TH 561-01
CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL ISSUES
BOSTON COLLEGE
Spring, 2002, Mon., Wed., 3-4:15 p.m.

Instructor: David Hollenbach, S.J.
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 4:30-5:30
Phone: 552-8855
E-mail: David.Hollenbach@bc.edu
Instructor's webpage: http://www2.bc.edu/~hollenb/

SYLLABUS

Readings marked + are in books available for purchase at the B.C. bookstore and are available on reserve in O'Neill Library. Readings marked * are contained in a course packet of photocopied material available for purchase at the B.C. bookstore. Items marked @ are available online. Some of these online documents are in PDF format. You will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader to read them. If you do not have it you can download it without charge from: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html. It is not required that books be purchased; the reserve shelf or copies from other libraries will help keep student costs down. Some of these books are available at a discount through the on-line bookstores.

The books ordered for the B.C. Bookstore are:


A. Introductory

1. Dimensions of the Task of Christian Social Ethics Mon., 1/14

Recommended:

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice, ch. 2.
2. Conflicts over law, morality, and religion Wed., 1/16

@Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" available online at:

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf


Monday, 1/21--No class, Martin Luther King holiday

3. Sources of conflict in policy argument Wed., 1/23

*Ralph Potter, War and Moral Discourse (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1969) chap. 2

B. Theological and ethical frameworks

4. Biblical foundations Mon., 1/28


Recommended:


5. The role of the church: witness to the world Wed., 1/30


Recommended:


6. The role of the church: transformation of society Mon., 2/4

@Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes), nos. 1-45 (study nos. 1-10 and 40-45 especially carefully). Available online at:

http://www.osjspm.org/cst/gs_cos1.htm
7. Religious freedom Wed., 2/6

@Vatican Council II, *Declaration on Religious Freedom (Dignitatis Humanae)*, available online at: [http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2relfre.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2relfre.htm)

8. Church, morality, and citizenship Mon, 2/11


@National Conference of Catholic Bishops "Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium," available online at: [http://www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship/citizenship.htm](http://www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship/citizenship.htm)

C. Economic justice in the United States


+William Julius Wilson, *The Bridge over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics*, Intro. and chaps. 1 and 2.

Video shown in class: "The Two Nations of Black America."

10. Bases for a Christian ethical response Mon., 2/18


@National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *A Decade After Economic Justice for All*, United States Catholic Conference. Available online at: [http://www.osjspm.org/cst/ten-aniv.htm](http://www.osjspm.org/cst/ten-aniv.htm)

11, 12. The meaning of justice Wed., 2/20 Mon., 2/25


@N.C.C.B., *Economic Justice for All*, nos. 127-214, 295-365 Available online at:

http://www.osjspm.org/cst/eja.htm

+William Julius Wilson, *The Bridge over the Racial Divide*, chaps. 3-5.

*Monday, 3/4 and Wednesday, 3/6--No class, spring break.*


D. Human rights and International Economic Justice


@Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide," Atlantic Monthly, September 2001, available online at:

http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/09/power.htm#

Videotape in class: "The Triumph of Evil."

16. Conflict and the international political system today Mon., 3/18


@Kofi A. Annan, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty," *The Economist*, 18 September 1999. Available online at:


@United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available online at:

http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html


+Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Ia Ilae, q. 91, arts. 1-3, q. 94, arts. 2, 4, 5; q. 96, arts. 1-2; IIaIIae, q. 42, arts. 1, 2, 7; q. 66, art. 2 (selections on law, property, and sedition). In W. Baumgarth and R. Regan, Saint Thomas Aquinas On Law, Morality, and Politics, pp.17-22, 46-48, 50-54, 65-68, 176-179, 185-187; 231-232.


Recommended reading:

@John XXIII, Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris), esp. nos. 1-45. Available online at:

http://www.osjspm.org/cst/pt.htm

Monday, 4/1--No class, Easter Monday

20. Human rights and economic development Wed., 4/3

@ John XXIII, On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum (Centesimus Annus). Study especially nos. 22-52. Available online at:

http://www.osjspm.org/cst/ca.htm

22. Responsibility toward Poor Countries Wed., 4/10

@N.C.C.B., Economic Justice for All, nos. 251-294. Available online at:

http://www.osjspm.org/cst/eja.htm


Monday, 4/15--No class, Patriots' Day

E. Peace, Conflict, and the Use of Force


@ National Conference of Catholic bishops, The Harvest of Justice Is Sown in Peace,


26. Conclusion to the course Mon., 4/29


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**Requirements**

1. Required reading done in full before session for which it is assigned.

2. Active participation in class discussions.

   Class participation may affect the final grade by a plus or minus added to or deducted from the letter grade calculated on the basis of papers and exam.

3. Writing requirements (60% of grade)

   4 short papers, 4 pages each, double spaced.

   The papers will be on the material covered in unit B, C, D, and E. A topic to frame the approach to the paper will be distributed in advance.
Each of these papers is due at the first class following the unit(s) for which the paper is written. The paper on unit E is due at the time of the final exam.

4. Concluding the course (40% of grade)
   
a. For undergraduates:

   Final exam.
   
   Five questions for the exam will be distributed in advance; you will be asked to respond to two of these in the exam. The questions will be formulated to evaluate your synthesis of the material treated in the course. Thus they may cross boundaries between the units of the course.

b. For graduate students

   Either: The final exam as described above.
   
   Or: A 12-15 page paper (double-spaced) on a topic to be determined through discussion with the instructor. This paper should directly address one of the topics treated in the course. It should build on the assigned readings and show that the student has a solid grasp of the issues raised by some of these readings. The professor can suggest supplementary reading that may relate these topics to areas of special interest to the student. If this option is chosen, a written proposal should be submitted to the instructor by April 3 and must be approved by April 10. If this has not been approved by April 10 the student will be required to take the exam. The paper is due on the day scheduled for the exam.