

ETHC6303 CURRENT ETHICAL ISSUES
NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES
FALL 2021 • W 8:00-10:50 A.M.



ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

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*"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them,
because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."*
1 Timothy 4:16

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

The development of a Christian response to contemporary ethical issues is the aim of this study, focusing upon moral questions in personal ethics, sexuality and marriage, biomedical ethics, gender and ethnic relationships, economic concerns, political issues, and the development of a strategy for social action and ministry. Prerequisite: ETHC5300 Ethics or ETHC6301 Biblical Ethics.

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.

Required Textbooks

Students should buy or borrow all of the required textbooks (They will make a good addition to your ethics library). We will not read all of every book, except Allberry, but will read assigned chapters from each.

- Allberry, Sam. *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?* Charlotte: The Good Book Company, 2020.
- Glahn, Sandra L, and C Gary Barnes, eds. *Sanctified Sexuality: Valuing Sex in an Oversexed World.* Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020.
- Pearcey, Nancy R. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality.* Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2018.
- Williams, Thaddeus J. *Confronting Injustice without Compromising the Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice.* Foreword by John M. Perkins. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

Book Review Options

Students must sign up to read **one of the following books**, prepare an annotated research outline, and lead in-class discussion on the issues covered in the book:

- Allen, Scott David. *Why Social Justice Is Not Biblical Justice: An Urgent Appeal to Fellow Christians in a Time of Social Crisis*. Grand Rapids: Credo House, 2020.
- Anderson, Ryan T. *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement*. New York: Encounter Books, 2018.
- Baucham, Voddie T., Jr. *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe*. Washington, D. C.: Salem Books, 2021.
- Loritts, Bryan. *Insider Outsider: My Journey as a Stranger in White Evangelicalism and My Hope for Us All*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- Snead, O Carter. *What It Means to Be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020.
- Sprinkle, Randy. *Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church, & What the Bible Has to Say*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2021.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *For the Body: Recovering a Theology of Gender, Sexuality, and the Human Body*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2020.
- West, Christopher. *Our Bodies Tell God's Story: Discovering the Divine Plan for Love, Sex, and Gender*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020.
- Walker, Andrew T. *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say About Gender Identity?* Charlotte: The Good Book Company, 2017.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies: lectures from the professor, extensive reading and professor and student led discussion about issues raised in the readings, research on ethical issues and student teaching that presents research findings.

Course Requirements

1. Required Reading, Attendance, Participation, and Hard Work (10% of grade):

Students are expected to read all required materials prior to class attendance and participate in classroom discussion. The professor reserves the right to give a "pop" quiz to keep accountability. *Students will submit a reading report at the end of the semester.*

2. Chapter Engagement Outlines and Discussions (%)

Students must read ALL assigned chapters in the textbooks (see schedule below) and prepare a **Chapter Engagement Outline**, which are due in Blackboard on the dates listed in the class schedule. Chapter outlines should be no more than one page (instructions will be given for larger reading assignments) and contain the following:

- Summarize the thesis or purpose of the chapter (why is it written?).
- Summarize the main points or arguments made by the author of the chapter.
- Does the author make his or her point? Why or Why not (note biases, evidence, and so forth)?
- List and define important terms
- Question(s) raised.

3. Book Review and Discussion (15% of final grade):

Each student will read and review one book listed under **Book Review Options**. Students should be prepared to discuss the book on the day the reviews are due.

All book reviews should follow the guidelines described below under the section, **Guidelines for Book Reviews**:

4. Annotated Research Outline and Teaching Presentation on Ethical Issues:

Each student will write a 4-6-page single-spaced **Annotated Research Outline** to use for teaching on a current Ethical Issues. Students may choose any current ethical issue, approved by Dr. Riley, on which to research, write, and present to the class. Plan presentations for 30 or so minutes, followed by Q&A for 20 or so minutes. Quality Power Point or other teaching aids will enhance a grade. In general, the outline and presentation should include the following:

- Ethical description of the issue
- What is the cultural and moral background that makes this an ethical issue that is currently important for the church to address?
- What is the best ethical strategy to use to address the issue?
- To what authorities do you appeal to address the issue: Scripture? Theology? Science? Philosophy?
- What are your primary ethical arguments?
- What are the primary ethical arguments that you oppose?
- What conclusions do you make? What position do you invite your hearers to take?

Students who preach or teach on their issue in an official church context by the end of the semester and who provide a one-page description of the event and summary of feedback can get up to 25 extra-credit points on the grade of this assignment.

Guidelines for Book Reviews:

1. Do not use a title page. In the heading of the first page, include your name and the bibliographic data of the book being reviewed. For example:
Jeffrey Riley. Review of Rhyne Putman, *When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.
2. Include proper referencing of direct citations, using in-text parenthetical notes: (page #)
3. If you use or cite other books, reviews, and so forth, include a bibliography and reference using in-text parenthetical notes: (last name, page #).
4. Use Subheading based on content instructions below.
5. On all other questions of style, refer to Turabian, *A Manual of Style* (approved edition)
6. Edit. Edit. Edit. Someone has said, "There are no good writers, just good editors." Perhaps an overstatement, but heed the advice (I actually had to edit this point 4 times).
7. Use a standard, 12-point font like Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.
8. Length: 1500-2000 words (approximately 6-8 pages).

Regarding content for Book Reviews:

Get a sense of the big picture. The review is not a summary of the book. You are engaging and evaluating the content of a book. Broadly divide the review into the following, attending to specific matters recommended within each section (pages are approximations; balance is the key):

1. Introductory matters (1 page):
 - a. Information on the author. What are some of the author's working assumptions (e.g., his or her denominational background, field of research, view of Scripture, etc.)?
 - b. State the book's primary aim/thesis and approach
 - c. Situate the book in a larger context, discussion, or issue
 - d. State the book's primary contribution
2. Content of the book (2-3 pages)
 - a. Brief outline (describe in prose)
 - b. Sketch the book's contents, being sure to account for the main threads of the book's arguments.
 - c. Present the whole book, remembering, however, that this is not a chapter by chapter summary.
3. Critical Engagement (2-3 pages)
 - a. Major ethical insights communicated by the book. What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?
 - b. Does the author provide strong biblical, philosophical, and historical support for his or her positions?
 - c. Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic
 - d. Ideas that changed or challenged your thinking. How and Why?
 - e. Insights in this book that practically relate to life and ministry, the life of the church, and the relationship Christians have to the broader cultures
 - f. Major strengths and weaknesses of the book
4. Conclusion (1 page)
 - a. Of review, not the book
 - b. Did the author fulfill his or her purpose?
 - c. Sum up importance and/or liabilities of the book
 - d. Include a recommendation (or not) and for whom

How Reviews are evaluated:

- **“A” papers (93-100)**
 - clearly state the book’s thesis
 - successfully and succinctly outline its argument in its own terms
 - demonstrate advanced critical engagement with the argument and content of the book
 - make clear and well-structured arguments that engage the content
 - exhibit a proficient grasp of grammar, spelling, and style
 - Use full allowable words/pages: approximately 2000/7-8 pages
- **“B” papers (85-92)**
 - clearly state the book’s thesis
 - show an attempt to understand the book on its own terms, though overly as summary
 - attempt critically to reflect on the issues at hand,
 - make satisfactory arguments that engage the content
 - show sufficiency in grammar, spelling, and style
- **“C” papers and less (84 and less)**
 - state the book’s thesis
 - present the content of the book in chapter to chapter summary without demonstrating evidence of grasping the books main ideas
 - shallow reflection on the issues at hand
 - raise preliminary critical questions for further evaluation
 - limit evaluation to preformed judgments without serious consideration of the book’s ideas ,or simply approve or disapprove the author’s ideas/arguments
 - make repeated mistakes in grammar, spelling, and style, and/or demonstrate little or no attempt to proofread
 - Use fewer than allowable words: less than approximately 1500 or 6 pages

Distribution of Grades and Assignment Schedule

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

1. Reading, Participation, and so forth	Due Dec. 1	15%
2. Chapter Engagement Outlines and Discussions	See Schedule	25%
3. Book Review and Discussion	Due Sept. 8	25%
4. Annotated Research Outline and Teaching Ethical Issues	Due Oct. 20	35%
Total		100%

All assignments must be submitted to pass the course. Students who fail to complete an assignment will not receive a passing grade.

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.

Writing Style Guide

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

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.

Course Schedule: Fall 2021

Note: The final schedule will be provided once the size of the class and text review assignments are determined.

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT FOR UPDATED SCHEDULE

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allberry, Sam. *Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction*. Surrey, England: The Good Book Company, 2013.

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Allen, Scott David. *Why Social Justice Is Not Biblical Justice: An Urgent Appeal to Fellow Christians in a Time of Social Crisis*. Grand Rapids: Credo House, 2020.

Alter, Adam. *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*. New York: Penguin Books, 2017.

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