



**ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**  
**Division of Theological and Historical Studies**

**Red Carpet Week: May 22-26, 2017**

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### **Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

### **Core Value Focus**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2016-17 year is *Characteristic Excellence*: “*What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

### **Curriculum Competencies**

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competency addressed in this course is: *Spiritual and Character Formation*.

### **Course Description**

In this introduction to the study and practice of Christian ethics, the student will examine philosophical and theological backgrounds for ethics, the role of biblical authority, and the historical relation between church and culture in order to develop a valid method of moral decision making, examine the importance of ministerial ethics, evaluate ethical issues, and lead the church in applying the gospel to life.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

In order to provide moral leadership by modeling Christian character and communicating ethical truth, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. **Understand** the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic.
2. Be able to **apply** a Christian ethic to contemporary issues.
3. Be able to **communicate** Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly.

### **Embedded Assignment**

This assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the degree objectives and will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. **The embedded assignment will be question one of the final exam.** The assignment follows:

Write a letter to a young believer (spiritual age, not necessarily physical age) who is struggling with how to relate to a friend who practices homosexuality or has strong same sex attractions. The friend makes statements like, “I believe Jesus is real and he died for me and all that, but I don’t understand how he could make it a sin for me to be a homosexual when I honestly can’t help it.”

For this assignment, use the following instructions:

- Single-space type your letter.
- Do not type more than 2 single-spaced pages.
- In your response, draw from the facts, concepts, judgments, and so forth that you have been learning in your readings and class notes in regard to the issue of homosexuality. Use some of the terminology from your studies.
- Incorporate Scripture into your response, utilizing good hermeneutical principles.
- Remember the tools you have been learning and use them when and where appropriate, for example, you might utilize the 4 terms that define an ethical act, Dr. Riley’s paradigm, worldview influences, levels of ethical engagement in Scripture, and so forth. Now is the time to apply what you have been learning
- Be alert to your tone. Be redemptive, while clearly communicating biblical moral truth.
- Some of you personally know people who practice homosexual behavior. You might keep them in mind while crafting your letter.
- This is your letter, so you have liberty in what you say and how you say it. You will not be able to say everything, so be fluid and succinct in what you do say while demonstrating to me that you can communicate moral truth affectively and clearly.

### Embedded Assignment Rubric

The rubric for grading the embedded assignment is below. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.

DOMAIN	LEVEL	INADEQUATE (0 PTS)	BASIC (1 PT)	COMPETENT (2 PTS)	GOOD (3 PTS)	EXCELLENT (4 PTS)
UNDERSTANDING	Able to <b>Understand</b> the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic					
APPLICATION	Able to <b>apply</b> a Christian ethic to contemporary issues					
COMMUNICATION	Able to <b>communicate</b> Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly					

### Primary Textbooks

Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2nd ed. Updated and Expanded. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Wright, N. T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.

### Review Textbooks

Beckwith, Francis J., and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Mitchell, C. Ben. *Ethics and Moral Reasoning: A Student's Guide*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.

Rae, Scott B. *Doing the Right Thing: Making Moral Choices in a World Full of Options*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert—Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*. Pittsburg: Crown and Covenant, 2015.

Walker, Andrew T., and Eric Teetel. *Marriage Is: How Marriage Transforms Society and Cultivates Human Flourishing*. Nashville: B&H, 2015.

Charles, J. Daryl. *Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperOne, 1980; **and** *Abolition of Man*. New York: HarperOne, 1974.

- In *Mere Christianity*, read only books 1, 2, and 3
- Read all of *Abolition of Man*

### Course Requirements

#### Reading Report (10% of final grade)

On the first day of class (**May 22, 2017**), you will submit a reading report consisting of summaries for each chapter of Hollinger's *Choosing the Good*. Each chapter summary will be 200-300 words long and will include:

- the main idea(s) the author is bringing out
- AND either one question you may raise, or your response to the author's position.

You should be prepared to answer questions about your reading report. You will also submit the

reading report on Blackboard by May 26, 2017.

### **Book Reviews (20% of final grade)**

From the above list under the general heading **Review Textbooks**, each student will write a review on **two books** (consider the C.S. Lewis assignment to be one review).

Book reviews will be submitted via SafeAssignment on Blackboard:

Book review 1 by **11:59pm CST on June 5, 2017**

Book review 2 by **11:59pm CST on June 19, 2017.**

Each review should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
2. The review should be **2400-3600 words long, double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. The word count does not include footnotes.** Content should include the following:
  - A brief statement introducing the author and title of the book and communicating that the book has been read in its entirety. If the book has not been completely read, then communicate the truth and state the estimated percentage read. If a percentage is not communicated, 10 points will be counted off the student's grade.
  - The primary thesis, purpose, and/or description of the book
  - Major ethical insights communicated by the book. What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?
  - Ideas that changed or challenged your thinking. How and Why? What ideas are interesting, novel, or problematic?
  - As the conclusion, state major strengths and weaknesses of the book; give a brief statement of recommendation and state why you would or would not recommend the book.

### **Points to Remember:**

- Do not simply summarize the content of the book
- Interact with the content of the book with the above guidelines. Use bullet points in (2) above to formulate subheadings.
- Be a discerning reader. You may not agree with everything that you read; however, be fair to the author when critical. Criticism should be substantial and not merely affective. Be willing to read with appropriate humility so that you will learn something even if you do not agree with the author(s).

### **Ethics Position Paper (20% of final grade)**

Each student will choose a current ethical issue on which to write a position paper. The position paper will follow examples of topical papers prepared by the ERLC on the

website, **erlc.com**. See, for example, the paper by Sarah Jane Head on *Abortion* (<http://mail.erlc.com/article/abortion>). Students are encouraged to examine other ERLC papers (see <http://erlc.com/resource-library/topic-index>).

**Position papers will be submitted via SafeAssignment on Blackboard by 11:59pm CST on June 26, 2017.**

Specific guidelines include the following:

1. The position paper should be should be **2400-3600 words long, double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. The word count does not include footnotes.**
2. The following are recommended subheading, to be used if appropriate (see [erlc.com](http://erlc.com) for alternative headings).
  - a. History of the issue
  - b. Technical background (if necessary, particularly for bioethical issues)
  - c. State of the issue today (include a clear statement describing why this is a moral issue and/or what ethical motives, means, and ends are involved)
  - d. Description of and response to opposing views
  - e. Biblical responses to the issue
3. The above subheadings, again, are recommended, but the chosen issue might beg for alternative headings.
4. Use appropriately what you have learned during the semester for evaluating moral issues.
5. Do not cut and paste your paper from the ERLC or any other source. The student may cut and paste blocked quotes, but quoted material should not be overused and should be appropriately cited. **Plagiarism will** lead to failure for the assignment and disciplinary action by the seminary. If you have questions about plagiarism, consult the seminary policy described in the **Student Handbook**.
6. Use **footnotes** to cite your sources. Books and Journals/articles/ websources are expected. Again, make appropriate citations using **Turabian**.

#### **Class Tests (20% of Final Grade)**

Four class tests will be conducted during the class sessions during the Red Carpet Week. Each test will be worth 5% of your final grade.

#### **Final Exam (30% of Final Grade)**

The final exam will be aimed at testing each student's ability to apply the concepts learned throughout the semester. It will be application oriented; students should be able to provide solutions to the given case studies and justify the solutions from the principles learned. An embedded assignment will be used to assess how well students are meeting the standards set by the degree objectives and will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. **The embedded assignment will be included in the final exam.**

### Submission of Assignments

- A. The **Book Reviews** and **Ethics Position Paper** should be posted in **SafeAssignment** on Blackboard. Follow the appropriate links from Blackboard.
- B. The final examination will be available on the due date and should be completed within the timeframe given.
- C. Please do not send your assignments to me as email attachments unless you have received permission to do so.

### Penalties

**Book Review** and **Ethics Position Paper**: A late paper will be assessed an initial 10 point penalty. For each calendar day after the due date an additional 2 point penalty will be assessed.

### Plagiarism

New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains high academic standards and is not tolerant of plagiarism. If you copy another author's work and present it as your own, you will be caught, and the penalty will be failure on that assignment and could mean failure for the course or expulsion from the Seminary. In order to help you avoid plagiarism, written assignments will be checked with *SafeAssign*. This will compare your paper with a database of other papers so that you may see how much of your paper comes from other sources. All cases of plagiarism will be reported.

### Grade Distribution by Assignment and Due Dates

Reading Report	10%	May 22
Class Tests	20%	May 22-26
Book Review 1	10%	June 5
Book Review 2	10%	June 19
Ethics Position Paper	10%	June 26
Final Exam	40%	June 30

### Course Evaluation

*Grades* will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below. Borderline grades will normally be determined by the numerical grade received (I round up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade

### Miscellaneous Course Policies

*Participation in Class* with preparation and attentiveness are crucial not only to your own success in the class, but to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution to make to the class. The use of laptop computers for note taking is acceptable, but playing computer games or doing work not associated with the class is not appreciated and is strictly prohibited. We will be dealing with some complex issues, and we need your undivided attention.

Be considerate of other students during discussions and give opportunity for others to participate.

*Appropriate Conduct in Class* is especially important so that all students can have a chance to hear and participate meaningfully in class discussions. Holding private conversations in class or other rude behavior is not appreciated. In an ethics class in which moral issues arise about which some of us will disagree, it is essential to treat each other with Christian charity and kindness. Rude behavior disrespectful of the instructor or other students will not be tolerated in class.

*Cell Phone and Computer Usage*: Students may use a computer in class, but must find a way to sit towards the front of the class. Students using computers may not sit in the back of the room or sit with a wall to their backs. The official seminary policy as written in the Student Handbook is as follows: The student is to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This includes the usage of cell phones and computers during class time. The opportunity for students to use these items within the classroom is contingent upon their proper usage. Students are also reminded that phones are to be silenced during the class and other Seminary functions. Proper usage includes note taking and tasks specifically assigned by the professor. Improper utilization includes all other usages such as surfing the Internet, playing games, texting, and emailing. If a student is engaged in improper usage of a cell phone or computer during a class, the professor has the right to prohibit the student from bringing the item to subsequent class meetings.

### **Technical Assistance**

You will be automatically enrolled into Blackboard. If you face any difficulties, you may request technical assistance from ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System [NOBTS.Blackboard.com](http://NOBTS.Blackboard.com).
3. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/) - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

### **Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”**

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

### **Selected Bibliography**

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- Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. Dallas: Spence, 2004.
- Campbell, Ken M. *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Caner, Ergun Mehmet, and Emir Fethi Caner. *Christian Jihad: Two Former Muslims Look at the Crusades and Killing in the Name of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004.
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