

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

PHI 633 Ethical Issues in Contemporary Society  
Fridays, 1:30-4:15 p.m.

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Spring 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*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

UNIT	ASSIGNMENTS
<b>January 11, 2008</b> Basic Ethical Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Teleological Ethics</li> </ul>	<b>Read Clark and Rakestraw, 1:17-49, 67-72, 83-100, 113-137, 143-161, 179-206, 211-231, 247-266, 279-297.</b> <b>Read Rae, 11-121, 261-270</b>
<b>January 18, 2008</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deontological Ethics</li> <li>• Biblical ethics</li> <li>• Using the Bible</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>January 25, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Decalogue</li> <li>• The Sermon on the Mount</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>February 1, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical Decision Making</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>February 8, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Abortion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:21-55</b>  <b>Read Rae, 123-143</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>February 15, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Reproductive Technologies and Genetics (Cloning and Stem Cell Research)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:57-93</b>  <b>Read Rae, 145-180</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>February 22, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Euthanasia</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:95-136</b>  <b>Read Rae, 181-207</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>February 29, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Spring Study Week—No Class</i></li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 7, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Homosexuality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:177-224</b>  <b>Read Rae, 225-242</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 14 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Society for Pentecostal Studies Conference—No Class</i></li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 21, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Good Friday Holiday—No Class</i></li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 28, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Race Relations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:261-292</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 4, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Term Paper Due</i></li> <li>• The Issue of Civil Disobedience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:423-450</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 11, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapel Service—1:30-2:45 p.m.</i></li> <li>• The Issue of Capital Punishment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:451-488</b>  <b>Read Rae, 209-224</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 18, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Issue of Peace and War</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read Clark and Rakestraw 2:489-524</b>  <b>Read Rae, 243-260</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 25, 2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Exam</li> </ul>	

**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. Barring a serious medical emergency, credit cannot be granted for this course if a student has been absent from more than two class sessions. Exceeding the absence limits shall be regarded as an unofficial withdrawal and result in a grade of F.
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 other than one of the ones considered in class. A list of suggested ethical issues will be distributed at the first class. The papers must conform to the guidelines of *A Manual for Writers of Term Paper, Theses, and Dissertations* (7<sup>th</sup> 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 April 4, 2008.
5. The student should successfully sustain a final exam, to be given on April 25, 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.

### **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**

Exam	50%
Term paper	50%

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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- Jersild, Paul T., and Dale A. Johnson. *Moral Issues*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993.
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- Kilner, John F., Nigel M. de S. Cameron, and David L. Schiedermayer, eds. *Bioethics and the Future of Medicine: A Christian Appraisal*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995.
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### **SPECIFIC DATA**

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