Ministry & Theology of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
Boston College School of Theology & Ministry TMPS 8006
James T. Bretzke, S.J. S.T.D.
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Spring Semester 2017 Class: Tuesdays 12:00—2:50 PM in STM 110
Office Hours Procedures: Tuesdays 3:30—4:15 PM; Thursdays 3:15–5:00 PM: contact the Service Center at 617-552-6501 to sign up for a slot on these days; OR e-mail the professor at Bretzke@bc.edu for other times outside of these slots. Please do not contact the professor for an appointment slot during regular Office Hours, as the Service Center keeps this schedule and this will only delay getting an appointment
Phone: 617-552-6514;
Fr. Bretzke’s Moral Theology Web-page: https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/BretzkeWebIndex.pdf

N.B. All hyperlinks tested on June 10, 2014; please e-mail if you discover a broken or inaccurate link

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

N.B. This course will use the BC LMS Canvas for all ordinary course activities and communication, so it is essential that all students consult the Canvas course web-page regularly and have their BC and personal e-mail set up to forward from the Canvas site.

This course will consider the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation from its historical, theological, moral, pastoral, liturgical, and canonical perspectives. The course’s emphasis will be on an ongoing practicum on confessional counseling, utilizing role playing of a variety of confessional cases and issues. The course will also involve an in-depth discussion of moral, liturgical, and systematic theology as it relates to the Sacrament. Additional attention will be paid to spiritual direction and pastoral counseling in the context of sacramental confession, as well as a number of pastoral, moral, and canonical issues which often surface in the celebration of the Rite of Reconciliation.

For each class students will be expected to do the assigned reading carefully and to participate actively in the class. Pre-lection and/or discussion questions will be available for most of the principal course articles. Canvas discussion of these readings will be available, but will be optional. Every two weeks (for a total of 6 for the semester) students are asked to submit electronically on Canvas a short (e.g. 1-2 pages max) reflection paper. Topics for these reflections papers will be suggested, but the student may elect to address any other issues, further questions, reflections, etc. that arise for them personally on the material and/or class practicum.

For the practicum sessions the students will be asked to submit a total of five (5) one-page confessional scenarios, detailing different pastoral situations in which an individual presents to the priest in the confessional. These will be exchanged with other class members, role playing will be used, and a written response to an assigned case will also be due in each succeeding class (responses can be made to other cases which will be given out by the instructor at the beginning of the course). The student will be asked to make a total of six (6) responses to individual cases, of which one will be a special (common) canonical case.
Students will also be asked *either to critique two (2) communal services* for the Rite of Reconciliation prepared by students previously taught in a similar course or to construct their own communal rite of reconciliation. If the critique option is chosen it should discuss both positive aspects as well as aspects that might be missing and/or problematic in a Communal Reconciliation in the designated particular pastoral setting (e.g., parish Lenten service, children's penance service, etc.). Extensive directions for this assignment are found in the “Communal Reconciliation” folder on Canvas as well as in the Canvas “Assignments” folder. If the option for the construction of a new Communal Rite of Reconciliation is chosen it should include all of the elements to be used, including either a detailed outline of the homily, or the homily itself.

Students will be asked to view substantial parts of one movie together (Priest) and to discuss aspects of the issues of secrecy of the confessional which arise in this film. Two (2) times, once towards the middle and once toward the end of the course students will also be asked to submit a set of penances that would be given to five (5) of the cases presented throughout the semester. A Mid-Term Exam will consist of a one-on-one confessional role-playing with the professor and discussion of the course material up to that point in the semester (including a few terms drawn in lottery fashion from the Glossary posted on Canvas), as well as a brief discussion of C.S. Lewis’ *The Great Divorce*. The Final Exam will have two parts one of which will have a confessional role-playing with the professor of one confessional scenario and discussion of a few terms drawn in lottery fashion from the Glossary posted on Canvas. The second part will have three (2) options which the student may choose from: 1) a written take-home essay integrating the theological input and readings assigned for the course in the form of either a sample presentation on sin and the sacrament of reconciliation suitable for an adult group (such as the RCIA or a parish adult education evening) OR 2) an extended essay in the genre of a written comprehensive exam question.

**Learning Outcomes for the Course:** By the end of the course the student will be able to

- **Demonstrate familiarity in practice with all three Rites of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and identify the elements of each and the conditions in which each of the Rites may be employed.**

- **Identify and apply in a pastorally appropriate manner all of the requisite elements of an integral confession in the Roman Catholic tradition and their application to the normal spectrum of potential penitents.**

- **Demonstrate familiarity with the relevant Canons from the Code of Canon Law regarding the Sacrament of Penance, counseling regarding possible cases of nullity in matrimony, application of *latae sententiae* penalties (especially in regards to a procured abortion), reserved penalties, and granting or withholding Holy Communion in accord with CIC #915 and #916.**

- **Demonstrate a pastoral manner that is sensitive, prudent, and in conformity with the theology and legislation regarding the Sacrament of Penance in judging a normal range of penitential cases, giving appropriate counsel and direction, and**
assigning appropriate penances that are reasonable, salutary, and medicinal (rather than excessively burdensome or punitive).

- Demonstrate an ability to catechize in a manner appropriate to the normal range of penitents a basic Catholic theology of sin, forgiveness, conversion, and reconciliation and relate this to an understanding of the role of the Sacraments in the life of the Church and the faithful.

- Be able to identify, explain and use appropriately in a confessional setting the Glossary of terms and concepts related to confessional ministry posted on Canvas

Course Communication Protocol: On the Use of Canvas for the Course:

Since all course communication, announcements, e-mail, electronic documents, assignments, etc. will be handled using Canvas it is imperative that each student configure their e-mail address so that Canvas-generated e-mails are automatically forwarded to whatever e-mail account is actually used. Since announcements and course updates will be posted on the “Course Content” page (which will be the first page seen when logging onto the Canvas course web-page) it is very important that students consult this page at least once before each course meeting. If you encounter technological issues in using Canvas please contact either the IT Help Desk or the Canvas support staff at cms@bc.edu; please do not contact the instructor to resolve technical issues as this will likely only delay solution of the problem. Online tutorials and support services on the use of Canvas can be found at http://www.bc.edu/offices/cte/tools/canvas.html [link verified January 2, 2016]. Students wishing to contact the Professor directly may do this through Canvas or via e-mail sent to bretzke@bc.edu.

STM and/or BC-Wide Policies

Attendance Policy: Please read this carefully

Attendance is expected at all classes; there is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, but only between “foreseen” and “unforeseen.” If an absence is foreseen please contact the professor before the class to be missed. If an absence is unforeseen (e.g., illness or emergency) please contact the professor as soon as possible after the missed class. Absences may result in lowering of the final grade. Given the considerable attention to role-playing practicum in the course, if more than two (2) absences are foreseen it is recommended that this particular course NOT be taken in this semester.

For Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan (Kathleen.duggan@bc.edu) Associate Director, Academic Support Services, the Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Paulette Durrett (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.
**Writing Assistance**

The STM Writing Companions Corner (WCC) offers students one-on-one help with writing research papers, exegeses, reflection papers, and other assignments frequently given by STM faculty. Please watch STM News for more information on signing up for an appointment in the WCC.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

*Plagiarism* is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one’s own. Penalties at Boston College range from a grade penalty to dismissal from the University. To avoid plagiarism, any use of another’s words or ideas must be fully cited. If in the original wording, quotation marks or blocked, indented quotations must be used. For more information regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, please consult the STM website at [http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/acadprog/acadpol.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/acadprog/acadpol.html) [link verified January 3, 2016]

**Inclusive Language Policy:**

Language is not fixed or static, but is constantly evolving and changing as society's attitudes and practices change. Be aware of the development of new forms of expression that endeavor to describe persons in non-discriminatory ways that are appropriate, respectful and just. In accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style and generally accepted contemporary canons of scholarship, the expectation is to use bias neutral language in academic writing. In addition to gender inclusive language, conscientious effort should be made to use appropriate language with reference to race, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, social status, etc.

**STM School-Wide Grading Policy**

**A** Work is exceptional in every respect. There is an active and sophisticated engagement with all aspect of the course, demonstrated through careful analysis or creative treatment of the ideas covered. Both class participation (including full attendance) and written work indicate outstanding mastery of content, originality of thought clearly expressed, and clarity in connecting course concepts with ministerial and theological interests. *All assignments turned in complete and on time.*

**A-** Work is superior and above the average graduate level expectations. This involves mastery of the course content, recognition of the “big picture” within which course material is situated, and capacity to make cogent links with one’s ministerial and theological position. This level is reflected in the ability to express one’s thoughts effectively in writing and to contribute significantly to class conversation.

**B+** Work is more than satisfactory at the graduate level. This involves mastery of the course content and the ability to draw connections across course topics and with appropriate theological and ministerial topics. Contribution to class conversation gives
evidence of both active listening and thoughtful participation. Written work is clear, focused and well organized.

**B** Work is clearly satisfactory at the graduate level. There is consistent engagement with, and a basic mastery of, the course material with a good command of the various topics. Assignments frequently turned in late or incomplete.

**B-** Work is barely acceptable at the graduate level. This reflects a basic command of the course material, an adequate articulation of the connections across content areas, and a basic recognition of the implications for pastoral work.

**C** Work is marginally acceptable at the graduate level. This is a basic mastery of most of the course materials but not all. It represents that you have slipped below an acceptable level of work in one or two areas.

**F** Work is unsatisfactory and fails to meet the requirements of the course.

**P/F** Pass/Fail option must be arranged with the professors by the end of the first week of the semester if this grade is desired in place of a standard Letter Grade.

**COURSE TEXTS: REQUIRED BOOKS**


Lewis, Clive Staples. *The Great Divorce.* ISBN 9780060652951. [To be read sometime before the Mid-Term Exam; it will not be “taught” per se] [146 pages]
COURSE TEXTS: REQUIRED ARTICLES


Anonymous (Letter from a former student and young Jesuit priest). “Dear Mike.” Available on the *Canvas* Course web-page. [1 page]


Burke, Raymond Cardinal. “The Scandal of Accepting Homosexual Relationships.” Interview given in reaction to a Synod on the Family speech given by one of the invited married couples who spoke of accepting their own gay son. Published 9 October 2014 on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MOfho3wGi4&list=UUYImiD9L0dMycenfBy2a0Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MOfho3wGi4&list=UUYImiD9L0dMycenfBy2a0Q)


*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (sections on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, #1420-1498, and Sin, #1846-1876 ) [ pp. 396-417; p. 504-511] Also available on the Internet at: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/index.htm)
Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, Canons 18, 144, 915-916, 959-997 [25 pages]. The texts of the Code itself are available online at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/INDEX.HTM


Francis, Pope. Amoris Laetitia Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Joy of Love in the Family, Ch.8 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html


Fuchs, Josef, S.J. "Good acts and good persons." The Tablet 247 (6 November 1993):.

Häring, Bernard, C.Ss.R. “Sins against Chastity within Marriage.” In Idem. Shalom:


Hill, Robert Alan. “7 Deadly Sins in a Contemporary Mode” (excerpt his “Angel Voice” 2014 Easter Homily) available on Canvas and at http://www.bu.edu/av/chapel/podcasts/sundayservices/sermon/Sermon042014.mp3


Keller, Paul, CMF. “Are We Living in Sin?” U.S. Catholic 30 July 2015. Available on Canvas and at http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201507/are-we-living-sin-30269 [also skim the “comments” to the article]


Loyola, St. Ignatius. “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” from the Spiritual Exercises (available on Canvas)


Martin, James, S.J. “Bless Me Father.” America (21 May 2007). Also available on the Canvas Course web-page. [4 pages]

McCormick, Patrick, C.M. "Human Sinfulness: Models for a Developing Moral Theology." Studia Moralia 26 (1988): 61-100. Also available on the Canvas Course web-page. [Pre-lection available on Canvas] [5 pages]


Mieth, Dietmar. "The Ethic of Failure and Beginning Again: A Forgotten Perspective in Theological Ethics." Concilium (5/1990): 45-57. Also available on the Canvas Course web-page. [Pre-lection available on Canvas] [12 pages]


Contrasts the theologies of Monika Hellwig in her 1982 book on the history and theology of penance with that of Pope John Paul II’s 1984 Apostolic Exhortation Reconciliatio et Paenitentia. Morrill concludes with a theological analysis of the contemporary situation.

See also, Recommended Readings, the two responses to Morill’s article in the same issue: Joseph C. Mudd, “What Might Bernard Lonergan Say to Bruce Morrill,” pp. 613-623; and Brian P. Flanagan, “Reconciliation and the Church: A Response to Bruce Morrill, pp. 624-634.


“Responsibilities of Children’s Confessors” (handout available on Canvas Course Web-page). [19 pages]

"Rite of Penance" Ch. 2 in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*. [228 pages]


An excellent treatment of contrasting theologies of conscience as exemplified by figures such as Archbishop Charles Chaput and Germain Grisez on one hand, and Josef Fuchs, SJ and Bernard Häring, C.Ss.R. on the other.


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


“[H]earing so many confessions about “cutting” is new for me. I've come to see that it represents a deep, intuitive search for wholeness. Cutting isn’t self-loathing. It is an inarticulate cry for help.”


McDermott, James, S.J. “What Really Happens in Confession?” *America* (22 October 2016). See especially the comments to the article. [http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/what-really-happens-confession?utm_source=Full+List+with+Groups&utm_campaign=db7823102b-Catholic+women+call+for+expanded+notion+10+26+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0fe8ed70be-db7823102b-57349833](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/what-really-happens-confession)

National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB, today the USCCB). *Post Abortion Ministry Resource Manual for Priests* (nd; available online on the Canvas site)


Schoenbechler, Roger, O.S.B. *Letters to a Scrupulous Person*. Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1939. [short pamphlet available on Canvas]


Uwineza, a Rwandan Jesuit and doctoral student in theology at Boston College, reflects on the Christian response to that tragedy of genocide in light of the Christian virtue of hope and the mandate of forgiveness.

*Other supplemental materials will be posted throughout the semester into the appropriate folders on Canvas.*

**Weekly Schedule of Classes**

**Week 1 (January 17)** *Introduction and Methodology; Begin Role-Playing of Confessions*

**Before the First Class:** Please read over and reflect on the Case and Questions in the Introductory Confession Case.

**Read**

Anonymous (a young Jesuit priest). “Dear Mike.”

Francis, Pope. “Address to Apostolic Penitentiary,” 28 March 2014  

Francis, Pope. Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Miseria* (on Mercy and Peace)  
November 20, 2016  


Martin, “Bless Me Father.” *America*

**Begin reading** Stasiak (Introduction and Chs. 1-3); please complete the reading of C.S. Lewis’ novel *The Great Divorce* by the mid-term.

**Read & Review Carefully:** The Course Syllabus (posted on Canvas)

**Download** and Review Confessional Ministry Glossary of Terms

**Recommended Reading:**
Bretzke, Chapter 1 from *A Morally Complex World* (See Study Materials section of *Canvas* Course web-page for Study Questions).

McDermott, James, S.J. “What Really Happens in Confession?” *America* (22 October 2016). See especially the comments to the article.  
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/what-really-happens-confession?utm_source=Full+List+with+Groups&utm_campaign=db7823102b-Catholic_women_call_for_expanded_notion_10_26_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0fe8ed70be-db7823102b-57349833

**Recommended to Watch & Review** the Power Point Presentations: *Introduction to Moral Theology Parts 1 & 2 on Canvas*

  Part One of Introduction to Moral Methodology:  
https://bc.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d1251b58-f539-4e4d-a1bc-d4b9c5ea2bb2

  Part Two of Introduction to Moral Methodology:  
https://bc.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=6e0a87e7-03ad-471b-b11b-2a15a195cb74

**NO Written Assignments this Week 😊**

**Week 2 (January 24) Elements of the Individual Confession**

Submit first bi-weekly *Reflection Paper* (Suggested theme: your own experience with the Sacrament of Reconciliation)

Hand in first confession case to the Discussion Board detailing what you would consider to be a “normal” confession (e.g., without complicated moral, canonical or pastoral issues).

Memorize prayer of absolution in English or your primary language of celebration of the Sacrament, "God, the Father of mercies..."

Read  
"Rite of Penance" Ch. 2 in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*

*Curran, “Sin, Reconciliation, and the Manuals of Moral Theology.”*


Finish reading Stasiak

Recommended Reading

Bretzke, Ch. 2, 6

Download and review Bretzke’s Rite One

Download and review Bretzke’s Penance Guidelines

Download and review Bretzke’s Confession Cases Group One Moral Cases

Download and review Bretzke’s Bible Passages for Confession

Download and review Bretzke’s Counseling Points

Download and review Busted Halo’s How to Confess

Download and review Boston Archdiocese’s How to Make a Good Confession

Download and review Bretzke’s New Rite of Penance Explained

Download and review Bretzke’s Method of Confession English & Spanish (this though was given as a handout in the first class)

Week 3 (January 31) Seal of the Confessional in Practice

Hand in second confessional case to the Discussion Board, ideally dealing with some sort of family issue or problem that involves the penitent and his/her relations with other family members.

Read (It is recommended to read these in the sequential order listed below)

1983 Code of Canon Law, Canons 959-997 (reading a good commentary on these canons, such as that of the Canon Law Society of America, is recommended). The texts of the Code itself are available online at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM


Bretzke SealHandout on the Seal of Confession (posted to Canvas)
McNamara, Seal of Confession (Zenit)


Finish Reading Stasiak, Ch 4 and Concluding Remarks

Download and review Arrupe Falling in Love

Download and review Newman’s Lead Kindly Light

Download and review Ps 139 Farrell Version

Download and review Mother Theresa’s Guidelines

Download and review Serenity Prayer Color

Download and review Bretzke’s Confessional Cases Group Two: Sexual Issues

Week 4 (February 7) Sin, Grace, Conversion, and Historical Overview of the Practice of the Sacrament of Penance

Submit second bi-weekly Reflection Paper (suggested theme: your reflections on the nature of sin, conversion, and reconciliation)

View & Discuss (in class) selected clips from “Don Jon”

Read

*McCormick, ”Human Sinfulness: Models”

Hill, 7 Deadly Sins excerpt from his Boston University Marsh Chapel April 20, 2014 Easter Homily (on Canvas)

Lensch, “Forgiving My Father.” On Canvas and at
Recommended Reading

Bretzke, Chs. 3, 4, 7


Gives a short & realistic view of how “mortal sin” was widely conceived in the Church up to Vatican II and outlines some problems with the lingering effects of this view today.


Kasper, Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life, Chs. 1-4


Download and review Bretzke’s Confessional Cases Group 3: Particular Issues

Download and review Bretzke’s Give Absolution Unless

Download and review How to Do Confession St. Joseph’s Daily Missal

Download and review Traditional Examination of Conscience & Act of Contrition

Download and review Pre-Vatican II Confession Catechesis

Download and review Zenit’s Indulgences at Point of Death and Indulgences Follow-up

Download and review St. Ignatius Loyola’s “Rules for the Discernment of
Spirits” (1st and 2nd Week of the Spiritual Exercises)

Week 5 (February 14) Contemporary Magisterial Documents on Reconciliation

Hand in third confessional case to the Discussion Board, ideally detailing a case that you would find perplexing to handle.

Hand in first response to a confessional case designated in previous class (to the professor only, i.e., do not post to the whole class). In your response please paste the case you were assigned and then either give a dialogue of how you would proceed OR outline briefly the key points you believe should be addressed.

Read


*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (sections on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, #1420-1498, and Sin, #1846-1876 (available online in several places, including the Vatican web-site: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)


Recommended Reading:

Pope Francis, 2016 Ash Wednesday Address to "Missionaries of Mercy"
https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-priests-named-missionaries-of-mercy/

Huels, John. The Pastoral Companion. (Sections on marriage and penance)

John Paul II’s Reconciliatio et Paenitentia. Also on the Internet at:

See also the two responses to Bruce Morrill’s article in the same issue: Joseph C. Mudd, “What Might Bernard Lonergan Say to Bruce Morrill,” pp. 613-623; and Brian P. Flanagan, “Reconciliation and the Church: A Response to Bruce Morrill, pp. 624-634.

Presentation of Special Canonical Case of “George” (Initial response due by February 20th)

Week 6 (February 21): Spiritual Direction and Developing a Contemporary Theology of Sin, Grace, and Conversion

Hand in your response by February 20th to the canonical “Curious Case of George” presented in the previous class detailing just the canonical and sacramental issues involved and how you would address these (this counts as a confessional response).

Hand in fourth confessional case to the Discussion Board, ideally dealing with some sort of sexual ethics sin issue.

Submit 3rd bi-weekly Reflection Paper (suggested theme: aspects of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation that you find challenging or perplexing)

Read


O’Hare, “Opening to Love: A Paradigm for Growth in Relationship with God.”

Paul VI, Indulgentiarum doctrina Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences (1967)

Recommended Reading


The article both caricatures and betrays a woefully inadequate grasp of fundamental option theory, but is useful for pointing out how this theory can be misunderstand and/or maligned. Bonagura has an M.A. in theology from St. Joseph’s University in Dunwoodie NY where he also serves as an adjunct professor of theology. More on Bonagura can be found at http://www.cdu.edu/about/administration/faculty/137-david-bonagura


Interview with the author of The Dark Box; A Secret History of Confession on his own thumbnail sketch of the history of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the negative effect Pius X’s emphasis on having children confess prior to their First Communion has had on them and the Church practice. For a critical review of Cornwall’s book see historian Leslie Woodcock Tentler in Commonweal (19 April 2014): https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/book-reviews/forgive-him-father


Whitehead, Evelyn and James. “Forgiveness, Gratitude, Generosity” and “Virtue of Self-compassion” from their Healing Emotions (4 pages)

Download and review Bretzke’s Anger Management

Download and review Bretzke’s Canon More file

Download and review Soul of Christ Prayer
**Download** and review *Praying the Examen*

**Download** and review *First Principle and Foundation*

**Download** and review *Novena of Grace*

**Download** and review *Isaiah 65: I Make All Things New*

**Download** and review St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Prayer for Generosity*

**Week 7 (February 28) Forgiveness Documentary & Mid-Term Exams**

**N. B. We will meet for the entire period in a large-class format**

**View** selected segments of Helen Whitney’s documentary *Forgiveness: A Time to Love & A Time To Hate*

**Discussion** of George canonical case (if all have successfully answered it)

**Hand in** second response to a confessional case designated, which is to respond to one of your own cases (or your own choosing) that has not yet been handled in your small-group role-playing. (to the professor only, i.e., do not post to the whole class). In your response please paste the case you were assigned and then either give a dialogue of how you would proceed OR outline briefly the key points you believe should be addressed.

**Hand in** fifth (and last) confessional case to the **Discussion Board** of whatever issue you would like to see handled in class.

**Finish Reading by Midterm Exam** *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis

**Download and Review** Glossary of Terms in Confessional Ministry covered to date

**Recommended Reading & Viewing**

*Amish Grace* (2010 film) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLqOIncjLug](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLqOIncjLug)


Bretzke, Chapter 5


Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, Chs. 5-6

Uwineza, a Rwandan Jesuit and doctoral student in theology at Boston College, reflects on the Christian response to that tragedy of genocide in light of the Christian virtue of hope and the mandate of forgiveness.

**Individual Mid-Term Exams** [outside of regular class time]

**Spring Break: No Class March 7th**

**Week 8 (March 14) Communal Rites of Reconciliation & Confessions in Foreign Language(s)**

**Read**
*Osborne, “The Ambiguity of Communal Penance.” [Pre-lection available on Canvas]*

*Ventura, “Old Wine in New Wineskins.” [Pre-lection available on Canvas]*

**Hand in** First Set of Penances & Pastoral Responses: Briefly identify the case and paste the introductory penitent dialogue and then give just the penance you would assign and a brief indication of why you choose this penance. Do this for any five (5) cases of your choosing.

**Hand in** fourth response to the professor only to one of YOUR OWN cases of your own choosing (as long the case you choose has not yet been discussed in class). In your response please paste the case you have chosen and then either give a dialogue of how you would proceed OR outline briefly the key points you believe should be addressed.

**Submit bi-weekly 4th Reflection Paper** (suggested theme: your personal experience[s] with communal rites of reconciliation)

**Recommended Reading**


“Beichte” (in German, if you can read this language) [on Canvas]

Prayer of Absolution in Italian (if you can read this language) [on Canvas]

**Week 9 (March 21) Confessional Role-playing and Special Cases**
Read
Burke, Raymond Cardinal. “The Scandal of Accepting Homosexual Relationships.” Published 9 October 2014 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MOfho3wGi4&list=UUYImiD9L0dMycenfBy2ai0Q

Code of Canon Law #18, #144 and #915-#916

*Magill, “A Moral Compass for Cooperation with Wrongdoing.”

McNamara, “Denying Communion to Someone.”

Download and review Bretzke’s Scruples and Scruples Case via E-mail

Download and review Bretzke’s Understanding Addiction

Download and review 12 Steps List from AA


Hand in fifth response to the professor only to a confessional case of your own choosing of ANOTHER student (as long the case you choose has not yet been discussed in class. In your response please paste the case have chosen and then either give a dialogue of how you would proceed OR outline briefly the key points you believe should be addressed.

Recommended Reading


“[H]earing so many confessions about “cutting” is new for me. I’ve come to see that it represents a deep, intuitive search for wholeness. Cutting isn’t self-loathing. It is an inarticulate cry for help.”
Week 10 (March 28) Sexual Sins and Pastoral Approaches I

Read

*Häring, “Sins against Chastity within Marriage.”

Keller, Paul, CMF. “Are We Living in Sin?” U.S. Catholic 30 July 2015. Available on Canvas and at [http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201507/are-we-living-sin-30269](http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201507/are-we-living-sin-30269) [also skim the “comments” to the article]


Mieth, "The Ethic of Failure and Beginning Again." [2 Pre-lections available on Canvas: by Brian Christopher and Ron Gonzales]

Recommended Reading


Spohn, William C. "St. Paul on Apostolic Celibacy and the Body of Christ."

Download and review Carnes Out of the Shadows Sexual Addiction

Hand in sixth response to confessional case designated in previous class (to the professor only, i.e., do not post to the whole class). In your response please paste the case you were assigned and then either give a dialogue of how you would proceed OR outline briefly the key points you believe should be addressed.

Submit bi-weekly 5th Reflection Paper (suggested theme: sexuality, sexual sins and the Sacrament of Reconciliation)

Week 11 (April 4) Sexual Sins and Pastoral Approaches II
**Hand in Communal Reconciliation Project (see directions & files on Canvas)**

**Read**


An excellent treatment of contrasting theologies of conscience as exemplified by figures such as Archbishop Charles Chaput and Germain Grisez on one hand, and Josef Fuchs, SJ and Bernard Häring, C.Ss.R. on the other.
**Download** and review Diocese of Sacramento *Internal Forum*

**Week 12 (April 11) Seal of Confession in Difficult Circumstances**

*N.B. We will meet as a full class for the entire session as we will be viewing and discussing selected scenes from the 1994 movie “Priest”*

**Hand in Second Set of Penances & Pastoral Responses.** Briefly identify the case and paste the introductory penitent dialogue and then give *just* the penance you would assign *and* a brief indication of why you choose this penance. Do this for any five (5) cases of your choosing, as long as you have not already handled this case in class or in a previous assignment.

**Week 13 (April 18) Social Sin, Children’s Confessions Abortion and Post-Abortion Healing and Reconciliation**

*N.B. We will meet as a full class for the entire session as we will be viewing discussing the 35 minute video “Beyond Regret”*

**Submit 6th and Last bi-weekly Reflection Paper** (suggested theme: reflections on the issues involved in the movie “Priest,” or any final issues, cases, problems that you would still like to see discussed in class)

**Read**

Bretzke/Rodman, “After the Choice”

McNamara, “Faculties to Absolve from Censures.”

McAreavey, "Abortion and the Sacrament of Penance." [Pre-lection available on Canvas]

John Paul II, *Misericordia Dei*. Available online at


“Responsibilities of Children’s Confessors”

Hugo, Pieter (photos) and Dominus, Susan (text). “Portraits of Reconciliation: 20 Years after Rwanda Reconciliation Still Happens One Encounter at a Time.” New York Times Sunday Magazine April 6, 2014. Available on *Canvas* and at


**Recommending Reading**

Bretzke, Ch. 5
John Paul II’s *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (sections#16-17 on social sin)


NCCB, *Post Abortion Ministry Resource Manual for Priests*

Sawyer, Samuel, S.J. “The Harder Task: Talking about Abortion.”

Download and review *John Paul II on Abortion*

Download and review *Beyond Regret Post Abortion Resources*

Download and review *Bretzke on Abortion and Canon Law*

Download and review *Huels on Penalties and Abortion*

Download and review *Bretzke on Children’s Confessions*

Download and review *Children Examination of Conscience*

Download and review Bretzke’s Power Point “Social Sin and Social Grace”

Download and Review Glossary of Terms in Confessional Ministry covered since the Midterm (to be used in lottery for Final Oral Exam)

**Week 14 (April 25) Student-Suggested Issues & Cases**

Please e-mail the professor *before* this class any remaining issues, cases, topics, etc. you wish to have treated in class.

**Recommended Reading**


http://www.patheos.com/blogs/catholicauthenticity/2016/04/michael-voris-austin-ruse-and-the-problem-of-detraction/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Catholic%202016%20(1)&utm_content=&spMailingID=51259083&spUserID=NDEwMTQ3NzI0OTgS1&spJobID=903591074&spReportId=OTAzNTkxMDc0S0

**Week 15 (May 2) Wrap-Up, Last Cases & Topics**

*Meet in the Full Class Session*
Final Role-playing and treatment of any remaining issues, questions, etc. proposed by the students either in class or via the Reflection papers.

30 minute Final Individual Oral Exam during May 3-12

Hand in on Canvas Take Home exam or Project by May 9th at 11:59 PM