1. COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course presents fundamental moral principles from the perspective of classical and contemporary moralists. Primary questions include the end of man, human acts, moral determinants, freedom, sin, moral responsibility, conscience, conversion, divine love.

2. ENVISIONED LEARNING OUTCOMES
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the soul in relation to man’s ultimate end;
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the objective nature of man’s ultimate end;
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the voluntary and the power of the soul in which it is found;
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how ignorance, passions, and circumstances relate to the freedom of man;
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the three moral determinants (the object, the intention, and the circumstances) and their relationship to conscience and law.

3. COURSE SCHEDULE (Assignments Due Saturday Midnight of Week)
Man is at the same time “both a servant and free.”\(^1\) This text from St. Augustine is an excellent summary of the traditional Catholic teaching on Moral Theology. The real difficulty in Moral Theology has always been to preserve a healthy respect for the law (the servant aspect) while also encouraging the interior formation in love which the truth of the law seeks to inculcate in human life (the aspect of freedom). The following schedule will show you the fullness of the Catholic synthesis which based in an authentic picture of the human soul seeks to direct man to a true experience of being both truthful and loving, both law-abiding and Spirit-filled, both obedient to absolute moral norms and freely pursuing heaven, BOTH A SERVANT AND FREE!

You will need to listen to the audio lectures assigned for each week. The corresponding Internet lecture notes refer to the audio lectures, and you should compare the topics with the notes and the assigned texts when preparing your discussion board posts and 3-page papers and when studying for your final exam.

**Week 1 - Lesson 1: Introduction**

**Assignment:** Those who are new to Distance Learning whom I have never tutored in the program should write me a short (one page at most) biography explaining to me who you are and why you are taking the course.

**Week 2 - Lesson 2: The Human Soul**

**Week 3 - Lesson 3: The Nature of Moral Theology**

**Week 4 - Lesson 4: Human Happiness**

**Assignment:** 1st Discussion Posting and Response Due

**Week 5 - Lesson 5: Moral Responsibility: The Voluntary**

**Assignment:** 1st Paper Due over Module One, Lessons 1-4. Topic: Explain why the nature of the soul is so important for establishing what the ultimate end of man is and what the objective nature of that end is.

**Week 6 - Lesson 6: The Voluntary and Modern Problems**

**Week 7 - Lesson 7: Freedom and Truth: Goodness and Evil**

**Week 8 - Lesson 8: The Intellect: Object, Intention, and Circumstances**

**Week 9 - Lesson 9: The Passions**

**Assignment:** 2nd Discussion Posting and Response Due

**Week 10 - Lesson 10: Law**

**Assignment:** 2nd Paper Due over Module Two, Lessons 5-7. Topic: Explain the nature of the voluntary, in which power of the soul it is found, and briefly how ignorance, passions and circumstances relate to the freedom of man.

**Week 11 - Lesson 11: Conscience**

**Week 12 - Lesson 12: Virtue**

**Week 13 - Lesson 13: Conclusion.**

**Assignment:** 3rd Discussion Posting and Response Due

**Week 14 - Lesson 14: Veritatis Splendor.**

**Assignment:** 3rd Paper Due over Module Three, Lessons 8-13. Topic: Explain the three moral determinants and how they relate to conscience and law.

Begin review for final exam (review questions available in Section 7 of this syllabus)

**Week 15 - Final Exam**

### 4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Three Papers**

The course requires in addition to the final that you write and send me three papers. These papers are to be three pages, double-spaced, 12-point font (New Times Roman or Arial is
Footnotes or endnotes should be used, plus a Title page at the beginning. Proper academic format should be used. The page limit is important in your practicing the succinct presentation of your arguments, so do make the effort to stay within this parameter. Though the MLA Style Sheet and Chicago Manual of Style permit parenthesis and short references within the text, I want you to use foot or endnotes as this is an academic paper. Please refer to the HACS Style Sheet located in the Shared Folder of the Files tab in Populi for proper citation, if needed.

Please send in either Microsoft Word or Rich Text format to: FrBMullady@aol.com.

The audio lectures and notes should be clear enough for the papers. What you are to demonstrate on these papers is that you have understood the material presented by the professor. It would be good to quote from either lectures or notes.

If you do not receive word from me that I received your paper within a few days of your sending it, I did not get it. If you do not get the corrected paper back within a week, or I did not remember to attach it, please advise me. If you cannot make the deadline, please inform me of the reason. The study questions at the end of the lessons are for the purpose of both private study and creating a distance learning community experience.

The required reading for this class may be found in the notes: under the Course Documents tab on the left you will find the Lessons, Lesson Reviews, and Review Questions.

Two Voluntary Discussion Forums

Two voluntary discussion areas have been made available to you in this course:

Water Cooler

This is for you to communicate with your fellow students about personal and spiritual matters not related to the course. I will not monitor this forum, so feel free to discuss anything important to you but to also not place items needing my response in this forum.

General Discussion

This is for course-related discussion. You may post questions about the materials and topics, your thoughts and comments about the course concepts, etc. Be sure to respond to the postings of your fellow students, the same as you would do in a traditional classroom. I will monitor this forum, but please do not expect me to comment on all postings.

Do please use the General Discussion forum for all course-related questions that you would like to ask of me, for if you have a question, chances are some of your fellow students have the same question and will be able to join in the response. You may also contact me directly as I do not check the General Discussion every day. Specific personal questions regarding your grades, extensions for due dates, and private matters should be sent to me in an email: FrBMullady@aol.com. I will do my best to respond to you within 48 hours, but as noted below, I may be out-of-range of Internet access for several days at a time. Questions regarding the manner and method of the final exam should be addressed to Bob Mish in the distance learning office: rmish@holyapostles.edu.

Three Required Discussion Forums

In addition to the two general discussion areas, three required discussion forums, designed to correspond to the three papers this course requires, have been created for the purpose of assignment submission and peer review. Within each module, you are to choose one question from among the lessons offered in that time period and post a 300-word response in the designated container. You are also to pick by the last week of each module one answer to
a question posted by one of your classmates and write a 50-word response to that answer. I will monitor and comment once on all the questions and answers, and this should help you to orient your mind to the material within the module as you begin the process of writing your papers.

5. RESOURCES:

This class does not have videos or DVDs, but it is on audio CD, *Fundamental Moral 1 – CD* by Fr. Brian Mullady, O.P. All of Fr. Brain Mullady’s CD’s must be order directly from the Rosary Center. Please order your materials before the course begins to allow time for delivery. The contact information is as follows: Rosary Center at Phone: (503) 236-8393. The [order form for Fr. Mullady CD’s](#). Mailing Address: PO Box 3617, Portland, OR 97208 USA; The general website is [www.rosary-center.org](http://www.rosary-center.org). All the books should be available for purchase on the Internet using Amazon.com. They are *Catechism of the Catholic Church; Aquinas, Summa Theologiae* which can also be found on the Internet; Conrad Baars, *I will give them a New Heart*; and Brian Mullady, *Man’s Desire for God*.

6. EVALUATION:

(Basis of evaluation with explanation regarding the nature of the assignment and the percentage of the grade assigned to each item below)

33% (final exam); 33% (reflection papers), 33% (module discussion), 1% A.

Concerning the discussion posts, I ask that you make at least one 50-word response to one of your colleagues in each of the three required discussion forums. This is for the purpose of fostering a community of learners. The grade for these responses will be factored into the grade you receive for the original post.

**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

7. FUNDAMENTAL MORAL THEOLOGY - LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON ONE - WEEK ONE

Catholic moral theology has experienced a great crisis since the Second Vatican Council. This is due to a bad metaphysics which does not allow for the existence of absolute truths in anything. This idea has consequences for many fields of thought but is especially difficult when it comes to the idea of law, freedom and conscience.

The great watershed in this shift from absolute truth in morals was the publication in 1968 of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* by Paul VI. The text of this document was leaked to the press before it was published and on the day of publication there was a huge reaction including a dissent advertisement signed by hundreds of priests and religious including theology professors in the *New York Times*.

Coupled with this problem was the general *malaise* in Catholic thought which occurred when ideas which the Church had managed to control for almost three centuries from modern European philosophy entered into play with the almost universal rejection of the traditional Thomistic philosophy which had been the foundation of Catholic thought since at least the middle of the 19th century. This led theologians like Rahner to maintain that the idea of universal truth was in such jeopardy that a universal Catechism could not be written as had been the case following the Council of Trent. Interestingly this occurred on the eve of the call
of the Extraordinary Synod in 1986 for a new universal Catechism, a project which has now been successfully brought to completion.

This difficulty in moral theology prompted John Paul II to write the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (Splendor of Truth) in which he calls on theologians to bring forth a renewal of moral theology within the context of tradition. This course is an attempt to do this using Thomas Aquinas and the post-Vatican II sources.

**Questions for study and reflection:**

Is there a crisis in Catholic moral theology today? What would characterize it?

**LESSON TWO - WEEK TWO**

A good deal of what one thinks about morals depends on how one views the human soul. In Catholic theology, it is important to affirm that man is both a body and a spirit and that the spiritual soul, as the form of the body is the place where properly human conduct is determined.

There are several theories of how the soul relates to the body in human conduct. For Plato, man was several souls with no necessary interconnection. The Church has never accepted this. Rather Catholic thought has considered man to be a unity of several different human powers which underlie the soul which informs the body. These are the intellect, the will and the passions. For union in moral activity, all three are necessary and must be perfected. Moral theology does not then affirm one at the expense of the others, but affirms that all three go together to form one integrated human act.

**Questions for Study and Discussion:**

Why is it necessary for morals to maintain that the soul in man is one? What sorts of power does it underlie? What is the evidence for its unity? Distinguish the kinds of powers in the soul. Which are necessary for morals and why?

**LESSON THREE - WEEK THREE**

Moral theology is the science of human acts as judged in light of divine revelation. As such, it draws on many sources. These include the whole tradition of perennial philosophy as to ethics, Scripture and Church authorities, especially papal documents. Some people today have questioned whether this tradition is viable anymore. Many would like to base moral theology on the confrontation of human conduct with the culture. Many would argue that the Church has significantly changed her teaching several times in history. There may be some development in doctrine, but it must always be homogeneous and not heterogeneous. In fact, the universal natural law, though sometimes difficult to determine must underlie all discussions of human acts because of the universal nature of man.

**Questions for study and discussion:**

Why is moral theology called moral? Why it is called theology? What are the sources for the science of moral theology?

**LESSON FOUR - WEEK FOUR**

The longest journey begins with the first step. Before one can take the first step one must identify the destination. Aristotle determined that all men seek happiness in acting. This happiness in Christianity is identified with the vision of God and so the direct knowledge of the essence of God in heaven is the only fitting final end for human life. This is what gives the theology of human acts it impetus. There are many material things which are necessary
preludes or accompanying experiences to this happiness but the central experience is in the intellect directly perceiving God as he is in himself. Human acts supported by grace are the means to arrive there and these are in the will.

Questions for Study and Discussion:

Why does St. Thomas use happiness as the primary basis for morals and not obligation? What is the difference between a material and a formal end? What is beatitude of man and why? Is the body necessary for this? Is the soul necessary for this? Is the fellowship of friends necessary for this?

LESSON FIVE - WEEK FIVE

The will is the power which determines if a given act is a moral act or not and thus can be praised or blamed. The will therefore determines moral responsibility. Though a man may act, if his will is not in it, it has no moral meaning for his own pursuit of heaven. The intellect presents the goods to the will so the presence of the intellect is essential to determining responsibility. Ignorance which precedes the will causes lack of responsibility; ignorance which follows from it increases responsibility. The same is true of the passions. They may decrease freedom if they precede the will and take it by surprise as it were; but they increase freedom if they follow the act of the will. Knowledge of circumstances is important too, for ignorance of a circumstance can make a moral action of a whole different kind.

Questions for Study and Reflection:

What sets human acts apart from others? What power determines if an act is human or not? Can an act be human without an actual action being placed? Can fear make an action voluntary? Can ignorance or passion?

LESSON SIX - WEEK SIX

The question of freedom is a very important one. The will depends on the intellect to supply it with content. The intellect is like the eyes of the will. On the other hand, morals cannot be reduced to mere knowledge because otherwise no one would ever go anywhere or desire anything. In fact, freedom is interplay of both the intellect and the will and cannot be reduced to either one. The will also underlies the passions and guides them not as a master to a slave but as a wise governor to a free citizen. Freedom is not freedom from the truth but freedom for the truth.

Questions for Study and Reflection:

How is the will affected by truth? Is freedom license to do what one wants? Is the will determined to action?

LESSON SEVEN WEEK SEVEN

Once an action is determined to be free then one must determine if it is right or wrong. This is based on whether the act conforms to objective human nature or not. Today there are many schools of thought in Catholicism which question the whole possibility of the existence of an objective human nature. They are respectively fundamental option, moderate teleology and the new natural law school. Each of these schools undercuts objective moral truth determined by the intellect in its own way. The primary source for many of these errors is the thought of Karl Rahner who may have been a careful and eloquent thinker but whose ideas cannot be saved from philosophical relativism.
Questions for Discussion and Reflection:
What is the source of the erroneous goings-on in Catholic moral theology? What is moderate teleology? What is the Fundamental Option? Characterize the New Natural Law theory?

LESSON EIGHT - WEEK EIGHT
There are three moral determinants of good and evil for any human action: object, intention and circumstances. The object is what the act is about and may be good, bad or indifferent. The intention is the personal reason an individual has in doing the deed. The circumstances are the climate including the consequences of a given action. All three must be good for an action to be in accord with reason and an action which could lead to heaven. So a good intention or outcome cannot justify an action which is evil in itself. Consequentialists or moderate teleologists think that no act can be morally evaluated until the intention and consequences are considered. This is true for good actions, but not for evil ones.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:
What are the three moral determinants? How many have to be good for an act to be good? Why? What kind of moral determination does one have if the object is evil but the intention and circumstances are good? What power determines goodness and evil in morals?

LESSON NINE - WEEK NINE
No treatment of morals is complete without considering the contribution of the passions to a moral action. Though the passions are not in themselves good or evil they can contribute to good or evil actions. Stoics denied that the passions could be good. Aristotelians think that moderated passions are good. The passions can blind us to the truth if not properly developed in a human way. They can also make a good action better and an evil action worse. Virtue does not consist in destroying the passions but in forming them in a human way. By the same token, the passions are not a standard by which to determine right or wrong and must be denied if they are leading to moral evil. This does not create a complex but moral maturity.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:
Are the passions moral in themselves? Why are they considered in morals? What is concupiscence? Is it in the passions as such? What are the virtues which form the passions and why are they necessary?

LESSON TEN - WEEK TEN
The intellect in moral theology is informed by the law. There are several kinds of law but the source of all law is God’s idea of the world called the eternal law. This in turn gives rise to man’s understanding of himself and his powers called the natural law. The natural law is specifically and generally delineated in the Ten Commandments by divine revelation though it can and has been known by reason some people. The Ten Commandments are in turn divided into those laws which govern the worship of God and those which govern our duties to our fellow men. These are very specific in the time of the Old Testament. Christ does not change the law but instead gives the Holy Spirit of love which is its fulfillment in the New Testament.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:
What is the definition of law? Which power of the soul is the most important in law? What are the kinds of law? Why is the natural law not the same as the laws of nature? Why is the revealed law necessary for moral theology? What are the kinds of precepts in the Old Law
and what distinguishes them? What is the distinctive character of the New Law? Is the New Law a written law in any way?

LESSON ELEVEN - WEEK ELEVEN

In addition to the law, God guides the human intellect in judging moral conduct through the conscience. In the conscience, the objective law of God is applied to human conduct by the individual who takes into account all the various sources for moral judgment. Many theologians today want to make the conscience not just the last place where moral law is applied but a law unto itself so that the moral laws are merely recommendations which can always be overridden by the action of the Holy Spirit. Conscience is not an oracle. Conscience has rights because it has duties and the primary duty to be formed by the objective moral law which includes the teachings of the Holy See. Only a correct certain conscience binds always and everywhere. A mistaken conscience only binds conditionally, on the condition that it is not changed. If it can be changed, it should be.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

What power of the soul is expressed in conscience? What is the syllogism? What is the difference between the way a correct and erroneous conscience bind? Can one just say: Follow your conscience and you will always do good”?

LESSON TWELVE - WEEK TWELVE

The interior principle which is most necessary to the pursuit of the truth in human action is virtue. This is because it is not enough for someone to merely know what should be done or even to perform one right action. The person must be interiorly formed and virtue is the place to do that. This interior formation is necessary so that the person not only does what is right but loves the right. A free agent must do good freely and delightfully in order to truly desire heaven. Virtue makes a person whole in their desires. In virtue, the intellect, will and passions all lie at the source of the actions of man whether physical or spiritual to display a marvelous integrity.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

Why are virtues necessary for the moral formation of the soul? Where should these virtues be found? Are actions all that are required for moral perfection? Why is a virtue approach more helpful than merely a sin or obligation approach to morals?

LESSON THIRTEEN - WEEK THIRTEEN

Sin is any word, deed or desire contrary to the eternal law. The act of sin is opposed to the act of virtue but as is the case with virtue one can do a sinful action and not be a vicious person. Sin always causes a lack of integrity and cannot exist if it is mortal with love for the ultimate end. Since there are three powers which contribute to every human act, full knowledge, complete consent and grave matter are necessary for a person to commit a mortal sin. The consideration of sin is important and essential to morals as one cannot go to heaven without grace. But it must always be viewed not on its own, but in light of virtue and grace. Mortal sin destroys the ability to go to heaven unless one repents. Venial sin makes it harder to get there.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

What is a sin? How is it opposed to virtue? Can a sin be present with a virtue? What is the difference between a sin of weakness, of ignorance and malice? Which is worse? What must
be present for someone to commit a mortal sin? What is the difference between a mortal and a venial sin?

LESSON FOURTEEN WEEK FOURTEEN

Read: The Splendor of Truth. Study and review all of the paper topics and study questions in preparation for the final examination.

Questions for Study and Reflection:

According to The Splendor of Truth: what is the exact place of conscience; does the Church still affirm St. Thomas’s idea of the natural law; what is the relation of freedom to truth; what is the primary moral determinant; what is the basic error of consequentialism?

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:

- 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:

Because of the nature of this class, academic dishonesty 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 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

Fr. Brian Thomas Becket Mullady, O.P., is the son of an Air Force officer and was raised throughout the United States. He entered the Dominican Order in 1966 and was ordained in Oakland, California, in 1972. He has been a parish priest, high school teacher, retreat master, mission preacher, and university professor. He received his Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD) from the Angelicum University in Rome, Italy and was professor there for six years. He has taught at several colleges and seminaries in the United States. He is an academician of the Catholic Academy of Science. He was most recently a Professor of Theology at Campion College in San Francisco. He is currently a mission preacher and retreat master for the Western Dominican Province. He also teaches two months of the year at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT. He has had five series on Mother Angelica’s EWTN television network. He is the author of two books and numerous articles and writes the Answer column in Homiletic and Pastoral Review.