Integrations – Ethics and Justice

I. Description of Purpose and Content
LMU’s commitment to a tradition that values goodness, truth, and beauty is a compass that orients the core and is the organizing principle for the inclusion of “Ethics and Justice” in the Core Curriculum. These courses explore major philosophical, theological, and spiritual traditions of ethics—especially those that have influenced and shaped the Catholic intellectual traditions—in order to help students in their efforts to articulate the good and to understand theoretical frameworks for the ethical analysis of specific situations and cases.

“Ethics and Justice” courses emphasize a philosophical approach to ethics. By its very nature, a philosophical approach seeks to articulate rational arguments that justify why persons ought to act in certain ways. Such arguments are prescriptive and fundamental, rather than descriptive and applicative. Furthermore, a philosophical approach inquires into the nature of goodness, ethics, duty, and justice per se before attempting to make claims about why specific actions, habits, processes, or systems are moral or immoral, virtuous or vicious, just or unjust. “Ethics and Justice” courses will address ultimate grounds of ethical claims, with openness to contemplative awareness and discernment as sources of moral insight. These courses include arguments about right and wrong, good and bad in specific areas of ethical concern, such as media ethics, business ethics, bioethics, environmental ethics, engineering ethics, research ethics, power and privilege, economic justice, and others.

II. Learning Outcomes
Course proposals will address the following student learning outcomes and briefly describe how the specific course content relates to these outcomes:

• Students will understand one or more of the major ethical theories—virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, natural law, various theories of justice, and so forth.
• Students will understand the difference among ethical theories, by investigating ultimate grounds of their validity.
• Students will value the importance of striving to be virtuous, ethical, and just, as well as the importance of rational reflection and engaged discourse with diverse perspectives in such striving.
• Students will develop ethical strategies for the analysis of complex situations.

III. Defining Characteristics
Course proposals for Ethics and Justice courses will:

• Study major theories that offer rational arguments about the sources of ethical norms—the grounds that one can use to justify why persons ought to act in certain ways.
• Study rational arguments addressing how persons should decide among incompatible arguments about the sources of ethical norms.
• Engage ethical theories with specific case studies or contexts, evaluating moral and ethical responsibilities and claims about justice as these apply to a complex world.