1. Course Description:
A study of the basic principles of ethics from a Thomistic and phenomenological perspective, including criteria for making moral choices and a refutation of situation ethics. Areas such as social justice, abortion, war and peace and sexual ethics will be addressed.

2. Envisioned Learning Outcomes
• Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basics of ethics, various theories about ethics, how to refute skepticism, relativism, and situation ethics, and the truth concerning controversial issues for the purpose in ministry outreach to overcome the widespread confusion in the area of ethics in post-Christian world culture and in Catholic thought and to be a voice in current tragic issues.

3. Course Schedule
General Notes on the Schedule:
1. Get the Required Materials. It is imperative that you obtain the required books for the course (see section 5 below) by the end of the first week of class. Otherwise you may have delays in delivery that will make it impossible for you to be synchronized with the rest of the students.
2. M.A. Students: Many assignments will be for all students, but in some cases there will be additional work for M.A. Students. Be sure to meet the expectation for each week that corresponds to you.
3. Writing assignments. Writing assignments are short (most are 2-3 pp. double-spaced), but you are expected to be thorough. In other words, be SUCCINCT. Succinctness, clarity, precision, order, and conciseness are imperative in philosophy, theology, and in the scientific pursuit of truth in general. Your grade in the writing assignments will depend on this. Take St.
Thomas Aquinas as your model (see his *Summa theologiae*). In this course, use of the syllogistic/scholastic methods is highly encouraged when expressing philosophical ideas and arguments. Use your words carefully; do not write for the sake of filling space. Also, do not fill space on response papers with your name and the title splayed out over 1/3 of the page. Two or three lines (single-spaced) will be sufficient for this.

Originality is also of crucial importance for your grade. It is imperative that you do not submit an old paper that you have used for another course, or paraphrase, or simply copy or cut/paste information from another source (e.g., from a website) as a response paper. Carefully relate your topic to specific ideas discussed in the course and it must be evident to the professor that it is your original piece of writing intended solely for this course, and not a rehashed paper or plagiarized material. Be honest about what you are doing: cite your sources (see academic dishonesty notice below).

4. **Discussion Board Components**: many assignments have a discussion board component: each week be sure to go to the discussion board to post, highlight, and respond to other student posts on the same day you send in your response paper by email to the professor.

5. **Disclaimer**: The instructor of this course reserves the right to change the tentative schedule of topics, number and length of examinations, point distribution, course requirements, and percentages required for letter grades in order to better facilitate the learning process.

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**Week 1, Jan. 11: Way of Love, Vol. III Introduction.**

You will find this book on Populi for this course.

Readings:


Assignments:

**All Students:**

1. Please email the professor to introduce yourself, including a bit about your background; include a picture of yourself if possible. If you wish, you can do this via Facebook instead (search Facebook for “Francisco Romero Carrasquillo” or follow the Facebook link above in the first page, and introduce yourself via a message).

2. Read the syllabus carefully.

3. Write a double-spaced two-page response paper to the questions at the end of the reading and send it to the professor via email (due this Sunday). In the text you will be asked to decide on an ethical issue of your own choosing to use to illustrate points in *Way of Love* up through Session 7. This is not required. If you decide to use an issue of your own choosing just write about that issue as you wish in your response papers.

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**Week 2, Jan. 18: Avoiding Self-Centered Excuses**

Read in Way of Love Sessions 2-4. pp. 7-18

Assignment:

**All Students:** write a three-page response double-spaced, due Sunday, dealing with some of the questions at the end of each session. Send this by e-mail to the professor. Share on
discussion board about a specific new insight you have gotten from the readings so far. Every time you write something on the discussion, also respond to one or more other student’s posts.

Week 3, Jan. 25: Right Ways to Make Decisions

Readings: Read in Way of Love Sessions 5-7.

Assignment:

All Students: Write a two-page paper, double-spaced, due Sunday, as per instructions for Week 2. Share on Discussion Board a paragraph about a specific new insight you have gotten from the readings so far. Every time you write something on the discussion, also respond to at least one other person’s post.

MA Students: In addition to what is assigned for all students above: prepare a brief PowerPoint you could present to a specific group making use of materials in the readings so far. This should be about 5-10 slides long.

Week 4, Feb. 1: Basics of Thomistic Ethics I

Lectures: Audio on Thomistic Ethics to be found on Populi for this course.

Readings: Basics of Thomistic Ethics Truths 1-5

Assignment:

All Students: Listen to audio on Thomistic Ethics. Read Basics of Thomistic Ethics, Truths 1-5.

MA Students: Read Summa Theologiae, Ia-IIae, QQ. 1-5 (responses only).

Week 5, Feb. 8: Basics of Thomistic Ethics II

Readings: Basics of Thomistic Ethics to end, and Posner Appendix for M.A. Students.

Assignment:

All Students: Write three pages (double spaced) summarizing the ideas in the text with your own examples. These examples are not the same example you worked on for Making Loving Moral Decisions. This is due on Sunday. Send to the professor by e-mail.

For the Discussion Board post one paragraph explaining a new insight you got from the reading of Basics of Thomistic Ethics. Respond to at least one other post on this subject.

MA Students: Read Summa Theologiae, Ia-IIae, Q. 18-20, 94.

Week 6, Feb. 15: Controversial Issues – Social Justice, War & Peace, Euthanasia, etc.

Readings: Way of Love, Sessions 8-13. Note: Some of these issues will be dealt with in much detail in other textbooks for this course such as contraception and homosexuality. Browse through Ronda Chervin’s chapters on these two topics, expecting answers to the many questions you will still have that have not been answered in these small sections.

Also read the booklet by Patricia D. Stewart: The Health Care Decision Guide. A Connecticut doctor close to Holy Apostles, Dr. Lorraine Hartnett, is an expert on the horrors of euthanasia practice in convalescent hospitals nowadays. Click onto this link to learn from her experience.
Assignments:

1. All Students: Write a three-page paper due Sunday, making use of reflection questions at the end of each session as well as your own ideas.

Put on discussion board one paragraph about a new insight you got from the readings, including the Stewart reading and the Dr. Hartnett link. Respond to one other student’s post.

2. All Students:

Pick out your course project topic. Follow these instructions:

1. Choose a project topic from these possibilities, and email your topic to the professor for approval by Sunday of week 6.
   a) Pick a selection or selections from one or more of the books from section 6 of this syllabus (below) and put together a PowerPoint presentation for a specific audience that you could present to (in the context of a high school or college audience, parish ministry, a conference presentation, etc.) relating the reading to the course contents.
   
   b) OR chose a topic in applied ethics, such as immigration, pornography, stem-cell, in vitro-fertilization, legalizing marijuana, euthanasia, first strike for defense against terrorist bastions, or any other topic that we have not covered much in this class, and prepare a PowerPoint presentation on it based on your own research of the topic, being sure to cite your sources. As above, gear your PowerPoint document to a specific group you could be presenting to.

2. Your PowerPoint presentation should be ca. 10-15 slides long; it can include direct quotations from your sources, but the last slide should include a bibliography. Do not submit a PowerPoint that you used for another course or simply a rehashing of information from a website or other source; you need carefully to make it original, to make it your own, relating your topic to specific ideas discussed in class.

3. You will present the PowerPoint sometime during Weeks 14-15 (TBA).

Week 7, Feb. 22: DeMarco - Contraception


Assignment:

Underline as you go, working toward response paper due 2 weeks from now.

Week 8, Feb. 29: DeMarco - Contraception

Readings: DeMarco, *New Perspectives on Contraception*, read to end.

Assignment:

All Students: Write a three-page paper double spaced summarizing each and every chapter of the book. Send to the professor via e-mail. On the Discussion Board post one idea from the reading that struck you as most insightful.
(Note: The statistics on side-effects of contraception vary greatly. You may know of some that contradict those DeMarco cites in support of his arguments. It is beyond the scope of this course to try to reconcile opposing statistics. It is fine to mention them on the discussion board but they do not change the thrust of the basic philosophical and theological arguments DeMarco presents against contraception.)

Find the Couple to Couple League on-line and get the most recent statistics on the reliability (method and user) for Natural Family Planning. Include them in the above paper.

On the Discussion Board post one idea from the reading and struck you as most insightful.

**Week 9, Mar. 7: Ethics of Homosexuality**

Readings:

Harvey, *The Truth About Homosexuality*. Read from the intro to p. 148 and then another chapter of your choice. You do not have to read every line. Read enough of each chapter to get the idea and especially anything new to you. Watch this video to see the sensational witness story of a lesbian professor who is now married with many children: Google “Melinda Selmys Courage.”

Conference #168. Watch either the video *The Third Way* (about same-sex attraction people and the church) at [http://www.blackstonefilms.org/films](http://www.blackstonefilms.org/films) html. Or a recent film from Courage called *The Everlasting Hills*.

Assignment:

**All Students:** Answer all these questions and send your response to the professor by Sunday. (About two pages double-spaced)

- What are some psychological theories about the origins of homosexual orientation?
- What does Harvey think about the belief that homosexual orientation is biological?
- What are some philosophical arguments about the wrongness of homosexual acts?
- What are some ministries Harvey recommends for those with homosexual orientation and/or practice?
- What did you learn from the video of the lesbian professor?
- What did you learn from the other video you saw?

**Week 10, Mar. 14: Morality of Abortion I**

Readings:

Schwarz and Lattimer, *Understanding Abortion*. It is a long book. This is a two-week reading; you could skim over parts you already know a lot about. Note: Schwarz and Lattimer are both strong pro-life advocates. They wrote it as in a “neutral” tone in order to reach middle-of-the-road readers.

**Week 11, Mar. 21: Morality of Abortion II**

Reading: Finish *Understanding Abortion*. Check out a series of talks by Kiki Latimer at Holy Apostles (Fall 2014): [www.youtube.com/holyapostlesedu](http://www.youtube.com/holyapostlesedu)
Assignments:

**All Students:** On the Discussion board post one paragraph about what stood out for you the most in this book. Respond to one other post.

**Undergrad Students:** Write a two-page double-spaced paper highlighting key points in Schwarz you thought were new. But span the whole book in choosing these.

**MA Students:** Based on the reading, write a short PowerPoint you could present in the context of an audience of some college-level or high school-level pro-lifers and some confused pro-choice people. Refer to new ideas you got from reading the book (i.e., do not just summarize).

**Week 12, Mar. 28: The Meaning of Conscience and Situation Ethics**

**Readings:**

**All Students:** Read the skit: *The Many Facets of Evil*. Then read the Summary of Von Hildebrand’s *Morality and Situation Ethics*. These will be posted on Populi for you.

**Assignment:**

**All Students:** By Sunday of Week 12 put on the discussion board 2 paragraphs indicating what you found most helpful in these readings of the Skit and the Summary on Von Hildebrand’s *Situation Ethics*. Respond to one other student’s post.

**Undergraduates:** Read: *Way of Love* Sessions 14-15

Write a 2 page double spaced paper responding to questions in the text of both Sessions. Send to the professor by e-mail.

**MA Students:** Read *Way of Love* Sessions 14-15 for background. Listen to Audio on *Splendor of Truth*. Locate and read *Splendor of Truth* (*Veritatis Splendor*) by John Paul II online. Then put together a 5-10 slide PowerPoint based on the Encyclical, focusing on any philosophical topics you were not familiar with before the reading. Be sure to cover John Paul II’s refutation of fundamental option and proportionalism. Your presentation should show that you are familiar with the whole document.

**Weeks 13-15, Apr. 4, 11 & 18: Project Presentations.**

These three weeks will be dedicated to presentations on WebEx or AdobeConnect. Details TBA.

4. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Discussion Postings – 30%
- Response Papers – 60%
- Project – 10 %

There is a deduction from your grade for late assignments unless you tell me about a real emergency, not something such as, “I'm going on vacation for a week.”

It is mandatory that if your writing skills need improvement that you go to OWL. Otherwise points will be deducted from your written responses.
5. REQUIRED READINGS and RESOURCES:

Note: You must obtain/purchase the works written in **bold**. The rest will be provided by the instructor via Populi or email.

- Chervin, Ronda. *The Way of Love*, Vol. III, Making Loving Moral Decisions. This will be found for free on Populi on the course materials posted for this class.
- Chervin, Ronda. *The Many Facets of Evil* – a skit to be found on Populi for this course.
- *Basics of Thomistic Ethics* by Chervin with Appendix by Posner.
- Harvey John. *The Truth About Homosexuality*. (ISBN 978089870536; order from Ignatius Press or other outlet such as amazon.com, list price $15.26).
- John Paul II. *The Splendor of Truth / Veritatis Splendor* (for MA students: find this Encyclical on line).
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (for MA students: find this work on line).

6. READINGS TO SELECT FROM FOR YOUR PROJECT (see Week 6):

- Feldman, Fred. *Introductory Ethics*. An introduction to ethics written by an analytical philosopher (non-Catholic). Whereas it has many shortcomings for an introductory ethics textbook (e.g., it does not present natural law or virtue ethics, and does not defend any view as being the truth about morality), it nonetheless has very strong merits as a systematic, logical refutation of many contemporary moral errors, such as utilitarianism, relativism, ethical egoism, Kantian ethics, etc. It uses the method of analytical philosophy; it is crucial especially for graduate students to be acquainted with this method, as it is quite prevalent in both secular and Catholic contemporary English-language philosophy.
- George, Robert; Patrick Lee. *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics*. The authors make a sustained philosophical argument for the Thomistic view that human beings are physical, animal organisms (against the more Platonic/Cartesian dualist view of humans as minds that have a body) and examine the implications of this Thomistic understanding of human beings for some of the most controversial issues in contemporary ethics, such as abortion, euthanasia, hedonistic drug-taking, homosexuality, contraception, etc.
• Lee, Patrick. *Abortion and Unborn Human Life*. A thorough and technical philosophical Thomistic defense of the pro-life position.

• McInerny, Dennis Q. *A Course in Thomistic Ethics*. A traditional exposition of Thomistic ethics written for seminarians at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary, by the brother of Ralph McInerny.

• McInerny, Ralph. *Ethica Thomistica*. A summary of Thomistic ethics from one of the foremost American Thomists of the 20th century.


• St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. The classic work of Thomistic theology by the Angelic Doctor; the Second Part (*Prima Secundae* and *Secunda Secundae*) contain St. Thomas’ moral theology.

7. EVALUATION

You will be writing responses to the readings. These are informal. You don’t need scholarly footnotes, but you should say what author you are referring to. *Please do not take a paper you wrote for another course with similar topics in it and hand it in for me on the basis that it is the same basic idea.* Each paper must clearly be a response to what you have read in this course.

All assignments are due on the Sunday night after the week it is assigned, unless otherwise indicated. See the Week-by-Week schedule (no. 5 above) for details.

Students who have difficulty with research and composition are encouraged to pursue assistance with the Online Writing Lab (available at [http://www.holyapostles.edu/owl](http://www.holyapostles.edu/owl)). You grade will be reduced for each assignment if I tell you to go to OWL and you do not do so indicated by the subsequent paper(s) being inadequate from a writing point of view.

**GRADING SCALE:**

A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73 D 60-69; F 59 and below

8. DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Holy Apostles College & Seminary is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunities and full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities who qualify for admission to the College. Students enrolled in online courses who have documented disabilities requiring special accommodations should contact Bob Mish, the Director of Online Student Affairs, at rmish@holyapostles.edu or 860-632-3015. In all cases, reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to course materials in a mode in which they can receive them. Students who have technological limitations (e.g., slow Internet connection speeds in convents) are asked to notify their instructors the first week of class for alternative means of delivery.

9. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students at Holy Apostles College & Seminary are expected to practice academic honesty.
Avoiding Plagiarism

In its broadest sense, plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas, presented or claimed as your own. At this stage in your academic career, you should be fully conscious of what it means to plagiarize. This is an inherently unethical activity because it entails the uncredited use of someone else’s expression of ideas for another's personal advancement; that is, it entails the use of a person merely as a means to another person’s ends.

Students, where applicable:

- Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- Students should not copy more than two paragraphs from any source as a major component of papers or projects.
- Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- Should follow the Holy Apostles College & Seminary Stylesheet (available on the Online Writing Lab’s website at http://www.holyapostles.edu/owl/resources).

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty:

At HACS academic honesty is taken very seriously. Students participating in academic dishonesty may be removed from the course and from the program.

10. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Even though you are not required to be logged in at any precise time or day, you are expected to login several times during each week. Because this class is being taught entirely in a technology-mediated forum, it is important to actively participate each week in the course. In a traditional classroom setting for a 3-credit course, students would be required, per the federal standards, to be in class three 50-minute sessions (or 2.5 hours a week) and prepare for class discussions six 50-minute sessions (or 5 hours) a week. Expect to devote at least nine 50-minute sessions (or 7.5 quality hours) a week to this course. A failure on the student’s part to actively participate in the life of the course may result in a reduction of the final grade.

11. INCOMPLETE POLICY

An Incomplete is a temporary grade assigned at the discretion of the faculty member. It is typically allowed in situations in which the student has satisfactorily completed major components of the course and has the ability to finish the remaining work without re-enrolling, but has encountered extenuating circumstances, such as illness, that prevent his or her doing so prior to the last day of class.

To request an incomplete, distance-learning students must first download a copy of the Incomplete Request Form. This document is located within the Shared folder of the Files tab in Populi. Secondly, students must fill in any necessary information directly within the PDF document. Lastly, students must send their form to their professor via email for approval. “Approval” should be understood as the professor responding to the student’s email in favor of granting the “Incomplete” status of the student.

Students receiving an Incomplete must submit the missing course work by the end of the sixth week following the semester in which they were enrolled. An incomplete grade (I) automatically turns into the grade of “F” if the course work is not completed.
Students who have completed little or no work are ineligible for an incomplete. Students who feel they are in danger of failing the course due to an inability to complete course assignments should withdraw from the course.

A “W” (Withdrawal) will appear on the student’s permanent record for any course dropped after the end of the first week of a semester to the end of the third week. A “WF” (Withdrawal/Fail) will appear on the student’s permanent record for any course dropped after the end of the third week of a semester and on or before the Friday before the last week of the semester.

12. ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

Francisco Romero Carrasquillo, PhD

Dr. Francisco Romero was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He holds a PhD in medieval philosophy from Marquette University and an M.A. in Theology and Christian Ministry from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is a faculty member at Universidad Panamericana, a corporate work of Opus Dei in Mexico, where he has served as Dean of Humanities and is currently Associate Research Professor of Philosophy. He has also taught philosophy, Latin, and religious studies at institutions such as Marquette University, St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Portland State University, and Oregon State University. As a scholar, he specializes in the philosophy of religion, philosophical ethics, and in Thomas Aquinas' Arabic philosophical sources. His academic research has appeared in numerous scholarly journals and international publications including *The Thomist, American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly, Latin Mass Magazine*, and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*. He is the author of the *Ite ad Thomam* blog, and the founder and president of *Ite ad Thomam* Books and Media. This is his first semester teaching at Holy Apostles’ College and Seminary.

For Dr. Romero’s CV, publications, and other information and materials, visit his Academia.edu Page: [https://up-mx.academia.edu/FranciscoRomeroCarrasquillo](https://up-mx.academia.edu/FranciscoRomeroCarrasquillo)