



## HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5550 ETHICS AND CHARACTER FORMATION, Spring 2021, Tues. 6:00-8:45 p.m.  
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.

### ***This course contributes to the following M.Div. degree outcomes:***

- Demonstrate the skills required for theological reflection.
- Demonstrate the ability to integrate the scriptures and theological tradition with diverse contemporary cultural contexts.

### ***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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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](mailto:mpowell@harding.edu)

Office Phone Number: (901) 432-7725

### ***Requirements and grading***

1. Reading of assigned texts

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. Students should come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion of the readings. Students may be penalized up to five points off the final grade for missing more than two class sessions or being late for more than three class sessions.

### ***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 took that class more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site ([www.hst.edu](http://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. These annotated bibliographies list basic tools you will find helpful in your research.

## *Course schedule*

- January 12 Introduction to the study of Christian ethics
- January 19 Concepts in moral philosophy  
(1) Fedler, chaps. 1, 2, 4
- January 26 Concepts in moral philosophy  
(1) Fedler, chap. 3
- February 2 Discussion of Stanley Hauerwas.  
(1) Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Introduction, chaps. 1, 2, 5-7.
- February 9 Concepts in scripture and Christian theology  
(1) Fedler, chaps. 5-7
- February 16 Concepts in scripture and Christian theology; Conscience and moral discernment  
(1) Fedler, chaps. 8-10, Epilogue
- February 23 Discussion of John Stackhouse, Jr.; Making ethical decisions  
(1) Stackhouse, Jr., *Making the Best of It*, Introduction, chaps. 1, 6-8, Conclusion
- March 2 Intensive course and study week
- March 9 Spring Break
- March 16 Mid-term exam; Introduction to ethical issues
- March 23 Sex and singleness  
(1) Dennis P. Hollinger, *The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), chap. 4-5.  
(2) Karen Lebacqz, "Appropriate Vulnerability: A Sexual Ethic for Singles," *Christian Century* 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.  
(3) Linn Marie Tonstad, *Queer Theology: Beyond Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018), 78-103

- March 30      Research paper prospectus due  
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), chaps. 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.
- April 6          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.
- Stewardship of creation
- (1) Bousma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, chap. 3-6.
- April 13        Race
- (1) James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll: NY: Orbis, 2011), chap. 2.
  - (2) Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: NYU Press, 2017), ch. 1.
  - (3) Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories* (Durham, NC: Pitchstone, 2020), ch. 5.
- 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), chap.4.
- April 20        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.
- April 27        Ethics, preaching, and counseling
- (1) Research paper due
- May 4          Final exam

### ***Class presentation***

Each student is required to lead the discussion on one ethical issue covered in the second half of the course. The presentation should include a one-page handout that highlights the following:

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

Class presentations should focus on the key issues presented in the course readings—outside research is not necessary. A good presentation and handout will not simply outline the readings, but will present key issues and disagreements and promote discussion of these issues. The presentation should last approximately ten 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 before the class session 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 except the issue the student covered for the class presentation. 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 submitted on Canvas by midnight (CST) on Thursday, April 27.

Late research papers 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.

It is recommended, but not required, that a prospectus be submitted to the professor by email by March 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*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Above Expectations Grade of A</b>	<b>Meets Expectations Grade of B or C</b>	<b>Below Expectations Grade of D or F</b>
<b>Presentation of the ethical issue.</b>	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.
<b>Critical analysis and argumentation</b>	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.
<b>Research and scholarly support</b>	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

***Exams***

Both exams are offered on-campus during the regular class time. All LIVE students who take exams off-campus must use Proctorio and take the exam during the regular class time, or make special arrangements with the professor.

***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., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).
- David Ford, ed., *The Modern Theologians*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2005).
- Joel B. Green, ed., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

## *Use of technology*

### Canvas Online Learning System

In addition to the live video platform Zoom.us (see below), this course uses Harding's *Canvas Online Learning System*, which is accessed at <http://elearning.harding.edu>. If you have problems gaining access to Canvas, contact HU technical support (501) 279-4545. You will need your HST username and your password to log into Harding Pipeline. These are the same credentials you use to register for classes via Pipeline.

When you need to contact your professor via email, you may use the email system contained in the Canvas learning management system or email your professor directly at [mpowell@harding.edu](mailto:mpowell@harding.edu).

Harding University gives each student an email address that also utilizes your user name. Many students use other email addresses as their preferred address. You can set your Harding G-mail account to forward messages to an alternative email address if you want; however, it is your responsibility to check your Harding email account regularly because this is the official Harding email address to which all Harding-related email will be sent.

### HST Live Interactive Video Education (HST LIVE) via ZOOM

In addition to Canvas (see above), this HST-Live course is supported with the video platform Zoom.us. For new Zoom platform users, go to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started> for helpful video tutorials about using this platform.

The HST LIVE/Zoom Meeting ID for this course can be found on Canvas.

Students new to HST LIVE should attend the HST LIVE orientation session scheduled for January 4 at 6:00-7:30 p.m. For more information on LIVE orientation, contact [bscurtis@harding.edu](mailto:bscurtis@harding.edu).

### Equipment Requirements for LIVE Sections:

- Internet access using a latest version of a web browser such as Firefox (preferred).
- Latest version of Zoom software. This changes periodically without notification. If you already have Zoom, use that account. Basic Zoom.us is available free.
- Laptop or tablet with camera or desktop computer with camera.
- Ear buds with microphone - Apple MD827LL/A EarPods with Remote and Mic work well. Order on Amazon.com, <https://goo.gl/jLYfBG>.
- Additional monitor – Live video conferencing is best facilitated with two monitors.

### LIVE Etiquette:

- HST Live is a convenience for distance broadcast and attendance. In terms of responsibilities, it is no different than on-campus participation. Attendance at all class sessions is required just as if in residence on the Memphis campus.
- “Making up” a missed session by watching the recording will be granted ONLY in extreme cases such as illness or family emergency (the same policy for those on the Memphis campus). Please make arrangements in your ministry context or employment to be in attendance for all

calendared sessions (e.g. a staff meeting is not an excused absence). The same applies to arriving late or leaving early.

- Be seated in an environment that approximates a classroom setting (e.g. a chair at a desk in your office). Create a distraction free environment. It is not acceptable to sit or lie down on your bed or in a recliner, lounge on your deck or on the beach, or sit in a coffee shop, etc.
- Remain stationary at your computer during the class session except during breaks. If you must go to the restroom & mute your audio/video, Then return to your screen, un-mute, and resume the class.
- Arrange for your HST Live environment to be distraction free (e.g. no family noise, TV, etc.).
- Failure to observe these and related etiquette matters will result in grade reductions at the professor's sole discretion.