in the Biblical times, Medieval Ages, Modern and Contemporary period
Law, Morality, and Religion	The tension among these three sources of behavioral norms
Human Dignity and Human Rights	Human Dignity as the foundation of social ethics and human rights
Principles of Catholic Social Ethics	Three other principles: solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good
The political community	The foundation and the purpose of political authority, as well as its legitimacy and limitation. The relationship between government and citizens
Work and economic justice	The meaning and dignity of labor, the principles of economic justice
Love, Marriage, and Family	The integral relationship between sex, love, and marriage, the controversy over same-sex marriage
Care for our common home	The vision of integral ecology, the human root of the ecological crisis, ecological conversion

Life and Death	The ethical and legal debate of Abortion and Euthanasia
War and peace, the international community, and immigration	Just war theory, peace movement, refugees

Course Components:

Teaching Modes and Learning Activities	
On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
Lectures (hybrid no)	70
Interactive tutorial (hybrid no)	20
Group presentation (hybrid no)	10

Assessment type and percentage

Assessment type	Percentage
Attendance	10%
Class Discussion	15%
Group Presentation	35%
Final Paper	40%

- Assessment rubric is listed at Appendix 1

Required and recommended readings

Required Readings:

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

Gaudium et Spes (GS): http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm

Recommended Readings:

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.

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 meetings with the instructor are always welcomed.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topics	Recommended Readings
1	Sept 6	Introduction to Catholic Social Ethics	
2	Sept 13	The Sources of Catholic Morality	CCC, no. 355-421; no. 1766-1802; no. 1950-1960. Servais Pinckaers, <i>The Sources of Christian Ethics</i> , chap. 2.
3	Sept 20	History of Catholic Social Ethics	Thompson, J. Milburn, (2010) <i>Introducing Catholic Social Thought</i> , Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, pp. 5-35. Schuck, Michael, (2005) "Early Modern Roman Catholic Social Thought 1740-1890," in <i>Modern Catholic Social Teaching, Commentaries & Interpretations</i> , ed. Kenneth R. Himes, Washington D. C.: Georgetown University Press, pp. 99-125. CSD, chap. 2, section III.
4	Sept 27	Law, Morality, and Religion	Xavier Focroulle Minard & Anna Sut, "Liberalism, Catholic Integralism, and the Question of Religious Freedom," <i>Brigham Young University Law Review</i> , vol. 47, no. 4, 2022, pp. 1171-1220.
5	Oct 4	Human Dignity and Human Rights	CSD Chap. 3 <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , no. 1-45.
6	Oct 11	<i>No Class: Chung Yeung Holiday</i>	
7	Oct 18	Principles of Catholic Social Ethics	CSD, chap. 4.
8	Oct 25	The political community	CSD, chap. 8.
9	Nov 1	Work and economic justice	CSD, chap. 6, 7.
10	Nov 8	Love, Marriage, and Family	CSD, chap. 5.
11	Nov 15	Care for our common home	CSD, chap. 10.
12	Nov 22	Life and Death	Laura Palazzani, "The Christian-Catholic Religious Perspective: Human Rights, Cultural Pluralism and Bioethics", <i>Religious Perspectives on Bioethics and Human Rights</i> , Springer, (2017) 09-01, 183-197.

			Sacred Congregation of Doctrine of Faith, <i>Declaration on Procured Abortion</i> , 1974. Sacred Congregation of Doctrine of Faith, <i>Declaration on Procured Euthanasia</i> , 1980.
13	Nov 29	War and peace, the international community, and immigration	CSD, chap. 9, 11.
14	Dec 6	Group Presentations	

Professor	
Name:	LAM Wing Kwan Anselm
Office Location:	Leung Kau Kui Building Rm 220
Telephone:	3943 1055
Email:	anselmlam@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	ELB_206
Time:	Wednesday 7:00 – 9:30 pm

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.

Approach 3 - Use of AI tools is allowed with explicit acknowledgement and proper citation.

- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.