CS 601 Christian Ethics

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CS 601: Christian Ethics  
Asbury Theological Seminary ***Spring 2006  
Section A: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am  

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Office Phone: 858-2284***Home Phone: 858-8136  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-3:00pm and by appointment

Purpose:
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.

Objectives:

Students will be able:
To provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
To describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
To use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
To use basic tools of social analysis.
To explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
To 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).
To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

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).

Selected readings in CS601 Packet for sale in bookstore; others on internet and electronic reserve.
Evaluation:

35% Take-Home Integrative Essay on weeks 1—7 
35% Take-Home Case Study 
30% Final Examination (short answer) 
Debit: For inadequate class participation and/or late or incomplete reading.

Grade Range: Work for CS601 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

A    = (4.0) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives 
B    = (3.0) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives 
C    = (2.0) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives 
D    = (1.0) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives 
F     = (0) Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. Attendance will be taken. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

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.

Take-Home Integrative Essays (5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Two essay questions will require moral reflection on, and integration of, the various biblical and historical materials covered in weeks 1—7 (includes readings and discussion on Wesley and Dayton). Due Tuesday, March 21.

Take-Home Case Study (5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Case Study will describe an issue in ministry and will require analysis from various moral and social perspectives. Due Tuesday, May 9.

Final Examination: The examination is oriented toward objective knowledge of ethical theory and historic traditions. Final Exam week.
February 7, 9: Moral Foundations and Sociocultural Contexts: Introduction

February 14, 16: Moral Foundations and Sociocultural Contexts: Continued

Readings:
Assigned Scriptures (class handout)
Hollinger, pages 7-88, 149-173

February 21, 23: Making Moral Decisions

Readings:
Hollinger, pages 89-148, 174-196
Miles, pages 1-59

February 28, March 2: Christ and Culture: The Historic Tradition

Readings:
Hollinger, pages 187-215
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Augustine, pages 234-237
Thomas Aquinas, 109-118
Luther, 187-194
Schleitheim Confession, 285-287

Electronic Reserve: See class icon; supplemental texts
Didache
Calvin, Civil Government

March 7, 9: Christ and Culture: Justice, Pluralism, and Public Engagement

Readings:
Hollinger, pages 216-272
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Niebuhr, 241-247
Wolterstorff, 251-253
Kennedy, 436-442
Yoder, 91-101
Jordan, 442-445
King, 427-436
Boff and Boff, 474-482
Callahan, 270-279
March 14, 16: Distinctives of a Wesleyan Moral Vision

Readings:

Electronic Reserve:
  Wesley, “Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions”

Internet:
  Sermon XCII: The Danger of Riches (go to http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/serm-087.stm)
  Thoughts Upon Slavery (go to http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/thoughtsuponslavery.stm)

In Packet:
  Heitzenrater, The Imitatio Christi and the Great Commandment

March 21, 23: The Church as a Moral Community
  (Take Home Essays due Tuesday, March 21)

Readings:
  Dayton, entire book
  Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
    Rasmussen, 311-315

March 28, 30: The Church as a Moral Community: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

Readings:
  Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
    Ruether, 88-91
    Gilligan, 172-176

On internet:

Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Does Belief in Women’s Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexual Practice?” (go to www.cheinternational.org, then, under “Resources” located on left of screen, click on Free Articles; find article)

“Breaking the Black/White Stalemate” (go to Library Information Commons login; type in student id# in Borrower ID field and login. Click on EBSCO Host. Click on Academic Search Premier database. In the find field, type “racial reconciliation in the church” and click search. Locate article title)

Douglas McConnell, “Confronting Racism and Prejudice in Our Kind of People” (go to Library Information Commons login. type in student id# in Borrower ID field and login. Click on ATLA Religion. In the keyword field type “race in the church” and click search. Find article title)

Miroslav Volf, “A Vision of Embrace: Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict.” Ecumenical Review 47.02 (ATLA Religion database)
April 3: READING WEEK

April 11, 13: The Church as a Moral Community: Friendship, Sexuality, and Homosexuality

Readings:
Miles, 103-126
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
   Meilaender, 264-270

In Packet:

April 18, 20: Marriage, Family, and Aging

Readings:
Miles, 76-102
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
   Farley, 342-346
   Smedes, 347-353

In Packet:
   Lysaught, excerpt from *Growing Old in Christ*, 267-301
   Van Leeuwen, excerpt from *My Brother’s Keeper*, 189-208

April 25, 27: Work, Environment, and Worship

*No class Thursday, April 27*

Readings:
Miles, 60-75
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
   Pope John Paul, 468-473
   May, 514-524
   Berry, 524-528

In Packet:
   Volf, excerpt from *Work in the Spirit*, 123-156

May 2, 4: Work, Environment and Worship, continued

*No class Thursday, May 4*

May 9, 11: Conclusions

*Take Home Case Study due Tuesday, May 9*