



Nazarene Theological Seminary

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

THE 760 — Introduction to Christian Ethics Spring Semester 2011

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. 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 textbook information
- 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

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Office Hours: By appointment

Catalog Description

This course intends to show how Christian virtue arises materially from the theological/doctrinal convictions of the Christian faith. This course will show how philosophical ethics has helped to define theological ethics, but it will also show that the Christian virtues are more fully understood and practiced in light of the faith claims of the Church. Therefore, this course will argue that Christian doctrine and Christian virtue need to be understood together in Christian ethics. This course will assist in learning how to 'formulate' and 'implement' ethical norms within the Christian faith. This course will show how the Church has and should engage major moral/ethical concerns

within the context of its witness of faith in the world and will explore a range of possible issues such as human sexuality, bioethics, justice, and war. This course should not be taken before the second year of the student's seminary studies unless the professor gives permission.

Course Narrative & Rationale

This module course will examine the Christian Faith in relationship to the various social, communal and biological formations that make up everyday life: family, sex, gender, race, economics, nation-state, military, police, corporation and technology. We will seek to discern the times in which we live. Given these times we will ask what difference does being a Christian make in thinking through, and living within and among, these various formations? We will first examine the moral life and see how it can be brought into conversation with the Christian life and the various traditions of Christendom. Then we will focus on the Christian life by examining Christ's ministry as it is continued in the Church through Word and Sacrament. The practices of gathering, reading and proclaiming the Word, responding to the Word through baptism, confession and Eucharist, and sending the faithful out to live in the world, as a 'sacrament for the life of the world,' will provide the context to discuss Christian social thought.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

1. Demonstrated a working knowledge and ability to formulate ethical norms from the Christian Story. (R1, R2, R4)
2. Demonstrated a working knowledge and ability to implement ethical norms from the Christian Story. (R1, R2, R4)
3. Demonstrated an understanding of the various traditions of Christian ethics. (R1, R2, R3, R4)
4. Demonstrated a working knowledge and ability to formulate and implement ethical norms from a Wesleyan perspective. (R3)

Required Texts & Course Materials

Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publisher, 2004, 2006. (498 Pages)

Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996. (460 Pages)

D. Stephen Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*. Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood Books, 2005. (247 Pages)
Samuel Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2004. (200 Pages)
Allen Verhey, *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003. (393 Pages)

Recommended Texts & Course Materials

Selected Bibliographic Sources

Aquinas, Thomas, *Treatise on the Virtues*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966, 1984.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Marting Ostwald. Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1962.
Barth, Karl. *Ethics*. Second Edition. Edited by Dietrich Braun. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. New York: The Seabury Press, 1981.
Beauchamp, Tom L. and Childress, James F., *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. Fifth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethics*. Edited by Eberhard Bethge. New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, 1949, 1963, 1965,
Burrell, David, *Friendship and Ways to Truth*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.
Curran, Charles, *Issues in Sexual and Medical Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978.
Ellul, Jacques, *The Ethics of Freedom*. Translated and Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.
Farley, Benjamin W., *In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Christian Context*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.
Grenz, Stanley, *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990, 1997.
Gustafson, James, *Christian Ethics and Community*. Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1971.
Gustafson, James, *Ethics for a Theocentric Perspective*. Two Volumes. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, 1984.
Gustafson, James and James T. Laney, ed. , *On Being Responsible: Issues in Personal Ethics*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968.
Gustafson, James, *Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics: Prospects for Reapprochment*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
Gustafson, James, *The Church as Moral Decision-Maker*. Philadelphia and Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1970.

Gustafson, James, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Hauerwas, Stanley, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

Hauerwas, Stanley, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Reflection*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1974.

Heyward, Carter, *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality, and Liberation*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1984.

Heyward, Carter, *Staying Power: Reflections on Gender, Justice, and Compassion*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1995.

Kirk, K.E., *The Vision of God: The Christian Doctrine of the Summum Bonum*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1931, 1966.

MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Second Edition. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, 1984.

Matera, Frank J., *New Testament ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1996.

Niebuhr, Reinhold, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. San Francisco: Harper, 1935, 1963.

O'Donovan, Oliver, *The Ways of Judgment*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.

O'Donovan, Oliver, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline in Evangelical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986.

Ogletree, Thomas, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Pohl, Christine D., *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Ramsey, Paul, *Basic Christian Ethics*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1950.

Reed, David H.C., *Christian Ethics*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1969.

Schlick, Mortitz, *Problems in Ethics*. Translated by David Rynin, New York: Dover Press, 1939, 1962.

Scroggs, Robin, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

Spaulding II, Henry, *Untangling the Sexual Revolution: Rethinking Our Sexual Ethics*, Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of K C, 1989.

Spinoza, Baruch, *The Ethics and Selected Letters*. Translated by Samuel Shirley. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982.

Stackhouse, Max L., *Public Theology and Political Economy; Christian Stewardship in the Modern World*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987

Stevenson, Charles, *Ethics and Language*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1944.

Truesdale, Albert, *A Matter of Life and death: Bioethics and the Christian*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of K C, 1990.

Williams, Rowan, *The Truce of God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983, 2005.

Winter, Gibson, *Elements for a Social Ethics; The Role of Social Science in Public Policy*. New York: The MacMilliam Company, 1966.

Course Outline

Introduction

Task of Ethics: Formulation & Implementation of Ethical Norms

"The Church does not have a social ethics; it is a social ethics": Essay Paper

Hays & Wells: Position Papers

Wesley's Ethics—Long Book Review

Case Studies—A Moral Predicament Paper

Course Assignments & Requirements

It is highly recommended but not required that *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* and *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* be read in their entirety before the class begins. The following two assignments will depend on this reading.

1. **Essay Paper: (Outcomes 1-3)** What is the significance of Hauerwas's statement, "*The Church does not have a social ethics; it is a social ethics?*" Make sure you explain what this statement means and who opposes it and why. Integrate your answer with the position of Hays. Opportunity will be given for each student to use their *Essay Paper* to offer in class thoughts and insights gleaned from the reading. This paper is to be approximately **5-7** pages, double-spaced and in twelve point font. This assignment will comprise 20 points of your final grade. **This paper is due: February 10, 2011.**

2. **Position Paper: (Outcomes 1-3)** From the list of the following six questions, each student is asked to answer **four** of their own choosing by preparing a position paper. A position paper consists of **5-7** pages, double-spaced, twelve point font, that addresses the question by first explaining the author or authors' position in the reading from *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, and *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. This must be done first and done in such a way that the author/s recognizes him or herself in the student's description of his or her work. Then the student should mention where she or he agrees and disagrees with the argument and why. The position paper should conclude with what the student thinks is the most pressing question or predicament that either the author or the theme raises for the church today. Students should be prepared to read and defend these position papers in class. ***The schedule for***

presenting these will be set on the first day of the class. This paper is due: February 24, 2011. This assignment will comprise 20 points of your final paper. Below are the possible questions that will select (4) to answer in the development of your position paper:

1. How does gathering as God's people move us beyond categories of race and gender and how does it not? Name those aspects of worship that help us recognize the significance of race and gender for the Church's common life.
2. What is justice? Relate it to the church, to politics, and to economics.
3. How does Baptism illumine how Christians should think about abortion and cloning?
4. Why should Christians marry?
5. Can Christians participate in war?
6. Homosexuality? How does Eucharist in the Body of Christ shape the question?
7. Why does Carole Bailey Stoneking oppose physician assisted killing? Assess her argument.
8. Name the 'practices' of the Church and 'how' they shape ecological stewardship?

3. A Critical Book Review: (Outcome 4) Compare and Contrast Stephen Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, Samuel Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* and Allen Verhey, *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine*. This is a 10 page double-spaced, 12 pitch font paper. This paper will comprise 30 points of your final grade. *This paper is due: March 17, 2011.*

4. A Moral Predicament Group Paper—A Case Study: (Outcomes 1-4) This *Group Paper* (4-6 students) is the final test of your ability to *formulate* and *implement* ethical norms that will enable you to come to terms with a particular moral dilemma to make a hard decision that is theologically informed with the unswerving conviction of the Christian faith. This *Group Paper* should use the *Companion* reader and the Hays text to develop a particular case study and work through the ethical horns of a moral dilemma. Specific attention and synthesis and moral resolution should be considered from a Wesleyan perspective. The use of Steve Long's *John Wesley's Moral Theology* should be used and integrated in thinking through the formulation and implementation of ethical norms that help you to make a moral decision. Samuel Wells book on *Improvisation* and the Allen Verhey's book, *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine* should also shed invaluable insight and help in this assignment. Further instruction pertaining to the development of a *Group Case Study* and class presentation will be given in class. This *Group Paper* is a 10 page double-spaced, 12 pitch font paper that will comprise 30 points of your final grade. Class presentations of these *Group Case Studies* will begin on the due date. *This paper is due: April 7, 2011.*

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	Hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	37
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0
Reading	71.92
Writing	40
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	0
Exams & Quizzes	0
TOTAL	149

Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments will be uploaded for this course in Moodle: <https://moodle.nts.edu/login/index.php>. Please use the assignments section of Moodle unless otherwise directed. Each assignment is to be submitted through its corresponding link in the Learning Unit. Assignments are **NOT** to be submitted as hard copy, via e-mail. Students should keep electronic copies of all work done for the course just in case they (or the professor) accidentally delete an assignment from the Grade book.

Form and Style Expectations

All written work—*Essay Paper, Position Paper, Critical Review, and Moral Predicament Paper*—should be formatted (and will be evaluated) utilizing Turabian, Kate L. "*A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*," 7th edition, revised by Wayne C. Booth, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

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

Late paper submissions will receive a 20% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Submitted *Papers* one week after the assignment is due will not be graded. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 10% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after the last day of the regular semester.

Policy on Incomplete Work

Only under the rarest of circumstances will the professor approve an incomplete. Only '*Death in the family*' or the '*prolonged illness*' of the student will be considered as a justifiable cause for petition. For the *most* part, all other requests will not be considered. And yet, if the rarest of unforeseeable circumstances do arise, and those circumstances are the abovementioned ('*death in the family*' and '*prolonged illness*'), then, and only then, *may* an incomplete be granted by the professor. And, if per chance the incomplete is to be granted for reasons other than '*death in the family*' and '*prolonged illness*,' it will be given with a letter grade penalty. For example, if the final grade earned in the class results in an A, and an incomplete was granted for other reasons besides '*death and prolonged illness*,' then the final grade to be submitted to the registrar will be a B.

Course Grading

Evaluation Criteria:

This class requires good writing skills. To do well certain things should be accomplished or avoided:

- a. Do not simply give me back my notes in a summarization.
- b. Make an argument in every paper. To do this you should avoid merely repeating a laundry list of disconnected ideas.
- c. Integrate class lectures, discussion and readings into your essay.
- d. Make an intelligible argument in every paper. This requires that you get the basic information correct, that your argument makes sense given the basic information, and that your essay is submitted in a presentable form. To accomplish this, you should:
 1. Avoid misspelled words, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
 2. Avoid "there is" as a subject if possible, and the use of the pronoun "it" without an antecedent.
 3. Avoid complicated subject formations. This can usually be done if you check to see if you have piled up prepositions. For instance, a subject such as "The form of the way of life in Miller's novel about Leibowitz" is too complex and doesn't say anything. It is "language on a holiday."

4. Avoid complicated verbal formations that hide rather than convey significance. For example, "It is to be understood by anyone who thinks about it that . . ." Use the passive voice as little as possible.

5. Check to see if your sentences flow upon each other, avoid *non sequiturs* -- that is, when one sentence does not follow upon a previous one but introduces an unexpected interruption of thought which cannot be accounted for in the context.

My Evaluation of your written work will use the following criteria:

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| 1. Presentation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (This criterion evaluates writing style, clarity of prose, basic grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow.) | | | | | |
| 2. Description of Sources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (This criterion evaluates the student's ability to describe in her or his own language the position of the theologians cited.) | | | | | |
| 3. Comprehensiveness of Sources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (This criterion evaluates the student's breadth of sources used in composing essays.) | | | | | |
| 4. Critical Engagement with Sources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (This criterion examines whether a student's work has taken the step beyond mere description and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis.) | | | | | |
| 5. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (This criterion determines not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position.) | | | | | |

Summary of Grading for Assignments:

Essay Paper will constitute 20 points of the final grade.

Position Paper will constitute 20 points of the final grade.

A Critical Book Review will constitute 30 points of the final grade.

A Moral Predicament Group Paper: A Case Study will constitute 30 points of the final grade.

Grade Scale:

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

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 that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Calendar

Essay Paper: February 10, 2011

Position Paper: February 24, 2011

A Critical Book Review: March 17, 2011

A Moral Predicament Group Paper: April 7, 2011