

Catholic Social Traditions

Theo 325 (Section 1) – Spring 2002

<http://webcampus.stthomas.edu/gwschlabach/theo325>

Dr. Gerald W. Schlabach
Theology Department
John R. Roach Center 117
651-962-5332
gwschlabach@stthomas.edu

Office hours:

Mon: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Thu: 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Other times by appointment

“What is to be done to prevent the increased exchanges between cultures, which should lead to a true and fruitful dialogue between groups and nations, from disturbing the life of communities, from destroying the wisdom received from ancestors, or from placing in danger the character proper to each people?”

-- Gaudium et Spes 56



Departmental course description

This course examines Catholic reflection on social structures and patterns of moral behavior as they are expressed in economic, social and political contexts. Focus topics might include: social virtues, the role of religion in the public realm, understanding of the person in relation to society and the state, the defense of the dignity of the person, the promotion of the common good, the use of force and the meaning of justice within and between communities. Possible sources for this course might include selections from classic biblical, patristic and medieval texts; papal, conciliar and episcopal documents; writings of modern and contemporary Catholic social theorists; and social movements inspired by the tradition.

Specific foci

- We will notice ways in which Vatican II anticipated the challenges of globalization we face at the beginning of the 21st century.
- We will explore the moral and theological resources that the Catholic Church is able to draw upon to respond to globalization,
 - insofar as "catholicity" already commits the Church to being a global, transnational, multicultural community on pilgrimage in the world through time,
 - insofar as "pilgrimage in the world through time" has bequeathed the Church a memory of ancient wisdom that provides critical perspective on the claims of any age, particularly the modern age,
 - and insofar as this "wisdom" has been embodied both in official Catholic social teaching and in the lives, communities and movements of faithful Catholics.
- We will focus our discussion of these matters by asking *what kind of social ethic a global church should have in an age of globalization?*
- Through major assignments, students will explore how Catholic social teaching is being or might be applied to specific regions or nations of the world.
- Particularly during the closing weeks, we will ask how Catholic social teaching might shape our own personal vocations, as well as those of the Christian local communities in which we participate.

Course readings & resources

- Aaron, Jane E. *The Little, Brown Essential Handbook for Writers*. 3rd ed. Addison-Wesley Pub Co, 1999.
- Barber, Benjamin R. *Jihad Vs. McWorld*. 1st Ballantine Books ed. New York: Times Books, 1996.
- Mich, Marvin Krier. *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998.
- O'Brien, David J., and Thomas A. Shannon, eds. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Thompson, J. Milburn. *Justice and Peace: A Christian Primer*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- **PLUS:** On-line course packet, article handouts and/or library reserve readings.

Assignments & evaluation

Assignments	Percentage
Research skill exercises	5 %
Bibliography assignments	10 % total
Short papers	30 % total *
Term paper	25 %
Midterm Exam	10 %
Final Exam	10 %
Participation (incl. discussion questions)	10 %

**Exceptionally thorough revision of short papers when writing the final term paper may retroactively raise grades for short papers or essays.*

Term project: This is a sequence of bibliographies and short papers on the impact that globalization is having upon one particular society or region of the U.S., later revised into a "value added" final paper. The overall sequence of work will follow a modified version of the Gustafson-Brady model of moral discourse: *narrative, prophetic, ecclesial, ethical, and policy*. Two bibliographies, three short papers, final term paper. [See handout for more information.](#)

Exams: This course follows a seminar format, which means its major emphasis is on integrative research, reflection and writing. That also means that exams will carry relatively less weight than you may be used to. What then is their role? Exams will mainly serve to check student mastery of key terms and concepts. Any essays given will be of modest length.

About attendance: Preparation, promptness, regular attendance, and active participation are necessary for your success in this class. Because the class relies heavily on classroom discussion and participation it is not really possible to "make up" for missed classes. You will, therefore, be allowed **only two absences** over the course of the semester – with no exceptions except for documented medical or family emergencies. This means that one **cannot** receive an A with 3 absences, a B with 4 absences, etc.

Discussion questions: At least once a week, every student must post a possible discussion question related to the next reading assignments on WebBoard. These are due **6 hours prior to the start of the class** for which the readings are assigned.

More about participation: Constructive participation in discussions is the key to a good "participation" grade. Students learn in different ways, however. Some learn by thinking out loud, some need to listen a while before forming their own conclusions, and some feel more comfortable conversing on-line. Even for

more reserved students, classroom discussion is an important way to think through questions and ideas, so all students are expected to participate in classroom discussions regularly. Students who are more comfortable sharing on-line can **solidify** their participation grade by participating in “threaded discussions” at our course WebBoard. In every case, students should note that well-reasoned and respectful contributions to class will value more than the sheer quantity of a student's interjections.

About promptness: My policy is to reduce the grade on any late assignment by half of a letter grade per day late, except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

About the honor system: The requirements of academic integrity preclude the unacknowledged use of other people’s words and ideas in one’s own writing. Such use is known as “plagiarism.” Information on [UST policies regarding academic integrity](#) is available in the [student handbook](#). It is your responsibility as a student to understand these policies, recognize plagiarism and avoid it. As applied to this class, academic integrity does not preclude discussions on readings, brainstorming, or mutual assistance in formulating approaches to assignments. **Collaboration must end, however, when each student begins writing.** Your written work, quizzes and exams must be your own.

For students with disabilities: I am glad to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the semester so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the Enhancement Program for disability verifications. This will allow me to determine the most helpful and reasonable academic accommodations.

Grading scale	95-100	A	75-78	C
	92-94	A-	72-74	C-
	89-91	B+	69-71	D+
	85-88	B	65-68	D
	82-84	B-	62-64	D-
	79-81	C+	<61	F

Analytical course outline & schedule

Your professor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule of topics, readings, and tasks. Any changes will be minor and announced in advance.

Unit 0: Introduction

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
1-29	Course overview		Syllabus Term project guide	
1-31	Focus question: What kind of social ethic should a global church have in an age of globalization?	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , §§ 1-10, 53-66	Barber, Introduction	<i>Defining a topic.</i>

The Circumstances of Culture in the World Today (Gaudium et Spes II.2.1)

54. The circumstances of the life of modern man have been so profoundly changed in their social and

cultural aspects, that we can speak of a new age of human history. New ways are open, therefore, for the perfection and the further extension of culture. These ways have been prepared by the enormous growth of natural, human and social sciences, by technical progress, and advances in developing and organizing means whereby men can communicate with one another. Hence the culture of today possesses particular characteristics: sciences which are called exact greatly develop critical judgment; the more recent psychological studies more profoundly explain human activity; historical studies make it much easier to see things in their mutable and evolutionary aspects; customs and usages are becoming more and more uniform; industrialization, urbanization, and other causes which promote community living create a mass-culture from which are born new ways of thinking, acting and making use of leisure. The increase of commerce between the various nations and human groups opens more widely to all the treasures of different civilizations and thus little by little, there develops a more universal form of human culture, which better promotes and expresses the unity of the human race to the degree that it preserves the particular aspects of the different civilizations.

55. From day to day, in every group or nation, there is an increase in the number of men and women who are conscious that they themselves are the authors and the artisans of the culture of their community. Throughout the whole world there is a mounting increase in the sense of autonomy as well as of responsibility. This is of paramount importance for the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race. This becomes more clear if we consider the unification of the world and the duty which is imposed upon us, that we build a better world based upon truth and justice. Thus we are witnesses of the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by this responsibility to his brothers and to history.

56. In these conditions, it is no cause of wonder that man, who senses his responsibility for the progress of culture, nourishes a high hope but also looks with anxiety upon many contradictory things which he must resolve:

Unit 1: McWorld vs. everyone & everything else?

(G&S 56:) What is to be done to prevent the increased exchanges between cultures, which should lead to a true and fruitful dialogue between groups and nations, from disturbing the life of communities, from destroying the wisdom received from ancestors, or from placing in danger the character proper to each people?

In our context, in other words...

- Just what is our context anyway?
- How is globalization contributing to the possibility of a more just and humane world?
- How is globalization undermining the possibility of a more just and humane world?
- How, especially, does globalization threaten to corrode and destroy the integrity of local communities and cultures around the world?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
2-5	Globalization as economic change		Barber c 1-4	<i>Note-taking strategies</i>
2-7	Globalization as cultural change		Barber c 5-9	<i>Due: 200-300 word of research topic & question</i> <i>Charting a research game plan</i>
2-12	Resistance to globalization		Barber c 10-14	<i>Session in the Ireland Library, south campus</i>

2-14	Is there any way out of the impasse between globalism and tribalism?		Barber c 15-16,19	<i>Field research & community contacts</i>
------	--	--	-------------------	--

Unit 2: Appropriating ancient wisdom for modern challenges

(G&S 56:) How is the dynamism and expansion of a new culture to be fostered without losing a living fidelity to the heritage of tradition? This question is of particular urgency when a culture which arises from the enormous progress of science and technology must be harmonized with a culture nourished by classical studies according to various traditions.

In our context, in other words...

- What sources of ancient wisdom did the Catholic Church take into its encounter with modernity?
- How has modernity posed both a challenge and an opportunity for Catholic Christianity?
- But wait a minute, does the long Roman Catholic tradition of appropriating "classical" thought tie it to Western culture, and make it harder to be a truly global church?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
2-19	The social encyclical tradition as a response to the challenge of modernity	<i>Rerum novarum</i>	Mich c 1: "Social Catholics' and <i>Rerum Novarum</i> "	Bibliography assignment #1 due <i>"Critical skimming" of texts</i>
2-21	Sources of Christian moral reflection	<i>R.N.</i> continued	Mich c 2: "Social Catholics in the United States"	<i>Outlining</i>
2-26	The radicality of ancient wisdom and premodern traditions	<i>Quadragesimo anno</i> §§ 39-148	Mich c 3: "The 1930s: Hope Amid Cynicism and Disillusionment" Dorothy Day, editorial, Feb. 1935	<i>"Close reading" of texts</i>
2-28	"Catholic" as Western European or as Global?	<i>Q.A.</i> continued	Thompson c 1: "The Post-Cold War World: How Did We Get Here?" Mich c. 5: "Ecclesial and Racial Revolutions: <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> and Racism"	<i>Quotation technique</i>

Unit 3: Wisely using science, technology, and new disciplines

(G&S 56:) How can we quickly and progressively harmonize the proliferation of particular branches of study with the necessity of forming a synthesis of them, and of preserving among men the faculties of contemplation and observation which lead to wisdom?

In our context, in other words...

- How can Christians master newly discovered insights and truths of modern scientific and academic disciplines without being mastered by them?
- Economics and business have increasingly claimed autonomy from moral, religious, philosophical or even civic considerations -- but should it?
- If science, technology and economics are to serve the global common good, what values and priorities ought to orient their use?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
3-5	Use for what?	<i>Mater et magistra</i> §§ 41-50, 73-96, 119-21, 144-235, 242-47	Mich c. 4: "Focus on Freedom: Pope John XXIII and John Courtney Murray"	Paper #1 due, on the narrative and prophetic phases of your area study (4-6 pp.)
3-7	Economics and the question of purpose	<i>Populorum progressio</i>	Mich c 6: "Challenging Structures: <i>Populorum Progressio</i> and Cesar Chavez"	<i>Evaluating Internet sources</i>
3-12	Science, technology and the question of purpose	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , §33-39 <i>Redemptor hominis</i> §§ 15-16 (a.k.a. ¶s 43-58)	Mich c. 8: "The Consistent Ethic of Life and the 'Gospel of Life'"	
3-14	Poverty and globalization 2001		Thompson c. 2: "Poverty and Development"	<i>Identify three statistics in the chapter that you find especially evocative.</i>
3-19				Mid-term exam

Unit 4: Struggling to conceive of global justice

(G&S 56:) *What can be done to make all men partakers of cultural values in the world, when the human culture of those who are more competent is constantly becoming more refined and more complex?*

In our context, in other words...

- Why has the Church come to speak of "structural injustice"?
- Won't economic globalization automatically bring greater global equity?
- What conception of global justice can best meet the challenge of global complexity?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
3-21	The call to justice	<i>Justice in the World</i>	Mich c. 7: "Calls for Action: <i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> , Justice in the World, and Centers of Analysis and Advocacy"	Bibliography assignment #2: Your "working bibliography" to date, formatted correctly.

4-2	Why liberation theology	Conf. of Latin American bishops at Medellin, 1968 (selections) <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> §§ 25-39	Mich c. 9: "Latin American Bishops' Conference—Liberation Theology"	
4-4	Why the "and" in peace and justice	<i>The Challenge of Peace</i> , §§ 56-79	Mich c. 10: " <i>The Challenge of Peace</i> " and the Catholic Peace Movement	
4-9	The US economy and global justice	<i>Economic Justice for All</i> , §§ 127-294	Mich c. 11: " <i>Economic Justice for All</i> and 'From Charity to Advocacy'"	
4-11	Justice for women Justice for the earth		Mich c. 12: "Sexism: Women's Voices—No Longer Silent." Mich c. 13: "An Emerging Earth Ethic"	Paper #2 due, on the ecclesial and ethical phases of your area study (4-6 pp.)

Unit 5: Becoming a global church

(G&S 56:) *Finally how is the autonomy which culture claims for itself to be recognized as legitimate without generating a notion of humanism which is merely terrestrial, and even contrary to religion itself?*

In our context, in other words...

- How can the church be a model of unity in diversity?
- How can the church be properly pluralistic without being merely relativistic?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
4-16	The Church as a pilgrim people	Handout of excerpts from patristic texts Handout of quotations from 20th century documents <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , §40-46	Yoder, "Let the Church be the Church."	
4-18	Beyond nationalism	<i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> , §§ 1-10	Thompson c 5 – 6: "Ethno-Nationalist Conflict" and "Weapons and Disarmament"	
4-23	Christian internationalism	<i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> , §§ 11-40	Thompson c. 7: "Peace and Security in the Post-Cold War World"	
4-25	Christian citizenship (in which nation?)	<i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> , §§ 41-49	Thompson c. 8: "Jesus, Catholic Social Teaching, and Christian Citizenship"	Paper # 3 due, connecting the ethical phase of your area study with policy proposals.

Unit 6: Finding our vocation

(G&S 56:) *In the midst of these conflicting requirements, human culture must evolve today in such a way that it can both develop the whole human person and aid man in those duties to whose fulfillment all are called, especially Christians fraternally united in one human family.*

In our context, in other words...

- What is the church's vocation in the world?
- What is my vocation in the church?
- What is my vocation in the world?

Date	Topic	Church Document	Other Readings	Task or assignment
4-30	Who? Me?	<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> §§ 1-24	Hélder Câmara, 1972 Mani Tese speech #1	
5-2	The Church's vocation in the world	<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> §§ 25-58	Hélder Câmara, 1972 Mani Tese speech #2	
5-7	The Christian's vocation in the Church in the world	<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> §§ 59-82	Hélder Câmara, 1972 Mani Tese speech #3	
5-9	Wrap-up: What kind of social ethic should a global church have in an age of globalization?			Final paper due. Must revise and integrate previous papers into a single, coherent, “value-added” final product. (15-18 pp.)

5/14: Tues, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	Final exam
-----------------------------	------------