

Dustyn Kainoa Ragasa, PhD
dustyn.ragasa@chaminade.edu
(808) 739 – 8533

Office: Henry Hall 206 F
Office Hours: MWF 8:30am – 11:00am
and via Zoom by appointment

Trigger Warning

Ethics, by its very nature, deals with difficult situations and life's most complex experiences. Themes covered in this course may be challenging or upsetting for some students. It is the earnest intent of the instructor to foster a safe, compassionate learning environment for all students regardless of their ethical, moral, or religious (non)commitments.

Catalog Description

This course examines the inter-relationships between justice, development and human rights norms and institutions at the global level. Students will explore the historical development of these concepts and their application and evolution from the 19th century to the present. Particular emphasis will be placed on the contemporary dialogue between Catholic Social Thought and secular international institutions that set global norms for justice, human development and the international human rights regime. Cross-listed with POL 347. Offered annually. Prerequisites: RE 103, RE 205, or RE 211.

Learning Outcomes

The structure, content, learning experiences, and pedagogical philosophy of this course are informed by:

- A. The Marianist Educational Philosophy: *Five Characteristics of a Marianist Education* (CME)
 - 1. Educate for formation in faith
 - 2. Provide an integral, quality education
 - 3. Educate in family spirit
 - 4. Educate for service, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation
 - 5. Educate for adaptation and change
- B. Education for Formation in Faith: *General Education Learning Outcome* (GELO)

The student will integrate faith and reason as complementary methods to explore questions of ultimate reality, leading to enhanced social awareness and service for peace and justice
- C. The Religious Studies Program: *Program Learning Outcomes* (PLO)

Upon completion of the undergraduate B.A. program in Religious Studies, students will be able to:

 - 1. Utilize the key concepts of Catholic theology in a critical reflection on integral human experience
 - 2. Engage in respectful dialogue on religious meaning in our globalized, multicultural society
 - 3. Employ Christian moral imagination in moral reasoning and decision making that affirms and/or challenges secular and cultural values
 - 4. Generate a substantive project that is animated by the Marianist Charism
- D. RE/POL 347: Justice, Development and Human Rights (3): *Course Learning Outcomes* (CLO)

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students will be able to:

 - 1. Appraise conceptions of human flourishing and integral humanism as they relate to development (CME 2, GELO, and PLO 3)
 - 2. Analyze the challenges of articulating justice and establishing a just society in our pluralistic world (CME 4, GELO, PLO 3)
 - 3. Relate religious experience to ethical practice as informed by the Catholic Social Tradition (CME 4, GELO, PLO 3)
 - 4. Construct an ethical argument employing the “grammar” of human rights to redress a social injustice confronting contemporary Hawai’i (CME 5, GELO, PLO 4)

Required Materials

Regular access to the below materials is necessary for your success in our course. Please inform the instructor if you require assistance in accessing any of these materials.

1. Access to Internet-Capable Technology

Important information and materials have been posted onto our Canvas site and will be updated regularly.

2. Texts in Print

Please obtain hardcopies of the texts below from the Chaminade bookstore or your choice of online retailers. Consult the schedule on page 8 for reading assignments and the dates for their discussion in session.

- a. Finn, Daniel K., ed. *Rethinking Justice in Catholic Social Thought*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2025.
- b. Nussbaum, Martha C. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

3. Electronic Readings

All articles and documents below are available for download in .pdf format on our Canvas course site. Consult the schedule on page 8 for reading assignments and the dates for their discussion in session.

- a. Francis. *Fratelli Tutti*, 2020.
- b. John XXIII. *Pacem in Terris*, 1963.
- c. John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987.
- d. King, Jr., Martin Luther. *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, 1963.
- e. Paul VI. *Populorum Progressio*, 1967.
- f. United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948.

Student Requirements

1. Completion of Session Readings

Careful reading of all assigned materials in a timely and engaged manner is essential. Because ethics is a highly specialized field, please allot ample time to study this challenging yet rewarding material. Readings are to be completed prior to class sessions according to the schedule on page 9.

2. Engagement Through Participation

Our learning community will be characterized by a spirit of collaborative learning. Two (2) instances of non-participation implies that the highest grade achievable is a "B." Four (4) or more instances of non-participation constitute grounds for a recommendation to withdraw from the course. Students must register absences via email prior to the beginning of class. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain materials from other students in the event of an absence.

3. Multi-format Reflections

At the end of each week, students will undertake and share short in-class multi-format reflections intended to spark open discussion, ensure content mastery, and monitor student progress. Dialogue and feedback from plenary reflection discussion may also serve as a resource for future assignments.

4. Final Projects and Presentations

This course culminates in an application of concepts through a project-based small group assignment. It is designed to identify opportunities for meaningful social advocacy and civic engagement by cultivating a greater awareness of the importance of protecting human rights in our community. Please consult the full project prompt on page 7 and grading rubric on page 8.

Credit Hour Policy

As established by the Chaminade University of Honolulu Credit Hour Policy, this three-credit hour course represents a minimum of 135 hours of student engagement over one 15-week semester. Students enrolled in this course are expected to satisfactorily complete:

1. 40.66 hours of regularly scheduled in-person classroom instruction (e.g., lectures on course themes, seminars on readings, collaborative group discussions, weekly quizzes, and finals presentations)
2. 24.00 hours of Final Project preparation (i.e., ideation, data collection, in situ immersive experiences, project refinement, and presentation development and revision)
3. 70.34 hours of ancillary work averaging 4.68 hours per week (e.g., course readings, supplementary research and study, office hour visits and one-on-one support, reflection papers, and completion of additional assignments to address unique needs)

Assessment, Grading, and Late Work Policy

I do not ask that you *believe* the subject matter covered in our course – I ask that you *know* it. The final grade earned by a student will be highly influenced by consideration of their regular and active participation (70%), session reflections (30%), and the final project (30%). Final grades awarded are to be interpreted as follows:

- A Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative
- B Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner
- C Average grade indicating a competent grasp of subject matter
- D Inferior work of the lowest passing grade, not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite course work
- F Failed to grasp the minimum subject matter; no credit given

Assignments cannot be made up at a later date except for extenuating circumstances or by discretion of instructor and with advance written permission.

Course Policies

The Free Exchange of Thought

The university has long been a privileged place for the exchange of ideas and positions. This implies both the freedom to express one's thoughts and the responsibility to hear and respect the thoughts of others. Religious freedom and freedom of the conscience are central concepts of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Students are encouraged to think about and question the concepts covered but will be assessed solely by an ability to adequately demonstrate understanding, appropriation, and synthesis of the course content and material.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism, in addition to more obvious dishonesty.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of Academic Division and may include an "F" grade for the work in question, an "F" grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. For the most up to date information, please refer to the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

Style, Language, and Grammar

All work must be submitted in legible and intelligible Standard American English (AmE) or 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (by prior arrangement with instructor) according to the generally accepted standards of those languages. The Turabian style of citation and paper formatting has been traditionally preferred in philosophical and theological disciplines. Students may choose to use a different citation method (APA, MLA, etc.) so long as it is utilized accurately and consistently. Exceptions for the above guidelines may be made in consultation with the instructor for free academic expression in other formats (e.g., spoken word, song, dance, or visual art) as appropriate. In all cases, the use of equitable, gender-inclusive language must always be observed.

Classroom Decorum and the Use of Electronic Devices

Please remain seated for the duration of the session and refrain from distracting behavior. The instructor will regularly pause to invite your questions; please reserve them until asked. The use of electronic devices during periods of instruction, including audiovisual retention of intellectual property, is strictly prohibited without permission. Please minimize disruption by silencing your push notifications.

Office Hours

Office hours are an invaluable opportunity to build a stronger sense of university community, deepen one's knowledge, and form more nurturing relationships with faculty in an individualized format. In-person office hours are offered as posted and are subject to change. Students may schedule a private Zoom meeting if preferred. Students are highly encouraged to schedule an appointment through email to secure availability.

Instructor and Student Communication

All written communication with the instructor must take place through official Chaminade University email addresses. Do not contact the instructor through other electronic media including personal email addresses. Please check your email on a regular basis as important information (e.g., emergency class cancellations, feedback or academic progress reports, or requests to meet during office hours) will be conveyed there.

University Policies

Attendance Policy ([as codified in the Academic Catalog](#))

Students are expected to attend regularly all courses for which they are registered. Student should notify their instructors when illness or other extenuating circumstances prevents them from attending class and make arrangements to complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by emailing the instructor's Chaminade email address, calling the instructor's campus extension, or by leaving a message with the instructor's division office. It is the instructor's prerogative to modify deadlines of course requirements accordingly. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing may receive a failing grade.

Unexcused absences equivalent to more than a week of classes may lead to a grade reduction for the course. Any unexcused absence of two consecutive weeks or more may result in being withdrawn from the course by the instructor, although the instructor is not required to withdraw students in that scenario. Repeated absences put students at risk of failing grades.

Students with disabilities who have obtained accommodations from the Chaminade University of Honolulu ADA Coordinator may be considered for an exception when the accommodation does not materially alter the attainment of the learning outcomes.

Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should communicate first with the instructor to review the options. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade or be withdrawn by the instructor at the instructor's discretion.

Academic Conduct Policy ([as codified in the Academic Catalog](#))

Campus life is a unique situation requiring the full cooperation of each individual. For many, Chaminade is not only a school, but a home and a place of work as well. That makes it a community environment in which the actions of one students may directly affect other students. Therefore, each person must exercise a high degree of responsibility. Any community must have standards of conduct and rules by which it operates. At Chaminade, these standards are outlined so as to reflect both the Catholic, Marianist values of the institution and to honor and respect students as responsible adults. All alleged violations of the community standards are handled through an established student conduct process, outlined in the Student Handbook, and operated within the guidelines set to honor both students' rights and campus values.

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ideals of the University. This includes knowing and respecting the intent of rules, regulations, and/or policies presented in the Student Handbook, and realizing that students are subject to the University's jurisdiction from the time of their admission until their enrollment has been formally terminated. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details. A copy of the Student Handbook is available on the Chaminade website under Student Life.

Student with Disabilities Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu offers accommodations for all actively enrolled students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (2008).

Students are responsible for contacting Kōkua 'Ike: Center for Student Learning to schedule an appointment. Verification of their disability will be requested through appropriate documentation and once received it will take up to approximately 2–3 weeks to review them. Appropriate paperwork will be completed by the student before notification will be sent out to their instructors. Accommodation paperwork will not be automatically sent out to instructors each semester, as the student is responsible to notify Kōkua 'Ike via email at ada@chaminade.edu each semester if changes or notifications are needed.

Kōkua 'Ike: Tutoring and Learning Services

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students. Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua 'Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check [Kōkua 'Ike's](#) website for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via TutorMe. Tutor Me can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click on Account > TutorMe. For more information, please contact Kōkua 'Ike at tutoring@chaminade.edu or 808-739-8305.

CUH Alert Emergency Notification

To get the latest emergency communication from Chaminade University, students' cell numbers will be connected to Chaminade's emergency notification text system. When you log in to the Chaminade portal, you will be asked to provide some emergency contact information. If you provide a cellphone number, you will receive a text from our emergency notification system asking you to confirm your number. You must respond to that message to complete your registration and get emergency notifications on your phone.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. For pregnant and parenting students, I am also obligated to provide you with similar resources for support and protections available to you. My goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the [Chaminade University Title IX Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website](#). On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at [CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Hazing Prevention Resources and Athlete Helpline

Assists athletes, parents, coaches, and any allies interested in ensuring physical and mental safety for sports communities by offering confidential emotional support, crisis intervention, informational athlete-focused resources, and guidance related to concerns about any type of abuse—including hazing.

Chaminade University's Hazing Policy:

<https://catalog.chaminade.edu/studenthandbook/codeofconduct>

<https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/athlete-helpline/>

<https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/how-to-report-hazing/>

Basic Needs Resources: <https://chaminade.edu/basic-needs/>

“The uncertainty of history and the painful convergences in the ascending path of the human community direct us to sacred history; there God has revealed himself to us, and made known to us, as it is brought progressively to realization, his plan of liberation and salvation which is once and for all fulfilled in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.”

Iustitia in Mundo 6

I. Project Prompt

Written by the 1971 Synod of Bishops, *Iustitia in Mundo* (“Justice in the World”) is an analysis of the most difficult issues confronting their milieu. In response, the Synod proposed a set of challenging initiatives for the establishment of more just societies inspired by the experience of Jesus the Christ.

Small groups up to three (3) students are invited to undertake the same prosecution of justice utilizing the grammar of Human Rights, insights from the Capabilities Approach, and the principles from the Catholic Social Teaching tradition.

- a. First, identify an issue that is an affront to justice in Hawai’i. Drawing upon your knowledge, skills, and experience, provide an analysis of why and how the issue is problematic for our community. (e.g., unequal access to quality essential healthcare; poor urban planning and the lack of affordable housing; concerns on the quality of education and its implications for intergenerational poverty, etc.)
- b. Next, draw upon two (2) or more concepts covered in our course to show how they can be a resource for the establishment of a regime of human rights in Hawai’i. Your engagement of the concepts should provide a compelling account of why human rights language, the Capabilities Approach, and the Catholic Social Teaching tradition are relevant for our community and the challenges we face today. (e.g., Article 25 of the UDHR protecting adequate healthcare; *Populorum Progressio* on authentic development demanding housing for all, Capability 4 on education and intellectual development, etc.)

II. Presentation Guidelines

Projects may be shared through your choice of medium: hands-on demonstration, research paper, a short documentary, a PowerPoint presentation, a collection of vlogs, or in any other creative way that would best present your work.

At the conclusion of your presentation, you will briefly field and answer questions from your classmates and the instructor about your project. Presentations and Question and Answers should approximate, but must not exceed, 10 minutes. Materials associated with your project, such as slideshows, videos, or papers, must be submitted to the instructor by the end of the session.

	Superior (5)	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Poor (2)	Fail (0)
Community Injustice	Issue is clearly identified as an urgent issue of justice for our community, analyzed and presented to clearly demonstrate why and for whom it is problematic	Issue is conveyed as a legitimate problem of injustice facing our community, demonstrating why and for whom it is problematic	Issue is related to injustice in our community but would benefit from further development	Issue is not related to our injustice in community or is backed by unreliable data from questionable sources (e.g., "trust me bro" and/or Wikipedia)	Issue is not a question of justice or is entirely misrepresented
Conceptual Framework	Conceptual framework informed by the Capabilities Approach, and the Catholic Social Teaching tradition is presented with exceptional precision, nuance and sophistication befitting advanced academic discourse	Conceptual framework is well presented with mastery, evidenced through facility and depth of understanding	Conceptual framework is presented in a way that demonstrates proficiency of understanding	Conceptual framework is largely accurate but is not adequately representative of course content	Conceptual framework is misappropriated, misrepresented, incomplete, or missing entirely
Integration	Integration of issue of justice and course concepts provides a clear and compelling account of how the Capabilities Approach, and the Catholic Social Teaching tradition are resources for envisioning a just society	Integration of issue of justice and course concepts displays strong conceptual command and excellent innovation	Integration of issue of justice and course concepts is present but must be developed more fully	Integration of issue of justice and course concepts is weak, tangential, or marginal	Integration of issue of justice and course concepts is egregiously inaccurate or missing
Presentation of Project	Presentation is engaging, creative, exceeding university-level quality, meeting the required duration of 10 minutes (+/- 2 minutes)	Presentation is clear and accessible, at university-level standards, and approximates 10 minutes in length (+/- 4 minutes)	Presentation is acceptable for university-level standards but does not approximate 10 minutes in length (+/- 5 minutes)	Presentation is hard to follow, unclear in its essential elements, and/or does not approximate 10 minutes in length (+/- 6 minutes)	Presentation is largely incoherent to entirely incomprehensible, and/or does not approximate 10 minutes in length (+/- 7 minutes)

Q & A Session	Responses to questions demonstrate thoughtfulness and a superior grasp of course materials as they relate to a human rights issue in our community	Responses to questions demonstrate an excellent grasp of course materials as they relate to a human rights issue in our community	Responses to questions demonstrate a competent command of course materials as they relate to a human rights issue in our community	Responses to questions display some grasp of course materials as they relate to a human rights issue in our community	Unable to respond to the most elementary of questions in any coherent manner
---------------	--	---	--	---	--

RE/POL 347

Reading Schedule

Fall 2025

Date	Day	Week	Reading Material
8/26	T	1.a	No reading assigned
8/28	R	1.b	No reading assigned
9/2	T	2.a	King: <i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i> .
9/4	R	2.b	Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 133-152.
9/9	T	3.a	United Nations: <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> .
9/11	R	3.b	Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 13-77.
9/16	T	4.a	Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 78-99.
9/18	R	4.b	Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 177-193.
9/23	T	5.a	John XXIII: <i>Pacem in Terris</i> , paragraphs 1-80.
9/25	R	5.b	Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 157-176.
9/30	T	6.a	John XXIII: <i>Pacem in Terris</i> , paragraphs 81-172.
10/2	R	6.b	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 1-33.
10/6 – 10/10 (Break: online)	x	x	Paul VI: <i>Populorum Progressio</i> , paragraphs 1-42. Finn: <i>Rethinking Justice</i> , pp. 197-247.
10/14	T	8.a	Paul VI: <i>Populorum Progressio</i> , paragraphs 43-87.
10/16	R	8.b	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 34-70.
10/21	T	9.a	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 70-110.
10/23	R	9.b	John Paul II: <i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> , paragraphs 1-26.
10/28	T	10.a	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 110-148.
10/30	R	10.b	John Paul II: <i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> , paragraphs 27-49.
11/4	T	11.a	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 148-166.
11/6	R	11.b	Francis: <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , paragraphs 1-86.
11/11	T	x	Veteran's Day
11/13	R	12.b	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 167-198.
11/18	T	13.a	Francis, <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , paragraphs 87-127.
11/20	R	13.b	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 198-240.

11/25	T	14.a	Francis: <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , paragraphs 128-197.
11/27	R	x	Thanksgiving
12/2	T	15.a	Nussbaum: <i>Women and Human Development</i> , pp. 241-303.
12/4	R	15.b	Francis: <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , paragraphs 198-287.