



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES

RED CARPET WEEK ACADEMIC WORKSHOP
MAY 28 - JUNE 1, 2018

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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

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 2017-18 year is ***Servant Leadership***: “*We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us.*”

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 embedded assignment is question one of the final exam.** 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 in regard to 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

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

Wilkins, Steve, ed. *Christian Ethics: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017.

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

Review Textbooks

Choose ONE (1) of the following for Text Review 1:

Bellinger, Charles K. *Jesus v. Abortion: They Know Not What They Do*. Theopolitical Visions, 19. Cascade Books, 2016.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Christians in an Age of Wealth: A Biblical Theology of Stewardship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Jones, Kevin, and Jarvis J. Williams. *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.

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.

Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Volf, Miroslav. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Walker, Andrew T. *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say about Gender Identity?* Foreword by Albert Mohler, Jr. Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2017.

Choose ONE (1) of the following for Text Review 2:

Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011.

Kilner, John F, ed. *Why People Matter: A Christian Engagement with Rival Views of Human Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

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 Teaching Methodology

The course will utilize lecture, class discussions, exams, reading assignments, written assignments, cooperative group work, and audio visual resources to reach the goals of the class.

Course Requirements

(You must turn in all assignments to pass the class)

1. Reading Reports (20% of final grade)

Each student will submit a Reading Report for the primary texts:

- Wilkens, *Christian Ethics: Four Views*, should be read completely and report submitted on **Workshop Week, Monday, May 28, 2018**. (10%)
- Wright, *After You Believe*, should be read completely and report submitted before **June 11, 2018** (5%)
- Rae, *Moral Choices*, should be read completely and report submitted before **July 6, 2018**. (5%)

The Reading Report should be submitted in the following form:

- On a single page, single-spaced, and in Times-New Roman 12 font, type your name and the following: By the due date, I read ___% of [put here the particular book]
- For the remainder of the page (use a full page), write a reflection on the book. Address the following:
 - How does the text help me understand the nature of Christian ethics?
 - According to the text, how do rules, character, and consequences relate?
 - Any concerns with or commendations for the text.
 - To whom would you recommend the text?
- You may use first-person, limited and in appropriate style.

This assignment is **on your honor**. **The collective percentage read from both books will be your grade.**

3. Two Book Reviews (each 20% of final grade)

Students will write one book review each from the **Text Review 1** and **Text Review 2** lists (for a total of 2 reviews). After registering for the course, students should email Dr. Riley's administrative assistant (rileysec@nobts.edu) listing in order from most preferred to least preferred their choice of a review text from each list. Review Texts will be assigned first come first serve. If the top pick is closed, then the next in your list will be considered, and so forth.

- **Text Review 1** is due **Workshop Week, Wednesday, May 30, 2018**, submitted via the **class Blackboard** (do not email). In addition to submitting your review via Blackboard, please bring a hard copy of your review to the class meeting. Students should be prepared to discuss and field questions on their books in class on the day submitted.

- **Text Review 2** is due **June 25, 2018**, submitted via the class **Blackboard** (do not email).

Discussions about Review Texts characteristically should be:

- Informative
- Critical regarding both the review text and the issue(s) treated
- Dialogue producing for the benefit of the class experience

These reviews should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Each book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical and theological principles and sound reasoning. Students are expected to be demanding readers, aiming to profit from the books, even if the student might disagree with an author's conclusions (disagreement is a very real possibility). Some books will demand more from the reader than others. The goal of reading in ethics is not merely to gain information alone but to increase in understanding. Be a teachable reader.
2. When you disagree with a book or if you find a book laborious or difficult to read, then follow the wisdom of Adler and Van Doran (*How to Read a Book*) and allow the author to speak on his or her own terms. *When you disagree, do so reasonably and not disputatiously or contentiously.* Moreover, *respect the difference between knowledge and mere personal opinion by giving reasons for any critical judgment you make.* You do not have to like or recommend a book. Not all books are worth reading. For this class, however, you are expected not only to learn from the reading but to hone your Christian ethical positions. Your review should be helpful to other students who might want to study an issue treated in the book that you read and review.
3. The critique should be **5-7 single spaced typed pages, Times New Roman 12.**
4. Use the following to **determine content** and **develop subheadings (develop headings using ii—v)**:
 - i. A brief statement introducing the author(s) 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. **If the information about percentage of book read is not included in the review, 10 points will be deducted from the final grade.**
 - ii. Describe the primary thesis, purpose, and/or description of the book. **DO NOT SUBMIT A CHAPTER BY CHAPTER SUMMARY.**
 - iii. Describe and analyze critically the ethical issue(s) treated in the book
 - a. Describe the moral issue(s) and how it is treated in the book.
 - b. Describe and critically analyze the ethical conclusions offered.
 - c. What ideas changed or challenged your thinking. How and Why?
 - d. What ideas, if any, are particularly problematic? Why? Move from the critical analysis to a description of your position contra the problematic idea.
 - e. What particular ethical insights are offered in the book (or missing) that practically relate to life and ministry in the church and society?
 - iv. Reasonably describe the major strengths and weaknesses of the book.
 - v. In the conclusion, give a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book, and to whom.

4. **One Final Exam, (40% of final grade) Due July 6, 2018**

Submit your final exam to Dr. Riley via the Class Blackboard (do not email).

The **Final Exam** will test the comprehensive knowledge of the student; that is, the student should demonstrate a proper mastery and application of Christian and biblical ethics as presented during the course. As such, the final will take one or more of the following forms: **essay in response to a general ethical issue; responses to particular ethical case studies; technical ethics position paper.**

Question one of the final exam is an **embedded assignment**. This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the course Student Learning Outcomes. The rubric for grading the embedded assignment is on **page 2** of this syllabus. Please complete the assignment according to the rubric.

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. 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. In

<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Report, Wilkens	10%	Due: Workshop Week, Monday, May 28, 2018
<input type="checkbox"/> Selected Text Review 1	20%	Due: Workshop Week, Wednesday, May 30, 2018
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Report, Wright	5%	Due: June 11, 2018
<input type="checkbox"/> Selected Text Review 2	20%	Due: June 25, 2018
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Report, Rae	5%	Due: July 6, 2018
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Exam	40%	Due: July 6, 2018

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult 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.

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.

Miscellaneous Course Policies

Reading Assignments

Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments.

Professor's Policy on Late Assignments

All work is due on the assigned date in the syllabus. The grade for late assignments will automatically be reduced by two points per day. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late unless prior permission is granted by Dr. Riley. **Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.**

Professor's Availability and Assignment Feedback

The student may contact the professor at any time using the email address provided in the course syllabus. The professor will make every effort to return answers to emailed questions within a 24-hour period of time during weekdays. Assignments requiring grading will be returned to the student within a reasonable period of time. Student feedback on graded assignments will be provided on the basis of syllabus guidelines

Academic Honesty Policy

All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or any other course requirement.

Classroom Parameters

Please arrive on time.

Turn off cell phones. Utilize laptops and other technology for class purposes only.

Respect the professor and other members of the class.

Maintain confidentiality when someone shares personal information.

Participate in class and group discussions.

Extra Credit

Extra credit may be available. Talk to Dr. Riley if you are interested in receiving extra credit.

Course Schedule

General Outline for the Week

Day	Class Topics
Monday	Foundational Concepts in Ethics
Tuesday	Foundational Concepts and Approaches to Ethics
Wednesday	Review Text 1 Discussions Biblical Ethics and Issues
Thursday	Issues in Ethics
Friday	Issues in Ethics

Issues in Ethics will be drawn from the following categories

- ★ Issues of Human Sexuality
- ★ Issues of Human Relationships
- ★ Bioethical Issues
- ★ Issues of Life and Death
- ★ Social/Political Issues

Select Bibliography

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- Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. Dallas: Spence, 2004.
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- 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 Religious Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Colson, Charles W., and Nigel M. de S. Cameron, eds. *Human Dignity in the Biotech Century: A Christian Vision for Public Policy*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
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- Doriani, Dan. *Women and Ministry: What the Bibles Teaches*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2003.
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- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
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- Shuman, Joel, and Brian Volck. *Reclaiming the Body: Christians and the Faithful Use of Modern Medicine*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Stetson, Brad, and Joseph G. Conti. *The Truth About Tolerance: Pluralism, Diversity, and the Culture Wars*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.
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