



## **ETHC5300 Christian Ethics**

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES  
**Defend Conference—January 2-6, 2023**

**JEFFREY RILEY, PhD**  
**Professor of Ethics**  
**Associate Dean of Graduate Studies**  
Office: Dodd 101  
Phone: 504.816.8017  
[jriley@nobts.edu](mailto:jriley@nobts.edu)

### **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**

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 <b>Understand</b> the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic					
APPLICATION	Able to <b>apply</b> a Christian ethic to contemporary issues					
COMMUNICATION	Able to <b>communicate</b> Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly					

## Primary Textbooks

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

Liederbach, Mark D., and Evan Lenow. *Ethics as Worship: The Pursuit of Moral Discipleship*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2021.

### Review the following for Book Review 1:

Allberry, Sam. *What God Has to Say about Our Bodies: How the Gospel Is Good News for Our Physical Selves*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

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

Anderson, Ryan T., and Alexandra DeSanctis. *Tearing Us Apart: How Abortion Harms Everything and Solves Nothing*. Washington, D. C.: Regnery, 2022.

Fikkert, Brian, and Kelly M. Kapic. *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty Isn't the American Dream*. Chicago: Moody, 2019.

Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.

Shrier, Abigail. *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*. Washington, DC: Regnery, 2021.

Sprinkle, Randy. *Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church, & What the Bible Has to Say*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2021.

Tennent, Timothy C. *For the Body: Recovering a Theology of Gender, Sexuality, and the Human Body*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 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.

### Review the following for Book Review 3:

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.

## Course Teaching Methodology

This is an event course tied to attending the Defend the Faith Conference at NOBTS. The Breakout sessions for this course include lectures and class discussions. Each breakout session in the conference is recorded. Following the Conference, students will continue to learn through reading and writing assignments, examination, and audio resources.

## Course Requirements

You must turn in all assignments to pass the class. Submit all assignments to the class Canvas Shell.

### Conference Participation Assignment (10%)

Participation in the Conference requires that students do the following:

- Attend **all** Plenary Sessions
- Attend a break-out presentation each time a break-out session is offered
- Listen to audio recordings of at least **20** breakout sessions not physically attended

Each student will submit by the due date a listening accountability statement estimating total participation, as described above. **Due 15 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (April 21, 2023).**

### Textbook Reading Report (10%)

Each student is required to submit a reading accountability statement for each textbook estimating how much of the total required reading was completed by the due date.

1. Hollinger, *Choosing the Good*, read completely **(Due 2 weeks after DtF; January 20, 2023)**  
For the Hollinger reading report, record your **name, book, and percentage read**. Also include, in no more than one page, a description of **three important concepts gleaned** from this book.
2. Liederbach and Lenow, *Ethics as Worship*, read Parts 1-3, and choose 5 chapters to read from Part 4 **(Due 5 weeks after DtF; February 10, 2023)**

This assignment is **on your honor**. **The collective percentage read from all books with the statements factored in will be your grade**. If you fail to note the percentage read, 10 points will be deducted automatically from the final grade for that assignment.

### Three Book Reviews: (15% each)

Students will write **three** book reviews. See **Book Review 1**, the **Book Review 2 list**, and **Book Review 3**.

**Book reviews may be submitted as they are completed, but the following are firm Due Dates:**

<b>Book Review One Due (8 weeks after DtF):</b>	<b>Friday, March 3, 2023</b>
<b>Book Review Two Due (11 weeks after DtF):</b>	<b>Friday, March 24, 2023</b>
<b>Book Review Three Due (14 weeks after DtF):</b>	<b>Thursday, April 14, 2023</b>

These reviews 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 critique should be **3-5 single spaced typed pages**.
3. Content should include the following. **Do not simply summarize chapters:**
  - 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 about how much was read
  - 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 (Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic). How and Why?
  - Insights in this book that relate practically to life and ministry, the life of the church, and to moral life in America
  - Major strengths and weaknesses of the book
  - In the conclusion, a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book.
4. Develop subheading from the above bullet points (2-7).

### **Final Exam (25%)**

**Submitted via the Class Canvas—DO NOT EMAIL.**

Each student must complete a Final Take-Home Exam. The exam will be comprehensive in scope, drawing from the lectures and assigned readings, and essay in form. The exam will test both *mastery of content* and *critical thinking skills*.

**Embedded Assignment:** Question one of the final exam is an embedded assignment (refer to pages 2 of syllabus for details). This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the course objectives.

**The rubric for grading this assignment is on page 3 of this syllabus. Please complete the embedded assignment according to the rubric.**

**Due 15 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, April 21, 2023). Note: Exam will open April 3, 2023.**

### **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 submitting assignments or extraordinary life situation and positive attitude warrant 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.

## Grade Distribution by Assignment and Due Dates

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reading Reports (2 books)</b>			
	Hollinger, <i>Choosing the Good</i>	10%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, January 20, 2023
	Liederbach and Lenow, <i>Ethics as Worship</i>	10%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, February 10, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Book Review 1</b>		15%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, March 3, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Selected Book Review 2</b>		15%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, March 24, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Book Review 3</b>		15%	<b>Due:</b> Thursday, April 14, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conference Participation</b>		10%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, April 21, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Final Exam</b>		25%	<b>Due:</b> Friday, April 21, 2023
		<b>100%</b>	

### Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [Canvas.NOBTS.com](http://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](mailto:Canvas@nobts.edu).
3. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://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.

### Course Schedule

Check the Defend Conference event schedule to see the topics, times, and locations for the Ethics Breakout Sessions. Any breakout session taught by Dr. Riley will count towards the Christian Ethics course and must be either attended or listened to via MP3 in order to get full credit for conference participation.

### Miscellaneous but Important Course Policies

1. **Participation.** You must attend the entire conference.
2. **Absences.** You must attend the entire Defend the Faith Conference to get credit for the course.
3. **Late Work.** Work turned in late will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per day) unless **prior permission** is sought and a legitimate reason warrants lateness.  
**Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.**

## Selected Bibliography

- Atkinson, David J., David F. Field, Arthur Holmes, and Oliver O'Donovan, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics & Pastoral Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.
- 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.
- Butterfield, Rosaria Champaign. *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*. Pittsburg: Crown & Covenant, 2015.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Secret Thoughts on an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey into Christian Faith*. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Expanded Edition. Pittsburg: Crown & Covenant, 2014.
- 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.
- 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.
- Colson, Charles W., with Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2000.
- Cook, David. *The Moral Maze: A Way of Exploring Christian Ethics*. London: SPCK, 1983.
- Coppenger, Mark. *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians: Pushing Back Against Cultural and Religious Critics*. B&H Studies in Christian Ethics, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody, 2009.
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004.
- Doriani, Dan. *Women and Ministry: What the Bibles Teaches*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2003.
- Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Updated and Expanded. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

- Fortson, S. Donald III, and Rollin G. Grams. *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.
- Gagnon, Robert A.J. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.
- Girgis, Sherif, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George. *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. New York, NY: Encounter, 2012.
- Grant, Jonathan. *Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age*. Foreword by James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015.
- Heimbach, Daniel. *True Sexual Morality: Recovering Biblical Standards for a Culture in Crisis*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Why Not Same-Sex Marriage: A Manual for Defending Marriage Against Radical Deconstruction*. Camp Sherman, OR: Trusted Books, 2014.
- Henry, Carl F. H. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947 (2003).
- Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Jones, David Clyde. *Biblical Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.
- Jones, Stanton L., and Mark A. Yarhouse. *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Kilner, John F. *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Why People Matter: A Christian Engagement with Rival Views of Human Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Why the Church Needs Bioethics: A Guide to Wise Engagement with Life's Challenges*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Lewis, C. S. *Abolition of Man*. New York: HarperOne, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.



- Loritts, Bryan, *Insider Outsider: My Journey as a Stranger in White Evangelicalism and My Hope for Us All*. Foreword by John Ortberg. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Letters to a Birmingham Jail: A Response to the Words and Dreams of Martin Luther Kings, Jr.* Chicago: Moody, 2014.
- Meilaender, Gilbert C. *Faith & Faithfulness: Basic Themes in Christian Ethics*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.
- 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.
- Moore, Russell, and Andrew T. Walker, eds. *The Gospel and Marriage*. The Gospel and Life Series. Nashville: B & H, 2017.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gospel and Pornography*. The Gospel and Life Series. Nashville: B & H, 2017.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Gospel and Same-Sex Marriage*. The Gospel and Life Series. Nashville: B & H, 2016.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- Reilly, Robert. *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior is Changing Everything*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2015.
- Satinover, Jeffrey. *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*. Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1996.
- Stetson, Brad, and Joseph G. Conti. *The Truth About Tolerance: Pluralism, Diversity, and the Culture Wars*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005.
- Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.
- 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.
- Wilkens, Steve. *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right and Wrong*. 2d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011.
- Wilson, Todd. *Mere Sexuality: Rediscovering the Christian Vision of Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

Yarhouse, Mark, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*.  
Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*.  
Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Understanding Sexual Identity: A Resource for Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan,  
2013.

Yuan, Christopher. *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand  
Story*. New York: Multnomah, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Angela Yuan. *Out of a Far Country: A Gay Son's Journey to God. A Broken Mother's  
Search for Hope*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2011.