

**Christian Ethics**  
**Theo 7220, Spring 2013**  
**North Park Theological Seminary**

(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. *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians*, Julie Hanlon Rubio (Georgetown, 2010). ISBN: 9781589016392.
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. *The Christian Art of Dying: Learning from Jesus*, Allen Verhey (Eerdmans: 2011), ISBN: 9780802866721.
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. Select articles available on Moodle.

## **Course Requirements & Grading**

### **1. Class Participation. 20%**

Involvement in on-line discussions and completion of on-line tasks, including reading the weekly lecture. Discussions will take place in small groups or large groups and will be asynchronous (class members do not need to be on-line at the same time). For Guidelines on weekly posting, see below.

**Due:** See calendar, but unless otherwise noted, small group posts are due by Wednesday of every week and responses to 2 classmates are due by Friday of every week.

### **2. Lenten Discipline (15%): 2 parts.**

Lenten Discipline Paragraph (due Thurs. 1/31): 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.

Lenten Reflection Paper (due 4/12). In your reflection, include the paragraph you submitted above 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 might this take shape in the season of Easter? 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.

**Due:** 1/31 (paragraph description); 4/12 (Reflection paper)

### **3. Essays (15% each)**

Write three essays that integrate the reading, lectures, and critical/creative thinking. See Calendar for the essay prompts. Guidelines: 1000-1200 words in length; double spaced, 12 point font please!, minimal (if any) footnotes as this is not a research paper. Submit through moodle in the week it is due.

**Due:** 2/16 (Paper 1); 3/9 (Paper 2); 5/4 (Paper 3)

### **4. Persuasion Paper (20%).**

Write a persuasion paper that takes up ONE of the following claims:

A: Just War is the most virtuous path to protecting life and preserving peace.

B: Pacifism is the most virtuous path to protecting life and preserving peace.

Strong papers will address both just war and pacifism, will incorporate a discussion of virtue, and will present a compelling argument, persuading the reader to support either Just War OR Pacifism. Guidelines: 1200 words.

**Due:** 4/5

\*Grade percentages operate as follows: A (93+), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), and so on.

### **Computer Requirements:**

In order to effectively participate in and successfully complete this course, each participant will need to have access to a computer and a high-speed internet connection. Please visit <http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Computer-Services/Network/Minimum-Requirements> for information on computer requirements.

It is expected that participants know how to perform basic tasks such as sending email with attachments, creating, editing and saving documents in a file structure, and performing web searches.

### **Participant Responsibilities:**

1. Attendance, presence, and full participation are required for this class. You cannot successfully complete this course without completing the weekly readings and assignments. If you miss more than 3 weeks of posting (which means either neglecting to post within 1 week of due date ), you will not pass this course.
2. Some assignments will be posted on-line for others to see. You will be asked to comment and provide feedback to one another on your work.
3. Use proper “netiquette” (see *A Guide to Netiquette in Course Information folder in Moodle*).
4. Participants should plan on spending on average 70 hours for the semester for this course.

### **Course Facilitator Responsibilities:**

1. The course facilitator will design the course and learning modules in such a way that students have every opportunity to achieve the learning objectives.
2. The course facilitator will provide reactions to student responses and discussion as appropriate in order to clarify important ideas and concepts.
3. The course facilitator will provide opportunities for group work that will include discussion.
4. The course facilitator will respond to emails within 2 business days of receipt.
5. The course facilitator will read and critically assess students’ weekly assignments and provide regular feedback.

### **Academic Honesty:**

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear his/her expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well.

For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University’s online catalog.

### **Support Services:**

Please see the Course Information button in your course in Moodle for the Student Support document if you need assistance during your course.

### **Disabilities Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the program's office. Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information please review the following website: <http://www.northpark.edu/ada>