

PERKINS COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL 2020
424 Ethics

Instructor: TBA

Course Description

This course introduces the study of biblical Christian ethics, and contemporary moral theory.

Course Objectives

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

- Write and recite aloud from memory Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 22:34-40, and Luke 4:14-19.
- Articulate a biblical and theological basis for Christian ethics.
- Distinguish 3 main types of thinking in moral theory: areteology, deontology, teleology.
- Demonstrate familiarity with annotated readings in philosophical and Christian ethics.

Course Objectives from General Board of Higher Education and Ministry:

- Articulate a biblical and theological basis for ethical thinking and moral behavior and distinguish major approaches to ethical reasoning.
- Comprehend the relationship between their personal stories, pastoral vocation, local contexts, and responsibility as moral leaders.
- Develop a Christian framework for moral reason and action and apply it to the use of power and the setting of boundaries in ministry.
- Demonstrate familiarity with and make use of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church as a resource for ethical reflection and action.

Required Texts:

- Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 22:34-40
- Luke 4:14-19
- *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2011) by Robin W. Lovin.
- *Ethics for Dummies* (Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing, 2010) by Christopher Panza and Adam Pothast.
- *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2016* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2016) by the United Methodist Church.

Pre-class Assignments:

- memorize Matthew 5:43-48 and Matthew 22:34-40
- study *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (2011) by Robin W. Lovin
- Write no more than two typed pages that explain the connections between (a) the subtitle of Lovin's book and (b) "Three Ways of Moral Reasoning" (see shaded box on page 74).

Recommended readings:

Allen, Joseph L. 1991. *War: A Primer for Christians*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Curran, Charles E. 1993. *The Church and Morality: An Ecumenical and Catholic Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Hauerwas, Stanley. 1983. *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Kant, Immanuel. 1784. "What is Enlightenment?"

Kant, Immanuel. 1785. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (perhaps: Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976, translated and introduced by Lewis White Beck).

King, Jr., Martin Luther. 1967. *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Boston: Beacon Press.

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

Macintyre, Alasdair. 1981. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Mill, John Stewart. 1861. *Utilitarianism* (perhaps: New York: Macmillan, 1986, edited by Oskar Piest, ISBN: 0-02-395670-4).

Niebuhr, Reinhold. 1932. *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*

Matthew 5:43-48 (NRSV) [Luke 6:27-28, 32-36]

43. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45. so that you may be children of your Father in heaven;

for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,
and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

46. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47. And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others?

Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV) [Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-28]

34. When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together,
35. and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.
36. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"
37. He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
38. This is the greatest and first commandment.
39. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Luke 4:14-19 (NRSV) [Mark 1:14-15; 6:1-6; Matthew 4:12-17; 13:53-58]

14. Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.
 15. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.
 16. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read,
 17. and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:
 18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,
 19. to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
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Evaluation:

- Pre-class assignment (memorization, study, 2-page explanation) = 20%
- In-class work (study, memorization, and discussion) = 50%
- Online work on annotated bibliography = 20%
- Online work on audio recording and commentary = 10%

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

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| <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> | |