

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS SCHOOL OF LAW

Moral Reasoning for Lawyers: Foundations 1
Syllabus -- First Week 2019

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Overview: This course introduces students to the foundational moral commitments shaping both the structure of our system of justice and the multiple roles of the lawyer in administering that system. Each line of inquiry is explored through both Catholic texts and texts from other religious or philosophical traditions, and by examining the multiple roles of the lawyer – as advocate for powerless or powerful clients, as policy-maker, as judge, as voter, as community member, and as family member.

Course Objectives: The course objectives are to:

- Equip students with the skills needed to **discern** the moral dimension of law and legal practice (which connects to Learning Outcome 1 – Professional Formation and Ethical Responsibilities);
- Help students begin to **understand** the professional identity of a lawyer (which connects to Learning Outcome 1 – Professional Formation and Ethical Responsibilities);
- Provide concepts and language by which students can **articulate** the connections between law and social justice (which connects to Learning Outcome 4 – Written and Oral Communication Skills, as well as Learning Outcome 1 – Professional Formation and Ethical Responsibilities);
- Introduce students to the **critical reasoning** that is foundational to legal practice (which connects to Learning Outcome 3 – Legal Analysis, Reasoning and Problem Solving);
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with students with different perspectives on issues being discussed and to **practice** the civil discourse that is essential to the function of the legal profession but increasingly rare in our society (which connects to Learning Outcome 6 – Teamwork and Relationship Skills).

- Provide a **common vocabulary** for continued consideration of the moral dimension of law and legal practice and the **concepts that inform our understanding of justice** in other law school courses (which connects to Learning Outcome 2 – Knowledge of Substantive and Procedural Law).

The course begins with a four-day introduction into the moral implications of our legal system and of being a lawyer, with some reflections on the role that faith and morality play in framing our understanding of what it means to be a lawyer and of how law school shapes our understanding of the law and of what it means to be a lawyer. We will have two additional meetings, one in first week of classes (one on self-care and the bar admissions process) and one later in September (on a date to be scheduled) dealing with better understanding how to work with people from different cultural contexts.

Text: The course text is a printed compilation of materials that should be available in the UST Bookstore on the Minneapolis campus no later than Friday, August 9.

Moral Reasoning for Lawyers: Foundations 1 -- First Week Reading Assignments:

Moral Reasoning for Lawyers: Foundations 1 will meet Monday through Thursday, beginning Monday, August 19. There are daily reading assignments for each day of First Week as set forth below. Please be sure to have read the assignments for Monday, August 19 and Tuesday, August 20 before you arrive at school on Monday, August 19. We will start class right away on Monday discussing *Buck v. Bell* and Roger Cramton's *The Ordinary Religion of the Law School Classroom*.

You should come to class each day prepared to discuss the readings and the questions for that day reflected in the notes following the readings. We strongly encourage you to reread the materials identified for each day after class while reflecting upon the class discussion and the questions addressed in class.

Grades -- Writing Exercises, Project and Final: This is a one-credit, pass-fail course. Passing the course involves successfully completing all assigned tasks during First Week, attending the additional class session on self-care and admission to the bar, and on cultural competency in September, and completing a reflection essay of 600-750 words due at the end of the fall semester.

Moral Reasoning for Lawyers: Foundations 1

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