



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY
Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries

Introduction to Canon Law for Pastoral Ministers

Course #56028

Updated Syllabus January 2023

PMIN 231

4 Units

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Pastoral ministers will be introduced to the nature, history, and function of Church law. The course surveys the norms of the 1983 Code of Canon Law in the areas of general norms, the rights and obligations of the Christian faithful, Church structures, the teaching and sanctifying offices of the Church, temporal goods, sanctions and procedural law. This course is focused on the relationship between law and ministry, the relationship between theologies of the Church and the expression of these theologies within the law itself. It is not designed to qualify students as canon lawyers; rather, it will introduce the law as a pastoral tool for ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To recognize value and necessity of canon law in the Church's ministry and life.
2. To study the historical development and sources of canon law, especially after the Second Vatican Council and the last years.
3. To identify the Church's governance and organization, particularly the diocesan and parish structures in which pastoral ministers unfold their work.
4. To examine how the Church, through its canonical framework, safeguards the faithful's participation and responsibility in the Church's life and mission.
5. To study the canonical principles guiding the administration and pastoral care in each of the seven sacraments, marriage annulment process, preaching and catechetical instruction.
6. To explore the application of canon law to modern pastoral situations encountered by pastoral ministries today, especially when working with various cultures.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

1. *The 1983 Code of Canon Law*

Online Edition: https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Regarding Printed Editions: Older translations of the *1983 Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition*, are not updated. Suggestion: borrow a copy from your pastor or library and wait to

¹ Karla Felix-Rivera holds a JCL from the Catholic University of America (2012), an MDiv from the Jesuit School of Theology (2007), and a BA in Philosophy from the University of San Francisco (2004). She has served as a Judge, Defender of the Bond, Promoter of Justice, and Delegate for Religious and lived as a Contemplative Missionary for over 23 years. She is Mexican-born, was raised in the Bay Area, and currently lives and works in Sacramento, CA.

Winter 2023 – Introduction to Canon Law

purchase the most updated edition which should be published by The Canon Law Society of America in the Spring of 2023 (Fourth Printing, ISBN 978-1-932208-65-8).

2. *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*, 5th edition (Gratianus Collection). By John M. Huels. Wilson & LaFleur (2016). ISBN-978-2-89689-354-6. May be purchased by contacting the Midwest Theological Forum: mail@mwtf.org
3. *An Introduction to Canon Law*, revised and updated. By James A. Coriden. Paulist Press (2019), ISBN 978-0-8091-5422-7 (paperback) and ISBN 978-1-58768-803-4 (e-book).

COURSE SCHEDULE AND GENERAL OVERVIEW:

DATE:	TOPIC:	ASSIGNMENTS
Monday January 9	Introduction to the Development of Canon Law, General Norms, and the Hierarchical Structure of the Church	Reading (prior to class)
Monday January 16	No class – Martin Luther King Day Holiday	
Monday January 23	The Rights and Obligations of the Christian Faithful	Reading (prior to class)
Monday January 30	Sacramental Law, Baptism, and the RCIA Process	Reading (prior to class) DUE: Short Paper#1
Monday February 6	Confirmation and the Eucharist	Reading (prior to class)
Monday February 13	Theology of Marriage, Matrimonial Consent, Canonical Form, Marriage Preparation, and Impediments	Reading (prior to class) DUE: Short Paper #2
Monday February 20	No class – Presidents’ Day Holiday	
Monday February 27	The Marriage Annulment Process	Reading (prior to class)
Monday March 6	Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Sanctions	Reading (prior to class) DUE: Short Paper #3
Monday March 13	The Teaching Office of the Church	Reading (prior to class)
Monday March 20	Final Research Paper Presentations	Research Paper Presentation
Saturday March 25	Final Research Paper	DUE: Final Paper

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS

More often than not, canon law is viewed as irrelevant or a hindrance to the exercise of pastoral ministry in the Church. Surprisingly, the opposite is true! Canon law is rich in theological content and provides practical direction to pastoral situations encountered by those called to ministry; learning the material covered in class will save pastoral ministers from making mistakes.

Apart from the assigned readings, students will complete four research assignments. The intention of these assignments is twofold: to teach students to critically research the Church's norms and apply them to contemporary pastoral scenarios.

In the first three research assignments, students will analyze pastoral case studies given by the professor (2-3 pages).

The final research assignment provides students with an opportunity to investigate a topic of pastoral significance chosen by the student (10-12 pages).

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Students are required to complete the assigned readings BEFORE class. Readings include canons from the universal law of the Church (Code of Canon Law), local norms (US Bishops' Conference / diocesan norms), and *The Pastoral Companion* (Huels).

January 9

Class Topic: Introduction to the development of Canon Law, General Norms, and the Hierarchical Structure of the Church

1. Canons: 1 (Latin Rite only), 11 (subjects), 85 (dispensations), 96 (personality)
2. John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, 25 January 1983. Downloaded from: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_25011983_sacrae-disciplinae-leges.html
3. Chapter: "Introductory Issues," in *An Introduction to Canon Law*
4. Chapter: "The Governing Function: Book One of the Code (General Norms)," in *An Introduction to Canon Law*

January 23

Class Topic: The Rights and Obligations of the Christian Faithful

1. Canons: 204 – 223 (The Christian Faithful)
2. Canons: 224 – 231 (The Lay Christian Faithful)
3. Section on "The Christian Faithful" found in the Chapter "The People of God," in *An Introduction to Canon Law*
4. Pages 1 – 9: "The Faithful," in *The Pastoral Companion*

January 30

Class Topic: Sacramental Law, Baptism and the RCIA Process

1. Canons: 834 – 839 (Liturgy)
2. Canons: 840 – 848 (Intro to Sacraments)
3. Canons: 849 – 878 (Baptism)
4. Pages 39 – 66, “Baptism,” in *The Pastoral Companion*
5. Pages 377 – 389, “Ecumenism and Liturgy” in *The Pastoral Companion*

February 6

Class Topic: Confirmation and the Most Holy Eucharist

1. Canons: 879 – 896 (Confirmation)
2. Pages 67 – 84, “Confirmation,” in *The Pastoral Companion*
3. Canons: 897 – 958 (The Most Holy Eucharist)
4. Pages 85 – 129, “Eucharist,” in *The Pastoral Companion*

February 13

Class Topic: Theology of Marriage, Matrimonial Consent, Canonical Form, Marriage Preparation, and Impediments to Marriage

1. Canons: 1055 – 1155 (Marriage)
2. *USCCB Complimentary Norms*: engagement (c. 1067), the investigation of freedom to marry (c. 1067), and lay witnesses for marriage (c. 1112)
3. Pages 203 – 306, “Preparation for Marriage,” “Impediments to Marriage,” “Matrimonial Consent,” Celebration of Marriage,” in *The Pastoral Companion*

February 27

Class Topic: The Marriage Annulment Process

1. Canons: 1151 – 1155 (Separation)
2. Canons: 1156 – 1165 (Convalidation)
3. Pages 307 – 332, “Dissolution, Declaration of Invalidity and Convalidation of Marriage” in *The Pastoral Companion*

March 6

Class Topic: Penance and Anointing of the Sick

1. Canons: 959 – 997 (Penance)
2. Pages 131 – 163, “Penance” in *The Pastoral Companion*
3. *USCCB Complimentary Norms*: general absolution (c. 961§1.2), the confessional (c. 964§2).
4. Canons 998 – 1007 (Anointing of the Sick)
5. Pages 165 – 173: “Anointing of the Sick,” in *The Pastoral Companion*

March 13

Class Topic: The Teaching Function of the Church

1. Canons: 747 – 833 (The Teaching Function)
2. Chapter: “The Teaching Function: Book Three of the Code,” in *An Introduction to Canon Law*

March 20: Final Presentations

March 25: Final Paper must be submitted before midnight

Disabilities Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged 2 accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations. While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University’s Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University’s EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com

Academic Integrity Policy

The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act,

may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of F for the course. In addition, a student found guilty of a dishonest act may be subject to sanctions up to and including dismissal from the University as a result of the student judicial process as described in the Community Handbook. A student who violates copyright laws, including those covering the copying of software programs, or who knowingly alters official academic records from this, or any other institution is subject to similar disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity Pledge

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.