



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Fall 2017—Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:00-3:20 p.m.

JEFFREY RILEY

Professor of Ethics

Office: Dodd 107

Phone: 504.816.8017

jriley@nobts.edu

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 2017-18 year is ***Servant Leadership***: “*We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us.*”

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 is 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 Understand the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic					
APPLICATION	Able to apply a Christian ethic to contemporary issues					
COMMUNICATION	Able to communicate Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly					

Primary Textbooks

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

Moore, Russell. *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville: B&H, 2015.

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

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

The Bible (preferably a contemporary translation— NASB, ESV, HCSB, NKJV, or NIV)

Review Textbooks

One of the following books must be chosen for review. A limited number of reviews per book will be allowed on a first come first serve basis, depending on the size of the class.

- Amstutz, Mark R. *Just Immigration: American Policy in Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.
- Bellinger, Charles K. *Jesus v. Abortion: They Know Not What They Do*. Theopolitical Visions, 19. Cascade Books, 2016.
- Bell, Daniel M., Jr. *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather than the State*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009.
- Fortson, S. Donald III, and Rollin G. Grams. *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016.
- Hill, Alexander. *Just Business: Christian Ethics for the Marketplace*. Revised Edition. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008.
- Jones, Kevin, and Jarvis J. Williams. *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017.
- Mitchell, C. Ben, and D. Joy Riley. *Christian Bioethics: A Guide for Pastors, Health Care Professionals, and Families*. B&H Studies in Christian Ethics, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014.
- Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will utilize lecture, class discussions, exams, reading assignments, written assignments, cooperative group work, and audio visual resources to reach the goals of the class.

Course Requirements

Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam. For the exams, guidance will be given in advance concerning the material to be covered and the direction of the questions asked.

The **Mid-Term Exam** (25% each of final grade) will test *mastery of content* (significant thinkers and their contributions, summaries of models presented in class, philosophical vocabulary, etc.).

The **Final Exam (30% of final grade)** will test *critical thinking skills* (the ability to articulate and defend a position) and *comprehensive knowledge*; that is, the student should demonstrate a proper mastery and application of Christian and biblical ethics as presented during the course. As such, the final will take one or more of the following forms: **essay in response to a general ethical issue; responses to particular ethical case studies; technical ethics position paper.**

The final, which includes the **Embedded Assignment** (see above), will be **distributed** prior to and **submitted** on the last day of class prior to finals week.

Wright and Moore Book Reports (5% each of final grade)

Each Student will read N.T. Wright, *After You Believe* and Russell Moore, *Onward*, and submit the following:

- On a single page, single-spaced, and in Times-New Roman font, type your name and the following: *By the due date, I read ___% of Wright, After You Believe (Moore, Onward).*
- For the remainder of the page, write a reflection on the book. Address the following:
 - How does Wright (Moore) help me understand the nature of Christian ethics?
 - According to Wright (Moore) how do rules and character relate?
 - Elaborate one issue in the text that you find most helpful
 - Any concerns with the text.
 - To whom would you recommend the text?
- You may use first-person, limited and in appropriate style.
- **Students who do not use the above format will be penalized 10 points.**

Book Review and Report, (25% of final grade)

From the above list under the general heading **Review Textbooks**, each student will sign up to write a review on **one book**. Students who sign up for a particular book should be prepared to field questions and discuss the book in class on or after the book review is due. This 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 critique should be **5-7 single spaced typed pages**.
3. Content should include:
 - 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
 - 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?
 - Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic
 - Insights in this book that practically relate to life and ministry, the life of the church, and to moral life in America
 - Major strengths and weaknesses of the book
 - In the conclusion, a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book.

Daily Reading for Class (10% of Final Grade)

At the end of the semester, each student will submit to Dr. Riley an estimated percentage of the total daily reading completed **on time** and an estimated percentage of the **total reading completed** during the semester. The student is responsible for keeping up with both the reading assigned in the syllabus and the amount read on time. The two percentages submitted are on the student's honor and will be combined for a daily reading grade.

Note: Dr. Riley reserves the right to give pop quizzes, which will count towards the daily reading grade.

Extra Credit, (Up to 3 points added to final average grade)

Students may earn extra credit (points added to the final average) by attending the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint lecture and submitting reports. The lecture is November 10-11, 2017, "The Meaning of the Atonement" featuring N. T. Wright and Simon Gathercole, with additional invited speakers. The Greer-Heard Forum is **FREE for NOBTS students, faculty, staff, and their spouses**.

The event will be held on the NOBTS campus in the Leavell Chapel. If a student is unable to attend the Greer-Heard forum in person the assignment may be completed from CDs or MP3s of the event. For more on the Greer-Heard Forum, see greerheard.com.

To get extra credit, you must do the following:

- 1 point added to final grade: Register at greerheard.com, attend or listen to the event for both days, and submit a brief statement of attendance (or listening), including one item you learned from each speaker (6 total speakers)—no more than a page total, single-spaced.
- 2-3 points added to final grade: Register, submit a statement of attendance, write a 2 to 3 page, single-spaced critical description of the event, highlighting important content from each speaker (6 total speakers). Finally, write a statement describing how the doctrine of atonement relates to Christian ethics.

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. 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. In special cases, extra credit can be arranged with Dr. Riley.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Wright Book Report	5%	Due:	Sept. 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moore Book Report	5%	Due:	Oct. 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mid-Term Exam	25%	Due:	Oct. 26
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book Review/Report	25%	Due:	Nov. 28
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Exam	30%	Due:	Dec. 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading Report	10%	Due:	Dec. 12

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

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.

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. Use of laptop computers for note taking is fine, 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.

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.

Absences may not exceed nine hours for a three credit hour class if the student is to receive credit for the course, according to the NOBTS catalog. A student’s grade may be penalized for excessive absences. Three times tardy or leaving early equals one absence.

Late Work will be immediately penalized **10 points**, followed by an additional 10 points per week, unless **prior permission** is sought and a **legitimate reason** warrants lateness.

Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.

Cell Phone and Computer Usage: 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.

Select Bibliography

- Atkinson, David J., David F. Field, Arthur Holmes, and Oliver O'Donovan, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics & Pastoral Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Budziszewski, J. *Evangelicals in the Public Square: Four Formative Voices on Political Thought and Action*. Introduction by Michael Cromartie. Afterword by Jean Bethke Elshtain. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- _____. *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.
- Charles, J. Daryl. *The Unformed Conscience of Evangelicalism: Recovering the Church's Moral Vision*. InterVarsity, 2002.
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- Cunningham, David S. *Christian Ethics: The End of the Law*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics*, 3rd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004.
- Evans, Debra. *Without Moral Limits: Women, Reproduction, and Medical Technology*. Updated Edition. Wheaton: Crossway, 2000.
- Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2nd ed. Updated and Expanded. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
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- Grenz, Stanley J. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* Wheaton: Crossway, 2006.
- Gushee, David P., and Robert H. Long. *A Bolder Pulpit: Reclaiming the Moral Dimension of Preaching*. Valley Forge: Judson, 1998.
- Henry, Carl F. H. *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947 (2003).
- Hoffmeier, James K. *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2009.
- Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- Jones, David Clyde. *Biblical Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.
- Jones, Stanton L., and Mark A. Yarhouse. *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Kuehne, Dale S. *Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship beyond an Age of Individualism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.
- Meilaender, Gilbert C. *Faith & Faithfulness: Basic Themes in Christian Ethics*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- O'Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- _____. *The Ways of Judgment*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
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- Smith, C. Fred. *Developing a Christian Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015.
- Stanton, Glenn T., and Bill Maier. *Marriage on Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage and Parenting*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Stapleford, John E. *Bulls, Bears, and Golden Calves: Applying Christian Ethics in Economics*, 2d ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.

Stark, Rodney. *God's Battalion: The Case for the Crusades*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Stott, John, with John Wyatt. *Issues Facing Christians Today*. 4th ed. Revised and Updated by Roy McCloughry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Vandrunen, David. *Bioethics and the Christian Life: A Guide to Making Difficult Decisions*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2009.

White, James Emery. *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

Wilkins, Steve. *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right & Wrong*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS
 FALL 2017
 Tuesday/Thursdays—2:00-3:20 p.m.
CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

Date	Class Discussion Topic	Reading Assignment
8-22	Introduction to the Class: Syllabus Review	(Assignments are due on the adjacent date)
8-24	Getting Started: What is Ethics	
8-24 - 8-26	ERLC Research Institute (Nashville, TN) <i>*live streaming of event will be available</i>	
8-29	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 1 Feinberg: Chapter 1
8-31	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making	
9- 5	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 4 <u>Rae</u> : pp.47-58; (last part of ch. 2, divine command and natural law)
9-7	Fundamental Concepts in Ethics and Decision Making	
9-12	Wright Discussion Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	Wright Book Report Due
9-14	Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	
9-19	Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 3
9-21	Ethical Systems and Moral Reasoning	
9-26	The Bible in Ethics	<u>Rae</u> : pp. 24-47 (first part of ch. 2, Christian ethics)
9-28	Dr. Riley at AACC: Class will not meet	Study Day
10-3	The Bible in Ethics	
10-5	The Bible in Ethics	

10-10	The Bible in Ethics	
10-12	The Bible in Ethics	Moore Book Report Due
10-17	FALL BREAK	
10-19		
10-24	Church and State	<u>Feinberg</u> Chapter 14 (The Christian and War) <u>Feinberg</u> Chapter 15 (The Christian and the Secular State) <u>Rae</u> : Chapter 11 (Morality of War)
10-26	MID-TERM EXAM	
10-31	Open topic	
11-2	Issues of Human Sexuality (Marriage)	
11-7	Issues of Human Sexuality (Divorce)	<u>Rae</u> : pp. 270-78 (Sexual Ethics) <u>Feinberg</u> Chapter 13 (Divorce and Remarriage)
11-9	Issues of Human Sexuality (Sexual Ethics)	
11-10 & 11-11	GREER-HEARD (Extra Credit option)	
11-14	Issues of Human Sexuality (Sexual Ethics)	<u>Feinberg</u> Chapters 7-8 (Homosexuality)
11-16	ETS Annual Meeting: Class will not meet	Study Day to Prepare for Review Presentations or Read Text Chapters
11/20- 11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	

11-28	Student Led Discussion of Books Reviewed and Ethical Topics of the Books (treated in order listed in syllabus)	All Major Book Reviews Due Open Final Exam <u>Feinberg</u> Chapters 2-3 (Abortion and Embryonic Stem Cell Research)
11-30	Student Led Discussion of Books Reviewed and Ethical Topics of the Books, Continued	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 9 (Capital Punishment) <u>Rae</u> : Chapter 12 (Ethics and Economics)
12-5	Student Led Discussion of Books Reviewed and Ethical Topics of the Books, Continued	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 6 (Reproductive Technologies) <u>Feinberg</u> Chapters 11-12 (Biotechnology, Genetics, and Human Cloning)
12-7	Open Issue Discussion FINAL EXAM DUE DAILY READING FOR CLASS DUE—Attach to Final Exam	<u>Rae</u> : Chapter 8 (Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia)
12-12		
12-14	Reserved Final Exam Time	2:00-4:00 pm