



TS 635: Christian Ethics
CGR 1301[†] Tuesdays from 1:00-3:50 PM
Winter 2017 (*revised 3 January 2017*)

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Course Description

This course will provide an examination of the basis, scope and dynamics of Christian ethics, exploring the interplay between Christian thought and practice in the context of contemporary issues facing church and society. Questions to be addressed include: How should we engage the realm of politics? How should we seek to address racial and economic injustice? How should we respond to the impact of technology on society and the environment?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- (1) use the basic vocabulary of Christian moral discourse with greater ease and precision in a variety of contexts, including personal, ecclesial, and societal realms;
- (2) situate ethical arguments in concrete communities of interpretation, while being attentive to persons thereby included or excluded;
- (3) engage effectively with people of different theological and ethical perspectives; and
- (4) draw upon their knowledge and skills in ethical discernment in the pursuit of a faithful and creative moral response to the concrete issues they encounter in their daily lives.

More generally, the activities and assignments in this course are intended to further student progress toward all aspects of the MTS program's mission:

- (1) Develop skills in effective writing, speaking, reading, listening, and teaching.
- (2) Demonstrate knowledge of Christianity from a variety of disciplinary, theological, contextual, and experiential perspectives.
- (3) Engage scholarship in the relevant fields of theological studies through research and critical analysis of primary sources and contemporary scholarly debates.
- (4) Interpret Christian traditions in light of present contexts.
- (5) Engage issues of justice and peace, and attend to voices of the marginalized.
- (6) Nurture personal formation through practices such as self-reflection, openness to others, leadership training, faith development, and participation in a community of learning.
- (7) Enhance the capacity for life-long learning.

[†] I would like to acknowledge that this class will be meeting on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Conrad Grebel University College is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Course Assessment

10%	Position statement (3 p.)	Due Jan. 17	See learning outcome 1
25%	Book review (4 p.)	Due Feb. 7	See learning outcome 2
15%	Public statement (2 p.)	Due Feb. 28	See learning outcomes 1, 3
15%	Seminar presentation	Due Mar. 21 or 28	See learning outcomes 1, 3
35%	Research paper (15-20 p.)	Due Apr. 4	See learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4

Additional Assignment Instructions

Detailed instructions will be provided for each individual assignment. They must be uploaded to the appropriate Waterloo LEARN dropbox by noon on the due date. Late assignments will be assessed an automatic penalty of 3% per calendar day if alternate arrangements have not been made.

Citation of sources must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. See Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), or www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Readings

Assigned readings for each class are highlighted in the weekly course outline and course bibliography that follows. Beyond the one required text, all can be accessed electronically.

Class Participation

The success of a graduate seminar depends upon your active engagement. Indicators of engagement include:

- Grasp of assigned readings. Together we will be attempting to nurture a deep approach to reading, finding meaning in the text by analyzing the arguments, making connections to more familiar concepts and principles, and then drawing on these insights to solve problems.
- Quality of questions and responses. Students should come to class prepared to raise questions related to the assigned reading. Of course, active and informed participation is characterized not only by the number and quality of spoken observations, but also by attentive listening.
- Contribution to cultivating a community of learning. In class discussions, students are encouraged to be honest, tactful, and sensitive. It is not likely that we all will agree on all issues, but each person should be respected.
- Throughout the semester I will be making connections to relevant current events, as well as campus and community activities. In order to help make this practice meaningful, you are encouraged to send me news items and announcements on a regular basis, either by e-mail, or by passing along a printed copy prior to the start of class.

Attendance and participation in all classes is expected—if you must be absent, please let me know in advance. I reserve the right to deduct up to 5% for non-participation in class.

Additional Course Policies

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her 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 dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Weekly Course Outline

The following outline will be revised on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in reading assignments and refinements to the course schedule. All changes will be announced in advance in class and the syllabus will be updated on Waterloo LEARN.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment	Additional Notes
1	Jan. 3	Course introduction	Wells (2006)	
2	Jan. 10	The landscape of ethics	Cunningham, Preface, Introduction, and ch. 1; Jacobs (2007); Neufeldt (2016), ch. 4; Singer (2013)	*Proposal for book review due

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment	Additional Notes
3	Jan. 17	God and community	Cunningham, ch. 2, 3, and Interlude 1; Brooks (2015), Introduction and ch. 1	*Position statement due Jan. 17: Book Launch: Robert Suderman's <i>Re-Imagining the Church</i>
4	Jan. 24	Stories and maps	Cunningham, ch. 4, and 5; Smith (2016), ch. 1	Jan. 25: Grebel Gallery Exhibit launch: <i>Tesatawiyat (Come In)</i>
5	Jan. 31	Distinctive practices in a fallen world	Cunningham, ch. 6; Yoder (1994), ch. 8	Feb. 3: Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies with Ken Nafziger: "Melting the Boundaries of Our Being: Explorations in Singing Together"
6	Feb. 7	Virtues; Book review presentations	Cunningham, ch. 7, 8, and Interlude 2; Haidt (2008)	*Book review due
7	Feb. 14	Body and world	Cunningham, ch. 9, and 10; Hunter (2010)	*Proposal for research paper due Feb. 16-18: MCC Ottawa Office Student Seminar: "Gender, peace and conflict: Exploring the intersection"
-	Feb. 21	No class (Reading Week)	N/a	
8	Feb. 28	Work and politics	Cunningham, ch. 11, 12, and Interlude 3; Heidebrecht (2016); Leddy (2011), ch. 6; Miller (2000)	*Public statement due Feb. 28: Scott Morton-Ninomiya, "Building a Global Low Carbon Economy Piece by PEACE" Mar. 3: Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture with Mary Jo Leddy: "Room Enough for Hope: Canada's Response to the Refugee Crisis"
9	Mar. 7	Health	Cunningham, ch. 13; Lysaught (2006)	Mar. 8: International Women's Day
10	Mar. 14	Creation	Cunningham, ch. 14, 15	
11	Mar. 21	Seminar paper presentations	N/a	*Seminar presentation due Mar. 21: Film Screening: "The Age of Consequences"
12	Mar. 28	Seminar paper presentations	N/a	*Seminar presentation due
13	Apr. 4	N/a	N/a	*Research paper due Apr. 4: International Mine Awareness Day

Assigned Reading Bibliography**Primary Text:**

Cunningham, David S. *Christian Ethics: The End of the Law*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Additional Sources:

Brooks, David. *The Road to Character*. New York: Random House, 2015.

Haidt, Jonathan. "The Moral Roots of Liberals and Conservatives." TED Talk, Monterey, CA, March 2008.

http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_on_the_moral_mind?language=en

Heidebrecht, Paul C. "Reframing Mennonite Political Engagement as Christian Formation." *Conrad Grebel Review* 34/1 (Winter 2016): 74-95.

Hunter, James Davison and Christopher Benson. "Faithful Presence: James Davison Hunter says our strategies to transform culture are ineffective, and the goal itself is misguided." *Christianity Today* 54/5 (May 2010): 32-36.

Jacobs, A.J. "By the Book: An Experiment in Biblical Living." *Christian Century* 124/21 (16 October 2007): 24-33.

Leddy, Mary Jo. *The Other Face of God*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011.

Lysaught, M. Therese. "Vulnerability Within the Body of Christ: Anointing of the Sick and Theological Anthropology." In *Health and Human Flourishing: Religion, Medicine, and Moral Anthropology*, ed. Carol Taylor and Roberto dell'Oro, 159-82. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006.

Miller, Vincent J. "Taking Consumer Culture Seriously." *Horizons* 27/2 (2000): 276-295.

Neufeldt, Reina C. *Ethics for Peacebuilders: A Practical Guide*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016.

Singer, Peter. "The Why and How of Effective Altruism." TED Talk, Long Beach, CA, March 2013. https://www.ted.com/talks/peter_singer_the_why_and_how_of_effective_altruism#t-1020583

Smith, James K.A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016.

Wells, Samuel. "For Such a Time as This: Esther and the Practices of Improvisation." In *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption*, edited by Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold, 167-87. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.