

**Fourth Year**  
**Pre-Class Written Assignment**  
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL 2014

**(414) PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS**

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**Course Description**

This course provides an analysis of biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior: personal, professional, and social. Emphasis is given to the acquisition of pastoral skills in moral discernment and ethically responsible decision-making and action.

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Have a general knowledge of biblical and theological bases for ethical thinking and activity.
2. Provide a survey of major approaches to ethical reasoning.
3. Examine the “Social Principles” of The United Methodist Church as a frame of reference for ethical decision making.
4. Have an ethical framework of reference of the ways to deal with dilemmas inherent in church and society.
5. Reflect 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. Delineate of and reflect upon essential guidelines for Christian identity and moral behavior.

**Required Textbooks:**

1. Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
2. Adeney, Bernard T. *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1995.
3. Lovin, Robin W. *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.
4. Miles, Rebekah L. *The Pastor as Moral Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
5. Wogaman, Philip J. *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
6. Holy Bible

### **Pre-class assignment**

(This assignment is due to the Course of Study School office postmarked by May 15, 2012). Assignments received after this date are subject to grade penalty. Assignments will not be accepted after the first day of class. Please follow the Perkins Course of Study guidelines below. Staple your assignment in the top left corner; it is not necessary to submit your assignment in a report cover. Be sure to retain a copy of your assignment.

**Class Assignment A:** Read in their entirety Lovin's and Wogaman's texts, both of which are named *Christian Ethics*, and use your knowledge of these texts to answer the assignments below (the answer to each numbered assignment should not exceed five double-spaced pages – about 1300 words, for a total of 10 pages).

1. In the first chapter of the Wogaman text, the author outlines six “points of conflict” regarding biblical interpretation within Christian ethics. Explain two of these tensions and then discuss how you think three of the following Christian thinkers might deal with or resolve the tensions:

Augustine of Hippo	Sojourner Truth
Thomas Aquinas	Walter Rauschenbusch
Martin Luther	Karl Barth
John Calvin	Reinhold Niebuhr
John Wesley	Gustavo Gutiérrez

2. Identify the historical context, meaning, and if possible, the authors' evaluation of the following persons and items.

Aristotle	Liberation Theology
Christian Realism	Virtue
Deontology	<i>Rerum novarum</i>
Ecumenical Social Ethics	Social Gospel
Just War	Ernst Troeltsch

**Class Assignment B (due on the first day of class):** After reading Miles' text, as well as your reading of the Lovin and Wogaman material, choose an ethical case study from the media or your own pastoral experience (being sure to protect confidentiality) and present a five-page analysis of the dilemma and your suggested conclusion. Pay particular attention in your analysis to Miles' “Guiding Questions.” Bring to bear, as well, Lovin's overall discussion of the “good life” and the primary approaches to ethics.

**Class Assignment C (due on Monday, after the first weekend):** Read Adeney's text and present a five-page reflection on the book. Include in your reflection the narrative's implications for Christian ministry in a Multicultural setting and/or with marginal persons.

**Class Assignment D:** Each student will prepare an eight- to ten-page research paper on an issue in contemporary Christian ethics. Students will make use of the materials studied in the pre-class assignments and in the class, along with additional reading and research related to the concern of the case. Each student will also present the results of his/her research to the class and engage colleagues in a discussion of the issue. Presentations will be made during the second week of the session. The papers will be due by class time on the day following the student's presentation.

## Class Expectations and Assignments

Regular attendance at class sessions is expected. A syllabus will be distributed on the first day of class with daily reading assignments; quizzes may be given on preclass and class readings at the instructor's discretion. Each student is expected to have read all assignments prior to the respective class session.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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The completed pre-class work for courses 211-514 must be sent to the Course of Study School office **postmarked on or before May 15, 2014** OR submitted electronically through the Locker system (see information below) **no later than May 15, 2014 at 11:59.59 p.m.** Pre-class work submitted after May 15 will have grading penalties assessed as follows: (grades are expressed alphabetically from A to F, with F being the lowest grade)

- Submissions dated May 16 - May 31 will receive a one letter grade reduction
- Submissions dated June 1 - June 14 will receive a two letter grade reduction.
- Submissions dated June 16 or later, the student will be dropped from that course registration with no refund (of registration, fees or housing)

A request for an extension requires the following:

- It must be submitted in writing to the director of the Course of Study School. Via e-mail, send to Jeannie Trevino-Teddle at [COSSExt@smu.edu](mailto:COSSExt@smu.edu). Via regular mail, send to COSS Extension, P.O. Box 750133, Dallas, TX 75275-0133. By fax, send to 214-768-1042). **Make sure that you notify the COSS office of any transmission.**
- It must be received by May 1
- It must state valid reason(s) for needing an extension
- It must state the course name(s) and number(s) for which the extension(s) is/are requested
- It must state the amount of time being requested (not beyond June 14)

**In order for an extension request to be considered, the student must be fully registered (i.e., fees paid, signatures acquired, Release of Liability and Course Registration and Housing forms filled out and submitted). Before a decision can be made regarding an extension, the Director will consult with the student's district superintendent, local pastor registrar and instructor.**

### Optional Electronic Submission for Pre Class Assignments

Course of Study School Lockers

We are offering an alternate method for the submission of pre-class assignments. The Course of Study School is using a "Locker System", Locker.SMU. This system allows COSS students to submit their pre-class assignments electronically. Please remember that we will continue to accept mailed in paper pre-class assignments. Electronic submissions and the use of Locker.SMU is optional.

A Locker will be assigned to each student for each class they are taking. For example, if you are taking Hebrew Bible I (211) and Formation Discipleship (213) you will be assigned two different Lockers. The instructor for each course will then be able to log in to the Locker System and retrieve your submitted assignments for each particular class.

When your registration is received, the Course of Study School staff will be creating your private Locker(s) and informing you via e-mail when your Locker(s) has been successfully created. In this email, you will receive specific instructions on how to access your Locker(s) and how to upload your assignments.

If you have not registered by May 15th, you will not be guaranteed a locker and you will need to submit your pre-class assignments via postal service.

The Locker System will automatically date and time stamp your submitted assignments to inform the instructor and the Course of Study School staff when the assignment was submitted.

The pre-class assignments should be submitted to the Locker System **ONLY in .doc format.**

When you are ready to submit your pre-class assignments online, but have not received an e-mail with information on how to access your private Locker(s), please contact the Course of Study School staff at COSS@smu.edu with the subject line: Locker Access. The Course of Study School staff will then reply with specific instructions on how to access your Locker(s) and how to upload your assignments.

The completed pre-class work for courses 211-514 must be submitted to the Locker System **no later than May 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:59:59 p.m.** Pre-class work submitted to the Locker System after May 15 will incur grading penalties as mentioned above on the grading guidelines. The same deadline restrictions apply whether you are submitting pre-class assignments electronically or via postal service.

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**Students should keep a printed copy of each assignment and bring a copy of each assignment to class regardless of how the assignment was submitted.**

In addition, students should include a one-page autobiography for each instructor.

Each assignment should be typed, double-spaced, or legibly handwritten, with pagination numbers, and be accompanied by a completed cover sheet. A copy of the cover sheet can be found in the Course of Study School Catalogue and can be photocopied, it will also appear as a preloaded file when you access your locker.

Guidelines for writing pre-class assignments and information on academic dishonesty are provided in the Course of Study School catalog, available on the website. Students are expected to understand what constitutes plagiarism. Students who are found to plagiarize are subject to grading penalties, which may include dismissal from the school.

**EVALUATION:**

<b>1) Assignment A</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>2) Assignment B</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>3) Assignment C</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>4) Assignment D</b>	<b><u>30%</u></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade Range:** Work for this class will be evaluated according to the following scale:

<i>A = 95-100 Unusually high quality, exceptional work</i>	<i>D+ = 67-69 Minimal work</i>
<i>A- = 90-94 Far above average, fine work</i>	<i>D = 63-66 Barely acceptable</i>
<i>B+ = 87-89 Above average for graduate work</i>	<i>D- = 60-62 Acceptable</i>
<i>B = 83-86 Very good, average for graduate work</i>	<i>F = 59 or below: Failure.</i>
<i>B- = 80-82 Slightly below average for graduate work</i>	
<i>C+ = 77-79 Meets requirements, but noticeable inadequacies for graduate work</i>	
<i>C = 73-76 Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work</i>	
<i>C- = 70-72 Meets requirements, but serious gaps</i>	

**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1: Foundations for Christian Ethics**

**Session 1 Monday - Student Introductions. Sociocultural Context and Initial Concepts**

**Readings:**

Hollinger, pages 9 – 126

Wogaman, pages 1 - 22

**Session 2 Tuesday** - Making Moral Decisions: Scripture

**Readings:**

Hollinger, pages 127 - 188

Miles, pages 1-59

**Session 3 Wednesday** - Christ and Culture: The Historic Tradition

**Readings:**

Hollinger, pages 189-215

Wogaman, pages 23 – 190

Lovin, 1 - 100

**Session 4 Thursday** - *Christ and Culture: Justice, Pluralism, and Public Engagement*

**Readings:**

Hollinger, pages 216-272

Lovin, 101 – 132

Wogaman, 191 - 284

**Session 5 Friday** - Distinctive of a Wesleyan Moral Vision

**Readings:**

On the Internet:

Wesley, Sermon CXX: Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity

Sermon XCII: The Danger of Riches

Thoughts Upon Slavery

Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/>

[http://wesley.nnu.edu/john\\_wesley/sermons/](http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/)

**Week 2: The Church as a Moral Community and the Pastor as the Moral Guide**

**Session 6 Saturday** - The Church as a Moral Community: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity (Multicultural)

**Readings:**

Miles, 60 – 102

Adeney, entire text

**Session 7 Monday** - The Church as a Moral Community: Friendship, Sexuality, and Homosexuality

**Readings:**

Miles, 103-126

**Session 8 Tuesday** - The Church as a Moral Community: Marriage, Family and Aging

**Readings:**

Miles, 76-102

**Session 9 Wednesday** - The Church as a Moral Community: Work, Environment, and Worship

**Readings:**

Miles, 60-75

**Session 10 Thursday** - Class Presentations