



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

Course Identification

Course Number: WYT2932H
Course Name: Beyond Bumper Stickers: Christian Ethics for Ministry
Campus: St. George

Instructor Information

Co-Instructor: Jonathan Clemens Co-instructor: Michael Buttrey
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

Systematic Theology I and II or institutional equivalent

Course Description

This course will explore questions attending contemporary moral issues that can arise in the context of parish ministry. The first half will look at key theories, sources, methods, and themes in Christian ethics and the second half will look at Christian responses to ethical issues that are likely to be raised in a church context, such as abortion, disability, euthanasia, politics, violence, military service, ecology, and economics. The concepts, distinctions, and texts presented in the course will help students practice integrating Scripture, tradition, philosophy, and experience and give them resources to better counsel family, friends, neighbours, and parishioners in thinking through ethical issues. Classes will consist of lectures and discussion, while evaluation will be based on participation, reading summaries, and two essays. Students in Master of Divinity programs will be asked to place their work for the course within the context of their current ministry, but the course is open to all basic degree students who have completed a year of systematic theology or the equivalent.

Course Methodology

The readings (textbook and course packet) will introduce students to key aspects of theories and methods for Christian ethics as well as key distinctions and important concepts in certain debates. Lectures will cover some of the basic distinctions and concepts and then discussions will enable the class to practice using and making such distinctions. Assignments will give students a chance to work on particular issues or themes that are of interest and pertinent to their ministry, and also give them competence in further research on such issues and themes.

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv, MDivP)
• will be able to demonstrate familiarity with different philosophical and theological approaches in the history of Christian ethics	Lectures, Discussion, Papers	MTS: 1.4 MDiv: 1.4 MDivP: 1.4
• will be able to demonstrate familiarity with different uses of Scripture as source and norm for Christian ethics	Discussion, Papers	MTS: 1.2 MDiv: 1.2 MDivP: 1.2
• will be able to give an accurate summary of the substance of a secondary source in theological studies, to give a plausible account of its place in the discussions or controversies of an academic or faith community, and to evaluate whether its approach to solving a problem is appropriate	Lectures, Discussion, Papers	MTS: 1.4, 2.1 MDiv: 1.4, 2.1 MDivP: 1.4, 2.1
• will be able to write an academic essay with a clear thesis statement, an expository outline dependent on the thesis statement, a selection of primary evidence appropriate to the exposition, persuasive interpretations and arguments, and reference to alternative possible interpretations of the primary evidence	Short paper and final paper, Discussion	MTS: 2.1, 2.2 MDiv: 2.1, 2.3 MDivP: 2.1, 2.3
• will articulate the importance of the concepts and issues covered in the course in relation to their practice of Christian ministry	Short paper and final paper; Discussion	MTS: 3.3 MDiv: 2.4 MDivP: 2.4

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Steve Wilkins, *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right and Wrong* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011). Available at Crux Books. (BBSE hereafter)
- Course Packet

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the University of Toronto portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged into portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find links to all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

Class 1 Introduction to the Course and Topic

Required Reading

The New Testament

Read the New Testament and bring to class *at least one* passage of scripture that you think supports a concept or idea that we will cover at some point in the class and be prepared to elaborate on your choice as well as canonical considerations (e.g. does it appear to say something else in another passage and how do you reconcile them, should we follow the “letter” of the text, does it matter who is speaking, etc.)

Class 2 Divine Command (Deontology), Consequentialism (Teleology), and Virtue Ethics (Aretology)

Required Reading

BBSE chapters 1, 6, 7, and 8

Augustine, *City of God*, XV.22 and XIX.4

Class 3 The Use of Scripture in Ethics

Required Reading

BBSE chapter 12

William Placher, “Is the Bible True?”

Glen Stassen & David Gushee, “Authority and Scripture.”

Karl Barth, “The Strange New World within the Bible”

William Christian Sr., *Doctrines of Religious Communities*, chapters 1 & 5

Class 4 Philosophy, Theology, and Tradition

Required Reading

BBSE chapters 9 and 10

Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Rationality of Traditions” and the introduction to *After Virtue*

Ellen Davis, “Critical Traditioning”

Cornel West, “The Indispensability yet Insufficiency of Marxist Thought.”

Class 5 Guiding Principles in Christian Ethics: Law, Love, Justice, and Anti-Essentialism

Required Reading

BBSE chapter 11

Tertullian, *Apology*, 37-38

Origen, *Against Celsus*, V.37

Augustine, *Sermon on 1 John 4:4-12*

Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIV.28

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II q. 23, 27, 44, 58, 80

Martin Luther, "On the Freedom of a Christian"

Menno Simons, "A Kind Admonition on Church Discipline"

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.vii.6-12

Stanley Hauerwas, "Love Isn't All You Need"

Timothy Jackson, "The Fate of Charity" and "Is God Just?"

Class 6 Liberation Critiques of Christian Ethics: Feminist, African-American, Latin American, and First Nations

Required Reading

Phillip Berryman, the introduction to *Liberation Theology*

James Cone, "Legacies of the Cross and the Lynching Tree"

Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?*, Appendix

Clara Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George Tinker, *A Native American Theology*, Introduction

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," "I Have a Dream," and "Where Do We Go from Here"

Susan Frank Parsons, "Feminist Ethics"

Emilie M. Townes, "To Pick One's Own Cotton: Religious Values, Public Policy, and Women's Moral Autonomy"

Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman."

Class 7 Term Break

Class 8 Beginning of Life: Abortion, Birth, and Disability

Required Reading

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Being Baptized: Bodies and Abortion."

Sidney Callahan, "Abortion and the Sexual Agenda: A Case for Prolife Feminism"

Beverly Wildung Harrison and Shirley Cloyes, "Theology and Morality of Procreative Choice"

Gilbert Meilaender, "The Fetus as Parasite and Mushroom"

Tom Reynolds, "Theology and Disability: Changing the Conversation."

Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

Class 9 End of Life: Alzheimer's, Dying, and Euthanasia

Required Reading

Vigen Guroian, "The Culture of Death"

Timothy P. Jackson, "Euthanasia and Capital Punishment: Christianity and the Right to Death"

Stanley Hauerwas and Richard Bondi, "Memory, Community, and the Reasons for Living: Reflections on Suicide and Euthanasia."

David Keck, *Forgetting Whose We Are: Alzheimer's Disease and the Love of God*, Ch. 1 and 6

Gilbert Meilaender, "Euthanasia and Christian Vision"

Class 10 Church and Politics: The Care of Souls in Civil Society

Required Reading

Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.15 and XIX.24

Harro Hopfl, "Introduction," *Luther and Calvin: On Secular Authority*

Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Kingdom of God"

Reinhold Niebuhr, "Democracy, Secularism, and Christianity"

James Davison Hunter *To Change the World*, Essay II, Chapters 3, 4, and 5

John Howard Yoder, "Why Ecclesiology is Social Ethics"

Class 11 Church and War: Violence, Military Service and Christian Complicity

Required Reading

Augustine, "Letter 189 to Boniface"

Tertullian, "Concerning Military Service"

Elizabeth Anscombe, "The Justice of the Present War Examined"

Michael Baxter and Lisa Cahill, "Is This Just War?"

Dorothy Day, "Our Country Passes from Undeclared War to Declared War"

H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing"

Reinhold Niebuhr, "Must We Do Nothing?"

Paul Ramsey, "Justice in War"

John Howard Yoder, "What Would You Do?"

Class 12 Ecology and Economy: Stewardship in the Marketplace and on the Earth

Required Reading

Clement of Alexandria, "Who is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?"

John Wesley, "The Use of Money"

Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation"

Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Poverty: Solidarity and Protest"

Michael Handy, "Interceding: Giving Grief to Management"

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I See the Promised Land"

Michael Northcott, "Ecology and Christian Ethics"

Max Stackhouse, "Business, Economics, and Christian Ethics"

Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"

Class 13 Other Topics

Topics and any required reading will be announced later in the course. Possible topics may include refugees, pain/abuse/torture, sexual misconduct, mental illness, etc.

Evaluation

Requirements

Attendance and Participation	10%
Weekly Reading Précis	20%
Short Essay	30%
Long Essay	40%

1. **Attendance** marks start out at 5%, with deductions for absence or lateness, while **participation** in class discussions will add to your grade.
2. Each week a short, one-page **reading summary and response** will be expected, with 6 bullet points, sentences, or short paragraphs. Three of these should summarize the readings,

and three should highlight questions or criticisms of the reading. You may be asked to read your comments in class. Each précis is worth 2%, but the two with lowest marks will be dropped from the final grade.

3. Your **short essay** should identify a challenge for contemporary Christians in the theories, sources, methods, and history we will discuss in the first half of the course. 1,250 to 1,500 words, with at least 3 sources chosen from the bibliography in the syllabus, due the class after reading week.
4. Your **long essay** will address the challenge of Christian ethics in terms of a particular case, issue, or subject. Your topic and a provisional outline, with bibliography, must be approved by the instructors. 2,500-3,000 words, due XXXXX X in Jon Clemens' mailbox at Wycliffe College. Please also e-mail digital copies to both instructors.

All assignments must be submitted on single-sided paper (with 1" margins, 12 pt. font, double spaced) at the beginning of the class when they are due to be considered on time. Assignments received on time will be graded and returned promptly. Assignments received late without a pre-arranged extension will be graded only in exceptional circumstances, and without detailed comments or feedback.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may

request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

Bibliography

List here any bibliographic resources that will be helpful to students, both within the course and for further study.

Class 2 Deontology, Consequentialism (Teleology), and Virtue Ethics (Aretology)

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Books 1-2. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1985.

Aquinas, Thomas. “Treatise on the Virtues.” Questions 55-62 in *Summa Theologiae I-II (Prima Secundae)*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Washbourne, 1938.

Kant, Immanuel. “Duty and Categorical Rules.” In *Ethics: The Big Questions*, edited by James P. Sterba. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

Mill, John Stuart. "Utilitarianism." In *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, 2nd edition, edited by Mark Philip and Frederick Rosen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Williams, Bernard. "Against Utilitarianism." In *Ethics: The Big Questions*.

Class 3 The Use of Scripture in Ethics

Christian, William A. *Doctrines of Religious Communities: A Philosophical Study*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.

Harink, Douglas. *Paul Among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity*. Brazos Press, 2003.

Fowl, Stephen E. and Gregory Jones. *Reading in Communion: Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

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Provan, Iain. *Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014.

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Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2004.

Wright, N.T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.

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Class 4 Philosophy, Theology, and Tradition

Hauerwas, Stanley. *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.

Hauerwas, Stanley. "Situation Ethics, Moral Notions, and Moral Theology." In *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection*, 11-29. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974.

Fletcher, Joseph. "What's in a Rule?: A Situationist's View." In *Norm & Context in Christian Ethics*, edited by Gene Outka and Paul Ramsey, 328-348. New York: Scribner, 1968.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2007.

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O'Donovan, Oliver. *Self, World, and Time*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.

Class 5 Guiding Principles in Christian Ethics: Law, Love, Justice, and Anti-Essentialism

Augustine. *City of God*, Book XIX

Griffiths, Paul J. *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004.

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Class 6 Liberation Critiques of Christian Ethics: Feminist, African-American, Latin American, and First Nations

Boff, Leonardo. *Church, Charism, and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*. London: SCM Press, 1985.

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Mary Daly, "The Spiritual Revolution: Women's Liberation as Theological Re-education"

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Class 8 Beginning of Life: Abortion, Birth, and Disability

Chapter 13 in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, edited by Therese M. Lysaught and Joseph J. Kotva Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Brock, Brian., and John. Swinton, eds. *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*. Cambridge, U.K.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012.

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Class 9 End of Life: Alzheimer's, Dying, and Euthanasia

Chapter 14 in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, edited by Therese M. Lysaught and Joseph J. Kotva Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

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Class 10 Church and Politics: The Care of Souls in Civil Society

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Class 11 Church and War: Violence, Military Service, and Christian Complicity

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Class 12 Ecology and Economy: Stewardship in the Marketplace and on the Earth

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