



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies

Spring 2017: Thursday Hybrid (1/26, 2/16, 3/30, 4/27)
6:00-8:50pm (CST)
NO, NGA, ORL

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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

The seminary has five core values.

- 1. Doctrinal Integrity:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting of the Bible.
- 2. Spiritual Vitality:** We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word. Spiritual Vitality is addressed by reminding students that a dynamic relationship with God is vital for effective ministry.
- 3. Mission Focus:** We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries. This course addresses Mission Focus by helping students understand the biblical foundations for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.
- 4. Characteristic Excellence:** What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry.
- 5. Servant Leadership:** We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. Servant Leadership is modeled by classroom department.

The core value focus for this academic year is: *Characteristic Excellence*.

Curriculum Competencies

NOBTS faculty members realize that all ministers need to develop specific competencies if they are going to have an effective ministry. To increase the likelihood of NOBTS graduates having an effective ministry, the faculty developed a competency-based curriculum after identifying seven essential competencies necessary for effective ministry. All graduates are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in all of the following areas:

1. **Biblical Exposition:** to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.
2. **Christian Theological Heritage:** To understand and interpret Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church.
3. **Disciple Making:** To stimulate church health through mobilizing the church for missions, evangelism, discipleship, and church growth.
4. **Interpersonal Skills:** To perform pastoral care effectively, with skills in communication and conflict management.
5. **Servant Leadership:** To serve churches effectively through team ministry.
6. **Spiritual and Character Formation:** To provide moral leadership by modeling and mentoring Christian character and devotion.
7. **Worship Leadership:** To facilitate worship effectively.

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. Be able to apply their knowledge and comprehension of the following concepts to the process of providing moral leadership by modeling and mentoring Christian character and devotion:
 - A biblical Christian ethic.
 - The major current ethical issues confronting contemporary Christians and Society.
2. Comprehend the key thinkers, models, and ideas in ethics.
3. Value the following concepts:
 - Godly living through personal morality.
 - Voicing Christian ethical and moral truths to the church and the world.
4. Be ready to address moral issues.
5. Be able to accomplish the following:
 - Discuss and argue moral issues competently and convincingly.
 - Practice Christian ethics for decision making and character development.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will utilize classroom lecture, classroom discussions, exams, reading assignments, written assignments, audio-visual resources, and online threaded discussions to reach the goals of the class. The hybrid format requires the student to invest heavily in reading and online interaction. Self motivation will be an important ingredient to success in the course.

Primary Textbooks

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

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

Wright, N. T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.

Review Textbooks

Beckwith, Francis J., and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Mitchell, C. Ben. *Ethics and Moral Reasoning: A Student's Guide*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.

Rae, Scott B. *Doing the Right Thing: Making Moral Choices in a World Full of Options*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert—Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*. Pittsburg: Crown and Covenant, 2015.

Walker, Andrew T., and Eric Teetel. *Marriage Is: How Marriage Transforms Society and Cultivates Human Flourishing*. Nashville: B&H, 2015.

Charles, J. Daryl. *Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperOne, 1980; **and** *Abolition of Man*. New York: HarperOne, 1974.

- In *Mere Christianity*, read only books 1, 2, and 3
- Read all of *Abolition of Man*

Course Requirements

Book Reviews (20% of final grade)

From the above list under the general heading **Review Textbooks**, each student will write a review on **two books** (consider the C.S. Lewis assignment to be one review). Students should be prepared to field questions and discuss the book.

Book reviews will be submitted via SafeAssignment on Blackboard:

Book review 1 by **11:59pm CST on February 15, 2017**

Book review 2 by **11:59pm CST on March 29, 2017.**

Each review should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
2. The review should be **2400-3600 words long, double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. The word count does not include footnotes.** 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 in (2) above 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. Be willing to read with appropriate humility so that you will learn something even if you do not agree with the author(s).

Section Tests (30% of final grade)

Three Section Tests will be given throughout the semester. Tests will be available throughout the course and can be taken any time prior to the due date, but must be completed by midnight on the last day of the section. Each test will be timed. Exams should be taken without notes in front of you. You are on the honor system.

Tests must be completed before 11.59 pm (Central Standard Time) on the dates below:

- 1) Test over section 1 February 23
- 2) Test over section 2 March 23
- 3) Test over section 3 April 20

Ethics Position Paper (10% of final grade)

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

Please select a topic by March 30, 2017.

The position paper will follow examples of topical papers prepared by the ERLC on the website, **erlc.com**. See, for example, the paper by Sarah Jane Head on *Abortion* (<http://mail.erlc.com/article/abortion>). Students are encouraged to examine other ERLC papers (see <http://erlc.com/resource-library/topic-index>).

Position papers will be submitted via SafeAssignment on Blackboard by 11:59pm CST on May 1, 2017.

Specific guidelines include the following:

1. The position paper should be should be **2400-3600 words long, double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. The word count does not include footnotes.**
2. The following are recommended subheading, to be used if appropriate (see erlc.com for alternative headings).
 - a. History of the issue
 - b. Technical background (if necessary, particularly for bioethical issues)
 - c. 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)
 - d. Description of and response to opposing views
 - e. Biblical responses to the issue
3. The above subheadings, again, are recommended, but the chosen issue might beg for alternative headings.
4. Use appropriately what you have learned during the semester for evaluating moral issues.
5. 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 appropriately cited. **Plagiarism will** lead to failure for the assignment and disciplinary action by the seminary. If you have questions about plagiarism, consult the seminary policy described in the **Student Handbook**.
6. Use **footnotes** to cite your sources. Books and Journals/articles/ websources are expected. Again, make appropriate citations using **Turabian**.

Interactive Discussions (10% of Final Grade)

Each student will participate in three (3) threaded discussions. During the week in which the discussion is active, each student must do the following:

- You must 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.
- Your initial comments express your opinion on the topic. You must then respond to **at least** two (2) people, but **not more** than five (5) in any one discussion.
- There must be **at least three 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. Failure to do so will affect your grade.
- For each discussion you will have a minimum of 3 entries and a maximum of 6 entries.

You will be 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 critiquing the ideas of their fellow students. Speak truth, but only in love and let your conversations be characterized by grace.

Final Exam (30% of Final Grade)

The final exam will be aimed at testing each student's ability to apply the concepts learned throughout the semester. It will be application oriented; students should be able to provide solutions to the given case studies and justify the solutions from the principles learned. An embedded 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 embedded assignment will be included in the final exam.**

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					

Submission of Assignments

- A. **Section Tests** are submitted within their respective sections and on the appropriate dates on Blackboard. They are accessed within each section by clicking on the appropriate link.
- B. **Discussion Threads** are conducted on Blackboard. Go to the Discussion Board to add your threads. Click on a thread to respond to it.
- C. The **Book Reviews** and **Ethics Position Paper** should be posted in **SafeAssignment** on Blackboard. Follow the appropriate links from Blackboard.
- D. Please do not send your assignments to me as email attachments unless you have received permission to do so.

Penalties

- A. **Tests:** Section tests must be completed by midnight (Central Standard Time) of the date of the section completion. Exams may be taken prior to that date, but **will not be available** after the due 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 adequately participate in the threaded discussions and to do so in a timely manner will affect the amount of points awarded.

Plagiarism

New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains high academic standards and is not tolerant of plagiarism. If you copy another author's work and present it as your own, you will be caught, and the penalty will be failure on that assignment and could mean failure for the course or expulsion from the Seminary. In order to help you avoid plagiarism, written assignments will be checked with *SafeAssign*. This will compare your paper with a database of other papers so that you may see how much of your paper comes from other sources. All cases of plagiarism will be reported.

Grade Distribution by Assignment

Section Tests (3)	30%
Book Reviews	20%
Ethics Position Paper	10%
Final Exam	30%
Discussions	10%

Calendar

1/26 Meeting 1
 2/2 Discussion 1
 2/16 Meeting 2
 2/23 Section Test 1
 2/29 Book Review 1 Due
 3/9 Discussion
 3/23 Section Test 2
 3/29 Book Review 2 Due
 3/30 Meeting 3
 3/30 Selection of Position Paper Topic
 4/13 Discussion 3
 4/20 Section Test 3
 4/27 Meeting 4
 5/1 Position Paper Due
 5/11 Final Exam

Course Evaluation

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. Borderline grades will normally be determined by the numerical grade received (I round up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade

Miscellaneous Course Policies

Participation in Class with preparation and attentiveness are crucial not only to your own success in the class, but to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution

to make to the class. The use of laptop computers for note taking is acceptable, but playing computer games or doing work not associated with the class is not appreciated and is strictly prohibited. We will be dealing with some complex issues, and we need your undivided attention. Be considerate of other students during discussions and give opportunity for others to participate.

Appropriate Conduct in Class is especially important so that all students can have a chance to hear and participate meaningfully in class discussions. Holding private conversations in class or other rude behavior is not appreciated. In an ethics class in which moral issues arise about which some of us will disagree, it is essential to treat each other with Christian charity and kindness. Rude behavior disrespectful of the instructor or other students will not be tolerated in class.

Cell Phone and Computer Usage: Students may use a computer in class, but must find a way to sit towards the front of the class. Students using computers may not sit in the back of the room or sit with a wall to their backs. The official seminary policy as written in the Student Handbook is as follows: The student is to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This includes the usage of cell phones and computers during class time. The opportunity for students to use these items within the classroom is contingent upon their proper usage. Students are also reminded that phones are to be silenced during the class and other Seminary functions. Proper usage includes note taking and tasks specifically assigned by the professor. Improper utilization includes all other usages such as surfing the Internet, playing games, texting, and emailing. If a student is engaged in improper usage of a cell phone or computer during a class, the professor has the right to prohibit the student from bringing the item to subsequent class meetings.

Absences may not exceed nine hours for a three credit hour class if the student is to receive credit for the course, according to the NOBTS catalog. A student's grade may be penalized for excessive absences. Three times tardy or leaving early equals one absence.

Technical Assistance

You will be automatically enrolled into Blackboard. If you face any difficulties, you may request technical assistance from ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

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.

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.

Selected Bibliography

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- Beckwith, Francis J., and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. Dallas: Spence, 2004.
- Campbell, Ken M. *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Caner, Ergun Mehmet, and Emir Fethi Caner. *Christian Jihad: Two Former Muslims Look at the Crusades and Killing in the Name of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.
- Chamberlain, Paul. *Talking about Good and Bad without Getting Ugly: A Guide to Moral Persuasion*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2005.
- Charles, J. Daryl. *The Unformed Conscience of Evangelicalism: Recovering the Church's Moral Vision*. InterVarsity, 2002.
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- _____. *Reading in Christian Ethics. Vol. 2, Issues and Applications*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Clayton, Philip, and Jeffrey Schloss, eds. *Evolution and Ethics: Human Morality in Biological and eligious Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
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- Colson, Charles W., with Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2000.
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- Hollenger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
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White, James Emery. *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

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