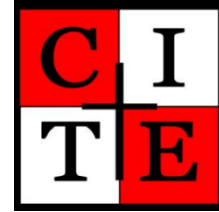




OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Campbell
Institute for
Theological
Education

BIBL 3713 – Contemporary Ethics

Winter Term 2017 (Jan 8 – Mar 23)

Tuesday & Thursday 5:15-7:15pm

Instructor: Jason Swick, MA
Office Hours: Friday 8:00-11:00am
By appointment

Office: 541-753-4310
Mobile: 541-207-2777
e-mail: jason@osucc.com

Course Description:

This course includes a brief foundation of moral decision making and ethical theory in Western Civilization and Christianity, and a study of significant ethical issues in contemporary society from both secular and Christian approaches. Topics include: biotechnology, beginning and ending life, punishment, war and peace, gender roles, sexual orientation, marriage, social justice, environmental ethics, animal rights, and cyberethics.

Course Objectives:

1. Moral Discernment: Develop a foundational knowledge that guides daily moral decisions and an informed position on several complex moral dilemmas.
2. Moral Conversations: The ability to effectively communicate theologically and socially on, and help others process, moral decisions and dilemmas.
3. Moral Respect: Exhibit the ability to listen to and converse respectfully and sensitively on complex moral dilemmas with individuals holding different world views and from different cultures.
4. Moral Responsibility: Research and critically evaluate how to engage in a current moral dilemma.

Required Texts:

1. Stassen, Glen, & David Gushee. Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-8028-7611-9
2. Various articles handed out in class.

Recommended Texts:

1. Fedler, Kyle. Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-6642-2898-9
2. Hinman, Lawrence M. Contemporary Moral Issues: Diversity and Consensus, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Education, 2013. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-2056-3360-9
3. Stackhouse, John G. Jr. Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-1998-4394-7

Course Requirements

1. Class Preparedness and Participation (30%):

In order for 'Moral Conversations' and 'Moral Discernment' to be possible, a student must be adequately informed on both sides of a moral dilemma. Students will be quizzed over the assigned readings with objective and reflecting questions. A daily grade will also be recorded based on answers given when called on and level of participation in class discussion.

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in discussions, debates, and/or other activities. Excellent participation requires perfect attendance and a demonstrated knowledge of assigned readings. Each absence will result in a zero for the daily and quiz grade. Four absences will result in a loss of 20% of the students' final class grade. Tardiness is one third of an absence.

2. Two Moral Reflection Papers (20%):

Students will write two moral reflection papers worth 10% each. Each 5 page paper will engage one complex moral dilemma chosen from the course textbook, recommended readings or a current ethical issue that is approved by me. Papers are expected to adequately explain alternative views, citing the most relevant and recent supporting arguments and their nuances, as well as present a strong case for your position. A good paper will discuss multiple resources for each position so the reader knows you are well informed in your conclusion.

3. Moral Reflection Presentation (10%):

Students will present one of their moral reflection papers in a 10-15 minute polished in-class presentation. This will include the best of both views and persuasive reasons why your results are best case. Visual aids such as PowerPoint are expected.

4. Exams (40%)

There will be two exams. These exams will cover in-class material and readings. They will be short answer, and essay. The Midterm is worth 20% of the course grade. The Final will be comprehensive and is also worth 20% of the course grade. Students must bring a blue essay book to the exams.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-90 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 D = 69-60 F = 59 and below

Course Policies

1. Academic Honesty Policy:

Academic honesty is expected of all students. Any form of cheating, copying, or dishonesty is unacceptable. These include: helping another student on an exam, using unauthorized aids during exams, falsely claiming authorship on an assignment, and plagiarizing material. Ultimately, this only hurts you as it destroys your opportunity to learn and grow as a disciple in this course.

Plagiarism is the use of another's words and/or ideas without giving the author the credit. If you have questions about this, go to the following webpage for a brief description with examples:

www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml. Academic dishonesty will result in a "0" for the assignment and following the process outlined in the current OC academic catalog.

2. Late Work Policy:

Assignments will be considered late if not turned in to me at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Assignments that are late will be deducted 5% of the grade for each day that it is late (excluding Sundays). Work that is more than 7 days late will not be accepted for any points.

Exams: The opportunity to make up exams will not be granted automatically and are only available at my discretion. Make-up exams may be entirely essay. If the make-up exam is not completed within the specified time the student will receive a "0" for the exam. There are two legitimate reasons for missing an exam: extreme illness and urgent personal emergency. Both must be verified by an outside source (i.e. written doctor note). Please note that travel arrangements, attending weddings or family gatherings are *not* acceptable reasons for missing an exam.

3. Classroom and Electronic Etiquette Policy:

Students are expected to be on time to class and actively engaged to create a healthy learning environment. I view this as being respectful of both myself and your fellow students.

- a. Tardiness is disruptive and reduces your participation grade.
- b. Cell phones are to be turned off. Texting and calls destroy a healthy learning environment.
- c. Laptops can be used for note-taking but NOT for surfing the web, email, completing assignments, or other distracting activities. Engaging in these will result in a zero for the day.

Engaging in disrespectful and distracting things during class will negatively impact your participation grade. You may also be asked to leave class.

4. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA/504) Statement:

If you have a diagnosed disability and need special accommodations, please notify Katy Roybal (405.425.1876) before or immediately after your first scheduled class meeting. After your disability has been verified, I will work with you, with Mrs. Roybal, and with the Oklahoma Christian University Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform well in the course.

5. Copyright Policy:

Copyright 2017. Oklahoma Christian University (the University) as to all class materials and lectures whether distributed in class, on Blackboard or by any other means. All rights are reserved. Class lectures and other activities may not be recorded, copied or distributed without the written permission of the professor.

Course Schedule

Class Date	Topic	Reading	Chapters
January 9	Course Introduction Foundations of Moral Decision		
January 11	Approaches to Ethical Decision Making	Stassen 3-42	1 & 2
January 16	Ethics Video		
January 18	Character Ethics & Sources of Authority	Stassen 43-63	3
January 23	Moral Norms & the Sermon on the Mount	Stassen 64-106	4 & 5
January 25	Valuing Life at the Beginning - Abortion	Stassen 149-168	8
January 30	Judging & Valuing Life at the End - Euthanasia Moral Reflection #1 Paper Due	Stassen 169-194	9
February 1	Living Faith & Prayer	Stassen 195-214 & 339-358	10 & 17
February 6	Punishment, Justice & Death Penalty	Stassen 126-148 & 215-233	7 & 11
February 8	Midterm Exam		
February 13	Gender Roles & Sexual Orientation	Stassen 234-269	12 & 13
February 15	Marriage	Stassen 270-287	14
February 20	Cyber Ethics & 'Truth-telling'	Stassen 288-307	15
February 22	War, Terrorism & Counterterrorism	Stassen 308-338	16
February 27	Economic Justice & Work Ethics	Stassen 359-378	18
March 1	Creation Care & Environmental Ethics Moral Reflection #2 Paper Due	Stassen 379-395	19
March 6	Race & Racism	Stassen 396-416	20
March 8	Biotechnology	Stassen 417-441	21
March 13	Practicing Ethics & Love	Stassen 107-125 & 442-448	6 & 22
March 15	Moral Reflection Presentations		
March 20	Final Exam		