



ETHC6302 MINISTERIAL ETHICS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2021; Tuesday, 6:00-8:50pm

JEFFREY RILEY
Professor of Ethics
Assoc. Dean of Research Doctoral Programs
 jriley@nobts.edu

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course is a study of the personal and professional ethics required of church ministers, religious counselors, and other “ministerial professionals,” as well as the ethical decisions unique to these roles. Particular emphasis is given to the minister’s professional code of ethics, structure of practice, and personal character.

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. **Identify** and **understand** the key ethical issues confronting ministers and ministries.
2. Be able to **apply** biblical and ethical truth to the practice of ministry and to the character and moral development of ministers.
3. Be able to **communicate** Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly.

Primary Textbooks

Bush, Joseph E., Jr. *Gentle Shepherding: Pastoral Ethics and Leadership*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2008.

Trull, Joe E., and R. Robert Creech. *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for 21st-Century Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Swetland, Kenneth L. *The Hidden World of the Pastor: Case Studies on Personal Issues of Real Pastors*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007.

Wheeler, Sondra. *The Minister as Moral Theologian: Ethical Dimensions of Pastoral Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Course Teaching Methodology

The Ministerial Ethics course will utilize lecture, class presentations and discussions, exams, reading assignments/discussion, case studies, and the development of a personal code of ministerial ethics to reach the goals of the class.

Course Requirements

Précis on Bush, Gentle Shepherding (25% of Grade; DUE: February 23, 2021)

Students will read Bush, *Gentle Shepherding*, and write a précis (a refined critical and analytical outline) and be ready to discuss the book in class. This is not a mere summary or book report, but a serious engagement with the arguments made by the author. Think of it like a carefully pruned set of notes that displays the content, the argument the author is trying to make, and a critical evaluation. You're trying to highlight the author's main thesis/point and how the author supports it (try not to quote the reading too much; use your own words). Précis should be formatted as a heavily annotated outline. Attend to the biblical and ethical contours of the content/argument. Précis call for a close reading a text and are designed to improve your attentiveness and your capacity to read.

Length: Students should write approximately 1 single-spaced page per chapter (approximately 8 total). Use Times-New Roman 12 font. Not title page is necessary. Put the bibliographic information and your name at the top of the first page

Please keep the following reading instructions in mind when preparing your précis:

- Argument (per chapter):
 - What is the chief claim being made about ministry and ethics and how is it constructed and supported?
 - What are the main questions which the author's arguments are intended as answers?
 - What objections could be raised against the author and how might the author respond?
- Interpretation (per chapter):
 - Identify areas of the argument that are ambiguous or difficult; what are the most charitable and just ways of understanding these portions? In other words, does Bush make his case? Could he make it better?
 - Identify any the larger context(s) for the argument (theological, biblical, cultural); how do these bear upon its intelligibility?
- Claims (per chapter):
 - Where does the argument succeed and where does it fail?
 - What are some unexplored/unarticulated consequences of the argument?
- Assessment (per chapter):
 - What are the ministerial implications of the argument?
 - What are the ethical implications of the argument?

Personal Code of Ministerial Ethics (20% of Final Grade; Due: March 23, 2021)

Each student will demonstrate an understanding and application of ministerial ethics by writing a personal code of ministerial ethics. The code will take the following form (examples will be examined in class):

- The code will take the form of an annotated outline.
- Various mayor areas of concern or responsibility should provide the general or first level outline. Within the major areas of concern, each student will address issues of particular conduct, practice, responsibilities, temptations, and so forth.
- Brief descriptive statements about conduct, practice, and so forth will be followed by brief explanations of rationality and implementation.
- The code will be typed, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12 and **will be no longer than 3 pages.**

Case Study Presentations (15% of Grade; DUE: on Presentation Days)

Students will lead discussions on assigned cases studies from the Swetland textbook. Students should prepare discussion notes that include the ethical resource used to respond to the case study situations:

- How do you process the situation?
- What resources help you to respond appropriately (biblical and ethical)?
- What decision would you make?
- Questions to generate discussion from class members

Reading Report (10% of Grade; DUE: May 4, 2021)

The Trull-Creech and Wheeler texts should be read on time, according to the course schedule. For each chapter, students will type a one-paragraph directed summary (see below). At the end of the course, each student will submit a reading report according to the following guidelines:

- Record your name, the name of the books, and the percentage read of each book.
- Under each book, by chapter, attach your directed summaries (you should have a paragraph for every chapter:
 - What was the main thesis of the chapter
 - Describe one aspect of the chapter that you found
 - If you did not read a chapter, list the chapter and leave blank the space designated for the summary

Final Exam Essay (30% of Final Grade: Due: May 4, 2021)

A letter/essay will be written in lieu of an exam. Using the following guidelines, the letter/essay will test the student's understanding of and ability to integrate and apply the concepts examined during the course. The essay will be 5-7 single-spaced typed pages in Times-New Roman 12. On common issues of form and style the student will follow the latest edition of Turabian.

You are a mentor to a person following a ministerial call similar to yours (If possible, think of someone you really know and, perhaps, mentor). Communicate the following to that person in the form of a letter:

- i. The nature of the call to ministry
- ii. The importance of a Christian morality for living and working as one who is called to ministry
- iii. Ethical characteristics that are not only essential for a Christian morality but also ought to be modeled particularly by those in ministry. Consider not only the specific ethical characteristics and actions but also why it is important that ministers model these characteristics and actions.
- iv. Dangers to avoid that one in ministry can expect and for which one ought to prepare. Give counsel on how to prepare for these dangers/temptations.
- v. End with a reminder that the call to ministry is a privilege. Encourage the person to be faithful.

Hints: Refer appropriately to Scripture. You would be wise to use your personal code of ministerial ethics as a source of content.

Evaluation of Grade

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.

<input type="checkbox"/> Précis on Text (Gentle Shepherding)	25%
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Code of Ministerial Ethics	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Study Presentations	15%
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Report	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Exam Essay	30%

Technical Assistance

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. 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.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Writing Style Guide

Writing assignments should follow the **NOBTS/Leavell College Manual of Form and Style** (*revised August 2019*). To access this manual on the seminary website, please use the following link: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>.

2021 SPRING Ministerial Ethics Schedule: Tuesdays, 6:00-8:50pm.

Date	Topics for Class	Assignments
1-19	Introductions Syllabus Issues Setting Ministerial Ethics in context—Christian and Biblical	Texts: TC: Trull and Creech B: Bush S: Swetland W: Wheeler
1-26	Issues concerning the Nature of Ministry Why a distinctive concentration? Profession or Vocation? Group work – Scripture and Basic Ministerial Character & Conduct	Note: Text assignments listed by chapters TC: 1-2 W: 1
2-2	Integrity in personal life and ministry Church Discipline and Restoration	TC: 3-4 W: 4
2-9	Ethics in Preaching, Teaching, and Evangelism	TC: 6 W: 2-3
2-16	Issues of sexual impropriety in the ministry: Protecting the Integrity of the minister and protecting the church/ministry	TC: 7; appendix A W: 4
2-23	Student led discussion on <i>Gentle Shepherding</i>	Bush Précis Due
3-2	Personal Code of Ministerial Ethics	TC: 8; related appendices W: 5
3-9	Issues of Ordination and Ministry: Men, Women and God	TC: 6
3-16	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
3-23	Discuss codes of ethics	DUE: Personal Code of Ministerial Ethics
3-30	Case Studies in Ethics Open Topic	S: Introduction, Appendix
4-6	Case Study presentations/discussions	S: Case studies TBA
4-13	Case Study presentations/discussions	S: Case studies TBA
4-20	Case Study presentations/discussions	S: Case studies TBA
4-27	Open Topic	
5-4	Discussion based on final exam	DUE: Final Exam Essay DUE: Reading Report
5-11	The slot for a final is the normal day/time of the class. We don't have an in class exam but may meet to finish the course	

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Austin, Micheal W., and R. Douglas Geivett, eds. *Being Good: Christian Virtues for Everyday Life*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012.

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