Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
DE 5440 Christian Ethics

Course Description

This course discusses biblical perspectives on contemporary ethical issues facing the church and the minister, such as: divorce, abortion, euthanasia, genetic control, sex, war, racism, ecology, personal lifestyle, and the church’s responsibility. 3 credit hours.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students should:

- Become familiar with the academic discipline of Christian ethics in its central concepts, methodological approaches, biblical and theological norms, and the variety of critical issues it seeks to address.
- Develop a basic Christian toolbox of decision-making skills in order to assess the various ethical issues that face and will face the church.
- Be equipped to analyze and interact with competing perspectives with regard to long-standing ethical concerns and those issues presented by the use of emerging technologies both within the church and the culture at large.
- Be encouraged to develop a holistic Christian worldview firmly grounded in Scripture that cultivates personal moral growth, clear thinking, and obedient discipleship as one seeks to love the Lord with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Required Course Materials


**Course Format**

This is an online, distance education course. This course features an audio lecture series produced by the Institute of Theological Studies. In addition to the audio lectures, the remaining structure of the course functions as a hybrid between a reading course and a guided research course with strong emphasis upon student self-directed learning. Course Tutors will guide the student throughout the course process as the student completes the reading and study guide assignments. Further interaction between the student and Course Tutor is facilitated via TriNet (http://trinet.tiu.edu).

**Course Expectations**

Students will be expected to complete all reading, listening and assignments, as well as to participate in forum discussions in TriNet. Since this is a course within the domain of ethics, student integrity and self-motivated participation are considered vital to the goals of this course. Students will be expected to complete all reading assignments. Students will also be expected to turn in written assignments reflecting the guidelines defined in this syllabus.

**Deliberate infractions of Trinity’s policy on academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in failure of this course. Please consult the student handbook for policies regarding cheating and plagiarism.**

**Required Learning Assignments**

1. *All reading* (unless otherwise noted) *will be completed at a level of competency which will allow the reader to interact with concepts at a critical level* **(note: this may require the reading of materials more than once).** Students will submit a reading report by the completion of the course (in documents folder inside your course forum).

   — **TIP** —

   Students are strongly encouraged to keep a notebook/journal of their work in reading Fedler for future reflection.

2. Students must listen to all of the assigned audio lectures as defined in this syllabus and to respond to requisite study guide questions.

3. There will be a **Final Paper**. This will be a **twelve (12) page** (double-spaced) **ethical reflection**. The purpose is to allow students to explore issues relevant to this course (in consultation with the course tutor) in greater depth than is possible in class and to develop a constructive position as well as practical responses to this issue or topic.

   Suggested areas include research on any of the following:
   - a contemporary moral problem
   - the application of ethics to the ministry
• the motivational dynamic of the Christian life
• the ethics of a recent theologian/ethicist

Any of the topics listed in any of the course texts, particularly Davis, Bevington, and/or Mitchell & Kilner would be acceptable, but you are advised to consult your course tutor for feasibility of the project using TriNet.

Students will be expected not only to give a brief background and discuss a number of alternative positions on the issue or topic, but to make constructive proposals for how to address the issue within a Christian worldview. The paper should end with a discussion of practical recommendations regarding how to interact with this issue in our various spheres of influence.

Students should complete at least an additional 500 pages of reading for the final paper that is not included in the assigned texts. Please turn in a reading report/bibliography with the paper.

The paper’s grade will be based upon content, argumentation, and quality of writing. All papers must follow an acceptable standard for documentation. Turabian or Chicago Style are highly recommended.

4. Students will complete four online interactions in the TriNet course forum. Thoughtful responses should be given to at least one question in each discussion area which (a) address the relevant question, and (b) interact with other student postings. In addition, each student should post at least one relevant question for others to consider. Questions should be based on the course material, but may be framed from the perspective of the student’s experience or desire for personal application.

5. There will be two closed book exams. One at the midpoint of the course and one at the completion of the course. Each will take the form of essay questions.

Assessment & Final Course Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Readings (self-report)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Audio Lectures w/Study Guide</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TriNet Discussion Questions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>25%</td>
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All assignments should be submitted directly to your Course Tutor using his/her “drop-box” within the TriNet course forum. Exams should be mailed by your proctor to the address below. Course work may be submitted by mail if necessary.

Distance Education
Trinity International University
2065 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
If you have questions related to your assignments, please contact your Course Tutor in TriNet. Technical and other questions should be directed to the Distance Education office (email or 847-317-6554).

**The Outline of the Course**

A. Introduction: the present moral crisis and its causes, basic words and distinctions, normative obligation, normative values, and basic logical tools.

B. Ethical Systems.

C. Deontological Theories of Obligation.

D. Theological Theories of Obligation.


F. A Biblical Statement of the Summum Bonum.

G. The Dynamic of Biblical Ethics.

**Grade scale:**

93 and above = A  
87 = B+  
77 = C+  
67 = D+

90 = A-  
83 = B  
73 = C  
63 = D

80 = B-  
70 = C-  
60 = D-