

Christian Ethics

Course: CSOC 501, Fall 2013

Drew Theological School

Course Description

A systematic treatment of the central themes and issues of Christian ethics, with particular attention to the life of the Christian community and its place in the social order.

Course Objectives

During the course, the student will:

- ❖ Become acquainted with a range of approaches to doing Christian ethics.
- ❖ Practice applying the ideas from Christian ethics readings to everyday situations in the practice of ministry.
- ❖ Explore the core elements and methods within their own understandings of Christian Ethics.
- ❖ Develop critical thinking skills with a commitment to developing their theology, while exhibiting an openness to learning and respectful attitudes of others.

Learning Outcomes

Through assignments and class participation, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Compare and assess approaches to Christian ethics.
2. Name core elements and method of student's own approach to Christian Ethics.
3. Present a well grounded ethical argument for everyday situations in the practice of ministry that attend to diversity and oppression as constitutive elements of our social world.

*And meet overall degree program learning outcomes listed under <http://www.drew.edu/theological/academics>.

Attendance and Deadline Policy

Complete assigned reading and written work on time. Active and responsible participation in class discussions is an essential component of this course. You may miss one unexcused class in the semester with no grade penalty. More than two missed classes (excused or not) will affect your grade.

If you cannot meet course deadlines, you may request an extension **before** the due date. If that deadline is not met or you do not renegotiate the due date, your work will not be accepted. No extensions will be given on the day an assignment is due. If comments on your initial assignments indicate that you need help with writing, we will discuss resources for writing assistance.

Seminary Policies

See Seminary Policies in your handbook regarding:

Academic Integrity - <http://www.drew.edu/theological/academics/policies-regulations/academic-integrity>

Inclusive Language - <https://uknow.drew.edu/confluence/display/Handbook/Inclusive+Language>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities - "Academic Accommodations: Should you require academic accommodations, you must file a request with the Office of Disability Services (BC 119, extension 3327). It is your responsibility to self-identify with the Office of Disability Services and to provide faculty with the appropriate documentation from that office at least one week prior to any request for specific course accommodations. There are no retroactive accommodations."

<http://www.drew.edu/academicservices/disabilityservices>

Class Policies

All electronic devices must be turned off during class. With one exception, laptop computers can be used to take notes; that means no use of email or the internet while in class. I expect all students to put their laptops away when I ask, for the benefit of discussions, and at any point a student may be asked to put a laptop away without explanation.

Cancellation policy: If class is officially cancelled because of University closing due to weather, you are expected to check your email for an alternate assignment to be completed by the following class period.

Course Requirements/Expectations

Grading for this course will be the average of all of the requirements and expectations. Participation includes attendance, discussion in class and precept, and moodle responses. Assignments include moodle precept posts, mid-term exam, and final exam. Grading rubric for each assignment is distributed prior to assessment. The grading system is:

Excellent (A -,+) = outstanding to exemplary work, that demonstrates a command and clarity of argument. Excels beyond learning outcomes.

Good (B, -,+) = good to very good work, that demonstrates understanding and grasp of issues presented and evaluated. Exceeds learning outcomes.

Satisfactory (C, -,+) = accurate and acceptable work, that demonstrates completion of the assignment(s) without any additional effort. Meets learning outcomes.

Poor (D, -,+) = scant and generally insufficient work, in addition to tardiness in attendance and/or assignments. Meets over half of learning outcomes.

Failure (F) = inadequate work and participation, not meeting course requirements or learning outcomes.

Required Texts

To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians, eds. Rebecca Todd Peters , Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, Westminster John Knox, 2008

Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction, by J. Philip Wogaman, Westminster John Knox, 1993

Electronic Texts – Marked with M for moodle resource

Suggested Texts

Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism And Women's Lives Matter, by Traci C. West, Westminster John Knox, 2006

Course Schedule:

Sept 3 Introduction to Christian Ethics and Basic Methods

Sept 10 Christian Ethics and Method (con't)

Wogaman – (M) or 22 in old book

Birch and Rasmussen, Ch. 3 (M)

Beverly Harrison, "Doing Christian Ethics," in *Justice in the Making* (M)

Wayne Meeks, "Morals and Community" in *The Origins of Christian Morality* (M)

Traci West, "What does Anti-Racist, Feminist Christian Ethics Look like?" in *New Feminist Christianity*

Sept 17 Historical and Scriptural Resources for Doing Christian Ethics

Wogaman – 5, 8, 10, 1

James M. Gustafson "Ways of Using Scripture" in Walter Boulton, et. al., ed., *From Christ to the World* (M)

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz "La Palabra de Dios en Nosotras-"The Word of God in Us" in *Searching the Scriptures, Volume One: A Feminist Introduction*, ed., E. Schussler Fiorenza (M)

Suggested: Augustine and Luther in Walter Boulton, et. al., ed., *from Christ to the World* (M)

? split – Scripture and Historical, then bump things down one day and use Tuesday after AAR as a full class period. Could be on-line? E.g listen to a lecture.

Sept 21 Christian Theological Foundations for Doing Christian Ethics

Wogaman 20 old book, 21 NEW book – "Liberation Theology"

Peters – 2 (For Families, Albrecht), 4 (For Prisoners and Our Communities, Bounds) and 10 (For All Creation – Kao)

Stanley Hauerwas, "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics" in *The Hauerwas Reader* (M)

?ADD West, Bible and welfare reform

Oct 1 Public Life and Ministry in Doing Christian Ethics

Nami Kim, "Transformative "Moves" to Join: A Transnational Feminist Pedagogy" in *Faith, Feminism, and Scholarship*

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" -

http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Reinhold Niebhuur, from *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (M)

Hak Joon Lee, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" from *Perspectives* (M),

<http://www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=3367>

Oct 8 How we Make Moral Choices in Doing Christian Ethics

Peters – 3 (For Those Affected By Drugs, Trimiew), 8 (For Immigrants, De la Torre)

Margaret Farley, "The Role of Experience in Moral Discernment" in *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects* (M)

National Public Radio – Radio Labs on Morality

Crime and Penitence - <http://www.radiolab.org/2007/aug/13/crime-and-penitence/>

Kiddie Morality - <http://www.radiolab.org/2007/aug/13/kiddie-morality/>

*Mid-term exam distributed due October 15 via email by 1:15pm

READING WEEK **NO CLASS – October 15**

TOPICS IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Oct 22 White Privilege and Racism

Traci West, Chapter 4 “Liturgy: Church Worship and White Superiority” in *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism And Women's Lives Matter*

Jennifer Harvey, “Crafting the Ground as We Go: ‘White’ Feminism and the College Classroom” in *Faith, Feminism, and Scholarship*

John Wesley, *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (M)

*****Download using ATLA Religion Database via Drew Library

Choi, Ki Joo, “Should race matter? A Constructive Ethical Assessment of the Postracial Ideal” in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 31 no 1 Spr-Sum 2011, p 79-101.

Oct 29 Internet/Social Networking Ethics

**All readings on Moodle this week

Radha Basu, “Mobile Technology and Social Media: Ethical Implications” listen at:

<http://www.scu.edu/r/ethics-center/ethicsblog/internet-ethics/16218/Mobile-Technology-and-Social-Media:-Ethical-Implications>

Thomas Long, “Stolen Goods” (M)

Verity Jones, “Living Theologically in a Networked World” in *iBelieve: Facing the New Media Explosion* (M)

Noreen Herzfeld, “Cyberspace on the Mind” in *Technology and Religion: Remaining Human in a Co-created World* (M)

Donna Schaper, “Send and Receive: Manners and Ministry on the Internet” (M)

Nov 5 Economic Ethics (Education, Housing, and Employment)

Peters – 1 (For Workers, Hinson-Hasty), 5 (For Public Education, Riggs), 7 (For Financial Security-Hill), 9 (For People Lacking Affordable Housing, Ross)

Nov 12 Sexual Ethics

*Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, “Trans-Forming Feminist Christianity” (M)

*Marie M. Fortune, “Seeking Justice and Healing: Violence Against Women as an Agenda for Feminist Christianity” (M)

*Kate Ott, Searching for an Ethic: Sexuality, Children, and Moral Agency” (M)

*All in *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Visions*

Ken Stone, “What the Homosexuality Debates Really Say about the Bible” in Miguel De La Torre, ed., in *Out of the Shadows into the Light* (M)

Marvin Ellison, “Is it Still Adultery if the Spouse Has Alzheimer’s?” and “Is Pro-life or Pro-Choice What We Mean to Say?” in *Making Love Just* (M)

Optional - Margaret Farley, *Just Love* excerpt Chapter 6 (M)

Nov 19 Healthcare and Bio-Ethics

Peters – 6

Shelp and Sutherland, "AIDS and the Church", in *On Moral Medicine* (M)
Courtney Campbell, "Religion and Moral Meaning in Bioethics", in *On Moral Medicine* (M)
Don E. Messer, "When It's My Turn, How Shall I Decide?" (M)
Visit <http://theconversationproject.org/> - Starting End of Life Discussions

Nov 26 AAR – No Class *Catch up on Reading and Forum Posts

Dec 3 Political Engagement and Militarism

Peters - 11

Dorothy Day, *The Catholic Worker*, Selected Excerpts (M)

Richard B. Miller, "Just-War Criteria and Theocentric Ethics" in *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects* (M)

*****Download using ATLA Religion Database via Drew Library

Keun-joo Christine Pae, "Western Princesses--a Missing Story: a Christian feminist ethical analysis of U.S. military prostitution in South Korea" in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 29 no 2 Fall-Wint 2009, p 121-139.

**Final Exam handed out, due Dec 10.