

**Theo 7220: Christian Ethics**  
**North Park Theological Seminary**  
**Spring 2009**

Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:30-3pm

(3 credit hours, Prerequisites: Theo 6330 or Theo 5330, \*Syllabus subject to minor changes)

**Instructor:**

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**Catalogue Description:** An introduction to the methods and topics of moral reflection and action in their biblical, historical and theological context. The course focuses on new life in Christ as embodied in the church for the world.

**Additional Description:** Paul says in II Corinthians 5:17, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” New life in Christ is based on the gift of faith and the life and work of Jesus Christ. It is celebrated in the event of being baptized into the body of believers and manifest in an ongoing life of faith. New life in Christ includes the experience of God’s love and forgiveness; it includes the practices of love and justice as central to Christian moral formation; it includes drawing from scripture and the tradition to help us live creatively. This course will use the framework of new life in Christ to explore Christian ethics as both Christian formation and the church’s response to “the least of these,” including widows, orphans, children, aliens, prisoners, the sick, the hungry, the poor, and the thirsty (Matt. 25).

The themes of the course will be presented and discussed in light of the gifts of scripture and the traditions of the church including the sacraments, the rhythms of liturgy and worship, and our life together. Throughout the course, I encourage you to eat with one another when you can, for:

The table fellowship of Christians implies obligation. It is *our* daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus we are firmly bound to one another not only in the Spirit but in our whole physical being. The *one* bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant. Now none dares go hungry as long as another has bread, and [the one] who breaks this fellowship of the physical life also breaks the fellowship of the Spirit. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

**Texts**

1. Bible, NRSV.
2. *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*, Samuel Wells (Brazos Press: 2004). ISBN: 1587430711. (Read chapters 1-10)
3. *Augustine’s Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: 1991). ISBN: 0192817744. (Read books I-X)
4. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, Miroslav Volf (Eerdmans: 2006). ISBN: 0802829899 (Read chapters 1-10)

5. *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*, Mark Lewis Taylor (Fortress Press: 2001). ISBN: 0800632834. (Read chapters 1-5)
6. *The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics*, Kelly S. Johnson (Eerdmans: 2007). ISBN: 0802803788
7. *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, M. Daniel Carroll R., forward by Samuel Rodríguez (Baker Academic: 2008). ISBN: 0801035661. (Read all)
8. Selected articles and excerpts:
  - a. Plato's Republic, Bk. 1-2 (beginning), available online (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>)
  - b. M. Therese Lysaught, "Practicing the Order of Widows," *Christian Bioethics* 11 (no. 1, 2005): 51-68. Available online, EBSCO.
  - c. Chapters from *The Child in Christian Thought*, Marcia J. Bunge, ed. (Eerdmans: 2001). ISBN: 0802846939. (We will only read sections of this text—chapters 1, 2, 9, 14, 17.) The book will be available for purchase; however, should you not purchase it, readings will be made available on e-reserve.)
  - d. M. Therese Lysaught, "Patient Suffering and the Anointing of the Sick," in *On Moral Medicine*.

### **Assignments**

1. Preparation and participation. Come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss material.
2. Putting On Christ. Design a practice, practice it, and reflect critically. A list of possibilities will be made available. (25%)
3. Papers. Write three essays that integrate the reading, lectures, and critical/creative thinking. (60%)
4. Final. (15%)

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook.