

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PHII 633 Ethical Issues in Contemporary Society Online Course

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March 10 – June 27, 2008

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of ethical issues facing contemporary Christians from the perspective of biblical principles. The implications of biblical ethics for moral decisions both in the individual and societal contexts will be considered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Analyze various basic ethical systems, particularly those utilized within the Christian tradition.
2. Integrate the ethical teachings of the Old and New Testaments and their underlying rationale into their approach to doing ethical decision making.
3. Formulate a model of ethical decision making.
4. Combine the biblical ethical principles with data about various ethical issues to arrive at satisfactory decisions.
5. Apply the norms of biblical ethics, using a model of ethical decision making, to various specific ethical issues facing the contemporary Christian.

TEXTBOOKS

Clark, David K., and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Readings in Christian Ethics: Volume 1, Theory and Method*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994.

_____. *Readings in Christian Ethics: Volume 2, Issues and Applications*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996.

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT	ASSIGNMENTS
March 10-15, 2008 Introduction to Online Learning	Assignment: Intro to Online Learning Post: Getting Acquainted & Group Prayer
March 16-22, 2008 Basic Ethical Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Christian Ethics	Read: Clark & Rakestraw 1:17-49, 67-72, 83-91; Rae 11-43 Links: http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/whatisethics.html

	<p>http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/approach.html http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/canethicsbetaught.html http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/ethics.htm Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>March 23-29, 2008 Ethical Systems (Cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teleological Ethics • Deontological Ethics 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 1:113-137, 143-161; Rae 45-102 Links: http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9071587/teleological-ethics http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/ Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>March 30-April 5, 2008 Biblical Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Decalogue • The Sermon on the Mount 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 1:179-206, 211-231, 247-266 Links: http://theresurgence.com/john_armstrong_1996-10_biblical_ethics/ http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-252529/ethics Video: Dr. Jim Railey Lecture Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>April 6-12, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Decision Making 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 1:279-297; Rae 103-121, 261-270 Links: http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/framework.html http://salemschools.com/~dsmith/checkpoints.htm http://www.masc.sc/Resources/EthicalDilemmasDecisionMaking.pdf (for Public Officials) Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>April 13-19, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Abortion 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:21-55; Rae 123-143 Links: http://www.abortionfacts.com/ http://www.emedicinehealth.com/abortion/article_em.htm Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>April 20-26, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Reproductive Technologies 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2: 57-82; Rae 145-168 Links: http://ethics.sandiego.edu/presentations/AppliedEthics/ReproductiveTechnologies/ (view PPT) http://www.ippf.org/en/News/Intl+news/Fertility+technology+allows+parents+to+choose+sex+of+c</p>

	<p>hild.htm http://www.asrm.org/Patients/patientbooklets/ART.pdf Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>April 27-May 3, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Issue of Genetics and Human Cloning 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:83-92 ; Rae 169-180 Links: http://ethics.sandiego.edu/presentations/AppliedEthics/cloning/ (view PPT) http://www.actionbioscience.org/biotech/mcgee.html http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/genetic-engineering Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>May 4-10, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Issue of Euthanasia 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:95-163; Rae 181-207 Links: http://www.euthanasiaprocon.org/ http://www.euthanasia.com/ Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>May 11-17, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Issue of Sexual Ethics: Marriage, Divorce, Singleness 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:139-176, 225-258; Rae 225-230, 237-242 Links: http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v9n2/divorce.html http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/muslim/mus-essays/mus-ess-marriage.html http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/sexuality/ethics.php http://www.singleness.org/course.shtml Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>May 18-24, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Issue of Homosexuality 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:177-223; Rae 230-237 Links: http://www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html (for) http://www.conservapedia.com/Homosexuality (against) http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bibl.htm (for) http://www.family.org/socialissues/A000000682.cfm (against) Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>May 25-31, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Issue of Race Relations 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:261-291 Links: http://www.speakout.com/activism/race/</p>

	<p>http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/features/2001/nov/cincinnati/011101.cincinnati.html http://www.cnn.com/2003/EDUCATION/09/25/smu.bake.sale.ap/index.html http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/691_the_ethics_of_interracial_marriage</p> <p>Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>June 1-7, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Term Paper Due</i> • The Issue of Civil Disobedience 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:423-250</p> <p>Links: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-disobedience/ http://www.answers.com/topic/civil-disobedience?cat=biz-fin http://www.afsc.org/iraq/civil-disobedience.htm</p> <p>Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>June 8-14, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Capital Punishment 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:451-488; Rae 209-224</p> <p>Links: http://ethics.sandiego.edu/video/Hinman/SocialEthics/DeathPenalty/index.html (video of lecture) http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v1n3/capital.html http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/2005/0503fea2sb2.asp http://www.rutherford.org/Oldspeak/Articles/Religion/oldspeak-capitalpunishment.html (for) http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/OApp/OAppWeat.htm (against)</p> <p>Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>June 15-21, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Peace and War 	<p>Read: Clark & Rakestraw 2:489-524; Rae 243-260</p> <p>Links: http://www.baylor.edu/christianethics/index.php?id=18536 (Read at least 3 articles) http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/submitted/jontepace/whywar.html http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week820/exclusive.html</p> <p>Post: 2 discussion forums</p>
<p>June 22-27, 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final Exam 	<p>Exam: Take online exam.</p>

METHODOLOGY

This course will make use of lectures by the professor and discussion of pertinent material. Students will need to be prepared to take notes and enter into the discussion of ethical issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The student is expected to log into virtual classroom every week. Lack of appearance constitutes an absence. If there are circumstances (either personal or technological) that hinder class participation the professor should be notified immediately.
2. The student should complete the reading assignments as they are due (see the Course Outline above for the program).
3. The student should engage every assigned internet link as a source of alternative perspectives and outside reading as they are due (see the Course Outline above for the program). NOTE: the views and information of the internet sites do not necessarily represent the views of AGTS or the professor.
4. Every week, the student is to participate in the online discussion forums. By Wednesday of the week, the student must post at least one (1) response to the professors question in each forum (approx. 200 words). By Friday, the student must post as least one (1) reply to another student's post (approx. 100 words). The textbooks and internet links will be helpful in preparing the student for the discussion forums.
5. Each student will prepare a major research paper (15-20 pages) on an ethical issue other than one of the ones considered in the course. A list of suggested ethical issues can be accessed through the online course documents. The papers must conform to the guidelines of *A Manual for Writers of Term Paper, Theses, and Dissertations* (7th edition), by Kate L. Turabian, using footnotes for source documentation. The paper should 1) identify the issue carefully, 2) present the arguments relative to the issue, 3) examine the biblical materials which speak to the issue, 4) identify the ethical principles involved, and 5) present a decision as to the ethical response to the issue. The paper is due Friday, June 6, 2008. It should be emailed to the professor (jrailey@agts.edu) as an attachment.
6. The student should successfully sustain a final exam, to be taken between June 23-27, 2008. The exam will be essay in nature, giving the student the opportunity to respond to a case study on one of the ethical issues discussed in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is assumed that students at AGTS will endeavor to be honest and of high integrity in all matters pertaining to Seminary life. A lack of respect and integrity is evidenced by cheating, fabricating, plagiarizing, misusing facilities, removing books and other property not one's own, and disrupting classes.

Cheating is defined as "intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise." It is assumed that whatever is submitted by a student is the work of that student and is new work for that course. Fabrication is "intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise or form." Plagiarism is "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as

one's own in any academic exercise." One who facilitates any of the above is equally responsible with the primary violator.

Penalties may include restitution, an "F" on an individual paper, exam, or course; loss of campus employment; disciplinary probation; removal from extracurricular activities; and suspension.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Discussion Forums	20%
Exam	40%
Term paper	40%

Grades are recorded and averaged on the basis of the following grade scale: A=94-100; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=84-86; B-=80-83; C+=77-79; C=74-76; C-=70-73; D+=67-69; D=64-66; D-=60-63; F=0-59.

All assigned work for the course must be submitted for the student to receive a passing grade for the course. The grade of I (Incomplete) will be granted only for extenuating circumstances upon the written request of the student. Except in the case of severe extenuating circumstances the course grade will be reduced by one letter.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by James H. Railey, Jr., October 2007.