

COS 424 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS
COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO
Fall 2014

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I. Course Description:

This course analyzes biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior: personal, professional, and social with emphasis given to the acquisition of pastoral skills in moral discernment and ethically responsible decision making and action. It provides a study of the distinctive character of Christian Ethics and its moral ideal. Discussion and assignments will focus on “What type of person should I be?” and “What type of communities should I help to build?” in the context of the moral vision suggested by the student’s perception and experience of the Christian Faith. The relevance of these moral visions to selected contemporary social and moral problems will also be explored.

Objectives include:

1. Exploration of biblical and theological bases for ethical thinking and activity
2. Survey of major approaches to ethical reasoning
3. Examination of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church as a frame of reference for ethical decision making
4. Exploration of ways to deal with ethical dilemmas inherent in selected contemporary moral issues
5. Reflection on case studies that challenge pastors to examine carefully their ethical responsibilities
6. Focus on pertinent issues for personal and professional life with indication of guidelines for ministerial ethics
7. Delineation of and reflection upon essential guidelines for Christian Identity and moral behavior.

II. Required Textbooks:

Robin W. Lovin, An Introduction To Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues,
Abingdon Press. Nashville, 2011

The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church (2012)

Steve Wilkens, Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right & Wrong, IVP Academic, 2011.

SUPPLEMENTAL AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Bruce C. Birch and Larry L. Rasmussen, Bible and Ethics in The Christian Life
Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN (rev. ed., 1989)

Wayne G. Boulton, et als, From Christ To The World: Introductory Readings in
Christian Ethics, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1994

Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics: The New Morality. The Westminster Press,
Philadelphia, 1966

Marie M. Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? Harper, San Francisco, 1989

Charles L. Kammer III, Ethics and Liberation: An Introduction. Orbis Books,
Maryknoll, New York, 1988

Robin W. Lovin, Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2000.

III. Course Schedule and Assignments:

Course Schedule:

Online Environment: **September 19 through November 1, 2014**

- ☞ This course utilizes the online environment after the initial weekend meeting on the United Campus. Typical work online includes watching or listening to lectures, engaging in discussion groups, and/or writing reflections.
- ☞ All online engagement will be complete by November 1, 2014

On Campus Weekend: **September 19 and 20, 2014**

- ☞ The On-Campus Weekend will begin at 2:30 on Friday and end by 2:30pm on Saturday. Friday class is 2:30 pm to 8:30 pm, with a dinner break at 5:00 pm; Saturday resumes at 8:30 am, with lunch at 12:30, and chapel at 1:15 pm, and class concludes at 2:30.

Final Semester Project: The student will work with the instructor to develop a topic for an 10 page final paper. The paper will deal with some aspect of social/personal ethics, preferably with a focus that will best serve the student in their local pastoral setting. The paper may focus on meta-ethical theories or on a particular ethical issue. The paper will be due by November 8th.

Grades will be handed into the COSSO office by no later than 30 days after the last day of class.

IV. Course Requirements:

(1) Class Participation: You will actively and thoughtfully participate as a member of this learning community, both on campus and online (25 % of final grade). The timely completion of assigned reading will comprise part of this grade.

(2) Assigned Reading: You will read all assigned texts within the timeframe assigned for the class. You will be given a reading report form to fill out at the end of the course (15% of final grade).

(4) Final Semester Project – Final Paper: At the end of our course, you will write a 10 page paper dealing with an aspect of UM theology mutually agreed between the professor and student. The goal is for the paper to deal with an issue of particular relevance to the student's ministry. (60% of final grade).

V. Course Grading:

Your class grade is based on 100 points.

- (1) Class Participation: 25 points (25%)
- (2) Assigned Reading: 15 points (15%)
- (3) Final Paper: 60 points (60%)

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination. Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor policy, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- (1) warning
- (2) probation
- (3) suspension for the remainder of the course

- (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio
- (5) failing grade for the course.

Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry.