

ETHC5300 Christian Ethics

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES
Defend Conference—January 6-10, 2020

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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2019-20 year is *Spiritual Vitality*.

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competency addressed in this course is: *Spiritual and Character Formation*.

Course Description

In this introduction to the study and practice of Christian ethics, the student will examine philosophical and theological backgrounds for ethics, the role of biblical authority, and the historical relation between church and culture in order to develop a valid method of moral decision making, examine the importance of ministerial ethics, evaluate ethical issues, and lead the church in applying the gospel to life.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to provide moral leadership by modeling Christian character and communicating ethical truth, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. **Understand** the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic.
2. Be able to **apply** a Christian ethic to contemporary issues.
3. Be able to **communicate** Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly.

Embedded Assignment

This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the degree objectives and will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. **The embedded assignment is question one of the final exam.** The assignment follows:

Write a letter to a young believer (spiritual age, not necessarily physical age) who is struggling with how to relate to a friend who practices homosexuality or has strong same sex attractions. The friend makes statements like, “I believe Jesus is real and he died for me and all that, but I don’t understand how he could make it a sin for me to be a homosexual when I honestly can’t help it.”

For this assignment, use the following instructions:

- Single-space type your letter.
- Do not type more than 2 single-spaced pages.
- In your response, draw from the facts, concepts, judgments, and so forth that you have been learning in your readings and class notes in regard to the issue of homosexuality. Use some of the terminology from your studies.
- Incorporate Scripture into your response, utilizing good hermeneutical principles.
- Remember the tools you have been learning and use them when and where appropriate, for example, you might utilize the 4 terms that define an ethical act, Dr. Riley’s paradigm, worldview influences, levels of ethical engagement in Scripture, and so forth. Now is the time to apply what you have been learning
- Be alert to your tone. Be redemptive, while clearly communicating biblical moral truth.
- Some of you personally know people who practice homosexual behavior. You might keep them in mind while crafting your letter.
- This is your letter, so you have liberty in what you say and how you say it. You will not be able to say everything, so be fluid and succinct in what you do say while demonstrating to me that you can communicate moral truth affectively and clearly.

Embedded Assignment Rubric

The rubric for grading the embedded assignment is below. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.

| DOMAIN | LEVEL | INADEQUATE (0 PTS) | BASIC (1 PT) | COMPETENT (2 PTS) | GOOD (3 PTS) | EXCELLEN (4 PTS) |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| UNDERSTANDING | Able to Understand the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic | | | | | |
| APPLICATION | Able to apply a Christian ethic to contemporary issues | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| COMMUNICATIO N | Able to communicate Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Primary Textbooks

Beckwith, Francis J., and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Chatraw, Joshua D., and Karen Swallow Prior. *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Wright, N. T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

Review the following for Text Review 1:

Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Choose ONE (1) of the following for Text Review 2:

Bellinger, Charles K. *Jesus v. Abortion: They Know Not What They Do*. Theopolitical Visions, 19. Cascade Books, 2016.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Christians in an Age of Wealth: A Biblical Theology of Stewardship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Jones, Kevin, and Jarvis J. Williams. *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.

Mitchell, C. Ben, and D. Joy Riley. *Christian Bioethics: A Guide for Pastors, Health Care Professionals, and Families*. B&H Studies in Christian Ethics, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014.

Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Yuan, Christopher. *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story*. New York: Multnomah, 2018.

Review the following for Text Review 3:

Pearcey, Nancy. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.

Course Teaching Methodology

This is an event course tied to attending the Defend the Faith Conference at NOBTS. The Breakout sessions for this course include lectures and class discussions. Each breakout session in the conference is recorded. Following the Conference, students will continue to learn through reading and writing assignments, examination, and audio resources.

Course Requirements

You must turn in all assignments to pass the class. Submit all assignments to the class blackboard.

Conference Participation Assignment (10%)

Participation in the Conference requires that students do the following:

- Attend **all** Plenary Sessions
- Attend a break-out presentation each time a break-out session is offered
- Listen to audio recordings of at least **20** breakout sessions not physically attended

Each student will submit by the due date a listening accountability statement estimating total participation, as described above. **Due 15 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, April 24, 2020).**

Textbook Reading Report (15%)

Each student is required to submit a reading accountability statement for each textbook estimating how much of the total required reading was completed by the due date. For the reading report, simply record your **name**, **book**, and **percentage read**. Include for each book, in no more than one page, a description of **three important concepts gleaned** from the book.

1. Beckwith and Koukl. *Relativism*: read completely **(Due January 24, 2020)**
2. Chatraw and Prior. *Cultural Engagement*, read completely **(Due February 7, 2020)**
3. Wright, *After You Believe*, read completely **(Due February 21, 2020)**

- This assignment is **on your honor**. **The collective percentage read from all books with the statements factored in will be your grade**. If you fail to note the percentage read, 10 points will be deducted automatically from the final grade for that assignment.

Three Book Reviews: (15% each)

Students will write **one** book review from **each** of the **Text Review 1**, **Text Review 2**, and **Text Review 3** lists (for 3 total reviews).

Book reviews may be submitted as they are completed, but the following are firm Due Dates:

Text Review One Due (9 weeks after DtF): **Friday, March 13, 2020**

Text Review Two Due (11 weeks after DtF):
Text Review Three Due (13 weeks after DtF):

Monday, March 27, 2020
Friday, April 10, 2020

These reviews should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
2. The critique should be **3-5 single spaced typed pages**.
3. Content should include the following. **Do not simply summarize chapters:**
 - A brief statement introducing the author and title of the book and communicating that the book has been read in its entirety. If the book has not been completely read, then communicate the truth about how much was read
 - The primary thesis, purpose, and/or description of the book

 - Major ethical insights communicated by the book. What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?
 - Ideas that changed or challenged your thinking (Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic). How and Why?
 - Insights in this book that relate practically to life and ministry, the life of the church, and to moral life in America
 - Major strengths and weaknesses of the book
 - In the conclusion, a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book.
4. Develop subheading from the above bullet points (2-7).

Final Exam (30%)

Submitted via the Class Blackboard—DO NOT EMAIL.

Each student must complete a Final Take-Home Exam. The exam will be comprehensive in scope, drawing from the lectures and assigned readings, and essay in form. The exam will test both *mastery of content* and *critical thinking skills*.

Embedded Assignment: Question one of the final exam is an embedded assignment (refer to pages 2 of syllabus for details). This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the course objectives.

This assignment is an embedded assignment that will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. The rubric for grading this assignment is on page 3 of this syllabus. Please complete the embedded assignment according to the rubric.

Due 15 weeks after the last day of the Defend the Faith Apologetics Conference (Friday, April 24, 2020). Note: Exam will open April 1, 2019.

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below. Borderline grades will normally be determined by the numerical grade received (I round up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in submitting assignments or extraordinary life situation and positive attitude warrant special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade. In special cases, extra credit can be arranged.

Grade Distribution by Assignment and Due Dates

| | | | | |
|----------|---|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| G | Reading Reports (3 books) | 15% | | |
| | Beckwith and Koukl. <i>Relativism</i> | | Due: | Friday, January 24, 2020 |
| | Chatraw and Prior. <i>Cultural Engagement</i> | | Due: | Friday, February 7, 2020 |
| | Wright, <i>After You Believe</i> | | Due: | Friday, February 21, 2020 |
| G | Selected Text Review 1 | 15% | Due: | Friday, March 13, 2020 |
| G | Selected Text Review 2 | 15% | Due: | Monday, March 27, 2020 |
| G | Selected Text Review 3 | 15% | Due: | Friday, April 10, 2020 |
| G | Conference Participation | 10% | Due: | Friday, April 24, 2020 |
| G | <u>Final Exam</u> | <u>30%</u> | Due: | Friday, April 24, 2020 |
| | | 100% | | |

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Check the Defend Conference event schedule to see the topics, times, and locations for the Ethics

Breakout Sessions. Any breakout session taught by Dr. Riley will count towards the Christian Ethics course and must be either attended or listened to via MP3 in order to get full credit for conference participation.

Miscellaneous but Important Course Policies

1. ***Participation.*** You must attend the entire conference.
2. ***Absences.*** You must attend the entire Defend the Faith Conference to get credit for the course.
3. ***Late Work.*** Work turned in late will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per day) unless **prior permission** is sought and a legitimate reason warrants lateness.

Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.

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- Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. Dallas: Spence, 2004.
- Butterfield, Rosaria Champaign. *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*. Pittsburg: Crown & Covenant, 2015.
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- Caner, Ergun Mehmet, and Emir Fethi Caner. *Christian Jihad: Two Former Muslims Look at the Crusades and Killing in the Name of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.
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