Course Description
In this brief introduction to Christian ethics, we will examine the ways in which Christian thinkers appeal to their traditions, sources, norms, and values to engage in moral reflection. The course is divided into two sections. In the first section, we are introduced to different methods of moral reflection concentrating on major ethical systems and the factors involved in doing ethics. We then examine the methods, sources, and norms used by Christian ethicists. Here we focus on the intellectual history and context of moral reflection within the Christian tradition. In the second section, we examine contemporary issues faced by Christian thinkers and the debates surrounding those subjects. Among the topics addressed in this section include the “war on terror,” HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa, same-sex marriage, and the environment.

Disclaimer
This course is not intended to teach Christians how to become better Christians. Rather, the point of this course is to introduce students, who may come from widely divergent intellectual and religious backgrounds, to the ways in which Christians undertake moral reflection within their tradition.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
• Distinguish between ethics and morals and identify major ethical systems
• Explain the sources that inform Christian ethics
• Grasp the fundamentals of moral reflection and its complexity within the debates examined during the course

Course Outline
I Introduction to Ethics and Ethical Systems
II Sources of Christian Ethics: The Hermeneutical Circle
III War and Peace
IV The Environment
V Poverty and HIV/AIDS
VI Life and Death
VII Sexual Ethics
Required Texts
2. Additional online sources are listed in this syllabus and posted on the course website

Recommended Texts
- New Revised Standard Version of the Bible-Apocrypha (or another reliable translation) Note: online editions are easily available

Course Evaluation
Descriptive Essay 25% due online by Sept 28 at 12:00 p.m.
Term Tests 75% (25% x 3 tests) Oct 3, Oct 31, & Dec 3

Descriptive Essay

Students must then answer the following questions: What anthropology is present in the declaration? What are the norms and values, loyalties or prejudices of the declaration? (Only choose one category of these three). Finally, what mode of decision-making is used in the declaration? Students will be expected to (1) briefly introduce the declaration, (2) define their major categories (i.e., anthropology, modes of decision-making and norms and values, loyalties or prejudices), and provide examples from the declaration to support their claims.

Sources: All information require for this assignment is available within the course. Your primary materials will be the UN’s declaration, the article by Charles Kammer in your course pack and lecture material. (Do not rely on lecture material alone.) You may choose to use the additional links provided on the Declaration website (i.e., history of the Declaration). External sources for this assignment are not required.

Note: If you are tempted to used additional sources make sure you are aware of your responsibilities with respect to academic integrity (discussed below).

Citations: When citing the Declaration you are only required to list the article number. For example, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile” (Article 9). When citing materials from the course pack use the following format: (last name year, p. #). For example, (Kammer 1988: 11). Lectures can be cited similarly, (Shrubsole 2011, Oct 6 lecture). Since all the material is from the course or the UN website, no bibliography is required.

Format: Students will be required to write a short paper of 900-1200 words in length. The essay is to be double-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins on all sides. Include page numbers on the bottom of every page.

Submission: All papers will be submitted electronically through the course website before 12:00 p.m. EST on Friday, September 28 Papers may be submitted in the following formats: .doc, .docx, .rtf, and .pdf. (Please note that Macintosh computers will not always automatically save to one of these formats). An overview of submission procedures will be conducted in the week before the papers are due.
## Reading Schedule

### I. Introduction: Ethics and Ethical Systems

**Sept 10:** Introduction to Course  
Readings: none

**Sept 12:** Ethics and Ethical Systems  
Readings:  
1. Steve Wilkins, “Bumper Stickers and Ethical Systems,” CP  
2. Charles Kammer, III, “Ethics as a Human Enterprise,” CP

**Sept 17:** Ethics and Ethical Systems  
Readings:  

**Sept 19:** Religious Ethics  
Readings:  
1. Roger H. Crook, “Alternatives within Christian Ethics,” CP

### II. Sources of Christian Ethics: The Hermeneutical Circle

**Sept 24:** Text  
Readings:  
1. Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, “Consensus and Questions,” CP  
2. Genesis 1-3 (Story of the Creation and Fall)  
3. Exodus 20:2-17 and 34:12-26, Deuteronomy 5:6-21 (10 Commandments)  
4. Matthew 5 (Sermon on the Mount)  
5. Romans 1-2, 13 (Paul’s Statement on Natural Law)

**Sept 26:** Tradition and Reason  
Readings:  

**ESSAY DUE ONLINE** anytime before **Friday, September 28** at 12:00 p.m. on the course website.

**Oct 1:** Experience  
Readings:  
1. Susan Secker, “Human Experience and Women’s Experience,” CP  

**Oct 3:** **TERM TEST #1 (25%)**

**Oct 8:** No class (Thanksgiving Holiday)
III. Christian Ethics, War, and Peace
Oct 10  War and Peace
2. Stanley Hauerwas, “The Sermon on the Mount, Just War, and the Quest for Peace,” CP

Oct 15  War and Peace
Readings: 1. Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris (excerpts), paragraphs 9–34, 80–93 and 109-16,
   http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html

Oct 17  The “War on Terror”
Readings: 1. What We’re Fighting For: 60 US Academics Respond to War on Terrorism,
2. James Crossley, “‘Just War’ and the Contemporary Art of Justifying the Unjustifiable,” course website
3. Walter Burghardt, S.J. “A Just War in Iraq?” course website
4. George Weigel, “Just Wars and Iraq Wars,” course website

IV  Christian Ethics and the Environment
Oct 17  Environmental Ethics
Readings: 1. Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” CP

Oct 22  Environmental Ethics

V  Christian Ethics, Poverty, and HIV/AIDS
Oct 24  Christian Ethics and Poverty
2. Gustavo Guterriuez, “The Power of the Poor in History,” CP

Oct 29  Christian Ethics and AIDS in Africa
Readings 1. Marcella Alsan, “The Church and AIDS in Africa: Condoms and the Culture of Life,” course website

Oct 31  TERM TEST #2 (25%)
**VI   Christian Ethics, Life, and Death**

Nov 5  
**Bioethics: Stem Cell Research and Cloning**
Readings:  
2. Ted Peters and Gaymon Bennett Jr., “Stem Cell Research and the Claim of the Other in the Human Subject”, course website  

Nov 7  
**Abortion**
Readings:  
   [www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1677](http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1677)  
2. Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, paragraphs 11–14,  
   [http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html)

Nov 12  
**Euthanasia**
Readings:  
2. Vancouver Sun article (June 2012): Gloria Taylor: Christian Fights for own Assisted Suicide,”  

Nov 14  
**Capital Punishment**
Readings:  

**VII   Christian Ethics and Sexual Relationships**

Nov 19  
**Sexual Relationships: Same-Sex Marriage**
Readings:  
1. Martin Ellison, “Contested Christian Teachings,” CP  
2. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), “Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons,”  

Nov 21  
**Gender, Body, and Sexuality: Bible and Tradition**
Readings:  
1. Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Gender and Christian Ethics,” CP  
2. Carter Heyward, “Notes on Historical Grounding: Beyond Sexual Essentialism,” CP  
3. 1 Corinthians 5-6

Nov 26  
**Pornography**
Readings:  
1. “Pornography: A Symposium,” course website

Nov 28  
**Conclusion**
Readings:  
none

Dec 3  
**TERM TEST #3 (25%)**
Course Website Information

Using your WatIAM username and password, you can access the course website at

http://learn.uwaterloo.ca

LEARN is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of lecture notes etc.), interact with their students (drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, course e-mail etc.), and provide feedback (grades, assignment comments etc.). The degree to which LEARN is utilized in a particular course is left to the discretion of the instructor; therefore, you may find a large variance in how LEARN is being used from one course to another.

On the RS150 course website, you will be able to:

- Download select lecture slides
- Submit assignments
- Access some reading material
- Read announcements
- View important dates
- View your grades

For further help on LEARN you may visit the help website at
http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/training_documentation/student_index.html

You may also contact support staff via e-mail at learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca

Statement on Academic Offense

All students registered in courses at St. Jerome’s University are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under St. Jerome’s University Academic Discipline Policy and UW Policy 71 –Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome’s University Grievance Officer. Read St. Jerome’s University Handbook, Section 4, item 8, www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/grievance_policy.html.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under St. Jerome’s University Academic Discipline Policy or Grievance Policy if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome’s University Appeals Officer. Read St. Jerome’s University Handbook, Section 6.4, www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/examinations_grades_standings_and_appeals.html.
US Policy Regarding Illness and Missed Assignments/Tests

The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations (www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf) state that:

• A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html.

• If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.

• The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.

• Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Additional Information

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Electronic Gadgets

Please turn off your cell phones and/or any other electronic devices before entering the classroom. Laptops and PDAs with keyboards may be used, but only to take class notes. If you abuse this privilege by accessing social networking sites, web browsing or by playing games during class, the instructor will ask you to leave class immediately. You will then be asked to drop the course at that time. Should you violate this rule more than once, the instructor reserves the right to submit a failing mark for you in the course.

Classroom Ethic

This course will be guided by an ethic of mutual respect and responsibility. At times, the topics may become controversial and in-class debate rather tense. While disagreement is part of a healthy university environment, please engage your colleagues (including the instructor) with respect and in such a way to promote a response. Occasionally, the instructor will need to close down a debate when time is running short, when a conversation devolves into a series of monologues, or when we get bogged down on a topic. And at all times, please refrain from chatting.
**E-mail Correspondence**

Email is NOT the preferred method of correspondence in this course. The preferred method of correspondence is through face-to-face contact during instructor office hours or through a scheduled appointment. Emails requesting information that is already posted on our course website or communicated in class will not be returned. Should you need such information, please see the instructor. Moreover, email correspondence is NOT a good method of communicating class material or explaining fairly complex concepts. Again, the preferred method of communication is face-to-face contact. Please USE email primarily to make appointments and, if need be, to refine your ideas in communication with the instructor. In some cases, the instructor may request a meeting in lieu of further emails. In all email correspondence, please include your full name and a subject heading that includes RS 150 in its title.