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CS 601 Christian Ethics

Brian G. Edgar

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Syllabus

Course: CS601 X1 (SP 2009)
Title: Christian Ethics
Hours: 2.00
Published: Yes, on 01/13/2009
Prerequisites:

IS501

Department: Church in Society
Faculty: Dr. Brian Edgar

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Office: EXL EXL
SPO:

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.

Maximum Registration: 27
Catalog Description: Prepares students to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective. Introduces students to historical and contemporary sources for Christian ethics. Explores how responses to moral problems and integrity shape the Christian community. Provides a foundation for further studies in Christian ethics and for congregational/institutional responses to social and moral concerns.

Objectives:

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Christian Ethics
CS 601

Syllabus

Dr. Brian Edgar,
Professor of Theological Studies

Fall Semester, 2009

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A: The Course

Introduction
This course aims

- to prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective
- to enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding moral responsibility and for practicing ministry with integrity
- to assist in training ministers who will draw all persons, including those who are excluded by society, into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ
- to assist in the training of ministers who will exemplify the Gospel-mandated holy life.

Course Outcomes
It is anticipated that by the end of the course students will be able to:

- provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
- describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
- use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
- use basic tools of social analysis.
- explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
- recognize and explain at a basic level: the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in society and in the church (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic locations).
  - explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

Required texts

Boulton, Wayne G., Thomas D.Kennedy, and Allen Verhey, eds., *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

Dayton, Donald W., *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).

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

Miles, Rebekah L., *The Pastor as Moral Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

In addition to these texts students will be required to access various electronic resources. Further information will be provided on this later.   (A packet of readings has previously been required for CS601 and may still be required for students taking this class with other instructors, however, it will **not** be required in this class).

Professor
Dr Brian Edgar is Professor of Theological Studies at ATS. He is an Australian and will direct this course from Australia. However, as ExL students well know, physical location makes little difference to extended learning!

Prior to taking up his present full-time position he taught systematic theology and ethics full-time for eighteen years in undergraduate, Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry programs at a number of Australian theological institutions and, on occasions, overseas. He is

Moderator for philosophy and ethics for the Australian College of Theology (Australia's largest theological accrediting agency – a moderator is responsible for ensuring parity of academic standard between the different institutions accredited by the ACT).

Brian is the General Editor of Crucible, an on-line journal of peer-reviewed articles and other resources on Christian life and thought (see www.crucible.org.au); a member of the Australian Public Theology Network; convenor of the Social Responsibility Commission of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations in the Uniting Church in Australia (see http://www.confessingcongregations.com); a Fellow of the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology (Australia) see www.iscast.org.au; and a double award winner with the Templeton Foundation's program for the conduct of courses on science and faith as well as being a winner of a Templeton award for writing on science and faith. He has been an advisor on ethics to the Australia Government's Gene Technology Regulator (who authorizes all artificial gene manipulations) and a member of the World Evangelical Alliance's Theological Commission.

He is the author of *The Message of the Trinity* (IVP, 2004), as well as a number of articles on other topics.

From 2004-2007 Brian was Director of Public Theology for the Australian Evangelical Alliance which involved him in publics policy discussions concerning a wide range of ethical issues. Prior to that he was Academic Dean at the Bible College of Victoria where he taught for 18 years.

Contact Professor

Moodle: contact concerning this course will take place via the Moodle site for this course where there are various options. If you have anything that should be said to me alone about the class (issues with your work, your grades, personal matters not for the whole of the class) please be sure that you contact me via the *To Professor* link in Moodle. Your assignments which are to be graded should be posted to the appropriate assignment link in Moodle. (see below on Mode of submission of assignments).

Email: My general email address is *brian.edgar@asburyseminary.edu* and anything sent to that address will, naturally, go to my mailbox, but for the purposes of this class contact will normally be via Moodle.

Mail: Contact by mail will not be the norm. However, my address is 20 Highland Boulevard, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia, 3134. (If you plug that into GoogleEarth it will take you across continents and show you where I live.)

Telephone: Telephone contact will not be the norm, however can be negotiated. If you feel like calling please note that there is a considerable difference in time zones – a factor complicated by changes as a result of summer times in both Australia and the US. + 61-3-98122294

Module topics and dates for the semester

Dates for individual modules will be provided on Moodle.

The course will include the following topics.

- Moral Foundations and Sociocultural Contexts
- · Distinctives of a Wesleyan Moral Vision
- · Christ and Culture: The Historic Tradition
- · Christ and Culture: Justice, Pluralism, and Public Engagement
- · The Church as a Moral Community
- · Gender, Race, and Ethnicity
- · Friendship, Sexuality, and Homosexuality
- · Marriage, Family, and Aging
- · Work, Environment, and Worship

Withdrawal from the course
NB: the last day to advise the Registrar that you are dropping the course and still being able to receive a refund is February 13, 2009.

The last day to advise the Registrar that you are dropping the course, get a pro-rata refund and without being automatically given an 'F' is March 20, 2009.

B: Assessment

Requirement 1: Short Essay
You are to write no more than 800 words in response to any one of two or three questions set on material covered in topics 1 and 2 (15%). The questions will be available on Thursday March 12 and answers are required by Wednesday March 18.

Requirement 2:   Short Exam

One hour is given to provide one short essay style answer chosen by you from two or three questions which are based on material covered in modules 3 and 4 (15%). You can select the hour in which you do this exam any time between Thursday 16th April and Wednesday April 22nd.

Requirement 3: Case Study
(1600 words) The Case Study will describe an issue in ministry and will require analysis from various moral and social perspectives. (30%). This will be based on material from modules 4 and 5, will be available on April 20 and is to be submitted by May 17.

Requirement 4: Examination
This examination is oriented toward objective knowledge of ethical theory and historic traditions and will take place during the exam week of May 18 to 22. (30%)

Requirement 5: Participation in Discussion forums and responses to Assigned Questions
Throughout the semester you will be interacting on-line in different locations and assessed appropriately. (10%).

You will make postings in the appropriate **Forum** within each module, either as part of the whole class or as part of a team. This is because some discussions are simply too cumbersome with the whole class. It is better if numbers are limited by dividing the class into teams. This on-line interaction is not only necessary educationally, it is, in effect, an indication of 'attendance' in the class. Attendance (ie participation through posting) is a requirement of the course and of the Seminary as a whole as Federal financial support is dependent upon it and authorities can require Asbury to provide evidence of participation. If there is a week where you are not able to participate you need to discuss that with me.

There are two parts to the on-line intereaction: (a) **Responses to set questions** – which means posting short answers to specific questions; and (b) **Other comments** initiating discussion or responding to other people's postings.

You should be reading and posting to the appropriate forums at least once each week. Preferably twice; More often is possible and can be helpful but can also be counter-productive if the quality goes down! Each week you will typically need to be posting your own responses to a set question or questions and *also* responding to one or more postings by others. So two postings would usually be expected, perhaps on the same day, perhaps not.

Mode of submission of assignments
Each assignment will be posted on Moodle in the appropriate module with instructions. Your assignments will only be seen by you and myself. They must be submitted by midnight Wilmore time on the due date, and late submissions may be graded for reduced credit and may not receive written feedback. My responses to your assignments and your grades will be linked to each assignment request. Again, only each individual student and myself can see the grades and comments for that particular assignment. You will know the assignment has been graded when you click on the assignment link.

Grading criteria
Refer to the Academic Catalog for further information. The following descriptions will provide the guidelines for grades based.

      A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives
      B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
      C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
      D = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
      F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

However, some assignments lend themselves better to scoring by numerical assessment rather than by assigning a letter grade initially. These numerical scorings must be converted to letter grades for recording at the end of the semester. The following breakdown is used for conversion purposes.

      A (95-100), A- (90-94)
      B+ (87-89),   B   (83-86),   B- (80-82)
      C+ (77-79),   C   (73-76),   C- (70-72)
      D   (60-69),
      F (less than 60)

Late penalties will apply. One to three days late - 10% (of the total mark available for the assignment) and four to seven days late - 20%.

Plagiarism: avoid it. The www is a particular temptation. Bear in mind that the technology that allows someone to find material which can be used without attribution is the same technology which allows someone else to check whether that has happened.

Incomplete
If you do not complete all required work you will fail the course. The official end of each term is 5 pm on the last day of the final exam week. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline, but not a later deadline, for

submission of any or all course work. If you have serious problems completing work by the end of the course you must petition the Registrar and the faculty person involved for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. The petition must be received before 5 pm on the last day of the term. However, such a request must fit the requirements of the Academic Catalog: 'A grade of 'I' denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.' Note that I am simply unable to enter an 'incomplete' without the prior approval of the Dean who will insist that these requirements are met. Sorry, but this means you need to get organized! If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

Inclusive language
All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

C: Resources

Prayers
Students are encouraged to use the Prayer Forum in Moodle. We have the privilege of being able to support one another in this way. Please pray regularly for the others in the class. Although prayers and prayer requests can be posted at any time each student will be asked, on a roster basis, to provide a 'prayer of the week'. Please try and relate the theme of the prayer to the topic being covered that week. It can be an original prayer or one you have drawn from somewhere else. All students are encouraged to pray this prayer as they begin their study for that week. This means that the prayer for the week needs to be posted up *before* the week begins. **A roster will appear in the Prayer Centre** and you will be reminded to visit it during the preliminary, introductory module.

Video
Videos will be available on the web-site. Please note that the images (various pictures and drawings) which appear within the video are copyrighted by other people and organizations and while they can be used in this context for educational purposes you are not permitted to make copies of them or reproduce them in any way. Sorry about that, but please do not involve yourself or Asbury in any legal issues.

Research Responsibilities
While a considerable amount of material is available in set texts, provided in supplementary reading and advice is available from the instructor, students are reminded of their responsibility to find their own study material, especially when undertaking assignments. Remember that the Asbury library allows a generous amount of time for borrowing – six weeks – and they will bear the cost of posting material to you (though you have to pay to return them).

The Virtual Classroom

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into http://one.asburyseminary.edu and clicking on

the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues

and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:

    a) Course News and Announcements, where I will post items important for the entire class;

    b) Syllabus, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;

    c) To Professor, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;

    d) Course Questions, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;

    e) Prayer Forum, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;

    a) Open Forum, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

1. Modules, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place,

documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

Virtual Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media contact Information Commons: Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale: ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:
   a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm

2. Materials Requests:
   a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:
 http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm

   b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

   c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:
   a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:
   a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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The World-wide-web
The web is a source for this course which is very mixed: some is great and some is very bad. You must be discerning. When surfing the web to find an image or a story about your favorite film star checking for site credibility probably doesn't rate very highly on your agenda. But when using the source for learning and referencing in a paper it is very important.