

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Degree Completion Program
Springfield, Missouri

PHID 633 ETHICAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

February 15, 22, March 8, 15, 22, 2007
Thursdays 6:00-10:00 P.M.
(3 Credits)

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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. (315 pages)

_____. *Readings in Christian Ethics: Volume 2, Issues and Applications*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996. (533 pages)

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989. (314 pages)

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT	OBJECTIVES/ASSIGNMENTS
<p>February 15, 2007 Basic Ethical Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Teleological • Deontological • Biblical ethics • Using the Bible • The Decalogue • The Sermon on the Mount • Ethical Decision Making 	<p>Read Clark and Rakestraw, 1:17-49, 67-72, 83-100, 113-137, 143-161, 179-206, 211-231, 247-266, 279-297; Geisler, 17-132.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the approaches to doing ethics according to their characteristics and unique values. 2. Prepare an approach to doing ethics that appropriates both the basic ethical systems and the biblical ethical principles. 3. Design an ethical system using the ethical principles of the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount. 4. Formulate an ethical decision making model.
<p>February 22, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Issue of Abortion ❖ The Issue of Reproductive Technologies and Genetics (Cloning and Stem Cell Research) 	<p>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:21-55, 57-93; Geisler, 135-155, 173-192.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the background of the abortion and stem cell research issues. 2. Compare the argumentation made about the issues with the biblical material that applies to it. 3. Recommend an appropriate response to the abortion and stem cell research issues.
<p>March 8, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Issue of Euthanasia ❖ The Issue of Homosexuality 	<p>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:95-136, 177-224; Geisler, 157-172, 257-276;</p> <p>At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the issues surrounding the debate about euthanasia and homosexuality. 2. Rank the argumentation used both for and against the two issues. 3. Select an approach to the issue that is biblically based.
<p>March 15, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Issue of Race Relations ❖ The Issue of Civil Disobedience 	<p>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:261-292, 423-450; Geisler 239-256.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Separate fact from fiction about the issues of race relations and civil disobedience. 2. Compare the arguments made for and against the issues.

<p style="text-align: center;">March 22, 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Issue of Capital Punishment ❖ The Issue of Peace and War 	<p>3. Decide on a proper and ethical response to the issues.</p> <p>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:451-488, 489-524; Geisler 193-214, 215-238.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the arguments for and against civil disobedience. 2. Compare the positions of pacifism, just war and realism. 3. Measure the biblical correctness of each of the three approaches to the issue of peace and war. 4. Select approaches to the issues that are biblically responsible.
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METHODOLOGY

This course will make use of lectures by the professor, discussion of pertinent material, and presentation of response papers and online email discussions by the students. Students will need to be prepared to take notes and enter into the discussion of ethical issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance: The student is expected to attend all class sessions. Absences should be for extreme circumstances only. The limits established by the Seminary MATS Degree Completion Program will be observed.
2. Reading: The student should complete the reading assignments as they are due (see the Course Outline above for the program) and **submit on the last evening of class a report detailing all readings** on a form to be supplied by the professor. The failure to complete the reading assignments will reduce the final grade for the course.
3. Response papers: The student will submit at the beginning of each session (sessions two through five) two, two-page responses, one to each of the ethical issues that are the focus of the class session. From the second week until the fifth week two ethical issues will be presented in the each class session, thus the student is responsible for eight response essays. The basis of the essay will be the assigned reading for the particular ethical issues and the biblical material that will be presented at the first session.
4. Discussion: 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.
5. Quizzes: The professor reserves the right to administer a brief quiz at the end of the discussion on each ethical issue. Quizzes will focus on salient concepts and biblical

backgrounds having to do with each issue that will be covered in the readings and classroom presentations.

6. Term paper: The student will expand one of the two-page papers dealing with an ethical issue of particular interest into a term paper of ten pages in length. The paper should be in good form as determined by Turabian (6th ed.), using not less than 10 substantial resources, and will be graded on content, composition and form. **Due date: Beginning of the last class (March 22)—may be extended to Noon, Friday, March 23 if needed.**

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.

THE USE OF COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM

The use of computers for word processing in the classroom represents a privilege given to students to enhance their learning. They may only be used for purposes related to the course. Therefore, it is breach of classroom etiquette, an act of rudeness, and a distraction to other students, when computers are also used to surf the web, watch videos, play games, send messages, etc., during class time. The professor assumes that seminarians will be persons of integrity when using computers in the classroom.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Quizzes	25%
Response papers	50%
Final Paper	25%

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.

Prompt and timely completion of assignments is essential to the degree completion program. Late work will be accepted only be pre-arrangement with the professor in compliance with program standards and only on sufficient grounds. Late work submitted beyond agreed-upon dates, if

accepted, may be penalized by one letter grade per week late. 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.

Note: A \$30.00 fee will be charged to the student's account for every grade change even if the instructor has approved an extension for completing the work. Any exception to the policy will be made by the registrar.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by James H. Railey, Jr., October 2006.