

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PTH 982 Ethical Leadership in a Morally Complex Society
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The primary focus of this course is to develop a constructive Christian ethic as a basis from which to lead the Church in addressing the complex moral issues confronting contemporary society. The emphases will be three-fold: (1) Examine biblical principles for ethical decision-making, including the relationship between theological reflection and ethical thinking. (2) Explore practical strategies that challenge ministers to personally lead with integrity (financial, relational, and sexual integrity). (3) Equip leaders with a process for guiding Christians toward ethical behavior with regard to contemporary issues (i.e. homosexuality and same-sex marriage, reproductive technologies and genetics, stem cell research, abortion, Euthanasia, pornography, etc.).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In order to facilitate ethical leadership in contemporary moral issues, this seminar-style course is an arena for learning and growth of several kinds. By the end of the seminar participants will:

Cognitive development:

- Gain a refined focus on biblical principles pertaining to ethical thinking; including a fresh understanding of the moral mission of the Church in the world;
- Recognize the importance of theological reflection in formulating a meaningful Christian ethic for today's Church in a postmodern world;

Theological reflection:

- Hear contemporary culture posing complex moral issues, and exercise reflective skills needed to develop appropriate responses;
- Consider a biblical approach to difficult issues surrounding moral dilemmas;
- Be equipped with a procedure for case study analysis of contemporary ethical dilemmas that enables them to identify and apply a biblically grounded ethic to those issues;

Ministry enhancement:

- Take steps toward the prevention of ethical impropriety in their personal lives, their ministry organizations, and among those they serve through the implementation of strategies for relational, financial, and sexual integrity;
- Acquire practical strategies and helps for guiding Christians toward ethical behavior in complex contemporary moral issues. Church leaders will be challenged to a lifetime of communicating ethical values to their spheres of influence.

COURSE FORMAT

The purpose of this course is to enhance the participants' ability to think critically about the issues and to integrate new strategies for leading others to live with Christian integrity and respond biblically to issues. Toward this end, seminar sessions will combine lecture, discussion, guest interviews, interactive exercises, case studies, discussion over assigned reading, and other instructional techniques. Vigorous participation is expected.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Participants will read a minimum of 1600 pages from the following books:

- Birch, Bruce C., and Larry L. Rasmussen. *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life*. Revised & Expanded Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989.
- Clark, David K. and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Readings in Christian Ethics: Volume 1, Theory and Method*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994.
- Clark, David K. and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Readings in Christian Ethics: Volume 2, Issues and Applications*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996.
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing the Church Today*. 3rd ed. P&R Publishing, 2004.
- Frankena, William K. *Ethics*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989.
- Gaddy, C. Welton. *Adultery and Grace: The Ultimate Scandal*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996.
- Grenz, Stanley. *Sexual Ethics: A Biblical Perspective*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1997.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.
- Maston, T.B. *Biblical Ethics*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988.
- Mott, Stephen Charles. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1982.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES

Pre-Session (20%)

Completion of 1600 pages of reading from the required pre-session assigned reading list: Participants will complete the provided reading report and submit it on the first day of class. NOTE: It is a violation of academic policy to claim credit for books read in prior college courses. If you have previously read any book on the list for credit, *you must substitute another book* from the bibliography.

During Session (10%)

1. Contribute to the learning environment through active participation in class.
2. Engagement in peer learning and relationships.

Post-Session (70%)

Participants will complete 2 post-session assignments from the following, for a total of 25-30 pages of written assignments. (Some participants may opt to do one larger post-session project, upon approval of the professor.)

1. Personal Growth Plan for Leading with Ethical Integrity

Based upon thoughtful reflection of the course, discuss in practical terms some of the ways the course materials can be implemented into your own life. Develop a 12-15 page personal growth plan that is capable of nurturing your life and ministry into more effectively leading with moral integrity and/or biblical ethical thinking. All work should:

- a. Be personal and reflective in that it represents your personal needs and understanding and the unique demands of your own ministry.
- b. Interact with course readings, seminar presentations, and discussions.
- c. Be grounded in Scripture and theologically informed.
- d. Plan should include concrete growth goals with practical/tangible steps toward achieving those goals.

2. Ministry/Organizational Growth Plan for Leading Others into Biblical Ethical Thinking

Based upon thoughtful reflection of the course, discuss in practical terms some of the ways the course materials can be implemented into your own ministry context. Develop a 12-15 page ministry growth plan that is capable of nurturing your organization and/or ministry staff into demonstrating moral integrity and/or integrating biblical ethical thinking. See details above.

3. Ministry Project: Develop a Resource for Assisting an Ethical Need in Your Ministry Context

Based upon thoughtful reflection of the course, develop a ministry resource (physical program, curriculum, seminar, written resource, Bible study, etc.), that addresses an ethical/moral issue pertinent to your ministry context.

4. Series of Sermons/Messages/Lessons

Using insights gained from the course, write 3-4 messages designed to promote biblical ethics within the body of Christ within your ministry context.

5. Written Project: Moral Issue Paper

Write a 15-page paper that focuses on a specific area of concern within the general area of the Church and contemporary moral/ethical issues. The paper should be pertinent to your ministry context/interests, and should include five components:

- a. an introduction with true-to-life illustrations showing the complexity and relevance of the issue;
- b. a summary of varying viewpoints on the issue;
- c. a summary of the theological reflection method that includes a careful treatment of biblical passages/principles that have bearing on the issue;
- d. a conclusion that clearly expresses your viewpoint on the issue;

- e. a practical application section demonstrating how the moral truths might be applied or embodied in the Christian life, or in your ministry context specifically. This should include *specific action steps* the reader can take to influence others' thinking or behavior.

6. *Written Project: Reflection on the Effects of Post-modernism on Evangelical Ethics*

Write a 15-page paper reflecting on the potential effects of Post-modernism on Evangelical Christian ethics. What should Christian leaders know about the potential impact of Post-modern thought on the Church's response to social/moral issues? Are there benefits to be sought? Dangers to avoid? How can Christian leaders take the initiative in leading Post-moderns to develop biblical responses to complex moral issues?

7. *Self-Designed Project*

- *Self-designed project*: Participants have the option of proposing a customized post-session project. The proposal must be submitted in written form, and the professor's permission must be secured in advance.

All work is due 90 days from the last day of class. Work must be postmarked by Jan. 21, 2006.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Day 1	I. Introduction to Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church in contemporary context • Diverse ethical systems
Day 2	II. Foundations for Biblical Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical principles for ethical thinking • The value of theological reflection
Day 3	III. Personal Integrity in Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational integrity • Sexual integrity
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial integrity IV. Leading others into ethical thinking and behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A process for guiding Christians toward ethical thinking/behavior
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies/Interview re: representative contemporary issues (i.e. homosexuality and same-sex marriage, reproductive technologies and genetics, stem cell research, abortion, Euthanasia, etc.).

GRADING PROCEDURE

Class Participation	10%
Reading of Textbook	20%
Final Projects	<u>70%</u>
	100%

Note: Late work will be penalized.