

ETHC6303 CURRENT ETHICAL ISSUES

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES
FALL 2023 • Tues/Thurs 12:30-1:50 P.M.



ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

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*"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them,
because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."*
1 Timothy 4:16

Mission Statement

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

Course Description

The development of a Christian response to contemporary ethical issues is the aim of this study, focusing upon moral questions in personal ethics, sexuality and marriage, biomedical ethics, gender and ethnic relationships, economic concerns, political issues, and the development of a strategy for social action and ministry.
Prerequisite: ETHC5300 Ethics or ETHC6301 Biblical Ethics.

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.

Required Textbooks

Students should buy or borrow all of the required textbooks (They will make a good addition to your ethics library).

Texts for Engagement Reports:

- Allberry, Sam. *What God Has to Say about Our Bodies: How the Gospel is Good News for Our Physical Selves*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. (185 pgs)
- Pearcey, Nancy R. *The Toxic War on Masculinity: How Christianity Reconciles the Sexes*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books 2023. (270 pgs)
- Shatzer, Jacob. *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today's Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2019. (178 pgs)

Texts to be read only:

Gobbet, Dave. *The Environment*. The Good Book Company: 2022. (89 pgs)
Ling, Lizzie, and Vaughan Roberts. *Abortion*. The Good Book Company: 2020. (91 pgs)
Roberts, Vaughan. *Assisted Suicide*. The Good Book Company: 2017. (62 pgs)
_____. *The Porn Problem*. The Good Book Company: 2018. (80 pgs)
_____. *Transgender*. The Good Book Company: 2016. (74 pgs)

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies: lectures from the professor, extensive reading, research on ethical issues.

Course Requirements

1. Required Reading, Attendance, and Hard Work (15% of grade):

Students are expected to read all textbooks completely (see course schedule). Students will only read the books in the Talking Points series by the date listed in the course Schedule. *Students will submit a reading report at the end of the semester* that includes the read-only texts and the Engagement Report textbooks (8 total). The format for the reading report follows:

Author's last name; short version of title; estimated percentage of book read. The final grade for this assignment will be the average of all the averages.

2. Three Textbook Engagement Reports (20% each)

Students will read and prepare **Textbook Engagement Reports**, for the Allberry, Pearcey, and Shatzer books. These reports are due in Canvas on the dates listed in the class schedule. Text reports should be one to two pages, single-spaced, and containing the following (Use headings in the report):

- Briefly summarize the main ethical points or arguments made by the author, at least the most important, interesting, or controversial to you.
- Do you agree with the main points or arguments the author makes? Why or why not (note biases, evidence, and so forth)? You may agree with some and disagree with others.
- List and define important terms.
- Questions the author raised or clarifications you would like to see addressed (Must include at least three questions that might be addressed in the class period after the report is submitted.

Reading texts for the reports will be included in the reading report submitted at the end of the semester.

Below are questions that might help you evaluate the textbooks for your engagement reports:

- What major ethical insights are communicated by the author?
- What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?
- Does the author provide strong biblical, philosophical, and historical support for his or her positions?
- What ideas are interesting, novel, or problematic?
- What Ideas changed or challenged your thinking. How and why?
- What insights in the book practically relate to life and ministry, life of the church, or the relationship Christians have to the broader cultures?
- What are the major strengths or weaknesses of the book?

3. Annotated Research Outline on Ethical Issue (25%):

Each student will write a 4-6-page single-spaced **Annotated Research Outline** on a current ethical issue that can provide background material for a teaching or preaching venue. Students may choose any current ethical issue, approved by Dr. Riley, on which to research. Quality Power Point or other teaching aids added to the outline will enhance the grade. Annotations should be in cogent paragraph form. In general, the annotated outline should include the following. Create outline headings from the bullet points:

- Ethical description of the issue, that is, what is at stake regarding right and wrong, good and bad character, behavior, and policy, and so forth.
- What is the historical, cultural, and moral background that makes this an ethical issue that is currently important for the church to address?
- What is the best ethical strategy to use to address the issue?
- To what authorities do you appeal to address the issue: in Scripture? Theology? Science? Philosophy?
- What are your primary ethical arguments?
- What are the primary ethical arguments that you oppose?
- What conclusions do you make? What position do you invite your hearers to take?

A sources or bibliography page should be attached, but not included in the page count. Good research should include books, articles from peer reviewed or respected journals, and respected online sources/websites (for example, *The Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity*). A good rule of thumb is no less than 10 credible sources.

Distribution of Grades and Assignment Schedule

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

1. Textbook Engagement 1	Due August 31	20%
2. Textbook Engagement 2	Due September 26	20%
3. Textbook Engagement 3	Due October 17	20%
4. Required Reading, Attendance,	Due November 28	15%
5. Annotated Research Outline on Ethical Issue	Due November 28	25%
Total		100%

Grades will be determined based on 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 special cases, extra credit can be arranged with Dr. Riley.

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 or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. Bluejeanshelpdesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Bluejeans & NOBTS Bluejeans classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. 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. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: <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.

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Canvas. 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 this syllabus.
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 [assignment by professor] 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.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Current Ethical Issues Schedule: Fall 2023
Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30—1:50pm

Date	Topic	Assignments
		Note: Reading and Assignments are due on the date that they are listed below
8/15	Welcome and Introduction to the Course	READ the syllabus. Think about what issues you would like Dr. Riley to address, which could be addressed on Open Topic days
8/17	Strategies for addressing current ethical issues	
8/22	Strategies for addressing current ethical issues	
8/24	Personal ethics and social justice	
8/29	Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory	
8/31		Pearcey, <i>Toxic Masculinity</i> Engagement Report Due in Canvas
9/5	Talk on Toxic Masculinity based on questions from Assignment	
9/7	Beginning of Life Issues	Ling, <i>Abortion</i> (Read only)
9/12	Beginning of Life Issues	
9/14	Beginning of Life Issues	
9/19	Human sexuality and identity	Roberts, <i>Transgender</i> (Read Only)
9/21	Human sexuality and identity	
9/26	Human sexuality and identity	Allberry, <i>What God Has to Say about Our Bodies</i> Engagement Report Due in Canvas
9/28	SERVE DAY- No Class	
10/ 2-6	FALL BREAK <i>"...give him rest from days of trouble..."</i> (Psalm 94:13)	
10/10	Talk on What God Has to Say Our Bodies Assignment	
10/12	Open Topic	
10/17	Open Topic	Shatzer, <i>Transhumanism and the Image of God</i> Engagement Report Due in Canvas
10/19	Talk on Transhumanism based on questions from Assignment	
10/24	Pornography	Roberts, <i>The Porn Problem</i> (Read Only)
10/26	Open Topic	
10/31	Care for the Earth	Gobbett, <i>The Environment</i> (Read Only)
11/2	Open Topic	
11/7	End of Life Issues	Roberts, <i>Assisted Suicide</i> (Read Only)
11/9	End of Life Issues	
11/14-16	ETS Annual Meeting: Class will not meet. Use as Research and Writing Day	
11/20-11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK <i>"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting"</i> (1 Chronicles 16:34)	
11/28	Open Topic	Submit Reading Report via Canvas Submit Annotated Research Outline
11/30	SEMINARY-WIDE FINAL EXAMS BEGIN	

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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