

ETH 5530 Online: Christian Ethics
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Fall Semester, 2020

Begins Monday, August 31, 2020 – Online Campus
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I. Course Description

This course assists students to reflect on moral issues through the perspective of Christian faith and discipleship, by developing responses and practices of justice that bear witness to the full scope of the kingdom of God when applied to a variety of ethical concerns.

Prerequisite – CHT5520 (Christian Theology for the Kingdom of God)

Note: This course is fully on-line, utilizing Blackboard as its major teaching medium. Access to a reliable computer and the internet through a high-speed means (dial-up access does not usually work satisfactorily in this course) is required, as is familiarity with the use of Blackboard (assistance in Blackboard is provided in video format through Learn AU). It is highly recommended that you be familiar with computer and web functions prior to starting the course since it is not advised to try to learn them while the course is in progress. On-line learning often requires more self-motivation than a regular class and is not suitable for every student.

This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional semester course format.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Not assessed in this course.
2. Establish communal and personal disciplines that nourish Christian spiritual and moral formation.
3. Not assessed in this course.
4. Demonstrate critical theological reflection that is biblically faithful, historically grounded, contextually relevant, and integrated with life and ministry.
5. Develop ongoing moral and just practices that bear witness to the full scope of the kingdom of God.
6. Exhibit effective ministry skills relevant to intended areas of service.

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks and Other Materials

Corbin Reuschling, Wyndy. *Desire for God and the Things of God: The Relationships Between Christian Spirituality and Morality*. Cascade, 2012.
ISBN: 978-1-60899-865-4

King, Martin Luther. *Strength to Love*. Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8006-9740-2
Miles, Rebekah. *The Pastor as Moral Guide*. Fortress Press, 1999. ISBN: 0-8006-3136-6
Spohn, William. *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics*. Continuum, 2007.
ISBN: 0-8264-1291-2

Full-Text Journal Articles (posted to Blackboard):

- Alexander, Estrela. "When Liberation Becomes Survival," in *Pneuma* 32, no 3(2010): 337-373.
- Bell, Daniel. "Can a War Against Terror be Just? Or What is Just War Good For?" in *Cross Currents* 56 no 1 (Spring 2006): 34-45.
- Birch, Bruce. "Reclaiming Prophetic Leadership," in *Ex Auditu* 22 (2006): 10-25.
- Boone, Jason. "Moral Injury and a New Way of Making Peace," in *Vision* 14, no 2 (September 1, 2013): 63-69.
- Brock, Brian. "Disability is not a 'Problem' to be Solved." *Faith & Leadership*. June 23, 2020. <https://faithandleadership.com/brian-brock-disability-not-problem-be-solved>.
- Bruckner, James. "Justice in Scripture," in *Ex Auditu* 22 (2006): 1-9.
- Fretheim, Terence. "What biblical scholars wish pastors would start or stop doing about ethical issues in the Old Testament," in *Word & World*, 31 no 3 Sum 2011, p 297-306.
- Hays, Richard. "Scripture-Shaped Community: The Problem of Method in New Testament Ethics," in *Interpretation* 44, no. 1 (January 1990): 42-55.
- Hynson, Leon. "The Church and Social Transformation: An Ethics of the Spirit," in *Wesley Theological Journal*, Spring 1976 (11): 49-61.
- Meneses, Eloise Hiebert. "Transnational Identities and the Church: Examining Contemporary Ethnicity and Place," in *Mission Studies* 29 (2012): 62-78.
- Miller, Patrick D. "The Human Sabbath: A Study in Deuteronomical Theology." *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 6 (1985): 81-97.
- Patterson, Daniel R. "Gobsmacked 1: Who are the Guilty?" *DanielPatto.com*. February 3, 2018. <https://danielpatto.com/blog/2018/2/3/gobsmacked-1-who-are-the-guilty>.
- _____. "Gobsmacked 2: The Cost of Silence." *DanielPatto.com*. February 9, 2018. <https://danielpatto.com/blog/2018/2/9/gobsmacked-2-the-cost-of-silence>.
- Spotts, Christopher. "The possibilities of the Hebrew Sabbath for Black theology," in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 33 no 2 (Fall - Wint 2013): 41-56.
- Srokosz, M.A. "God's Story and the Earth's Story: Grounding Our Concern for the Environment in the Biblical Metanarrative," in *Science and Christian Belief*, Vol. 20, no. 2 (2008): 163-174.
- Verhey, Allen. "Health and Healing in Memory of Jesus," in *Ex Auditu* 21 (2005): 24-48.
- Volf, Miroslav. "A Vision of Embrace: Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict," in *Ecumenical Review* 47, no 2 (April 1995): 195-205.
- _____. "Soft Difference: Theological Reflections on the Relation Between Church and Culture in 1 Peter," in *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 15-30.
- Wheeler, Sondra Ely. "Creation, Community, Discipleship: Remembering Why We Care About Sex," in *Ex Auditu* 17 (2001): 60-76.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Justice as a condition of authentic liturgy," in *Theology Today* 48, no. 1: 6-21.

B. Attendance

According to the *Student Handbook*, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours (2 weeks) will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

If you miss more than 6 hours of course time you will forfeit the percentage of the grade earned for course participation (except in extenuating circumstances that you have discussed with the professor). Additional absences may result in a request to withdraw from the course.

A Note About Classroom Etiquette: The ability and willingness to “be fully present” is an important habit and disposition in ministry where we need to “be fully present” to God, parishioners, clients, counselees, friends, family members, tasks, etc. Please see our course as an opportunity to practice being fully present to God and to each other by minimizing distractions and focusing on the tasks at hand. For an on-line class this means:

- Pay attention to how you communicate in your postings and responses to other students. Imagine if you were discussing issues face-to-face with your co-learners. What tone of voice would you use? How would you demonstrate active listening? How would you respond respectfully? Do this in your postings and responses to other students. One of the ways is avoiding posting in ALL CAPS and **BOLD**.
- Please adhere to the deadlines for postings. Other students are relying on your trustworthiness and readiness in class for their own postings. Don't hold others back or jam up their work.
- Please establish rhythms and routines for this class. As you set up your schedule for the semester, please carve out the appropriate time for readings, assignments, and on-line interaction and stick to them as you would for any other class. On-line courses do not work well if you are disorganized and undisciplined. Others depend on your participation (please see above).

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

1. **On-Line Postings** - The instructions for each week of the semester will be in designated folders (i.e. Week 1, Week 2, Week 3...you get the picture). **Please log into Blackboard each Monday to make sure you know what is required for the week.** As a rule, postings on the readings will be due Thursday of each week, with responses that further the discussion due by Saturday of each week by 6:00 p.m. Please plan accordingly. I will respond to your posts on Monday or Tuesday the following week and will keep these discussion boards open for further discussion.

Your on-line participation will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- Timeliness of your posts and responses: **you will not receive credit for late postings since this impacts the ability of others to complete their weekly assignments. You will be marked as “absent” which will impact the grade earned for participation. Please see “B” (Attendance) and “C-4” (Important reminders).**
- Your adherence to what was required in the postings: attention to the questions, attention to the instructions, and demonstration you have read the assigned material.
- The quality of your posts: your posts and responses to the discussion questions must demonstrate you have read the material, understood it, are able to synthesize the readings, and bring well developed insights and questions to the discussions and in your responses to others' posts.

2. **Mid-Term Assignment:** The mid-term assignment with specific instructions will be available on Blackboard on September 14 and is **due Saturday, October 24 by 6:00 p.m. to Blackboard**). The mid-term is designed to give you an opportunity to interact with and apply the course material on the foundations and sources of Christian ethics for the purpose of establishing normative frameworks for moral deliberation. The successful completion of the mid-term will depend on your understanding, familiarity and critical interaction with and use of the assigned reading material, the focus of lectures and class discussions from Weeks 1 through 7 in your responses to the questions.
3. **Course Integration Assignment** (Interpretive, Normative, Practical and Fundamental Tasks): This integrative assignment will provide an opportunity for you to identify and reflect on an experience in the past or present in which you were/are presented with an opportunity for moral deliberation and ethical action. If you are not able to identify an issue from your context and experience, contact the professor. You will have opportunity to work on this paper throughout the semester, integrating what you are learning about the interpretive, normative, practical, and fundamental tasks of Christian ethics with your own real life work in your case study.
- a. **Part I: Interpretive Task (Due September 26 by 6:00 p.m. to Blackboard)** - Write a 4-6 page paper on the situation on which you are reflecting, including the following:
- **Describe** the situation in as much detail as possible as well as the background and any events leading up to it.
 - **Name** the significant persons (or groups) involved and any other pertinent facts.
 - **Identify** the moral dimensions of the situation such as trigger events, conflicting moral claims and obligations, harms and goods at stake, moral perceptions, character failure and flaw
 - **Some situations do not work well for all parts of this assignment. To avoid later frustration, email a 1 paragraph summary of the situation you plan to address to Dr Lilley by Saturday 9/19 for approval.*
- b. **Part II: Normative and Practical Tasks (Due November 7 by 6:00 p.m. to Blackboard)** – You are functioning as a moral guide and leader in this case study and will now begin a response to the situation you described in Part I. Revise the paper you submitted for the Interpretive Task, paying careful attention to the professor’s comments. Expand your revised paper by adding another 4-6 pages (in one document) in which you:
- **Describe and use** the ethical resources available to you in understanding and responding to the situation from a biblical and theological standpoint.
 - **Draw** upon Scripture, theological frameworks, any pertinent historical and/or denominational resources and contemporary insights, and wisdom you have gleaned from the course readings to create a coherent moral framework that addresses the issue(s) you identified in Pt I. Please be explicit in using the sources of Christian ethics.
- Note:** In this part of your case study you will be establishing the moral framework that will guide you in the decisions, responses, strategies, and proposals you will offer in the third part of your paper.

c. **Part III: Fundamental Task (Final Integration Assignment Due December 12 by 6:00 p.m. to Blackboard)** - Revise Parts I and II. Expand your revised paper by adding another 2-3 pages for Part III which you:

- (If writing about a past experience) **Analyze and evaluate** your response to the situation. What did you learn from the experience? What might you do differently if you face a similar situation in the future?
- (If writing about a present challenge) **Make** an action plan for what you plan to do and what you expect or hope to happen.
- *In either case, pay specific attention* to the Christian virtues and Christian practices that are important in resolving the situation pertinent for your case. How might the congregation (or other Christian body or faith community) implement practices that would be helpful to others in similar situations in the future that embody the goodness and justice of God’s kingdom?

The Final Integration Assignment should be approximately 10-15 pages, doubled spaced with one inch margins following the most recent edition of Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, with proper citation of the sources you have used in this case study.

4. **Important Reminders:** The abilities to organize workloads and schedules, to meet deadlines and fulfill commitments are important competencies and expectations for Christian leadership and ministry. Therefore, please keep in mind the following:
- It is expected and assumed that you will turn in assignments on the due dates listed in the syllabus. **There is a 2-point deduction for each day an assignment is late. Assignments submitted more than one week late will not be accepted for credit.**
 - There will be no extensions or incompletes granted except in extenuating circumstances (such as a death in the family).

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Percent of Final Grade</i>
Weekly Discussions and Online postings	#2	20%
Mid-Term Assignment	#4	30%
Parts I and II of the Case Study (combined in 2 nd rewrite)	#4 and #5	20%
Final Integrative Case Study	#5 and #6	30%

IV. Course Schedule

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Lecture/Topic</i>	<i>Readings/Assignments</i>
1	August 31 – September 5	Getting Started	Readings: Miles, Introduction and chapter 1; Corbin Reuschling, Introduction; King, chapter 1
2	September 7 – 12	The Sources of Christian Ethics: Scripture	Readings: Spohn, pp 9–16, Corbin Reuschling, chapters 1 & 2 Journal Articles: Hays, “Scripture-Shaped Community”

3	September 14 – 19	The Sources Christian Ethics: Theology	Readings: Spohn, chapters 2 – 3 Journal Article: Hynson, “The Church and Social Transformation” *Request approval of case study
4	September 21 – 26	The Sources of Christian Ethics: Historical Perspectives and Traditions	Readings: Spohn, 73–76, 89–93; King, chapters 2 – 4 Journal Article: Spotts, “Possibilities of the Hebrew Sabbath...” *Case Study – Interpretive Task (Part I) Due
5	September 28 – October 3	The Church as Moral Community: Worship, Witness and Discipleship	Readings: Spohn, 120–7, 142–3, 152–62, 163–184; Corbin Reuschling, chapters 3 & 4
6	October 5 – 10	The Church as a <i>Shalom</i> ic Community	Readings: King, chapter 5 & 6 Journal Articles: Wolterstorff, “Justice as Condition of Authentic Liturgy”; Bruckner, “Justice in Scripture”
7	October 12 – 17	The Church as Moral Community: Political Engagement	Readings: Corbin Reuschling, chapter 6; King, chapters 7 & 8; Journal Article: Volf, “Soft Difference”
8	October 19 – 24	The Church as Moral Community: Stewardship of Creation, Resources and Work	Readings: Corbin Reuschling, chapter 5 ; King, chapter 9 Journal Article: Miller, “The Human Sabbath” *Mid-Term Assignment Due
9	October 26 – 31	The Church as Moral Community: War, Peace and Reconciliation	Readings: King, chapter 15 Journal Articles: Bell, “Can a War Against Terror be Just?”; Boone, “Moral Injury”
10	November 2 – 7	The Church as Moral Community: Race, Gender and Ethnicity	Readings: King, chapter 11 Journal Articles: Alexander, “When Liberation Becomes Survival”; Meneses, “Transnational Identities”; Volf, “A Vision of Embrace” *Case Study – Parts II (normative task) with Part I due
11	November 9 – 14	The Church as Moral Community: Human Sexuality	Readings: Miles, chapter 4; King, chapter 12 Journal Articles: Wheeler, “Creation, Community, Discipleship”; Patterson, “Gobsmacked” (1&2)
12	November 16 – 21	The Church as Moral Community: Life and Death	Readings: King, chapter 13 Journal Article: Brock, “Disability is not a problem...”; Verhey, “Health and Healing in Memory of Jesus”

13	November 23 – 28	Thanksgiving Break!	
13	November 30 – December 5	Dimensions of Moral Leadership	Readings: Miles, chapter 2; King, 14 Journal Article: Birch, “Reclaiming Prophetic Leadership”
14	December 7 – 12	Open session for discussion	*Final Case Study Due
15	December 14 – 19	Wrapping Up	

V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

There are many good sources and opportunities for continuing the work and reflection you have done in this class. The bibliography posted to Blackboard provides suggested readings in particular areas which you may find helpful, along with these suggestions:

- Join a local ministerial association (or start one!) to provide a place where you can seek moral guidance and wisdom from other Christian leaders.
- Subscribe to the Hastings Center (www.thehastingscenter.org) or the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity (<https://cbhd.org/>) for updated information and resources on biomedical ethics and pastoral practices.

VI. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

B. Ashland Multiliteracy Center

The Ashland Multiliteracy Center can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified Consultants can advise you online or in person.

To schedule an appointment, visit [Ashland Multiliteracy Center](#) and select “Online and Graduate” from the schedule menu.

C. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations

It is Ashland University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at 419-289-5904, or send an email to dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

D. ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	
B	3.0	86-88	Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.
C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

VII. Selected Bibliography or References will be posted to Blackboard.