



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Fall 2018—Friday 4x Hybrid, NOLA2U

JEFFREY RILEY
Professor of Ethics
Assoc. Dean of Research Doctoral Programs
jriley@nobts.edu

Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2018-19 year is *Doctrinal Integrity*.

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competency addressed in this course is: *Spiritual and Character Formation*.

Course Description

In this introduction to the study and practice of Christian ethics, the student will examine philosophical and theological backgrounds for ethics, the role of biblical authority, and the historical relation between church and culture in order to develop a valid method of moral decision making, examine the importance of ministerial ethics, evaluate ethical issues, and lead the church in applying the gospel to life.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to provide moral leadership by modeling Christian character and communicating ethical truth, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. **Understand** the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic.
2. Be able to **apply** a Christian ethic to contemporary issues.
3. Be able to **communicate** Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly.

Embedded Assignment

This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the degree objectives and will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. **The class grade for the embedded assignment is averaged with the Tests on Assigned Reading.** The assignment follows:

Write a letter to a young believer (spiritual age, not necessarily physical age) who is struggling with how to relate to a friend who practices homosexuality or has strong same sex attractions. The friend makes statements like, “I believe Jesus is real and he died for me and all that, but I don’t understand how he could make it a sin for me to be a homosexual when I honestly can’t help it.”

For this assignment, use the following instructions:

- Single-space type your letter.
- Do not type more than 2 single-spaced pages.
- In your response, draw from the facts, concepts, judgments, and so forth that you have been learning in your readings and class notes about the issue of homosexuality. Use some of the terminology from your studies.
- Incorporate Scripture into your response, utilizing good hermeneutical principles.
- Remember the tools you have been learning and use them when and where appropriate, for example, you might utilize the 4 terms that define an ethical act, Dr. Riley’s paradigm, worldview influences, levels of ethical engagement in Scripture, and so forth. Now is the time to apply what you have been learning
- Be alert to your tone. Be redemptive, while clearly communicating biblical moral truth.
- Some of you personally know people who practice homosexual behavior. You might keep them in mind while crafting your letter.
- This is your letter, so you have liberty in what you say and how you say it. You will not be able to say everything, so be fluid and succinct in what you do say while demonstrating to me that you can communicate moral truth affectively and clearly.

Embedded Assignment Rubric

The rubric for grading the embedded assignment is below. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.

| DOMAIN | LEVEL | INADEQUATE (0 PTS) | BASIC (1 PT) | COMPETENT (2 PTS) | GOOD (3 PTS) | EXCELLENT (4 PTS) |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| UNDERSTANDING | Able to Understand the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic | | | | | |
| APPLICATION | Able to apply a Christian ethic to contemporary issues | | | | | |
| COMMUNICATION | Able to communicate Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly | | | | | |

Primary Textbooks

Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2nd ed. Updated and Expanded. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Review Textbooks

Choose one of the following books for review. To choose a book, go to Unit 3 and follow the Google Doc link. The number reviews per book is limited on a first come, first serves basis. During one of the class meetings, students will lead discussion on the books they reviewed.

- Bell, Daniel M. Jr. *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather than the State*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009.
- Blomberg, Craig L. *Christians in an Age of Wealth: A Biblical Theology of Stewardship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Grant, Jonathan. *Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age*. Foreword by James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015.
- Jones, Kevin, and Jarvis J. Williams. *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J, and Margaret E. Köstenberger. *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.
- Mitchell, C. Ben, and D. Joy Riley, *Christian Bioethics: A Guide for Pastors, Health Care Professionals, and Families*. B&H Studies in Christian Ethics, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014.
- Naselli, Andrew David, and J. D. Crowley: *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.
- Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will utilize textbooks, notes from NOBTS ethics classes, unit tests, reading assignments, written assignments, audio-visual resources, and online threaded discussions to reach the goals of the class. Because this is an internet course, each student must invest heavily in reading and online interaction. Self-motivation will be an important ingredient to success in the course.

Web-based courses are, by nature, a different kind of learning experience than courses taught in the traditional classroom. Because of this structure, this web-based course is more reading and writing intensive than traditional classroom courses. Rigorous study of the deep things of God can be a rewarding experience for anyone who participates in it, but it also calls for extra diligence and integrity in completing the work. This reality does not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in equipping you, the student, for effective, God-honoring ministry. It simply means utilizing a different strategy. Internet courses allow room for independent learners to thrive—to work at a responsible pace, to engage in student-led discussions, and to take ownership of the learning of course content. Note that your instructors are praying for your success.

Course Requirements

Tests on Assigned Reading (30% of final grade)

Five (5) tests are given on assigned reading. Tests are open and can be taken at any time prior to the due date; they must be completed by 11.59 pm (CST) on the day due. Tests are timed and should be taken without notes. You are on the honor system.

Embedded Assignment: Unit 7 hosts the embedded assignment (refer to page 2 of syllabus for details). The rubric for grading this assignment is on page 2 of this syllabus. Please complete the embedded assignment with the rubric in mind.

The grade for the embedded assignment will be averaged with the tests to generate a single score.

Text Review (20% of final grade)

From the above list under the general heading **Review Textbooks**, each student will sign up to write a review on **one book**. **Each student will go to the “Sign-Up Sheets” link under Interactive Tools on the Blackboard site to sign up for the Review Text.**

A text must be chosen by the end of Unit 3 (Saturday).

The books are available first come first serve. The professor has the authority to change a student’s choice in order to have a balanced number of reviewers for each book. A student may appeal the professor in the event a change is made.

Students who sign up for a particular book should be prepared to field questions and discuss the book during a class meeting.

Book reviews are to be submitted via SafeAssignment on Blackboard by 11:59pm CST on Friday of Unit 9. Students should be prepared to lead discussion of their book during the class on Friday that week.

This review should adhere to the following guidelines:

- The book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
- The critique should be **4-6 single spaced typed pages, Times New Roman 12 font**
- **Content should include the following:**
 - A brief statement introducing the author and title of the book and communicating that the book has been read in its entirety. If the book has not been completely read, then communicate the truth and state the estimated percentage read. If a percentage is not communicated, 10 points will be counted off the student’s grade.
 - The primary thesis, purpose, and/or description of the book
 - Major ethical insights communicated by the book. What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?
 - Ideas that changed or challenged your thinking. How and Why? What ideas are interesting, novel, or problematic?
 - As the conclusion, state major strengths and weaknesses of the book; give a brief statement of recommendation and state why you would or would not recommend the book.

Points to Remember:

- Do not simply summarize the content of the book
- Interact with the content of the book with the above guidelines. Use bullet points to formulate subheadings.
- Be a discerning reader. You may not agree with everything that you read; however, be fair to the author when critical. Criticism should be substantial and not merely affective. Do not state that you arrived at no new ideas while reading the book.
- Be willing to read with appropriate humility so that you will learn something.

Ethics Position Paper (25% of final grade)

Each student will choose a current ethical issue on which to write a position paper.

A topic must be chosen by 11:59pm at the end of Unit 7 (Saturday). See Google Doc Link in Unit 7 to list topic. You may submit at any time before the due date/time.

The professor may ask a student to change topics or make suggestions about the chosen topic. As students sign up, they should become aware of what other students are doing and try not to duplicate too many topics.

The position paper will follow examples of topical papers prepared by the ERLC on the website, **erlc.com**. Students are encouraged to examine ERLC papers (see topics>understanding the issue>specific paper). Students are also encouraged but not required to choose topics not specifically addressed on erlc.com. Quality papers could be submitted to the ERLC for web publication.

Example: **Capital Punishment**, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/issue-briefs/capital-punishment>

Example: **End-of-Life**, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/issue-briefs/end-of-life>

Example: **Gambling**, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/issue-briefs/gambling>

Example: **The Effects of Pornography on the Male Brain**, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/issue-briefs/the-effects-of-pornography-on-the-male-brain>

Note: Submit Position Papers will via SafeAssignment on Blackboard by Monday 11:59pm CST in Unit 14.

Specific guidelines include the following:

1. The position paper should be should be **5-7 single spaced typed pages, Times New Roman 12 font, excluding endnotes.**
2. Use subheadings. Listed below are examples of heading (note: go to erlc.com papers for alternative headings).
 - History of the issue
 - Technical background (if necessary, particularly for bioethical issues)
 - State of the issue today (include a clear statement describing why this is a moral issue and/or what ethical motives, means, and ends are involved)
 - Description of and response to opposing views
 - Biblical responses to the issue

3. Use what you have learned during the semester for evaluating moral issues. For example, you might use the terms that define ethical acts, Dr. Riley's paradigm, a decision making model, levels of ethical engagement, specific rules in hermeneutics, and so forth.
4. Do not cut and paste your paper from the ERLC or any other source. The student may cut and paste blocked quotes, but quoted material should not be overused and should be cited appropriately. **Plagiarism will** lead to failure for the assignment and disciplinary action by the seminary. **SafeAssignment** is a program that compares your paper with works from the internet and provides the professor with a report detailing possible plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, what it is and is not, send the professor an email seeking clarification, consult the seminary policy described in the **Student Handbook**, or send your paper to the **Write Stuff** lab at NOBTS.
5. Use **endnotes** to cite your sources. Books and Journals/articles/ websources are expected. Again, make appropriate citations using **Turabian**.

Interactive Discussions (15% of Final Grade)

Each student will participate in One (1) ungraded and Four (4) graded threaded discussions.

During weeks in which a graded discussion is active, each student must do the following:

- Enter the discussion at least three times: once near the beginning of the unit and twice toward the end as you respond to your classmates' comments.
- The initial post should express your justified position on the topic. Subsequent posts should be thoughtful responses to **at least** two (2) people, but **not more** than five (5) in any one discussion thread.
- There should be at least **two days** time span between your initial comments and your responses to classmates. Be sure to plan accordingly so that you leave enough time to respond before the end of the unit.
- For each discussion you will have a minimum of 3 entries and a maximum of 6 entries.

You are graded on your contributions to the discussion **and** on your interaction with what other students have said. It is **EXTREMELY** important that students remember to use courtesy when analyzing the ideas of their fellow students. Speak truth, but with humility, and let your conversations be characterized by grace. The first interactive discussion, shown below, will not be graded. This will allow you to become familiar with the program:

Discussion 1 (not graded): Please describe yourself. Please include your educational background (where you went to school, major), current degree plan, desire for future ministry, and information about your family (married/children/unique experience growing up, etc.). Include only information that you feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Discussions 2-5 (graded): See Weekly Units on Blackboard

Reading Reports (10% of Final Grade)

Primary textbook are an important resource for student learning. As such, Students should read on time the pages assigned for a set of units. Students will submit 6 reading reports during the course of the semester. The assigned readings represented by the six reading reports provide content for Discussions and the 6 Tests given during the semester.

Reported is the percentage completed (in 5% increments) of the assigned reading. Students will post a number representing the percentage total read. No written report is required. The percentage submitted is on your honor, and the honor of Christ Jesus.

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below.

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|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unit Tests (5 of 6) | 30% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text Review | 20% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Position Paper | 25% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussions (4) | 15% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Reports (10 of 12) | 10% |

Submitting Assignments

- A. **Unit Tests** and **Reading Reports** are submitted within their respective units and on the appropriate dates on Blackboard.
- B. **Discussion Threads:** Follow the discussion link from the appropriate Unit to add to your threads in the Discussion Board. Click on a thread to respond to it.
- C. The **Book Review** and **Ethics Position Paper** are uploaded to **SafeAssignment** on Blackboard. Follow the appropriate links from Blackboard.
- D. Please do not send your assignments to the professor or grader as email attachments unless requested to do so or unless there is a compelling reason. You may send an email announcing that you have submitted an assignment, but, if you follow the correct procedures, I will find it. I enjoy hearing from my students, but my Inbox fills up pretty quickly with attachments, and then I have to shift them over to the proper location.

Penalties

- A. **Tests:** Unit tests must be completed by midnight (Central Standard Time) of the date of the unit completion. Exams may be taken prior to that date.
- B. **Book Review** and **Ethics Position Paper:** A late paper will be assessed an initial 10 point penalty. For each calendar day after the due date an additional 2 point penalty will be assessed.
- C. **Interactive Discussions:** Failure to participate adequately in the threaded discussions and to do so according to the syllabus instructions will count against a student's grade.

Technical Assistance

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Blackboard

An important instrument in the implementation of this course is the Blackboard Learning System. *Some assignments will be submitted using Blackboard SafeAssign technology.* Tests will also be conducted in Blackboard. Because this technology is accessible at home or office, there is a **trust policy** in place that the student will not compromise his or her integrity by looking at notes or books during the test. And as the proverb notes, “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered” (Prov. 28:18).

Netiquette Statement on Appropriate Online Behavior

Appropriate Conduct in Discussions is especially important so that all students can have a chance to participate meaningfully. In an ethics class in which moral issues arise about which some of us will disagree, it is essential to treat each other with love and kindness. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity will be expected at all times in the online environment.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

UNIT AND READING SCHEDULE

| Date Unit Begins | Class Reading and Discussion Topic | Reading Assignment |
|---|---|--|
| Unit 1 8-20 | Introduction to the Class UNIT 1 DISCUSSION (1) CLASS MEETING: Friday, 8/24 6:00 to 9:50pm | Note: Submit Reading Reports to Blackboard by 11:59pm on Due Date |
| Unit 2 8-27 | Foundations UNIT 2 DISCUSSION (2) | Hollinger, Introduction Feinberg: Chapter 1 Hollinger Part 1 |
| Unit 3 9-3 | Foundations 2 Text Review Choice Due by End of Unit | Reading Report 1 Due 9-8 |
| TEST 1 DUE 9-8-18, 11:59pm CST | | Test on Reading for Report 1 |
| Unit 4 9-10 | Worldviews UNIT 4 DISCUSSION (3) | Hollinger Part 2 Hollinger, Chapter 7 |
| Unit 5 9-17 | Biblical Ethics CLASS MEETING: Friday, 9/21 6:00 to 9:50pm | Reading Report 2 Due 9-22 |
| TEST 2 DUE 9-22-18, 11:59pm CST | | Test on Reading for Report 2 |
| Unit 6 9-24 | Moral Authority UNIT 6 DISCUSSION (4) | Hollinger, Chapters 6 & 8 Feinberg Chapters 7-8 Hollinger Part 4 |
| Unit 7 10-1 | The Bible in Ethics: The Issue of Homosexuality Ethics Position Paper <u>Topic</u> due 11:59pm by the end of this Unit (Saturday, 10-6-18) | |
| Embedded Assignment Due 10-6-18, 11:59pm CST | | Embedded Assignment |
| Unit 8 10-8 | Church and the World | Reading Report 3 Due 10-13 |
| TEST 3 DUE 10-13-18, 11:59pm CST | | Test on Reading for Report 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 10-15 | <p style="text-align: center;">FALL BREAK</p> <p>Take some time to rest, if you can; Remember, your Major Book Review is Soon Due!</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">FALL BREAK October 15-19, 2018</p> |
| Unit 9 10-22 | <p style="text-align: center;">Major Book Review Due by class meeting (Friday, 10/26)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">War and Peace & Politics</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLASS MEETING: Friday, 10/26 6:00 to 9:50pm</p> | <p>Feinberg Chapters 14-15 Feinberg chapter 13</p> |
| Unit 10 10-29 | <p style="text-align: center;">Marriage and Divorce</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Reading Report 4 Due 11-03</p> |
| TEST 4 DUE 11-3-17, 11:59pm CST | | Test on Reading for Report 4 |
| Unit 11 11-5 | <p style="text-align: center;">Morality of Sex</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 11 DISCUSSION (5)</p> | <p>Feinberg: Chapter 6 Feinberg: Chapters 11-12</p> |
| Unit 12 11-12 | <p style="text-align: center;">Bioethics</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Reading Report 5 Due 11-17</p> |
| TEST 5 DUE 11-17-18, 11:59pm CST | | Test on Reading for Report 5 |
| 11-19 | THANKSGIVING BREAK | THANKSGIVING BREAK |
| Unit 13 11-26 | <p style="text-align: center;">Life Issues</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLASS MEETING: Friday, 11/30 6:00 to 9:50pm</p> | <p>Feinberg: Chapters 2-3 OR Feinberg: Chapters 9-10</p> |
| Unit 14 12-3 | <p style="text-align: center;">ETHICS POSITION PAPER DUE BY MONDAY—December 3, 2018 11:59pm CST</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Reading Report 6 Due 12-8 No late submissions accepted!</p> |
| GRADUATION | | December 15, 2018 |

Select Bibliography

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- Kuehne, Dale S. *Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship beyond an Age of Individualism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
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