



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Fall 2020—Tuesday 6:00-8:50pm

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

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 2020-21 academic year is **Mission Focus**.

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

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. **Note: DO NOT BUY A HARD COPY OF THE BOOK FOR THIS CLASS.** Students must purchase directly from Zondervan the e-Enhanced version of the text (follow link—press Ctrl: <https://enhancededitions.zondervanacademic.com/all/moral-choices-fourth-edition>). You will gain 12 months access to the enhanced version, but the keep the eBook and notes for life. I will send you a code to invite you into the particular enhance version for this class.

Current Issue Discussion Books: Race (Choose One)

Choose one of the following books to read for discussion on the issue of race. The number of people per book is limited on a first come, first served basis. Dr. Riley will provide a signup sheet. During one of the class meetings, students will lead discussion on the book they reviewed.

- Bradley, Anthony B. *Black and Tired: Essays on Race, Politics, Culture, and International Development*. Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Loritts, Brian, ed. *Letters to a Birmingham Jail: A Response to the Words and Dreams of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Chicago: Moody, 2014.
- Mason, Eric. *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Injustice*. Chicago: Moody, 2018.
- Strickland II, Walter R. *For God so Loved the World: A Blueprint for Kingdom Diversity*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020.

Critical Review Textbooks (Choose One)

Choose one of the following books for critical review. The number of reviews per book is limited on a first come, first served basis. Dr. Riley will provide a signup sheet. During one of the class meetings, students will lead discussion on the book they reviewed.

- Bradley, Anne R., and Arthur W. Lindsley, eds. *For the Least of These: A Biblical Answer to Poverty*. Foreword by Arthur C. Brooks. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Leeman, Jonathan. *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*. Nashville: Nelson Books, 2018.
- 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.
- 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.
- Thacker, Jason. *The Age of AI: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*. Foreword by Richard Mouw. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas P. *Journey towards Justice: Personal Encounters in the Global South*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

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.

NOLA2U Flex Attendance Policies

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Blackboard. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in the graduate catalog. (See page 184 in the graduate catalog: https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/academics/GraduateCatalog.pdf).
2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done through **Certification Notes** (see below) after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.
4. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: the late addition of the flex delivery option requires that Dr. Riley adjust course requirements to accommodate students who cannot be present in class to lead discussions on the critical review and current issue discussion texts. Flex students will be required to submit Certification Notes on the discussions that take place in the classroom about the books and the required race book report.

Quizzes, Videos, and Final Exam.

Enhanced Textbook Quizzes (10 total) (20% of final grade) test *mastery of reading content*. From the 10 assigned chapters in *Moral Choices*, students must take the chapter quiz.

Enhanced Textbook Video Viewing (10 total) (10% of final grade) will deepen student understanding of Christian Ethics. Students must view the video for each of the 10 assigned chapters. Dr. Riley recommends that students work through the <Review> learning application for each chapter to get the most out of the text.

The **Final Exam** (25% of final grade) will test *critical thinking skills* (the ability to articulate and defend a position) and *comprehensive knowledge*; 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.**

The final, which includes the **Embedded Assignment** (see above), will be **distributed** prior to and **submitted** on the last day of class prior to finals week.

Race Book Report and Discussion (15% of final grade)

From the above list under the general heading **Race Discussion Books**, each student will sign up to submit a report and engage in discussion based on the content of **one book**. The report and discussion preparation should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Report:
 - On one to two single-spaced pages, and in Times-New Roman font, type your name and the following: *By the due date, I read ___% of “Title of the Book.”* **Note, flex students must submit 2 pages.**
 - For the remainder of the page, write a reflection that addresses the following:
 - Does this book help me to understand the nature of the race issue that is current in American culture and churches? If so, how? If not, why?
 - What is the nature of the race issue?
 - Elaborate one or two aspects of the text that you find most helpful in thinking about race in America and a proper Christian response
 - Elaborate any concerns with the text.
 - To whom would you recommend the text?
 - You may use first-person, limited and in appropriate style.
 - **Students who do not use the above format will be penalized 10 points.**

- Discussion:
 - Be prepared to summarize the basic content and position of a book
 - Be prepared to field questions about the book
 - Be prepared to discuss the topic in general

Critical Text Review and Report (25% of final grade)

From the above list under the general heading **Critical Review Texts**, each student will sign up to write a critical review on **one book**. Students should be prepared to field questions and discuss the book in class on or after the book review is due. This review should adhere to the following guidelines:

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.

This critical review should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
- The critique should be **6-8 single spaced typed pages, Times New Roman 12 font**
- **Content should include the following:**
 - A brief statement introducing the author or contributors and title of the book. Communicate 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.
- Strongly recommended that you use subheadings to show that above content is being addressed.

Points to Remember:

- Do not simply summarize the content of the book
- Interact with the content of the book with the above guidelines.
- 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.

Moral Choices Reading Record (5% of Final Grade)

At the end of the semester, each student will submit to Dr. Riley an estimated percentage of the total weekly reading completed **on time** and an estimated percentage of the **total reading completed** during the semester. The student is responsible for keeping up with both the reading assigned in the syllabus and the amount read on time. The two percentages submitted are on the student's honor and will be combined for a daily reading grade.

Recorded is the percentage completed (in 5% increments) of the assigned reading. No written report is required. The percentage submitted is on your honor, and the honor of Christ Jesus.

Certification Notes for Flex Students Only

To certify attendance for the live or viewing of the recorded session, all flex students must take "Certification Notes" and submit them to Dr. Riley. These notes must be submitted weekly. Failure to submit notes will constitute being absent from a 3 hours class meeting. Students who miss more than 3 class periods cannot pass the course, per NOBTS policy. Certification notes should include the following:

- The statement: I watched or attended ___% of the class on (give the date).
- On 1 to 2 single-spaced pages, times new roman 12 font, outline the content delivered or discussed during the class. Use your own words or the elaborations from class, not the power points.
- Include one question (more if you like) raised in your mind about the content delivered or discussed.

Certification is on your honor before the Lord.

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.

G Enhanced Textbook Quizzes	20%
G Enhanced Textbook Video Viewing	10%
G Race Book Report and Discussion	15%
G Critical Text Review and Discussion	25%
G <i>Moral Choices</i> Reading Record	5%
G Final Exam	25%

Note: Flex students have Certification Notes tied to the Book Report and Text Review, which will be factored into the final grade for those particular assignments. Flex students must also submit Certification Notes to certify attendance, which are not counted as required assignments in the evaluation above. In other words, submitting certification notes will not add to the final grade percentage but can count against the final grade percentage. Failure to submit Certification Notes can warrant an F for the course.

Submitting Assignments

- A. Assignments are submitted to the course blackboard.

- B. 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. **The Book Report, Text Review, and Final Exam:** A late assignment will be assessed an initial 8 point penalty. For each calendar day after the due date an additional 2 point penalty will be assessed.

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.

Writing Style Guide

Writing assignments should follow the **NOBTS/Leavell College Manual of Form and Style** (*revised August 2019*). To access this manual on the seminary website, please use the following link: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>.

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.

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
 FALL 2020
 Tuesday 6:00-8:50 (Campus and Flex)
CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

Date	Class Discussion Topic	Reading Assignments
8-25	Introduction to the Class Getting Started: What is Ethics	Assignment Readings are <u>due</u> on the adjacent date; recommend working through Enhanced Reviews and taking chapter quizzes soon after reading text. Watch video before reading chapter.
9-1	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making All book choices due	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.1, Introduction
9- 8	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.4, Making Ethical Decisions
9-15	Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.2, How to think about morality
9-22	Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	Rae: Ch. 15, Race, Gender, and Diversity
9-29	Race Book Report Due and Student Led Discussion	
10-6	The Bible in Ethics	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.3, Christian Ethics
10-13	The Bible in Ethics	
10-20	FALL BREAK	FALL BREAK
10-27	Student Led Discussion of Books Reviewed and Ethical Topics of the Books (treated in order listed in syllabus)	
11-3	Student Led Discussion of Books Reviewed and Ethical Topics of the Books, Continued	<u>Rae</u> : Ch,13, Ethics and Economics

11-10	Issues of Human Sexuality (Marriage and Divorce)	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.11, Sexual Ethics
11-17	Issues of Human Sexuality (Homosexuality) Open Final Exam	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.8, End of Life
11-24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	THANKSGIVING BREAK
12-1	ENTIRE CLASS WILL MEET VIA INTERNET Issues of Life	<u>Rae</u> : Chs.5, Beginning of Life
12-8	ENTIRE CLASS WILL MEET VIA INTERNET Open Topic Final Exam and Moral Choices Reading Record Due	<u>Rae</u> : Ch.6, Beginning of Life
12-15	Final Exam scheduled	Graduation: 12/19

Select Bibliography

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Charles, J. Daryl. *The Unformed Conscience of Evangelicalism: Recovering the Church's Moral Vision*. InterVarsity, 2002.

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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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