



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

Department of Religious Studies RS 251: Catholic Social Thought

Winter 2022

MW, 1:00pm – 2:20pm, SJ2 2007

We acknowledge that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. We give thanks for the privilege to work on this land and we are committed to working toward reconciliation and through research, learning, teaching, and the building of community.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Cristina Vanin
Email: cdvanin@uwaterloo.ca
Office: Sweeney Hall (SH) 2030
Office Hours: By appointment
Office hours will be held remotely via MS Teams until further notice

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Calendar Description:

This course will explore the origins, development, and contemporary challenges to Catholic social thought. The main focus will be on the critical and global influences of the past 100 years.

Detailed Description:

This course assumes that a religious tradition such as Roman Catholicism, has something to offer to the discussions and deliberations regarding the social challenges and injustices that we face as human persons and communities. As we enter the third calendar year of living with COVID-19, I am struck again by how significant Catholic social teaching can be, when we reflect critically and determine how to act to address a social injustice. As Dr. Philip Metres, director of the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights Program at John Carroll University, says: "Keep in mind that the most vulnerable of our society and the world will bear the worst brunt of this [pandemic], as they always do." So we can ask: what does the pandemic mean for the people experiencing homelessness? For people living in poverty? For workers, especially low-income workers? For women? For persons of colour and other marginalized peoples? Who has access to vaccines? To health care? At its core, this course strives to understand why the most vulnerable always suffer the most in the face of any kind of injustice and to figure out what it means to respond adequately.

Our study of the historical development of Catholic social teaching and its key principles, (hopefully) our encounter with organizations and people who are addressing social issues directly, and our investigation into current social injustices in the Canadian context will be, at times, challenging, sometimes gut-wrenching, eye-opening, and perhaps even inspiring and transformative. We do this within the current

context of Pope Francis who became pope in 2013 and who, from the outset, has been a public voice calling on all of us to develop an integral ecology, to respond to the cries of the poorest people and of our common home, the Earth.

Our aim is to develop a community of learning so prepare yourselves to read and think actively and creatively, and to communicate your ideas with all of us.

MANAGING OUR UNCERTAIN TIMES

We're going to hope that conditions will be such that we'll move to in-person classes by the end of January, but the pandemic renders our best laid plans precarious, so let's be prepared for whatever might come.

First, it will be the responsibility of each of us to stay up-to-date regarding Health and Safety protocols and to ensure that we're complying with requirements:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/return#health-safety>

Secondly, at present (until the end of January), our plan is to meet synchronously via MS Teams during the scheduled class times. These online synchronous meetings will not be recorded.

If you find yourself unable to attend class due to an extenuating circumstance, lecture slides can be made available to you upon request. Furthermore, we will discuss the idea of sharing the responsibility of creating notes that capture our meetings. So again, if you face an extenuated circumstance, you will have a means of accessing what we discussed in our class meetings.

Thirdly, when we return to in-person classes (hopefully at the end of January), we will keep each other safe if we listen to our bodies and stay home if we are ill and/or suspect we are ill and/or if we have been advised to self-isolate/quarantine. Once we resume in-person classes, you are expected to stay home from class if you find yourself in one of these situations; and of course, as long as you are well and free from quarantine, you are expected to attend class.

Let's remember that the university is a professional place, so it's essential to demonstrate our professionalism. That means many things in our uncertain times, including but not limited to:

- Showing your commitment to the class and missing class only when you must because of an extenuating circumstance like illness or suspected illness
- Taking responsibility for any necessary absence by requesting access to lecture slides and by consulting class notes so as to ensure you are achieving the learning outcomes of the course
- Ensuring that you understand [university expectations](#) and course policies (see below) regarding the pursuit of accommodations and how to [self-declare an illness](#)
- Following health and safety protocols with exactness and consistency, thereby doing your part to prevent the spread of illness

We continue living in the midst of uncertainty, but we will have means of ensuring that we can continue and achieve the goals of this course even when circumstances are not ideal.

Information about testing, rapid screening and vaccination on campus:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/testing-rapid-screening-and-vaccinations>

COURSE OBJECTIVES and /or Learning Outcomes

- familiarize ourselves with modern Catholic social thinking, its origins and historical development, and its significance for addressing social issues
- reflect critically on the key principles of Catholic social teaching
- learn about the main themes of social justice, both in terms of their historical context and as serious contemporary challenges
- determine whether and to what extent Catholic social teaching helps me to determine what it means to be a human person in the world and what type of world I wish to help to create
- participate in a community of learners wherein you can engage in conversation, demonstrate respect for the ideas of others, and communicate your own insights and ideas clearly

REQUIRED TEXTS [AND OTHER REQUIRED/SUGGESTED READINGS]

- Dorr, Donal, *Option for the Poor and for the Earth*. Revised Edition. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016
- additional readings will be indicated on our LEARN site
- if the pandemic situation allows, possible class visits to: (1) The Working Centre [downtown Kitchener’]; (2) Ignatius Jesuit Centre [Guelph]; (3) De Mazenod Door Outreach [Hamilton]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Active Participation + Citizenship	Course	15%
Leading Class Discussion	One Class (TBD)	10%
LEARN Discussions	Post: one time	10%
	Response: four times	20%
Research Essay Proposal / Outline	March 7, 2022	10%
Research Presentation and	TBD	
Research Paper	April 11, 2022	35%
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Total		100%

Please note that detailed assignment guidelines will be posted on LEARN. What follows are some general descriptions of the various assignments:

Assignment 1: Active Participation + Citizenship

All students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings and prepared to contribute to discussion. When we come to class prepared, it contributes to the good (or demise) of the whole. We will be learning with and from each other so it will help all of us if we have read thoughtfully and are prepared to dialogue with each other.

As part of developing our community of learning, two students will be assigned to produce class notes for each week of meetings. The notes will represent the class meetings from your assigned week. What your group produces will be posted as a resource for the class.

Assignment 2: Leading Class Discussion

Students will sign up to lead class discussion one time during the semester, for one of the Monday classes. The intention is to engage us in understanding and thinking together about the reading(s) assigned for the day; about the key insights presented; about the significance of what is being said; about how a given reading related to what we have read previously or to things that you have read and learned about elsewhere. It is also about raising questions for us to consider.

Assignment 3: LEARN Discussion [Post]

Students will sign up to post to LEARN discussion one time during the semester. Posts must be submitted by Friday evening, 11:59pm. The posts will consist of a written critical reflection on the reading assigned for the Monday class.

Assignment 4: LEARN Discussion [Response]

Students will respond to LEARN posts four times during the semester. Responses must be submitted by Monday morning, 9:00am. The response will indicate the further insights that the post has provided for you and you will pose at least two further questions that are raised for you by the post.

Assignment 5: Research Essay Proposal [DUE: March 7]

This assignment requires that you indicate the social issue that you are researching; the two principles of Catholic social teaching that you intend to demonstrate as important in understanding and addressing the social issue; and identify possible sources. It allows you to try out your ideas and get feedback on them before you develop them into the final research presentation and essay. Feedback will be provided via a meeting with the instructor.

Assignment 6: Research Presentation [tentatively — March 30 and April 4]

Students will sign up to present their research to the rest of the class. The presentation itself will take no more than 15 minutes. It will be followed by 10 minutes of conversation / discussion.

Assignment 7: Research Essay [DUE: April 11]

Students will write and submit a formal essay, in the sense that it should follow an accepted academic style, especially in terms of the proper citation of references and it should have a bibliography. The essay should be 2500-3000 words in length (10-12 pages), 12-point type [Times or Times Roman], double-spaced, one-inch margins.

Submission

Assignments must be submitted onto LEARN Dropbox.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	January 5	Introduction	
2	January 10 January 12	Catholic Social Thought in the time of Pope Francis ("Oh, how I would like a poor Church, and for the poor." Modern Catholic social teaching	Dorr, Ch. 19, 'Pope Francis' • Pope Francis TED Talk Dorr, Ch. 1, 'Context'
3	January 17 January 19	Beginnings of modern CST • Challenging governments in the interests of workers	Dorr, Ch. 2, 'Leo XIII'
4	January 24 January 26	Personal and Structural Injustice: Subsidiarity Anti-communism and Decolonization	Dorr, Ch. 3, 'Pius XI' Dorr, Ch. 4, 'Pius XII'
5	January 31 February 2	Catholic Church moves in new directions	Dorr, Ch. 5 'John XXIII'
6	February 7 February 9	Renewal and <i>aggiornamento</i>	Dorr, Ch. 6, 'Vatican II'
7	February 14 February 16	International Level of Social Justice Emergence of Liberation Theology	Dorr, Ch. 7, 'Paul VI' Dorr, Ch. 8, 'Medellin'
	READING WEEK	February 19-26	None

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
8	February 28 March 2	The Centrality of a Commitment to Justice Political, Economic, and Cultural-Religious Aspects of Liberation	Dorr, Ch. 9, '1971 Synod' Dorr, Ch. 10, '1974 Synod'
9	March 7 March 9	Work and Solidarity Women and Justice	Dorr, Ch. 12, 'John Paul II' Dorr, Ch. 14, 'Women'
10	March 14 March 16	Development Agencies Relationship between Justice and Love	Dorr, Ch. 15, ' <i>Deus Caritas Est</i> ' (Benedict) Dorr, Ch. 16, ' <i>Caritas in Veritate</i> ' (Benedict)
11	March 21 March 23	An Integral Ecology: The Cries of the Poor and of the Earth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of planet will we leave our children and our children's children? • Indigenous Perspectives 	Dorr, Ch. 19, 'Pope Francis and Ecology'
12	March 28 March 30	Decolonization, Reconciliation and Healing [Research Presentations]	Tanya Talaga's 2019 CBC Massey Lecture #1: "We Were Always Here" Jesuit Forum: "Listening to Indigenous Voices"
	April 4	[Research Presentations]	

COURSE POLICIES

Correspondence:

If you need to contact me by email, please use my cdvanin@uwaterloo.ca address. In most cases, I will respond to emails within 24 hours, although I can't guarantee that I will be looking at email on weekends. You should **use your UW email addresses** for all correspondences with me. Though our course does have an MS Team, I will not be checking the chat for messages. It's best to email me.

Class announcements generally will be posted on LEARN.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of three per cent (3%) per day, including weekends.

Extensions:

All extensions must be requested a minimum of one week before the assignment is due. Any requests after this week will be granted only if accommodations are secured through proper processes (e.g., self-declaration of illness, VIF, other relevant documentation). Without documentation, no extension will be granted after the original due date has passed.

Attendance

Students are responsible for attending and taking notes at all classes.

Electronic Devices

I request that there be no off-task use of technology while we are participating in our class meetings. Also, please turn off all sound on your devices when we are not discussing.

Privacy and Permissions

Materials, lectures, and all audio, video and written content on LEARN is absolutely not to be circulated or reproduced beyond LEARN and this course. Please be considerate and respectful of your colleagues and your instructor's privacy.

The instructor maintains copyright over this course. It is the intellectual property of the instructor and not to be copied or reproduced for any purposes without explicit permission.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome’s University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff at St. Jerome’s encourage students to seek out mental health support if needed.

On Campus

Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services may be available only online or by phone.

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- SJU Wellness Coordinator: Lindsay Thompson (Lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca)

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext.6880
- [Here](#) 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 ext. 213