



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2023—Internet

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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.

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: Unit 9 hosts an embedded assignment and provides the site to upload the assignment. Included below is a rubric. Complete the embedded assignment with the rubric in mind.

- **Instructions for the Embedded Assignment**

This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the learning outcomes for degree programs and will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. 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 the embedded 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 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, etc. Apply what you have been learning.
 - Be alert to your tone. Be redemptive, while clearly communicating biblical moral truth.
 - Some of you know people personally 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 that you can communicate moral truth affectively and clearly.
 - *Note that you are writing the letter to a friend who is struggling with his friend’s homosexuality. You are not writing to the person who is practicing homosexuality.*
- **Embedded Assignment Rubric**
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 | | | | | |

Required Textbook

- Liederbach, Mark D., and Evan Lenow. Ethics as Worship: The Pursuit of Moral Discipleship. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2021.
- Book for Review: Students will choose one book to review from the **Select Bibliography** below.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following tools and methodologies: textbooks, video lecture, power point, 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. The challenges do not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in preparing 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 will be actively involved in the learning process and are praying for your success.

Course Requirements

Tests on Assigned Readings and Lecture Videos (30% of final grade)

- Five (5) tests are given on assigned readings and lecture video content. 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.
- The grade for the embedded assignment will be averaged with the tests to generate a single score. Do not attempt the embedded assignment before reading content and watching lectures in Units 8 & 9.

Book Review (20% of final grade)

- From the **Select Bibliography** below, each student will sign up to write a review on one book. Go to the Ethics Canvas, Unit 2; follow the google doc link and put your name by the book you want to review.
- Students must choose their review book by the end of Unit 2 (Saturday).
- Students are to submit their reviews to Canvas by 11:59pm CST by Saturday of Unit 6.
- 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
- The content of the book review 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, 7 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 in writing the book review.
 - 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.
 - Remember to avoid plagiarism. 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.

Ethics Position Paper (25% of final grade)

- Each student will choose a current ethical issue on which to write a position paper.
- Students must choose a topic 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.
- Unit 7 includes links to various articles to give students ideas about what types of issues to right on and how to approach various topics. See below, however, for specific guidelines for this assignment.
- The professor may ask a student to change topics or make suggestions about the chosen topic. As students sign up, they should note what other students are doing and try not to duplicate too many topics.
- Ethics Position Paper Submission: Students should submit position papers on Canvas by Monday 11:59pm CST in Unit 14. Specific guidelines include the following:
 - The position paper should be should be 5-7 single spaced typed pages, Times New Roman 12.
 - Use subheadings. Listed below are examples of headings (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
 - 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.

- Do not cut and paste your paper from 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.
- If you need help on form and style, send your paper to the Write Stuff lab at NOBTS.
- Use footnotes to cite your sources. Books and Journals/articles/ web sources are expected. Again, make appropriate citations using Turabian.

Interactive Discussions (15% of Final Grade)

- Each student will participate in five (5) interactive threaded discussions.
- During weeks in which an interactive 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 position on the topic. Make an argument for your position. 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 a two-day 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.
 - Your grade will be based on 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.

Reading and Watching Reports (10% of Final Grade)

- The textbook and lecture videos are an important resource for student learning. As such, Students should keep up with reading and watching for each unit. Students will submit 6 reading/watching reports during the course of the semester. These assignments also provide content for Discussions and the Tests given during the semester.
- Report percentage completed for reading the text and watching lectures in 5% increments. Students will post one percentage per report representing the percentage total read and watched for designated Units. The percentage submitted is on your honor, and the honor of Christ Jesus.

Submitting Assignments

- **Unit Tests** and **Reading Reports** are submitted through designated units and on the appropriate dates posted on Canvas.
- **Discussion Threads:** Follow the discussion link from the appropriate Unit to add to your thoughts to threads in the Discussion Board. Click on a thread to respond to it.
- The **Book Review** and **Ethics Position Paper** are uploaded to **Canvas**. Follow the appropriate links embedded in Module Units.
- Please do not send your assignments to the professor or grader as email attachments, unless the professor requests you to do so or unless you have a compelling reason. You may send an email announcing that you have submitted an assignment, but, if you follow the correct procedures, the professor will find it.

Evaluation of Grade

A student's final grade will be computed according to the following:

- **Unit Tests (4 of 5) + Embedded Assignment** 30%
- **Book Review** 20%
- **Ethics Position Paper** 25%
- **Interactive Discussions (5)** 15%
- **Reading Reports (5 of 6)** 10%

Course Schedule

| UNITS | DATES | READING L&L | LECTURE TOPICS | ASSIGNMENTS DUE Note: All items due by midnight on due date |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|
| 1 | Jan 17-21 | Preface; Ch. 1 | Ethics and Morality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Welcome Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Introduce yourself |
| 2 | Jan 22-28 | Ch. 2 & 3 | Worldview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 1 (Preface and Ch. 1-3) due 28th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 1 & 2 due 27th • Choose book to review due 28th |
| 3 | Jan 29-Feb 4 | Ch. 4 | Theological ethics; Paradigm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 1 |
| 4 | Feb 5-11 | Ch. 5 | Authority; Biblical ethics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 2 (Ch. 4-5) due 11th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 3 & 4 due 11th |
| 5 | Feb 12-18 | Ch. 6 | Complexity and Moral truth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 2—Watch McDowell video |
| 6 | Feb 19-25 | | Paradigm; decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Review Due 25th |
| 7 | Feb 26-Mar 4 | Ch. 7 & 8 | Conflicting Absolutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 3 (Ch. 6-8) due 4th • Ethics Position Paper Topic due 4th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 5,6,&7 due 4th |
| 8 | Mar 5-11 | Ch. 17 | Disordered Sexuality (tied to Levels of Ethical Engagement) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 3—Watch “Trans Mission: What's the Rush to Reassign Gender?” |
| March 12-18 SPRING BREAK | | | | |
| 9 | Mar 19-25 | Ch. 18 & 19 | Marriage and Divorce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded Assignment (Ch. 17-18) due 25th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 8 & 9 due 25th |
| 10 | Mar 26-Apr 1 | Ch. 9 & 10 | Justice and Race | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 4 |
| April 2-8 EASTER BREAK | | | | |
| 11 | Apr 9-15 | Ch. 11 | Wealth and Poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 4 (Ch. 9-12) due 15th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 10 & 11 due 15th |
| 12 | Apr 16-22 | Ch. 14 | Violence: War | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion 5 |
| 13 | Apr 23-29 | Ch. 15 & 16 | Beginning and End of Life Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 5 (Ch. 13-16) due 29th • Reading and lecture Report for Units 12 & 13 due 29th |
| 14 | Ethics Position Paper Due MAY 1ST | | | |

Attendance Policy for Online Classes

Students are expected to engage regularly with course content through the learning management system. Students who fail to participate consistently in course activities may receive a grade of “F” for the course.

Penalties

- **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.
- **Book Review and Ethics Position Paper:** A late paper will be assessed an initial 7 point penalty. For each calendar day after the due date, an additional 2-point penalty will be assessed.
- **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

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. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
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. 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.

Select Bibliography (from which to choose book to review)

- Allberry, Sam. *What God Has to Say about Our Bodies: How the Gospel Is Good News for Our Physical Selves*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.
- Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. *Openness Unbindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*. Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant, 2015.
- Charles, J. Daryl. *Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.
- Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.
- Fikkert, Brian, and Kelly M. Kapic. *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty Isn't the American Dream*. Chicago: Moody, 2019.
- Grant, Jonathan. *Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age*. Foreword by James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015.
- Mitchell, C. Ben, and D. Joy Riley. *Christian Bioethics: A Guide to Pastors, Health Care Professionals, and Families*. B&H Studies in Christian Ethics. Ed. Dan Heimbach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study of Ethics and Politics*. New York: Continuum, 1960.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.
- Williams, Thaddeus J. *Confronting Injustice without Compromising the Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice*. Foreword by John M. Perkins. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.
- Trueman, Carl R. *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022.
- Yuan, Christopher. *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story*. New York: Multnomah, 2018.