

TH 6303: TRADITIONS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND ETHICS
Austin Graduate School of Theology
Spring 2017

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Introduction

- A. Course Description (from the course catalogue). Survey and evaluation of influential approaches to theology and ethics in the history of Christian theology, including Augustine, Thomist, Lutheran, Reformed, and Wesleyan traditions.

- B. Course Objectives. By the end of the semester, each student will demonstrate the ability to:
 - 1. Identify and describe the basic fundamental terms and concepts of ethical reflection.
 - 2. Understand and express familiarity with the history of Christian ethics as articulated in class and the required readings.
 - 3. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze written and spoken arguments and the ability to clearly articulate one's own position (both orally and in writing) concerning theological and ethical matters.

Required Texts

The following texts will be used as the basic narrative that ground class discussion and further enquiry:

- (WOG) Wogaman, J. Philip, *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*. 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011).

- (LC) Höpfl, Harro, ed, *Luther and Calvin: On Secular Authority*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

- (LR) Library reserve: there will be several texts placed on reserve in the library.

Assignments

- A. Reading: In order to acquire the foundation for the objectives outlined above, it is expected that all students read the required readings. As such, all material contained in the required readings is fair game for exams and class discussion.
- B. Attendance: Regular attendance is essential for success in this course. Students are expected to attend class and be on time. In the event of illness, family emergency, or an extenuating circumstance, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor as soon as possible concerning the reason for the absence.
- C. Class presentation (on book review): April 11 is reserved for a sustained conversation about Christian ethics. As part of the discussion, each student will lead portions of the discussion by giving a presentation on the book reviewed for the course. Further direction will be provided as we approach this section of the course.
- D. Written assignments
1. Book Review
 - a. Formatting
 1. 6-8 pages, not including bibliography and cover page.
 2. Double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" margins.
 3. Turabian style (use footnotes, not endnotes).
 4. Each review should have an appropriate introduction and conclusion.
 - b. Guidelines
 1. Reviews are due April 13 at the beginning of class.
 - a. Late papers are penalized 10% each day.
 - b. Papers will not be accepted after class on April 25.
 2. Students are to carefully engage the book's ideas with outside research and knowledge gained from course readings.
 - c. Further direction will be provided in class.
 2. Traditions paper (6-8 pages): summarize what you have learned from the readings, lecture, and class discussion about your own faith tradition and that of others.
 - a. Each paper will contain two main parts. The first part of the paper will focus on your own faith tradition. Reflecting on what you have learned during the course of the semester, describe an area(s) from your own faith tradition that has been positively reinforced during the course of the semester. Additionally, identify and critically engage an area(s) of your tradition that needs improvement.

- b. In the second part of the paper, describe what you have learned about another ecclesial tradition in the course of your study. You may engage both positive and negative aspects of the tradition. Identify and include in your analysis a feature(s) that may serve to strengthen your own tradition's theology, ethics, or worship.
- c. The paper is not autobiographical in nature. The intent of the paper is to allow you to display your grasp of your own faith tradition and the potential benefit of mutual dialogue and understanding with others.

E. Exams

1. Mid-term
2. Final

Grading

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|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Mid-term | (20%) |
| 2. Final exam | (20%) |
| 3. Book review and presentation | (25%) |
| 4. Ethics paper | (25%) |
| 5. Participation | (10%) |

100-90 = A 89-80 = B 79-70 = C 69-60 = D 59-0 = F

Course Schedule

Part I: Introductory Matters

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| (1) Jan 17 | <i>Introduction to Theology and Ethics</i> |
| (2) Jan 24 | <i>Why Study Ethics?</i>
Readings:
1) WOG, ch. 2 (pp. 17-23)
2) Glaukon's Challenge – LR (Library reserve) |
| (3) Jan 31 | <i>The Bible and Ethics</i>
Readings:
1) WOG, ch. 1 (pp. 1-16)
2) Gospel of Matthew 5-7
3) Talbert essay – LR
4) Brunt and Wilson essay – LR |

Part II: Early Christian Ethics

- (4) Feb 07 *Early Christian Ethics*
Readings:
1) WOG, chs. 3-4 (pp. 27-52)
2) *Didache* – LR
3) Tertullian: *Apology, On Idolatry, The Military Chaplet*
(De Corona) - LR
4) Origen: *Against Celcus* - LR
- (5) Feb 14 *Early Middle Ages*
Readings:
1) WOG, ch. 5 (pp. 53-62)
2) Augustine: *On Free Choice of the Will, Against Faustus, City of God, Letter 189* - LR
- (6) Feb 21 *The Middle Ages*
1) WOG, ch. 8 (pp. 86-99)
2) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*: I.5, I.48-49, I-II.55, I-II.61-62, I-II.91, II-II.40 - LR

Part III: The Reformation

- (7) Feb 28 *The Reformation: Martin Luther*
1) WOG, ch. 10 (pp. 115-131)
2) LC, 3-43
- (8) Mar 07 *The Reformation: John Calvin*
The Radical Reformation
1) WOG, ch. 12 (pp. 144-153)
2) LC, 47-86
3) *The Schleithem Articles* – LR
- (9) Mar 14 Spring Break

Part IV: The Modern Period and Beyond

- (10) Mar 21 Mid-Term
- (11) Mar 28 *Towards the Modern Moral Landscape*
1) WOG, chs. 13-15 (pp. 155-201)
2) John Wesley: *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* - LR

- (12) Apr 04 *Christian Ethics on War and Peace*
 1) Yoder, *Nevertheless*, various – LR
 2) Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, ch. 2 – LR
 3) James Turner Johnson, “The Just War Idea,” 167-180 only – LR
- (13) Apr 11 *Student Presentations*
- (14) Apr 18 *Iron Sharpens Iron: Christian Perspectives Interact*
 1) Yoder, “Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism” – LR
 2) Reinhold Niebuhr, “Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist” – LR
 3) Reinhold Niebuhr and Angus Dun, “God Wills Both Justice and Peace” – LR
 4) Corey and Charles, ch. 11, “Why Have Our Churches Lost the Tradition?” - LR
- (15) Apr 25 *Contemporary Christian Ethics: Changing Landscapes and Medical Ethics*
 1) WOG, ch. 23 (pp. 307-314)
 2) Issues in Medical Ethics, Rae, ch. 5 - LR
- (16) May 02 *Contemporary Christian Ethics: The Third Millennium*
 1) WOG, chs. 24-25 (pp. 315-340)
- (17) May 09 *Final Exam*

Bibliography for book review

- Allman, Mark J. and Tobias L. Winright, *After the Smoke Clears: The Just War Tradition and Post War Justice*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010.
- Baer, David H. *Recovering Christian Realism: Just War Theory as a Political Ethic*. Boulder: Lexington Books, 2015.
- Bainton, Ronald H. *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960 (17th printing in 1990).
- Bell, Daniel M. *The Just War and Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church rather than the State*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.
- Biggar, Nigel. *In Defense of War*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

- Brock, Rita and Gabriella Lettini. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury After War*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2012.
- Capizzi, Joseph E. *Politics, Justice, and War: Christian Governance and the Ethics of Warfare*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Carter, Craig A. *The Politics of the Cross: The Theology and Social Ethics of John Howard Yoder*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.
- Cavanaugh, William. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Johnson, James Turner. *Ethics and the Use of Force: Just War in Historical Perspective*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.
- Meagher, Robert Emmet. *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014.
- Schlaback, Gerald W., ed. *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007.
- Stassen, Glen H. *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*. Pilgrim Press, 2008.
- Winright, Tobias and Laurie Johnston, eds. *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century? Ethicists Engage the Tradition*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015.
- Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.