



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

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## URB790 Ethics and Responsible Business Practices Fall Semester, 2010-11

### **Essential Information**

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at [http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential\\_Information](http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information). Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

### **Instructor Information**

Professor: Fletcher L Tink, PhD  
Office: (816) 268-5496  
Office Hours: daytime or by appointment

Email: [fltink@nts.edu](mailto:fltink@nts.edu) or [fletcht@aol.com](mailto:fletcht@aol.com)  
Home/Cell: (816) 805-4115 Please do not call  
between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

### **Catalog Description**

This seminar is being offered for the first time this semester as a follow-up course to Theology of Work, offered for the past two years on campus. In a workaday world of collapsing morality and ethics, where little guidance is given for a truly Christian approach to the moral dilemmas both in Church and in the workplace, this seminar describes the pain, the causes, and the effects of an ethically deficient society. As an antidote to “everyone did what was right in his own eyes”, the course looks at case studies, principles, Biblical insights, historical precedence and business consensus that encourage leaders and employees in the workplace to be transformative agents and ministers within their context.

### **Course Narrative & Rationale**

Under the financial of Mustard Seed Foundation, this seminar is the second of a sequence of seminars committed to developing a thorough-going “Theology of Work.” Preference of enrollment and scholarship funding (\$500) will be given to those who have participated in the earlier seminar.

Additional preference will be given to active business people (both through the Church and outside) who are engaged in expressing their witness through character and philosophy in their workplace.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the world cannot be transformed without the full and active engagement of workplace Christians. There are not enough “professional and credentialed” Christians to meet the spiritual needs of the growing secularizing masses.

This seminar believes that all sincere and obedient Christians are given a calling, a “vocation”, uniquely tailored for their God-given responsibilities and influence. They are called to be “transformative agents” not only in their workplaces but also through their workplaces to the communities touched by their influence. As such, there is no real division in importance between clerical and lay ministries, between sacred and secular, as all assignments are to be considered sacred. Nor is there a lesser commitment on others days of the week, than on Sundays, as all days are sacred. Worship does not begin with church time, but rather as an attitude carried through in all weekday endeavors.

Sadly, the work environment often takes on its own value system, quite contrary to the ethic and morality of Christianity. In its “cut-throat” operations its singular profit motive and competitive style, people are regarded as dispensable or as easily manipulated for the greater good of the stockholders or management. And sometimes, sadly, these tendencies appear within church circles.

In a world lacking principle, Mahatma Gandhi’s judgment is especially pertinent:

“Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Knowledge without Character,  
Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity, Worship without Sacrifice”

His words about “Commerce without Morality” resound especially true.

There is a growing spirit among Christians that business ethics has been neglected and must necessarily recoup its moral bearings. Indeed, business can potentially become a great liberator in the hands of those who see its purpose as glorifying God and ennobling human creativity. Not only can business create and fashion an economic system of quality and justice within its organization, but it can also leverage its influence to become transformative in its interactions outside of itself, in its sphere of influence.

There are many new resources in development that take seriously Scripture and its application to the business enterprise. Some of these are seen in the Lausanne Documents, in the pronouncements of the Acton Institute, in United Nations documents, in World Labor statements, and in newly emerging programs at Gordon-Conwell Seminary and Regent College. These resources will be brought into place in the course of the seminar.

The seminar has added value in assisting young ministers to engage the lay people of his or her congregation to think about the ethical issues in the workplace, and to critique any evidence of a sub-Christian morality that may even surface in the Church.

### **Course Outcomes**

1. To see both the creative and the redemptive mandates as of equal importance and mutually supportive in the Kingdom of God. (Assignments 1, 2, and 3)
2. To understand and practice ethical behavior both in the Church and in the workplace worlds, by employing best business practices. (Assignments 1, 3, 4, and 7)
3. To correct any theological deviance or misunderstanding pertaining to the nature of legitimate business. (Assignment 3)
4. To understand the importance of “calling” and “vocation” within the business or work context.

5. To see the various ways in which history is replete with responsible business ethical practices that have had transformative effects, and to see its contrast when such practices are not employed.
6. To evaluate one's own ethical orientation.
7. To examine contemporary forms of best business practices, ethical dilemmas in the workplace, with alternative strategies that honor God and respect humankind. (Assignment 7)
8. To appreciate a wide variety of business roles, their limitations and their possibilities.
9. To encourage networking and "gift exchange" in the relationships encountered within the seminar experience.
10. To recognize how a variety of cultures tend to respond to ethics differently, and how to relate Biblical understanding to a cross-cultural understanding of ethics.
11. To expose oneself to hands-on case studies in one's immediate context in Kansas City and beyond.
12. To identify and create resources that contribute to the body of literature and dialogue for a contextualized and cross-cultural understanding of the role of "business ethics". (Assignment 12)

### **Required Texts & Course Materials**

- Higginson, Richard. *Questions of Business Life: Exploring Workplace Issues from a Christian Perspective*. Spring Harvest. 2001. ISBN #: 978-85078477-9. 2001. \$11.04
- Scott, Rae. *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics*. Zondervan. ISBN #: 978-0310240020. 2001. \$32.84.
- Wallis, Jim. *Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street and Your Street*. Howard Books. ISBN#: 978-1439183120. \$16.32.

### **Recommended Texts & Course Materials**

- Hammond, Pete, R Paul Stevens and Todd Svano. *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business and Vocation*. Simon & Shuster. 2002. ISBN #: 978-0830826728.
- Melendez, Federico, translated by Fletcher L Tink. *Ethics and Economics: The Legacy of John Wesley for the Latin-American Church*.  
[www.missionstrategy.org/missionstrategy/portals/0/pdf/mmpdf/Ethics&Economics.pdf](http://www.missionstrategy.org/missionstrategy/portals/0/pdf/mmpdf/Ethics&Economics.pdf)
- Novak, Michael. *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life*. Free Press. 1996. ISBN #: 978-0684827483
- Stevens, Paul. *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Workplace*. Eerdman's 2006. ISBN #: 978-0802833983
- Stivers, Roberts L , Christine E Gudorf, Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A Evans. *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed*. Orbis Books. 2005. ISBN #: 978-1570756214.
- Wogaman, J Philip. *Faith and Fragmentation: Reflections on the Future of Christianity*. Westminster John Knox Press. 2004. ISBN #: 978-0664228750.

### **Course Outline**

- Sept 21: Review of "Theology of Work" assumptions.
- Sept 28: A Wesleyan Framework on the Ethic of Work, Prevenient Grace, Sanctification in Unholy Settings, the Prophetic Witness to Social Abuse and "Ethics in Business".
- Oct 5: The Theological And Practical Significance of the "Sabbath" as Ethical Principle that Fulfills Work
- Oct 12: Choices, Goals, Rules, Virtues, Church, Society and Faith as Building Blocks to Ethical Practice
- Oct 19: Reading and Research Week
- Oct 26: No Class
- Nov 2: The Relationship between Personal and Systemic Evil and Ethical Approaches to Each
- Nov 9: All Day Site Visits to Noted Christian Business People in Morally Difficult Circumstances

- Nov 16: The Biblical Legacy and Philosophical Legacies for Christian Ethics  
 Nov 23: Business: Immoral, Amoral or Moral? Leveraging Christian Values into Institutional Settings. Case Studies  
 Nov 30: Using Business as Transformative Agent in the Larger Community. Case Studies  
 Dec 7: The Corporate and International Economies---Growing Ethical Consensus and Documentation  
 Dec 14: Student Presentations

## **Course Assignments & Requirements**

1. Reading Report: The reading of the three texts plus one of the recommended books. This report should be turned in on the last day of class and should include complete bibliographic information and number of pages read. (Responds to course outcomes #1 and #2).
2. Journal Article Reports: The reading of three journal articles of workplace case studies centering around ethical dilemmas or issues. These articles will be reported but will also require a presented paragraph of annotated summary. (Responds to course outcome #1).
3. Book Reviews: Two written reviews of texts, either required or recommended. These reviews should include clearly marked sections of “synopsis”, “critique” and “personal application”. Each should be 3-4 pages long. (Responds to all assignments).
4. Case Study Narrative: A two page paper narrating a significant ethical issue that the student has faced in a ministry or job situation. This paper should include details, the response of the student and, in reflection, what might have been the better choice of responses, given the principles discussed in class or learned in reading materials. (Responds to #2).
5. A Verbatim Interview and Reflection: With someone engaged either in the Church or in the workplace who has confronted a serious ethical issue. This should be around 1,000 words long, with competent and accurate description of the conversation. This should be followed by a critique of the experience and reference to ethical and Biblical principles that either guided the response, or should have guided the response. What might unintended consequences be of your recommended actions? (Responds to #2, #7).
6. Journaling: Preparing a journal of notes that describe and reflect on what is learned from the all-day visits to the various sites and personalities, to take place on November 9<sup>th</sup>. (Responds to #7).
7. Major Project: 10-15 pages, that addresses a major ethical issue not adequately explored within the seminar context. This could include issues either in the Church or in the workplace, such as the reporting of staff sexual abuse, confidentiality issues, whistle-blowing issues, relational or integrity issues, systemic issues, personal issues, etc. Any one of these should be discussed in the following ways: (Responds to #12).
  - a. Clarify clearly the issue. How prominent is it? Document a case study or two.
  - b. What are the contesting perspectives on this issue?
  - c. Who are the stakeholders in the issue?
  - d. Is this an isolated or individual issue? Or is it part of a systemic or collective institutional Evil?
  - e. What possible violation of Biblical truth is involved in this?
  - f. What light does the bible or theology shed on this issue?
  - g. Is it clear cut? Is it in the grey area? How do you reconcile the least of two bad choices?
  - h. What precedence is being set?
  - i. What are the possible unintended consequences?
  - j. Is this an issue-based conflict or an identity-based one?
  - k. Does it violate one’s conscience?
  - l. Does it damage the reputation of Christ?
  - m. What is the cost of acting “ethically”?
  - n. Is it consistent with the principle of “love”?

- o. How do those around the issues feel about it?
- p. What laws does it violate? Are these laws justified?
- q. Describe a scenario where this issue is reconciled in a Christian or ethical way?

A 10 minute synopsis of this paper will be given by each student to the class both orally and in written form on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Distribution of Student Learning Hours***

	hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	35
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0
Reading	50
Writing	26
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	27
Exams & Quizzes	0
TOTAL	138

### ***Method for Submitting Assignments***

During class times, assignments may be handed in as hard copies to the professor. Outside of class times, assignments may be emailed to fletcht@aol.com as Word document attachments.

### ***Form and Style Expectations***

Assignments should be presented using a word processor rather than handwritten copies, following consistent format that is easy to read and conforms to any of the formal templates of acceptable formal written works. Footnotes or endnotes, appropriate bibliographic format, and title pages should be used. Accurate spelling and acceptable grammatical constructions are imperative.

### ***Inclusive Language***

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

### ***Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams***

Any assignment that is not turned in on the due date will be discounted in accordance to the reasons and context of the assignment. No grade will be deducted by more than a letter grade within 24 hours of the due date. However, all work must be turned in by Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> to receive any grade. Materials turned in after that time will be given failure grades.

### ***Additional Costs***

Because of the required assignment of participating in the full 12 hour sites visit day, scheduled for Nov 9<sup>th</sup>, it will be necessary to eat “on the road” twice in the course of this day. We will probably eat at “site-visit” restaurants, at a price of no more than \$10 a meal. An additional \$5 may be required to help fund the transportation needs.

## **Course Grading**

1.	Reading Report:	10%
2.	Journal Article Reports:	10%
3.	Book Reviews: 5% each:	10%
4.	Case Study Narrative:	10%
5.	Verbatim Interview and Reflection:	10%
6.	Journaling:	10%
7.	Major Project:	40%
	Written Version:	20%
	Oral Presentation:	10%
	Q and A:	10%

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

## **Course Calendar**

Date	Week	Assignment
Sept 28		Journal Articles Annotated Report
Oct 5		First Text Read and Reviewed
Nov 2		Verbatim Interview
Nov 16		Journaling Project Turned in
Nov 23		Second Text Read and Reviewed
Nov 30		Case Study Narrative
Dec 14		Major Project Presented; Reading Report Turned in

## **Bibliography**

A Bibliography will be made available during the course of the seminar