

## **Theology and the Good Life Master Syllabus**

### **Cluster**

Wisdom, Faith, and the Good Life

How do faith and reason help us to know what is good and true? What does faith have to offer reason, and what does reason have to offer faith? Faith opens new horizons for reason, and reason challenges faith to greater understanding and refinement. *Theology* is the free, rigorous, and methodological study of God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ encountered in community. *Philosophy* is the free, rigorous, and methodical use of logic and argument in search of truth. The courses in this cluster introduce students to the experience of doing philosophy and theology, both where they converge and where they diverge. The experience of doing philosophy well is of discovering new, surprising, wonderful, and sometimes baffling depths and complexities to existence, our lives, and our beliefs. The aim of theology is the good life as informed by the critical study of sacred scripture, the lives and ideas of people who search for God, and the moral investigation of the personal and common good. Theology integrates the methods of many disciplines such as philosophy, history, literature, and science. This cluster plays a special role in the Catholic mission of King's College to transform minds and hearts with zeal in communities of hope.

### **Core Goals Served in this Category**

Goal 2: To lead students to become conversant with the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Goal 3: To enable students to recognize, formulate, and address matters of moral significance and concern.

### **Core Learning Outcomes**

A student successfully completing this category will be able to

1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of philosophical and Christian ethics (Core Goal 3.1)
2. Analyze moral arguments about matters of contemporary and perennial importance in view of differing moral perspectives locally and across cultures (Core Goal 3.2)
3. Apply fundamental principles, such as those of the Catholic social justice tradition, to important economic, social, and political issues (Core Goal 3.3)
4. Construct, evaluate, and defend moral arguments about matters of contemporary and perennial importance, especially to foster justice and service (Core Goal 3.4)
5. Develop self-awareness about core moral convictions and a capacity for self-criticism and scrutiny (Core Goal 3.5)

## **Catalog Description / Introduction**

Moral Theology is the discipline of reflecting critically and constructively on the Christian way of life. Students are encouraged to engage with and examine the ways in which Christian beliefs and practices form and reform the imagination, language, and actions of believers, and to describe and judge the variety of ways in which the Christian way of life has contributed, or has failed to contribute, to making God's reign present to the world.

## **Intangibles / Aspirations / Other Category-Level Elements**

In addition to the outcomes assessed in this category, other Core outcomes might be developed and addressed by various courses in Theology and the Good Life. Skills, competencies, and dispositions relevant to the subject of theology might also be cultivated in this category.

- To help students develop the foundational skills and competencies of written communication, critical inquiry and analysis, and technological competency and information literacy (Core Goal 1)

## **Teaching Methods and Assessment**

Student learning will be assessed using a four-part rubric, typically using exams or papers.

## **Texts**

Each instructor will choose the texts for her/his course, addressing the topic and goals of the course category and course description. All theology I courses will address at least some biblical texts, since the Bible is the root source of the God's revelation within the Catholic tradition. Similarly, all biblical studies courses will address the development of at least some theological concepts. All moral theology courses will address Christian scripture and doctrine and key themes in moral philosophy insofar as they relate to central concerns in moral theology.

## **Additional Information / Resources for Instructors**

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## **Courses**

### **THEO 160: Christian Ethics (3)**

Christian Ethics is the discipline of thinking critically about how best to embody the Christian way of life in particular places and times. This class investigates concepts such as narrative, practice, law, virtue, and liturgy and the ways they inform the Christian moral life. These notions will be applied to concrete moral questions of contemporary relevance.

### **THEO 163: Christian Marriage (3)**

This class is an exploration of the Christian tradition on the issues of sexuality, gender, marriage, and the family.

THEO 164: Christian Social Ethics (3)

The course will present a general view of how the Christian tradition understands and approaches moral issues that relate to social and political life. Both theoretical and practical questions will be confronted. The course features an ecumenical approach to Christian social ethics, but will attend in particular to Catholic social teaching beginning with *Rerum Novarum*.

THEO 165: Environmental Ethics (3)

This course studies how Christian theological perspectives can and should shape personal and social responses to “nature” and to problems arising from the human-nature interaction. Biblically based religious traditions will be compared with other religions in order to clarify the religious dimensions of our ecological dependencies. Current environmental problems and policy debates will be selectively treated to establish the relevance of Christian reflection on the environment.

THEO 168: Theology and Service (3)

The call to service is a central Christian teaching. This course explores that call to service, both by studying it, and by enacting it. Students taking this course will be required to perform community service, according to class guidelines, as part of the requirements for this course. Studying the call to service will include exploring some of the theological sources and arguments for service, as well reflecting on issues and communities through service in the local community. Courses might explore the way service can help bridge differences between cultural and religious communities.

THEO 169: Topics in Moral Theology (3)

This course will take up a focused topic in moral theology. A course could focus on a particular theme in moral theology, like war, forgiveness, or work, or a course could focus on a particular type or period of moral theology, such as virtue ethics. Past course titles have included *War in Christian Tradition*, and *Theology of Work*.