

Theo 7220: Christian Ethics
North Park Theological Seminary
Spring 2012

Both sections: Tuesday 10:45-noon
Section 1: Tuesday 4-5:15pm
Section 2: 9:30-10:45

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 5:17-19, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 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 and the church’s ministry of reconciliation 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.

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. *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment*, Christopher D. Marshall (Eerdmans: 2001). ISBN: 978-0-8028-4797.
6. *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory*, Lisa Sowle Cahill (Fortress: 1994). ISBN: 9780800627003.
7. *My Name is Child of God...Not "Those People": A First Person Look at Poverty*, Julia Dinsmore (Fortress: 2007). ISBN: 9780806656243.
8. *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions*, David Vandrunen (Crossway: 2009). ISBN: 1433501449
9. *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)
10. Selected articles and excerpts:
 - *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, 9, 14, 17.) The book will be available for purchase; however, should you not purchase it, all readings will be made available on blackboard.)

Assignments

1. **Preparation and participation** (10%). Come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss material in the sectional meetings. There will be days when I assign informal writing exercises – those will be collected but not graded. Last, we will make a field trip to the Juvenile Detention Center.
2. **Lenten Discipline** (15%). Choose a discipline that you will take up over the season of Lent. In a paragraph, describe the parameters of how you will practice this discipline throughout the season. Reflect on your Lenten Discipline. In your reflection, include the paragraph you submitted early in the semester and answer the following questions: What habit(s) were you hoping to cultivate? Toward the end of what virtue? How would you connect your discipline with the season of Lent? How does this take shape in the season of Easter or what was your experience of Easter in light of your discipline? What did you learn? Why is the liturgical season important for Christian Ethics, or not? (Note: Your instructor thinks it is very important!) Guidelines: 1000-1200 words.
3. **Papers** (20% each). Write three essays that integrate the reading, lectures, and critical/creative thinking. See Schedule for specific paper topics. Guidelines: 1000-1200 words in length; minimal (if any) footnotes as this is not a research paper; due by 5:00pm in my mailbox.
4. **Final** (15%). The final will integrate themes of the course and be short/long essay format.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY CLASS TIME ON THE DATE GIVEN. IF YOU DO NOT GIVE THEM TO ME IN CLASS, YOU MUST POST THEM IN MOODLE UNDER THE ASSIGNMENTS LINK. DO NOT EMAIL ASSIGNMENTS TO ME OR PUT THEM IN MY BOX.

Policies

Grading in this course will follow the standards of the *Student Academic Handbook*, which sets A as the mark for exceptional or excellent work, B as the mark for meritorious or above average work, C as the mark for “work that is without marked merit or marked defect” in fulfilling the assignment, D as the mark for deficient work that nonetheless partially fulfills the assignment, and F as the mark for no work or for work that does not even partially fulfill the assignment. Academic dishonesty will produce failure on a given assignment or failure of the entire course.

Absences beyond the third will lower your course grade. Students who miss more than six class sessions should not expect to pass the course. Make every effort to notify an instructor ahead of time about any absence. Being habitually late is both discourteous and poor training for ministry. Students who are consistently tardy should expect a grade penalty.

Late Papers. Students may have a one week extension on one paper without grade penalty. All other late papers will be reduced one letter grade per day.

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.