

## TS 635: Christian Ethics

**CGR 2201 Tuesdays from 9:00 AM – 10 AM**

**Fall 2020**

**Instructors:** Dr. Kimberly Penner  
Office hours (online): By appointment please.  
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### Course Description

How should Christians respond to violence? What choices do we face as we seek to be faithful to Jesus as we make decisions about sexuality, healthcare, and politics, for example? What values and beliefs should shape the communities where we debate and discern appropriate choices? We will engage these and other questions as we examine the methods, sources, and norms used for Christian ethics, as well as the interplay between Christian thought and practice in the context of contemporary issues facing church and society.

### Learning Outcomes of the Course

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 the persons and relationships of power present therein;
- 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.

### Learning Outcomes of the Program

The course will also help students meet the following MTS program learning outcomes:

- 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; and
- 7) enhance the capacity for life-long learning.

## Course Assessment

- 25% Participation in Online Discussions (LEARN)
- 15% Tracing My Moral Formation assignment – Due Sept. 15
- 20 % Reading Response & Reflection - Due Oct. 6
  - 5% Proposal for Plan for Community Engagement – Due Nov. 17
- 35% Plan for Community Engagement - Due Dec 1

## Participation in Online Discussions (LEARN)

The success of a graduate seminar depends on your level of preparedness and participation. For this reason, your full presence and participation is required.

Excellent class participation in this course means demonstrating a thorough and critical understanding of the readings evidenced by participation in online discussion forums and synchronous Zoom conversations (as you are able).

Your participation grade will come from your participation in online discussion forums. Excellent class participation in that regard means that you begin **one discussion thread each week and offer two thoughtful responses to other people's threads each week**. In addition, twice throughout the course you will indicate to me which you think is your best post and why (Due: Oct 27 & Dec 1).

Excellent class participation also means being self-reflective and respectful in posting your questions, and open and honest when giving and receiving feedback with each other online. Listening and speaking to one another in ways that withhold judgment and demonstrate compassion are what each of us, instructor and students, are asked to strive for.

## Assignment Instructions

Detailed instructions are provided for each individual assignment on LEARN. **They must be uploaded to the appropriate Waterloo LEARN dropbox by 9:30 AM on the due date.** Late assignments will be assessed an automatic penalty of 3% per calendar day if alternative 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 Dissertation: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), or [Chicago Manual of Style Citation Guide](#).

## Readings

Assigned readings for each class are highlighted in the weekly course outline that follows. All can be accessed electronically, including the required textbook, which is available through [ProQuest](#). (For the textbook in ProQuest, simply click on the link and then enter your WatIAM user ID and password when prompted. If you are not directed to the page immediately, simply search the book's title and it should come up.)

### Required text:

Lovin, Robin W. *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, Virtues*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011.

## Weekly Course Outline and Readings

### Part 1: Introduction

**Sept. 8**

#### **What is Ethics?**

**Required Reading:** Lovin, Intro & Part I: Christian Ethics, pp. v. - 66.

**Sept. 15**

#### **Situating Ourselves as Moral Agents**

**Required Reading:** Nancy J. Ramsay, "Intersectionality: A Model for Addressing the Complexity of Oppression and Privilege," *Pastoral Psychology* 63 (2014): 453-469; Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, "Intersectionality as Theological Method," in *Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 41-64; Allen G. Johnson, "Privilege, Power, Difference, and Us," in *Privilege: A Reader*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Abby L. Ferber (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013), 59-68.

**Tracing My Moral Formation due**

### Part 2: Methods, Sources, and Norms

**Sept. 22**

#### **Method: Goals Oriented Ethics; Source: Experience**

**Required Reading:** Lovin, Part II: Goals, pp.69-116. Lydia Neufeld Harder, "Chapter 2: Discipleship and Authority," in *Obedience, Suspicion and the Gospel of Mark: A Mennonite Feminist Exploration of Biblical Authority* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1998), 25-56; Shannon Dunn, "Experience, Authority and Social Critique: A Comparison of Margaret Farley and John Dewey," *Feminist Theology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 171-186.

**Sept. 29**

#### **Method: Duties Oriented Ethics; Source: Scripture**

**Required Reading:** Lovin, Part III: Duties, pp.117-184; Genesis 32:22-32; A. J. Jacobs, "By the Book: An Experiment in Biblical Living," *Christian Century* 124, no. 21 (Oct 2007): 24-33; Robert Allan Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians," *Christianity and Crisis* 49, no. 12 (Sept 1989): 261-265.

- Oct. 6**      **Method: Virtues Oriented Ethics; Sources: Reason and Tradition**  
**Required Reading:** Lovin, Part IV: Virtues, pp.185-236; Serene Jones, “Bounded Openness: Postmodernism, Feminism, and the Church Today,” *Interpretation* 55, no. 1 (2007): 49-59; Robert Gascoigne, “Revelation and Reason in Liberal Societies,” in *The Public Forum and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2001): 11-44.  
**Reading Response and Reflection due**

<b>Oct. 13</b>	<b>READING WEEK</b>
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- Oct. 20**      **Norms**  
**Required Reading:** Beverly Harrison, “The Power of Anger in the Work of Love,” in *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985), 3-21; Dorothee Soelle, “Justice: A feeling in the pit of your stomach,” in *Not Just Yes and Amen: Christians with a Cause*, Dorothee Sollee and Fulbert Steffensky (Philadelphia, Fortress Press: 1985), 8-13; Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “Un poquito de justicia – a little bit of justice,” in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis, Fortress Press: 1996), 325-339; Judith Bulter, “Introduction,” in *The Force of Nonviolence* (London, Verso: 2020), 1-26; Margaret Farley, “Just Love and Just Sex: Preliminary Considerations,” in *Just Love: A Framework for Sexual Ethics* (New York, Continuum: 2006), 174-206; Robert J. Suderman, *Re-Imagining the Church*, ed. Andrew Gregory Suderman (Oregon, Wipf & Stock: 2016), 102-104.

Part 3: Moral Issues

- Oct. 27**      **How to Analyze a Moral Issue/Argument**  
**Required Reading:** Matt. 25:31-34; Emilie Townes, “Ethics as the Art of Doing the Work our Souls Must Have,” in *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Katie Geneva Cannon et. al (Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press: 2011), 35-50; James Gustafson, “Context versus Principles: A Misplaced Debate in Christian Ethics,” *Harvard Theological Review* 58, no.2 (April 1965): 171 – 202.; R. Hutchinson, “Towards a ‘pedagogy for allies of the oppressed’,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 13, no. 2 (1984): 145-150  
**My best post and why due**

- Nov. 3**      **Peace and Violence**  
**Required Reading:** Matt. 5:38-48; Daniel Smith Christopher, “Political Atheism and Radical Faith,” in *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Non-violence in Religious Traditions*, ed. Daniel Smith Christopher (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 141-166; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, *Women’s Bodies as Battlefield* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 2015), 154-159; Tertullian, “Concerning Military Service” (1

page); Augustine, "Letter 189 to Boniface" (3 pages); H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing" (4 pages); Reinhold Niebuhr, "Must We Do Nothing?" (4 pages); Elizabeth Anscombe, "The Justice of the Present War Examined" (10 pages); Michael Baxter and Lisa Cahill, "Is This Just War?" (4 pages); Dorothy Day, "Our Country Passes from Undeclared War to Declared War" (3 pages)

**Nov. 10**      **Church and Politics**

**Required Reading:** James Davidson Hunter, *The Christian Right*, 19 pages; Perpetua, "The Martyrdom of Perpetua" (6 pages); Eusebius of Caesarea, "On the Dedication of the Holy Sepulchre Church" (2 pages); Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman" (1 page); Reinhold Niebuhr, "Democracy, Secularism, and Christianity," 3 pages; Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," "I Have a Dream," and "Where Do We Go from Here" (17 pages); James Cone, "Legacies of the Cross and the Lynching Tree" (9 pages); Walter Rauschenbusch, *The Kingdom of God*, 9 pages.

**Nov. 17**      **Money and Business**

**Required Reading:** Clement of Alexandria, "Who is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?" (11 pages); John Wesley, "The Use of Money" (11 pages); Martin Luther King, Jr., "I See the Promised Land" (3 pages); Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Church in the Process of Liberation" (3 pages); Michael Hanby, "Interceding: Giving Grief to Management" (13 pages); Keri Day, *Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism*, "Conclusion" (26 pages)

**Paper Proposal Due**

**Nov. 24**      **Professional Ethics**

**Required Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; James Gustafson, "Professions as 'Callings'," in *Moral Discernment in The Christian Life* (), 126-138; Karen Lebacqz and Joseph Driscoll, "Ethics for Clergy" in *Ethics and Spiritual Care* (Abingdon Press, 2010), 37-55; Karen Lebacqz and Ronald Barton, "Pastoral Power," in *Sex in the Parish* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press: 1991), 93-112

Part 5: Integration and Wrap-up

**Dec. 1**      **Last Class**

**Required Reading:** Beverly Harrison, "Living in Resistance: Interview with Pamela Brubaker," in *Justice in the Making: Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Elizabeth M. Bounds, et al. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 215-219; M. Shawn Copeland, "Saying Yes, Saying no," in *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2019), 59-71.

**Final Paper due**

**My best post and why due**

## UW Policies on Academic Integrity

**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 Undergraduate Associate 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](#).

**Accommodation for students with learning differences:** The [Access Ability Services](#) office, located on the first floor of 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.

**Accommodation for Illness:** 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. More information can be obtained from Health Services and the form is available in pdf: <https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness>

**The Writing Centre:** Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit [www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre)

### Mental Health Support:

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

### On Campus

- Counselling Services: [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and

### Counselling Services

- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

### Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#). Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#). Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

## Territorial Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, please see the [CAUT Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory \(PDF\)](#)