Philippine Association for the Sociology of Religion Journal
https://pasrjournal.org | eISSN: 2362-9320
Volume 6 Issue No. 1 | doi: https://doi.org/10.63931/pasrj.v6i1.89
Received: May 5, 2026 | Revised: May 15, 2026 | Accepted: May 24, 2026 | Published Online: May 29, 2026

Article

Technology in Theology: Comparative Analysis of A.I. Academic Integrity Policies in Faith-Based Education Syllabi through Durkheim's Theory of Moral Regulation

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Abstract

This study analyzed different AI policy guidelines reflected in syllabi of faith-based education in higher education in order to come up with recommended policies addressing digital equity and the requirements for ethical disclosure of AI use in an academic instruction setting. The study used a Qualitative Multi-Document Analysis approach on selected faith-based syllabi from a mix of sectarian universities and colleges to extract explicit AI statements, academic integrity clauses, and assignment instructions from the 2025–2026 academic years. Thematic lenses related to regulatory, pedagogical, and theological notions were applied for the study's analytical framework. Drawing on Durkheim's theory of moral regulation, the study emphasized that institutional policies on AI serve not only as technical guidelines but also as collective norms that preserve ethical order, spiritual values, and the integrity of human-centered mentoring. The study concluded that integrating AI into faith-based education syllabi requires a carefully crafted policy approach that balances technological efficiency with the preservation of ethical and spiritual values. This study proposed five research-based public AI policy recommendations for faith-based syllabi in congruence with UNESCO's AI guidelines, frameworks from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and De La Salle University's Policy for Generative AI in Education.

Keywords: *Academic Integrity, AI Policy Guidelines, Faith-based Education, Qualitative Multi-Document Analysis, Theological Framework, Moral Regulation Theory*

Suggested citation:
Alonsozana, V. (2026). Technology in Theology: Comparative Analysis of A.I. Academic Integrity Policies in Faith-Based Education Syllabi through Durkheim's Theory of Moral Regulation. *Philippine Association for the Sociology of Religion Journal, 6*(1), 121-130. https://doi.org/10.63931/pasrj.v6i1.89

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Introduction

We are living in the modern digital era, where artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most pressing challenges in the education sector. International, national, and local institutions have responded by developing AI policies to guide responsible adoption. UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, adopted in November 2021, represents the first global standard-setting instrument on AI ethics, endorsed by all 193 Member States (UNESCO, 2021).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has issued policies through its 2020–2022 CMOs on digital transformation and flexible learning. While not AI-specific, these policies encourage digital innovation, adaptive learning platforms, and technology-driven pedagogy, paving the way for AI integration. CHED also references the Philippine National AI Strategy Roadmap (2021, updated 2024), developed with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), which promotes AI integration in education, workforce preparation, and research (CHED, 2021; DTI & DICT, 2024).

In a specific school setting, De La Salle University (DLSU) has taken a proactive stance by developing a formal policy on generative AI in higher education. Introduced through an advisory in 2023 and clarified in 2025 via an AI Policy Forum led by the Office of the Provost, this policy provides a structured framework for responsible AI use in teaching, learning, and research (De La Salle University, 2025). DLSU's Policies on Generative Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education highlight several important provisions found in the policy document (pp. 12–18). The policy emphasizes the responsible and transparent use of generative AI in teaching, learning, and research, ensuring that its application remains aligned with Lasallian values and graduate attributes. Faculty and students are required to disclose any use of generative AI in academic outputs, specifying the tools employed and the extent of their influence on the final work. Beginning Term 1 of Academic Year 2025–2026, all course syllabi must include a dedicated Generative AI Use Policy section that clearly defines whether AI use is free, restricted to specific contexts, or banned for each graded component. Misuse of generative AI, such as undisclosed use or violations of course-specific policies, is treated as academic dishonesty under the Student Handbook, with penalties ranging from failing grades to disqualification from honors. Finally, the policy safeguards data privacy and intellectual property by prohibiting the sharing of sensitive or internal university information with AI services and clarifying that AI cannot be considered an author, thereby reinforcing accountability and ethical responsibility in academic work.

As syllabi must include a generative AI usage policy according to DLSU, are other schools, specifically Faith-based schools, have AI provision in their faith-based syllabus? Under the direct supervision of the teacher-researcher, exploratory inquiry from student's former classmates studying now in other faith-based schools was conducted to check their faith-based syllabus if there's a portion where a provision related to artificial intelligence is stated. It turns out that other than DLSU, there are

two other prominent faith-based universities with AI provisions in their faith-based syllabus. These universities have also begun to articulate clear policies on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) within their syllabi.

At DLSU Manila, the Faith Worth Living Carefully syllabus outlines a balanced approach to AI integration. Students are permitted to use generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, or Gemini to explore research topics, verify sources, and refine their writing. However, they are explicitly prohibited from using AI to generate proposals, essays, or papers. To ensure transparency, students must include an acknowledgment note at the end of their assignments whenever AI has assisted them in brainstorming, summarizing, or polishing their work (De La Salle University, 2025).

As mentioned, two other faith-based institutions have adopted distinct approaches, one of these is a prominent faith-based university along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. Its Faith, Spirituality, and the Church syllabus discourages the use of generative AI tools, emphasizing the importance of personal faith narratives. AI use is only permitted with explicit instructor approval and must be accompanied by a comprehensive disclosure document explaining how the tool contributed to the work. Misuse of AI is treated as a serious breach of academic integrity, with disciplinary measures that may include referral to the Discipline Committee or even course failure (Ateneo de Manila University, 2025).

Meanwhile, this other university in Silang Cavite adopts a structured compliance model through a "traffic light system" for AI use. In this framework, red indicates that AI use is prohibited, yellow requires permission or negotiation, and green encourages AI use with explicit disclosure. Students must provide the tool name, its specific use, and a description of its influence on their work. Furthermore, APA citation of AI tools is strongly recommended, reinforcing the institution's emphasis on responsible and ethical engagement with technology (Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025; Mormando, 2023).

From a sociological perspective, these institutional responses can be understood through Durkheim's theory of moral regulation, which posits that collective norms and rules are essential for maintaining social order and moral cohesion. By embedding disclosure requirements, prohibitions, and structured literacy frameworks into syllabi, faith-based universities are not merely regulating technology but reinforcing shared values of integrity, authenticity, and discernment within their academic communities (Durkheim, 1912/1995).

Using these three model syllabi, what can be proposed to faith-based higher education institutions standardized AI policies in a syllabus to ensure digital equity, ethical disclosures, balanced technological efficiency with spiritual values when integrating AI into academic instruction, and aligned with global and national AI frameworks (e.g., UNESCO, CHED, De La Salle University) to strengthen institutional credibility and compliance? It is therefore the objectives of the study to propose standardized AI policy guidelines for faith-based syllabi that promote digital equity and ethical disclosure; to ensure these proposed guidelines are academic strategies for

balancing technological efficiency with ethical-spiritual values in faith-based academic instruction; and to align these proposed AI provisions in faith-based syllabi with global and national AI frameworks to enhance institutional credibility and compliance.

Methodology

Qualitative Multi Document Analysis approach on selected faith-based syllabi from a mix of sectarian universities and colleges to extract explicit AI statements, academic integrity clauses, and assignment instructions from the 2025–2026 academic years. Taken together the three aforementioned syllabi, these examples illustrate the diversity of approaches among faith-based institutions. DLSU adopts a supportive but limited stance, allowing AI for auxiliary tasks while safeguarding authenticity. The university in Quezon City prioritizes theological authenticity by restricting AI use in personal faith narratives. The university in Silang Cavite, on the other hand, promotes AI literacy and ethical responsibility through structured guidelines. These policies reflect broader efforts to balance technological innovation with academic integrity, ethical responsibility, and the preservation of authentic spiritual reflection in higher education.

In the light of the UNESCO and CHED's regulatory documents, as well as, DLSU's pedagogical policies, the three syllabi are analyzed in thematic lenses related to regulatory, pedagogical and theological notions. Theological is added since the study analyzed syllabi of faith-based subjects. However, this study primarily relied on the De La Salle University (DLSU) policy document as its main reference, since the AI provisions of UNESCO and CHED required further validation through authoritative online sources to establish authenticity. Although the AI provisions of UNESCO and CHED are extensively available in digital form, the researcher underscores the importance of verifying their authenticity and ease of access for academic application. This verification gap in this study may have not fully harmonize AI global standards with faith-based syllabus policies, but the availability of DLSU's AI policies provided needed consistency and credibility in syllabus integration of AI policies referring to digital equity, establishing ethical disclosure protocols, embedding faith-integrated AI literacy, safeguarding human-centered mentoring, and aligning institutional practices with global and national frameworks. By integrating the proposed AI provision of the study, faith-based institutions can still strengthen their compliance, uphold their distinctive values, and contribute meaningfully to the responsible adoption of AI in higher education.

Results and Discussion

In examining the integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) into faith-based higher education, three institutions mentioned previously—one in Quezon City, another in Silang Cavite, and DLSU—demonstrate distinct regulatory, pedagogical, and theological approaches. From a regulatory perspective, the university in Quezon

City frames AI misuse as a serious breach of academic integrity, explicitly outlining disciplinary measures such as referral to the Discipline Committee and possible course failure. This strict enforcement reflects a compliance-driven stance that aligns AI use with institutional integrity standards (Ateneo de Manila University, 2025). In contrast, the university in Silang Cavite adopts a structured traffic-light system (red, yellow, green) to regulate AI use, requiring APA citation and explicit disclosure of the tool, its purpose, and its influence. Misuse is considered a breach of academic integrity, but the framing emphasizes responsible use rather than outright prohibition (Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025; Mormando, 2023). DLSU, meanwhile, defines clear permitted versus prohibited uses, treats fully AI-generated submissions as academic dishonesty with zero credit, and requires acknowledgment notes at the end of assignments to ensure transparency (De La Salle University, 2025).

From a pedagogical standpoint, the university in Quezon City emphasizes authentic personal reflection, discouraging AI use because it undermines the learning objective of faith narrative writing. AI is permitted only if it contributes meaningfully and is fully explained. The university in Silang, Cavite encourages critical engagement with AI through its traffic-light system, teaching students to discern when AI is appropriate and promoting fact-checking, validation, and ethical responsibility as learning outcomes. DLSU balances exploration and authenticity by allowing AI for supportive tasks such as brainstorming, refining, and grammar checking, while explicitly prohibiting AI from replacing the student's authentic theological voice.

The theological dimension further highlights differences. The university in Quezon City adopts a strong theological stance, insisting that faith narratives must remain personal and authentic, with AI seen as potentially undermining the spiritual integrity of reflection. Theology drives the strictness of its policy. The university in Silang, Cavite emphasizes honesty and responsibility, framing AI as a tool that must be used ethically in alignment with Christian values of truthfulness, and encouraging discernment that mirrors spiritual decision-making. DLSU allows AI for supportive tasks but insists that faith exploration must remain student-driven, balancing modern technological tools with the preservation of spiritual authenticity.

The synthesis among these universities reveals that the university in Quezon City is the strictest in regulatory enforcement, the university in Silang Cavite offers the most structured compliance framework, and DLSU provides a balanced approach with clear sanctions. Pedagogically, the university in Quezon City prioritizes authenticity, the university in Silang Cavite builds AI literacy, and DLSU blends supportive use with limits. Theologically, all three emphasize authenticity, but the university in Quezon City ties it most directly to faith integrity, the university in Silang Cavite frames it as honesty, and DLSU balances authenticity with modern tools.

In reviewing the policies of three faith-based institutions—one in Quezon City, another in Silang Cavite, and DLSU—five research-based public AI policy statements can be articulated to guide syllabus development in higher education.

First, ethical disclosure of AI use in teaching and assignments must be a cornerstone of faith-based syllabi. Institutions should require students and faculty to explicitly acknowledge when generative AI tools are used, specifying the tool, its purpose, and its influence on the final output. This aligns with DLSU's requirement for acknowledgment notes and university in Silang, Cavite's traffic-light system that mandates disclosure (De La Salle University, 2025; Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025).

Second, digital equity provisions for all students should ensure that access to AI tools does not exacerbate inequalities. Faith-based institutions must provide clear guidance on acceptable free tools, training opportunities, and institutional support to guarantee that students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can engage with AI responsibly. This reflects UNESCO's emphasis on equitable access in its Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (UNESCO, 2021).

Third, integration of AI literacy into faith-based curricula is essential. Universities should embed AI literacy into courses, teaching students not only how to use AI responsibly but also how to critically evaluate its outputs. The university in Silang, Cavite's traffic-light framework exemplifies this by encouraging discernment and ethical engagement, while DLSU allows AI for supportive tasks such as brainstorming and grammar refinement, ensuring students develop both technical and reflective skills (Mormando, 2023).

Fourth, safeguards for academic integrity in AI-supported work must be established. Policies should treat misuse of AI as academic dishonesty, with clear sanctions ranging from failing grades to disqualification from honors, as seen in the university in Quezon City's strict enforcement and DLSU's balanced but firm stance. Preventive measures such as AI-resistant assessments and explicit communication of expectations should also be incorporated (Ateneo de Manila University, 2025; De La Salle University, 2025).

Finally, alignment with UNESCO, CHED, and institutional AI frameworks ensures that faith-based syllabi are not developed in isolation but are consistent with global and national standards. UNESCO's ethical guidelines, CHED's digital transformation policies, and institutional frameworks such as DLSU's Generative AI policy provide a foundation for harmonizing technological innovation with ethical responsibility and theological authenticity (CHED, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; De La Salle University, 2025).

All in all, the following five policy statements are hereby proposed to provide a comprehensive framework for faith-based institutions to responsibly integrate AI into higher education while safeguarding authenticity, equity, and integrity. To simplify, the following are the proposed policy statements that are syllabus ready, combining policy clarity with theological grounding (statements presented in all capital letters may be copied and reflected in the syllabus):

1. All uses of artificial intelligence must be openly acknowledged, as an expression of the Church's teaching on truth and integrity, thereby ensuring transparency,

authenticity, and moral responsibility in both academic and faith-based work. ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN AI HELPS WITH YOUR WORK.

2. Access to artificial intelligence tools must be fair and inclusive, upholding the Church's social teaching on justice and the common good, thereby ensuring that all learners are equally empowered to benefit from technological advancements in education and formation. AI TOOLS MUST BE SHARED FAIRLY WITH ALL LEARNERS.
3. AI literacy must be systematically integrated into curricula to foster discernment and wisdom, enabling students to critically evaluate outputs while preserving authentic theological voice and responsibility in their academic and faith-based formation. THINK CRITICALLY, USE WISELY, AND KEEP YOUR AUTHENTIC IDENTITY.
4. Undisclosed or prohibited use of artificial intelligence constitutes academic dishonesty, violating both institutional and Church teachings on integrity, with sanctions in place to safeguard authenticity and uphold the dignity of human effort. HIDDEN OR PROHIBITED AI USE IS DISHONESTY.
5. The use of artificial intelligence must comply with UNESCO, CHED, and institutional guidelines, embodying the Church's principle of stewardship and ensuring the responsible application of technology for the common good. USE AI RESPONSIBLY OBSERVING SCHOOL ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE.

Sociological Implications

Faith-based institutions balance efficiency with values by embedding disclosure requirements, restricting AI in faith narratives, and framing AI literacy as discernment. For example, the university in Quezon City prohibits AI in personal faith narratives to preserve authenticity, while the university in Silang, Cavite uses a traffic-light system to encourage ethical engagement (Ateneo de Manila University, 2025; Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025). The unique AI policy approaches of De La Salle University and the two other universities illustrate this diversity: DLSU adopts a balanced approach, allowing AI for brainstorming and grammar but prohibiting full papers, with disclosure notes required; the university in Quezon City enforces strict prohibition in faith narratives, permitting AI only with instructor approval and disclosure; while the university in Silang Cavite implements a traffic-light system (red = prohibited, yellow = conditional, green = encouraged with disclosure). The similarities and differences between the university in Silang, Cavite's traffic-light system and DLSU's disclosure-based framework highlight shared emphasis on transparency and ethical use. DLSU requires acknowledgment notes, while the university in Silang Cavite mandates APA citation and categorizes AI use into permitted, conditional, or prohibited zones (Mormando, 2023; Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025).

Academic integrity is central to these policies: undisclosed or prohibited AI use is treated as academic dishonesty, with sanctions ranging from failing grades to

disqualification from honors (De La Salle University, 2025). Students are expected to disclose AI use in assignments to maintain transparency and integrity, specifying the tool, its purpose, and its influence. DLSU requires acknowledgment notes, while the university in Silang Cavite recommends APA citation (De La Salle University, 2025; Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025). AI can be used responsibly to support, but not replace, authentic personal faith narratives. It may assist with brainstorming or grammar refinement but must not generate faith narratives, as seen in the university in Quezon City's strict prohibition (Ateneo de Manila University, 2025).

At the global and national level, UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) emphasizes equitable access, transparency, and accountability. Philippine institutions, such as DLSU, align their syllabi policies with these principles by requiring disclosure and safeguarding data privacy (UNESCO, 2021; De La Salle University, 2025). CHED's digital transformation policies (2020–2022 CMOs) complement UNESCO's framework by encouraging digital innovation and flexible learning, while UNESCO stresses equitable access and ethical use. Together, they provide a foundation for faith-based institutions to harmonize innovation with values (CHED, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). Similarly, the Philippine National AI Strategy Roadmap (2021, updated 2024) supports AI integration in higher education by promoting responsible adoption in education, workforce preparation, and research (DTI & DICT, 2024).

From these insights, five syllabus-ready standardized AI policy guidelines can be proposed for faith-based institutions to ensure digital equity: Ethical disclosure, Digital equity, AI literacy, Academic integrity safeguards, and Alignment with UNESCO/CHED frameworks. Faith-based universities can integrate AI literacy into curricula without compromising theological authenticity by embedding AI literacy as discernment—teaching students to critically evaluate outputs while preserving authentic theological voice (Adventist University of the Philippines, 2025; Mormando, 2023). At the same time, institutions must address challenges faced by students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly unequal access to paid AI tools. Providing guidance on free tools and training opportunities ensures equity, consistent with UNESCO's emphasis on digital inclusion (UNESCO, 2021).

Importantly, these institutional approaches reflect Durkheim's theory of moral regulation, wherein collective norms and rules serve to maintain social order and moral cohesion. By embedding disclosure requirements, prohibitions, and structured literacy frameworks, faith-based universities are not merely regulating technology but reinforcing shared values of integrity, authenticity, and discernment within their academic communities (Durkheim, 1912/1995).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of syllabi demonstrates that faith-based institutions are actively shaping policies to regulate the use of generative AI in higher education. Each institution reflects a unique balance between regulatory enforcement,

pedagogical priorities, and theological commitments. DLSU adopts a supportive but limited stance, allowing AI for auxiliary tasks while safeguarding authenticity; the university in Quezon City emphasizes strict disciplinary framing to protect the integrity of personal faith narratives; and the university in Silang Cavite promotes structured AI literacy through its traffic-light system, encouraging discernment and ethical responsibility.

These findings highlight that while approaches differ, all three institutions converge on the importance of transparency, accountability, and authenticity in AI use. The policies collectively reinforce the need for disclosure of AI assistance, equitable access to tools, and safeguards for academic integrity. Moreover, they demonstrate how theological principles—truthfulness, authenticity, and discernment—can be integrated into modern technological frameworks, ensuring that faith-based education remains spiritually grounded while adapting to digital realities.

Finally, the articulation of five research-based public AI policy statements provides a comprehensive framework for faith-based syllabi. By embedding ethical disclosure, digital equity, AI literacy, academic integrity safeguards, and alignment with UNESCO, CHED, and institutional guidelines, these policies ensure that AI integration in higher education is not only technologically responsible but also consistent with the values of faith-based institutions. This synthesis underscores the potential of faith-based universities to lead in harmonizing innovation with ethical and spiritual commitments, preparing students to navigate both academic and moral challenges in the digital era. In line with Durkheim's moral regulation, these policies act as collective norms that preserve social cohesion, ensuring that technological adoption strengthens rather than undermines the moral fabric of faith-based education.

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