



TH515 Seminar in Theological Ethics

Short Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Gary Deddo

Course description

This course involves research and discussion of a selected topic in theological ethics. Students will write a research paper, present that paper to other students, and lead an online discussion of the topic. Weekly participation is required.

Prerequisite: At least two courses in theology with a grade of B+ or better. The class must have at least three students, but not more than six.

Estimated workload: For a student to do well in this course, the student will need to invest a total of 146 hours, or about 12 hours per week of reading, participating on the website, and writing papers.

Required Reading

Required Readings (total of 1000 pages.)

Bloesch, Donald G. *Freedom for Obedience: Evangelical Ethics in Contemporary Times*. Eugene (Or.): Wipf & Stock Pub, 2002.
ISBN: 978-1-57910-932-5, \$37.00 (362 pp., 320 pp. reading)

Tyra, Gary. *Pursuing Moral Faithfulness: Ethics and Christian Discipleship*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2015.
ISBN: 978-0-8308-2465-6, \$27.00 (304 pp., 281 pp. reading)

Deddo, Gary. "Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God." (48 pp. On Reserve Reading)

Secondary Required Reading (150 pp.)

(Read a total of 150 pp. from one or more of these secondary sources to prepare for class discussions and in preparation for your paper presentation.)

Barth, Karl. “The Christian Community and the Civil Community” in *Community, State and Church*, Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, reprint 1968.

Barth, Karl. “Church and State” in *Community, State and Church*, Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, reprint 1968.

Barth, Karl. “Gospel and Law” in *Community, State and Church*, Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, reprint 1968.

Ellul, Jacques. *The Ethics of Freedom*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976. ISBN: 978-0-8028-3472-0, 517 pp. (510 pp. reading), \$30.00

Grenz, Stanley J. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000. ISBN: 978-0-8308-1568-5, (379 pp., 302 pp. reading) \$15.92.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation, A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. 1st edition. San Francisco: HarperOne, 1996. pp. 528, ISBN: 978-0-06-063796-5, \$19.00.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. 10.2.2011 edition. IVP Academic, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3961-2, 520 pp. \$27.00.

Reading Requirement for Paper Research

(An additional 200 pages is required to prepare for your final paper submission. This research reading is to be taken from the Secondary Reading list, Appendix C: Additional Course Bibliography and other relevant sources related to your particular paper topic.)

Student learning outcomes

This course fits primarily into the second GCS student learning outcome: Students will be able to reason from a sound theological basis as new covenant Christians centered in Incarnational Trinitarian faith. This course will require students to ...

1. Research and analyze a selected topic in theological ethics.
2. Craft a paper designed to analyze and critique an ethical argument made by another author (Christian or secular) *or* to inform and persuade others about an ethical topic.
3. Critique the presentations of other students in an informed and civil manner, so that all might grow in their understanding of the topics.

For more details on Academic Policy, see Appendix B.

Requirements and assignments

1. Read course website materials. The course will begin with introductory lectures by the professor, giving direction to the course. Students must read all the student papers as they are posted in subsequent weeks, and keep reading and participating in the ongoing discussions.

2. Read the textbooks and other required assigned reading. Textbooks will be assigned. For the Seminar in Theological Ethics, about 800 pages will be assigned; it is expected that students will read another 200 pages as they research their paper. Total reading to be completed for the Seminar in Theological Ethics is 1000 pages.

3. Online Forums. There will be two weekly online forums for the instructor and students to interact with each other, as if in a classroom setting. At first there will be only one Instructor Forum for discussion the course readings and lectures. Once student presentations begin in the fourth week a second forum, the Class Forum, will begin. That forum will facilitate interaction for two weeks on the two student presentations posted.

-Forum interaction requirements:

- a) For the Instructor Forum, students should post at least *one* reply to each of the instructor questions posed. These will be on the weekly assigned lectures and the readings for that week.
- b) For the Class Forum, students should post at least *one* reply to each of the two presentations (2) directing comments and queries to the

respective presenters made that week by Thursday, and another *two* posting for *each* presentation (4) in further reply to the presentations and the replies of the presenters or other students. (Six total postings for the week.)

In the following week, at least one reply should be made to each of the instructor's posting that week (2, one for each presentation), and one reply to each of the presenters (2), and one reply to another student's comments on one or both of the presentations (1 or 2). (Five or six total postings for the week.) These should be completed by the end of Friday so that the Presenters can make their final responses before the end of Sunday.

c) The requirement of the presenters during the two weeks their papers are being discussed, is to interact well with the postings of the other students and the instructor. Not every comment requires a reply. But most queries directed to you, the presenter, should be addressed.

The online discussion is a major part of the learning that will occur in this class. Weekly participation is important, so don't sign up for the class if you are going to be gone for a week. It is important that the forum comments involve critical thinking – adding further support on points of agreement, offering supporting reasons when not in agreement, but without being disagreeable. This counts for one third of the final grade.

4. Research and write. Student papers will form the initial basis of discussion. *The paper topic must be submitted to and be approved by the course instructor. See Appendix D for a short list of potential topics. Topics should be submitted no later than in the third week of the course.*

a) The papers will present facts and organize those facts in such a way as to defend or critique particular ethical argument from an incarnational and trinitarian theological perspective that is biblical, Christ-centered and historically orthodox.¹

¹ Students who present papers early in the semester will not have much time to research the topic. This will be taken into consideration when assigning a grade to the

b) Presentations of the first draft should be posted by noon on the Monday it is due. That week and the following week the presenters should be prepared to interact with the other students extensively on the Class Forum.

c) *The first two or three* paper presentations in the term should be an analysis of a Christian or secular argument for a particular ethical issue written by another author. *The fourth through sixth* papers/ presentations of the term can either be a thorough analysis of a given Christian or secular ethical argument or can be the student's own position paper making a theological ethical argument for a particular ethical position.

d) This paper will be revised after the discussion and submitted as a final paper. About 4250 words of text (12 pt. double spaced), plus the Works Cited.

first draft. But further research should be done before the final draft of the paper is submitted at the end of the semester. In some cases the student may come to a different conclusion because of the discussion and additional research.

For a guide to formatting your papers, see "How to Format a GCS Paper," posted at <http://www.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23>.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

| Assignment | Hours * | Percentage of grade |
|---|---------|---------------------|
| Reading the syllabus and lectures | 8 | required |
| Reading student papers ² | 9 | required |
| Reading discussions and making responses ³ | 18 | 33.33 |
| Reading the textbooks and required reading | 50 | required |
| Reading additional texts on the topic of research | 15 | required |
| Writing research paper and presenting it to the class | 36 | 33.33 |
| Revising the paper after the discussion | 10 | 33.33 |
| Total – about 12 hours each week | 146 | 100 |

* Some students will complete the course requirements in less time, and some will take more time. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa.

Weekly topics and assignments

| Week | Topic | Assignments to be done during the week |
|--------|--|---|
| Week 1 | Introductory Lecture 1 from the professor: “What is Theological Ethics , Part 1” | Read Bloesch, Chaps. 1-6, pp. 1-103. Student Forum Discussion Sign-ups for Presentation slots |
| Week 2 | Introductory Lecture 2, from the professor: “What is Theological Ethics, Part 2” Professor will | Read Bloesch, Chaps. 7-10, pp. 106-192. Student Forum Discussion Students will submit for approval by professor of <i>two</i> alternative potential topics for their presentation and final |

² The time required for reading will depend in part on the number of students in the course.

³ Since forum discussions are a large part of the grade, the instructor will post participation grades every other week.

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| | determine with student final topic, sufficiently limited to lend itself to adequate coverage. | paper beginning this week and no later than the third week. The first two presenters should submit topics by the end of the second week. |
| Week 3 | Introductory Lecture 3, from the professor: “What is Theological Ethics, Part 3” | Read Bloesch, Chaps. 11-13, pp. 198-278. Professor will approve of assigned topics for first two presenters by the end of the week. All other students must submit topics by the end of this week. Student Forum Discussion |
| Week 4 | Lecture 4: “Evaluation of Bloesch’s Theological Ethics” First and second students prepare first draft of their presentation papers on their assigned topic. | Read Bloesch, Chap. 14, pp. 287-315. Read Tyra, Chaps. Intro, 1, 2, pp. 13-87. The students who present the first and second papers will need to focus their time on the topic of their paper; other students should continue to read the assigned reading, about 100 pages each week. Student Forum Discussion |
| Week 5 | First and second students post first drafts of their papers by noon, Monday. | Read Tyra, Chaps. 3-5, pp. 89-179. Student Forum discussion: Initial comments on two papers by the end of Thursday; at least two replies by the end of Sunday. |
| Week 6 | Professor posts comments about the papers and the discussion, with some questions for further discussion. Third and fourth student prepare first draft presentation | Read Tyra, Chaps. Intro, 6-9, pp. 181-276. Student Forum discussion: Initial comments on two papers and professor’s comments by the end of Thursday; at least two further replies by the end of Sunday. |

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| Week 7 | Third and fourth students post first drafts of their papers by noon, Monday. | Read Tyra, Chaps. 10 and Conclusion, pp. 277-294 and Deddo, G. "Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God" (48 pp.) Student Forum discussion (same schedule as previous) |
| Week 8 | Professor posts comments about the two papers and the discussion, with some questions for further discussion. Fifth and sixth students prepare first draft presentation | Additional Reading/Research Student Forum discussion |
| Week 9 | Fifth and sixth students post first draft of papers on their assigned topics by noon, Monday | Additional Reading/Research Student Forum discussion |
| Week 10 | Professor posts comments about the paper and the discussion, with some questions for further discussion questions. | Additional Reading/Research Student Forum discussion |
| Week 11 | Final Research and Revision of Papers | Additional Reading/Research Final Student Forum discussion |
| Week 12 | Final paper must be turned in no later than the end of week | |