

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PHI 633 Ethical Issues in Contemporary Society

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Spring 2005

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.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT	ASSIGNMENTS
January 6, 2005 Basic Ethical Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Teleological Ethics• Deontological Ethics	Read Clark and Rakestraw, 1:17-49, 67-72, 83-100, 113-137, 143-161, 179-206, 211-231, 247-266, 279-297.

<p style="text-align: center;">January 13, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical ethics • Using the Bible • The Decalogue • The Sermon on the Mount 	
<p style="text-align: center;">January 20, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest—Dr. Stanley Grenz • Ethical Decision Making 	
<p style="text-align: center;">January 27, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Abortion 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:21-55
<p style="text-align: center;">February 3, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Reproductive Technologies and Genetics (Cloning and Stem Cell Research) 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:57-93
<p style="text-align: center;">February 10, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Class 	
<p style="text-align: center;">February 17, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Euthanasia 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:95-136
<p style="text-align: center;">February 24, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Homosexuality 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:177-224
<p style="text-align: center;">March 10, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Term Exam 	
<p style="text-align: center;">March 17, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Race Relations 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:261-292
<p style="text-align: center;">March 24, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Care for the Environment 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:381-422
<p style="text-align: center;">March 31, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Civil Disobedience 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:423-450
<p style="text-align: center;">April 7, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Capital Punishment 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:451-488
<p style="text-align: center;">April 14, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Issue of Peace and War 	Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:489-524
<p style="text-align: center;">April 21, 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam 	

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 attend all class sessions. Absences should be for extreme circumstances only. The limits established by the Seminary will be observed
2. The student should complete the reading assignments as they are due (see the Course Outline above for the program).
3. When the professor begins to lecture on the specific ethical issues listed above in the Course Outline the student is responsible to be ready to discuss the ethical issue in the class session(s). The textbooks will be helpful in preparing the student for the discussion.
4. Each student will prepare a major research paper (15-20 pages) on an ethical issue presented in the textbook other than one of the ones considered in class. The papers must conform to the guidelines of *A Manual for Writers of Term Paper, Theses, and Dissertations* (current edition), by Kate L. Turabian, using footnotes for source documentation. (Students in the counseling programs may use Turabian chapter 10, "Parenthetical References and Reference Lists"). 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 March 31, 2005.
5. The student should successfully sustain two exams, one to be given on March 10, 2005 and the other on April 21, 2005. Both exams 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 before each exam.

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

Exams	50%
Term paper	50%

Grades are recorded and averaged on the basis of the following grade scale: A=12; A-=11; B+=10; B=9; B-=8; C+=7; C=6; C-=5; D+=4; D=3; D-=2; F=1.

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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Barnette, Henlee H. *Introducing Christian Ethics*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1961.

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Birch, Bruce C. and Larry L. Rasmussen, ed. *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life*. Revised and expanded edition. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1989.

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University Press, 1976.

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by James H. Railey, Jr., November 2004.