

# *Missional Ethics and the Great Commission*

## **ETHC 6337**

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Division of Theological and Historical Studies**

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**BOLIVIA MISSION TRIP: MAY 20-29, 2019**

### **Mission Statement**

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

### **Core Value Focus**

The seminary has five core values, which this course supports.

- *Doctrinal Integrity*: Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. Our confessional commitments are outlined in the “Articles of Religious Belief” and the “Baptist Faith and Message 2000.”
- *Spiritual Vitality*: We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word.
- *Mission Focus*: We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.
- *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.
- *Servant Leadership*: We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us.

The Core Value Focus for this academic year is Doctrinal Integrity.

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to equip those engaged in the Great Commission with the tools needed to evaluate cross-cultural moralities and to respond consistently and ethically within a Christian worldview. Students will understand more clearly the nature of the moral life and learn to apply a Christian ethic to issues encountered transculturally. Topics addressed include worldviews and morality, cultural distinctions, ethical implications of guilt, shame, and fear driven cultures, polygamy and other culturally distinct expressions of marriage and family, responding to bribery and corruption, truth-telling, and other ethical concerns for those involved in cross-cultural ministries.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

- To understand how cultures and worldviews influence ethics and morality
- To understand basic distinctions between cultures and how those distinctions shape ethics and morality
- To be able to analyze and state a justifiable position on major ethical issues that confront those engaged in cross-cultural ministries
- To have greater clarity in where Christians should stand on ethical issues, with special reference to issues encountered when crossing cultures
- To have a stronger commitment to Christian values when those values are incongruent with the values of diverse cultures
- To have a stronger commitment to discovering, living, and voicing Christian values in diverse cultures and in appropriate ways
- To achieve competency in applying biblical ethics within diverse cultures
- To be able to discuss and justify a Christian ethic competently, convincingly, and transculturally

## **Course Teaching Methodology**

This course is concurrent with a mission trip to Bolivia, South America. The course will utilize teaching moments in Bolivia, discussions or presentations by the professor in Bolivia, reading assignments, and written assignments to reach the goals of the class.

## **Meetings**

May 20-29: Mission Trip to Bolivia. Students, when present, should take notes when Dr. Riley is teaching ethics. Much instruction, however, will occur in conversations

June 4, July 2, July 16: Meetings to discuss assignments

## Textbooks

Adeney, Bernard T. *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.

Muller, Roland. *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2001.

## Review Textbooks

Choose one of the following books for review. Students may choose a book from the Select Bibliography but it must be approved by Dr. Riley.

Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody, 2009.

Kunhiyop, Samuel Waje. *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Hippo Books/Zondervan, 2008.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998.

Ramachandra, Vinoth. *Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.

Rowell, John. *To Give or Not to Give: Rethinking Dependency, Restoring Generosity, & Defining Sustainability*. Tyrone, GA: Authentic, 2006.

## Course Requirements

### **Ethics Journal (Due June 4, 2019; 20% of Final Grade)**

Each student will keep an *Ethics Journal* while on mission. The journal should contain daily reflections on what the student sees and experiences, as these relate to learned material, ethical issues, and cultural morality (positive and negative). Following are examples for content:

- Notes and reflections from Dr. Riley's lectures or discussions while on mission
- Observations about economic/work conditions, relationships between men and women, state of marriage, character and practices of authorities, sources of morality, moral challenges to individuals and churches, and so forth
- Insights about morality gleaned from conversations with the people you encounter
- Your own struggles with what you see and hear

## **Book Review and Discussion (Due July 2, 2019; 20% of Final Grade)**

From the above list under the general heading **Review Textbooks**, each student will choose a book and write a **review**. The student should be prepared to discuss the book on the due date meeting.

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 critique should be **4-6 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 diverse cultures
  - Major strengths and weaknesses of the book
  - In the conclusion, a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book.

## **Textbook & Article Reading Report and Discussion** **(Due July 16, 2019; 20% of Final Grade)**

For the reading report, record your name and the collective total percentage read from the following textbooks. Report will include notes summarizing content and defining important terms and concepts. The report should also include questions to ask about the content:

1. Muller, *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*, should be **read completely** before landing in Bolivia May 20, 2019; reading report due July 16, 2019.
2. Adeney, *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. The following chapters should be read before landing in Bolivia May 20, 2019: Chapters 1,2, & 4. Reading report due July 16, 2019.
3. Dr. Riley will assign and provide articles/chapter to read. Reading report due July 16, 2019.

This assignment is **on your honor**. Each Student should be prepared to discuss the text readings and assigned articles on the due date meeting.

## **Final Exam (25% of final grade)**

The Final Exam is due the last meeting, **July 16, 2019**. The final exam consists of ethical case studies, to which students will write responses.

## **Grade Distribution by Assignment and Due Dates**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethics Journal	25%	Due	June 4, 2019
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book Review and Discussion	25%	Due:	July 2, 2019
<input type="checkbox"/>	Textbook and Article Discussions	25%	Due:	July 16 2019
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Exam	25%	Due:	July 16, 2019

## **Course Evaluation**

NOBTS grading scale:      A: 93-100      C: 77-84      F: 69 or below  
    B: 85-92      D: 70-76

Borderline grades will normally and strictly be determined by the numerical grade received (rounded 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 warrant 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, usually through an additional book review.

## **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.

Absences: due to the shortened seat time, absences are strongly discouraged. Students are expected to attend every meeting after the mission trip.

Late Work will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per day) 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.**

**Select Bibliography**

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Clark, David K., and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Reading in Christian Ethics. Vol. 1, Theory and Method*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

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- DeSilva, David A. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.
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