



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

Course Identification

Course Number: WYT2932HS L0101
Course Name: Beyond Bumper Stickers: Christian Ethics for Ministry
Course Meetings: 2-5pm, Mondays, Wycliffe College, St. George Campus

Instructor Information

Co-Instructor: Jonathan Clemens Co-instructor: Michael Buttrey
E-mail: jon.clemens@mail.utoronto.ca E-mail: michael.buttrey@mail.utoronto.ca
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

Systematic Theology I and II or institutional equivalent

Course Description

This course will have two parts. The first half will look at key theories, sources, and methods used in Christian Ethics and the second half will look at specific contemporary issues that are likely to arise in a church context, such as abortion, euthanasia, disability, war, violence, and politics. The concepts, distinctions, texts, and questions presented in the course will help students practice integrating Scripture, tradition, philosophy, and experience and give them resources to better assist family, friends, neighbours, and parishioners in thinking through ethical issues. It will also ask and explore attendant questions around the major moral issues that could arise specifically in the life of parish ministry.

Course Methodology

This course is a seminar. The majority of class time will be devoted to discussion of the readings, which are selections from significant primary sources, interspersed with short lectures covering basic concepts and distinctions as well as exercises in applying these concepts and distinctions. To make this course a success, students will need to complete the required readings (about 60 pages/week), prepare short reading summaries and responses each week, and be willing to discuss the readings and their responses in class. Other assignments will give students a chance to work on particular issues or themes they find interesting and are 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 will be able to:	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)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Class and Reading Schedule

Class 1 Introduction to the Course and Topic

The New Testament

Read the New Testament and bring to class *at least one* passage of scripture that you think relates to 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 Consequentialism, Deontology, Natural Law, and Virtue

Required Reading (88 pages)

BBSE chapters 1 “Ethical Systems”, 6 “Utilitarianism”, 7 “Kantian Ethics”, 8 “Virtue Ethics”, and 11 “Natural Law Ethics” (88 pages)

Suggested Reading (29 pages)

Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.4 (5 pages)

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II q. 55, 61, 62, 65, 94 (24 pages)

Class 3 The Use of Scripture in Ethics

Required Reading (84 pages)

BBSE chapters 9 “Narrative Ethics” and 12 “Divine Command Theory” (36 pages)

Karl Barth, “The Strange New World within the Bible” (25 pages)

William Placher, “Is the Bible True?” (5 pages)

Glen Stassen & David Gushee, “Authority and Scripture” (18 pages)

Suggested Reading (52 pages)

William Christian Sr., *Doctrines of Religious Communities*, chapter 5 (28 pages)

Stanley Hauerwas, “Jesus: The Presence of the Peaceable Kingdom” (24 pages)

Class 4 Philosophy, Theology, and Tradition

Required Reading (59 pages)

Ellen Davis, “Critical Traditioning” (19 pages)

Cornel West, “The Indispensability yet Insufficiency of Marxist Thought” (19 pages)

Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Rationality of Traditions” (21 pages)

Suggested Reading (11 pages)

Alasdair MacIntyre, prologue and preface to *After Virtue* (11 pages)

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

Required Reading (78 pages)

BBSE chapter 10 “Situation Ethics” (15 pages)

Augustine, *Sermon on 1 John 4:4-12* (11 pages)

Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIV.28 (1 page)

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.vii.6-12 (8 pages)

Timothy Jackson, “Is God Just?” (24 pages)

Tertullian, *Apology*, 37-38 (4 pages)

Origen, *Against Celsus*, V.37 (2 pages)

Stanley Hauerwas, “Love Isn’t All You Need” (13 pages)

Suggested Reading (70 pages)

Martin Luther, "On the Freedom of a Christian" (26 pages)

Menno Simons, "A Kind Admonition on Church Discipline" (11 pages)

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II q. 23, 27, 44, 58, 80 (33 pages)

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

Required Reading (80 pages)

Phillip Berryman, "Introduction," *Liberation Theology* (8 pages)

James Cone, "Legacies of the Cross and the Lynching Tree" (9 pages)

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," "I Have a Dream," and "Where Do We Go from Here" (22 pages)

Susan Frank Parsons, "Feminist Ethics" (13 pages)

Emilie M. Townes, "To Pick One's Own Cotton: Religious Values, Public Policy, and Women's Moral Autonomy" (26 pages)

Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman" (2 pages)

Suggested Reading (29 pages)

Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?*, Appendix (9 pages)

Clara Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George Tinker, *A Native American Theology*, Introduction (20 pages)

Class 7 Term Break

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

Required Reading (71 pages)

Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion" (20 pages)

Gilbert Meilaender, "The Fetus as Parasite and Mushroom" (10 pages)

Sidney Callahan, "Abortion and the Sexual Agenda: A Case for Pro-life Feminism" (12 pages)

Frederick Bauerschmidt, "Being Baptized: Bodies and Abortion" (13 pages)

Tom Reynolds, "Theology and Disability: Changing the Conversation" (16 pages)

Suggested Reading (28 pages)

Beverly Wildung Harrison and Shirley Cloyes, "Theology and Morality of Procreative Choice" (20 pages)

Philippa Foot, "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect" (8 pages)

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

Required Reading (64 pages)

Gilbert Meilaender, "Euthanasia and Christian Vision" (11 pages)

David Keck, *Forgetting Whose We Are: Alzheimer's Disease and the Love of God*, Ch. 1 (22 pages)

Vigen Guroian, "The Culture of Death" (15 pages)

Timothy Jackson, "Euthanasia and Capital Punishment: Christianity and the Right to Death" (16 pages)

Suggested Reading (17 pages)

Stanley Hauerwas and Richard Bondi, "Memory, Community, and the Reasons for Living: Reflections on Suicide and Euthanasia" (15 pages)

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

Required Reading (62 pages)

Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.15 and XIX.24 (3 pages)

Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Kingdom of God" (9 pages)

Reinhold Niebuhr, "Democracy, Secularism, and Christianity" (4 pages)

John Howard Yoder, "Why Ecclesiology is Social Ethics" (25 pages)

James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World*, Essay II, Chapter 3 (21 pages)

Suggested Reading (34 pages)

Harro Hopfl, "Introduction," *Luther and Calvin: On Secular Authority* (17 pages)

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

Required Reading (36 pages)

Augustine, "Letter 189 to Boniface" (3 pages)

Elizabeth Anscombe, "The Justice of the Present War Examined" (10 pages)

Reinhold Niebuhr, "Must We Do Nothing?" (4 pages)

Paul Ramsey, "Justice in War" (7 pages)

Michael Baxter and Lisa Cahill, "Is This Just War?" (4 pages)

Dorothy Day, "Our Country Passes from Undeclared War to Declared War" (3 pages)

H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing" (4 pages)

Tertullian, "Concerning Military Service" (1 pages)

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

Required Reading (58 pages)

Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation" (16 pages)

Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Poverty: Solidarity and Protest" (3 pages)

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I See the Promised Land" (3 pages)

Clement of Alexandria, "Who is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?" (14 pages)

John Wesley, "The Use of Money" (11 pages)

Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (11 pages)

Suggested Reading (31 pages)

Michael Hanby, "Interceding: Giving Grief to Management" (13 pages)

Max Stackhouse, "Business, Economics, and Christian Ethics" (18 pages)

Class 13 Other Topics

BBSE chapter 13 "Unravelling the Options" (11 pages)

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 10%, with deductions for absence or lateness, while **participation** in class discussions will add to your grade. With good participation on top of reliable attendance you may earn bonus marks, up to 5% more.
2. Each week after the first week a short **reading summary and response** will be expected, no more than one page, 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 a bibliography we will supply, due February 26th.
4. Your **long essay** will address the challenge of Christian ethics in terms of a particular case, issue, or subject. Your topic and an provisional outline, with bibliography, must be approved by the instructors. 2,500-3,000 words, due April 13th via e-mail to both instructors.

All assignments must be submitted 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 Equivalent	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 from 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.