



HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5550 ETHICS AND CHARACTER FORMATION, Summer 2018, Intensive
Prof. Mark E. Powell

Course description

A study of the virtuous life and moral decision making from a Christian point of view. The first half of the course considers basic concepts of moral philosophy, major approaches to Christian ethics, and biblical and theological themes for moral reflection. The second half of the course examines representative situations of moral decision making as case studies.

Course outcomes

1. Exhibit an understanding of the basic concepts of moral philosophy in general, and Christian ethics in particular.
2. Exhibit an understanding of several contemporary approaches to Christian ethics.
3. Exhibit the ability to reflect theologically on daily moral decisions and complex moral dilemmas.
4. Develop and present one's own position on a contemporary moral dilemma.

Required texts

Kyle Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

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

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

Textbooks can now be ordered through a link on the HST website. The Textbooks tab can be viewed on the navigation bar on any page of the website. Check the book list provided under the Textbooks tab (<http://hst.edu/students/textbook-services/>) for correct ISBN's and editions to ensure correct ordering. A link provided there will take you to Amazon where you will only need to enter the ISBN to order your books. By going through our website, HST will receive some credit from the order. Thanks for your support.

Additional readings, course notes, a place to submit assignments, and grades are available on the Canvas course page at <http://elearning.harding.edu>.

Accessibility

HST professors are accessible to local and distance students. Please use the following to arrange appointments with me (in person or by phone):

Email: mpowell@harding.edu

Office Phone Number: (901) 432-7725

Office: Ijams Administration Building 209

Requirements and grading

1. Reading of assigned texts and class participation
2. Mid-term exam (35%)
3. Research paper (35%)
4. Class presentation (10%)
5. Final exam (20%)

Grading scale: 100-90 (A), 89-80 (B), 79-75 (C), 74-70 (D), 69 and below (F)

All readings should be completed before the session for which they are assigned, and preferably before the course meets on-campus. Students should come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion of the readings. Reading and participating in class discussions may have a positive or negative effect on the final grade of up to five points.

Late assignments will receive one point off per day late (excluding Sundays) for the first three days, and then three points off per day late, up to 20 points total.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice, and will result in penalties which could include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the course, and even dismissal from the school.

Credit Hour Workload

For every course credit hour, the typical student should expect to spend at least three clock hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work, including but not limited to time attending class, as well as out-of-class time spent reading, reviewing, organizing notes, preparing for upcoming quizzes/exams, problem solving, developing and completing projects, and other activities that enhance learning. Thus, for a three-hour course, a typical student should expect to spend at least nine hours per week dedicated to the course.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Steve McLeod, the Associate Dean, at 901-761-1353.

Library Resources

If you have not taken 5990 (Advanced Theological Research) or 5770 (Research in Counseling), or took either class more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site (www.hst.edu) for information concerning library services to students. Under the “library” tab you will find a link to and

instructions for searching the HST online catalog. There are also instructions for using the following databases available through the library: OCLC FirstSearch, EBSCOhost, Infotrac, PsycINFO, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. Contact the library for passwords to these databases. Also available are the research guides distributed in 5990 and 5770. These annotated bibliographies list basic tools you will find helpful in your research.

Course schedule

Class meeting times:	June 11-15	Session 1: 8:00-10:55 AM Chapel: 11:00-11:30 AM Session 2: 1:00-4:00 PM
	June 11	Lunch: 11:30 AM-1:00 PM
	June 16	Session 1: 8:00-10:00 AM
Mon., June 11	Session 1: Session 2:	Introduction to Christian ethics Concepts in moral philosophy
	(1) Matthew 5-7 (2) Fedler, chap. 1, 2, 4	
Tues., June 12	Session 1: Session 2:	Concepts in moral philosophy Discussion of Stanley Hauerwas Concepts in Scripture and Christian theology
	(1) Fedler, chap. 3, 5-7. (2) Hauerwas, <i>The Peaceable Kingdom</i> , Introduction, chaps. 1, 2, 5-7.	
Wed., June 13	Session 1:	Conscience and discernment Discussion of John Stackhouse, Jr.
	(1) Fedler, chaps. 8-10, Epilogue (2) Stackhouse, Jr., <i>Making the Best of It</i> , Introduction, chaps. 1, 6-8, Conclusion	
	Session 2:	Sex and singleness
	(1) Dennis P. Hollinger, <i>The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life</i> (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), chap. 4-5. (2) Karen Lebacqz, "Appropriate Vulnerability: A Sexual Ethic for Singles," <i>Christian Century</i> 104, no. 15 (May 6, 1987): 435-38.	

Homosexuality

- (1) Richard B. Hays, "The Biblical Witness Concerning Homosexuality," in *Staying the Course: Supporting the Church's Position on Homosexuality* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 65-84.
- (2) Victor Paul Furnish, "The Bible and Homosexuality: Reading the Texts in Context" in *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*, ed. Jeffrey S. Siker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 18-36.

Thurs., June 14 Session 1: Divorce

- (1) David Clyde Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), chap. 9.

Birth control and abortion

- (1) Stanley J. Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), chap. 7.
- (2) Beverly Wildung Harrison with Shirley Choyes, "Theology and Morality of Procreative Choice" in *Feminist Theological Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Lois K. Daly (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 213-32.

Session 2: Reproductive technologies

- (1) Grenz, *Sexual Ethics*, chap. 8.

Stewardship of creation

- (1) Bousma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, chap. 3-6.

Fri., June 15 Session 1: Euthanasia and end of life issues

- (1) Gilbert Meilaender, "Euthanasia and Christian Vision" in *Last Rights? Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia Debated*, ed. Michael M. Uhlmann (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 237-48.
- (2) Paul Badham, "Should Christians Accept Euthanasia?" in *Euthanasia and the Churches*, ed. Robin Gill (New York: Cassell, 1998), 41-59.

Immigration

- (1) James Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), chaps. 4, 9.
- (2) M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), chap.4.

Session 2: War and terrorism

- (1) Lee C. Camp, *Who Is My Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face about Islam—and Themselves* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011), chaps. 5, 7.
- (2) James F. Childress, “Just-War Criteria,” in *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers*, ed. Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1980), 40-58.
- (3) William J. Abraham, *Shaking Hands with the Devil: The Intersection of Terrorism and Theology* (Dallas: Highland Loch, 2013), chap. 6.

Ethics, preaching, and counseling

Sat., June 16	Mid-term exam
Fri. June 30	Final exam due Research paper prospectus due
Fri., July 20	Research paper due

Class presentation

Each student is required to lead the discussion on one ethical issue covered in the second half of the course. Class presentation assignments will be made on the first day of class. The presentation should include a one-page handout that outlines the following:

- The primary disagreements or concerns underlying the ethical issue under consideration.
- Key points and arguments presented by the author(s).
- Two questions to promote class discussion.

Class presentations should focus on the key issues presented in the course readings (outside research is not necessary). The presentation should last 15-20 minutes to allow time for class discussion on the topic and the readings. The presentation handout should be posted on Canvas as a PDF document so that other students have access to it.

Research paper

Students are required to submit a research paper, approximately fifteen pages in length, on any ethical issue. The paper should clearly state the student’s position (preferably in the first paragraph), demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and theological issues involved, and defend the position taken in a responsible manner (that is, present opposing positions fairly and in as strong a manner as possible). The student is expected to make use of materials from the entire course and outside resources. Papers should carefully follow the latest edition of Turabian’s *Manual*. Papers may be penalized up to ten points for style. A PDF of the research paper should be posted on Canvas by Friday, July 20.

It is recommended, but not required, that a prospectus be submitted to the professor by email by June 30. The prospectus may be informal and should include (1) a statement of the issue to be investigated and (2) a preliminary bibliography.

Research paper grading rubric

Criterion	Above Expectations Grade of A	Meets Expectations Grade of B or C	Below Expectations Grade of D or F
Presentation of the ethical issue.	Rich presentation of the ethical issue. Present objections in a strong manner.	Adequate presentation of the ethical issue and objections.	Shallow presentation of the ethical issue; weak or no presentation of objections.
Critical analysis and argumentation	Rich critical interaction with the scholarly discussion and strong presentation of one's position on the ethical issue.	Adequate critical interaction with the scholarly discussion, and adequate presentation of one's position on the ethical issue.	Very little or no critical interaction with the scholarly discussion. Weak presentation of one's position on the ethical issue.
Research and scholarly support	Excellent research (at least 15 scholarly sources).	Adequate research (at least 10 scholarly sources).	Inadequate research (less than 10 scholarly sources).

Penalties: grammar and style; late submission

Recommended resources

David J. Atkinson, David H. Field, eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

Lawrence C. Becker and Charlotte B. Becker, eds., *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001).

James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

Joel B. Green, ed., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).