Spring 2014
Introduction to Christian Ethics (ET-525)
Heidi Hadsell
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Class Dates – January 29, February 12, March 5 & 26, April 23 - 9:00am-5:30pm
Office Hours – Mondays – 3:00-5:00pm, Fridays – 10:00-1:00pm

Course Description
This course is designed to introduce students to the basic concepts, methods and resources of Christian ethics so that the student not only understands but is equipped to use these basic building blocks in daily life and leadership. The course will also provide a chance for students to explore some of the central issues in Christian ethics today.

Course Goals
1) Each student becomes familiar with the basic concepts methods and resources that compose the discipline of Christian Ethics, and is able to discuss them with fellow students.
2) Each student acquires the ability to use the concepts and methods in real life situations that all leaders are likely to confront.
3) Each student demonstrates the ability to engage in critical thought about the nature of Christian ethics itself as well as about the issues it addresses.
4) Each student will be evaluated on how he/she demonstrates the knowledge of Christian Ethics acquired in the class, through engaging in reasoned moral argument in written work and classroom discussions, and the ability to apply what has been learned, through case studies that are presented in class or that arise outside of class.

Expectations
1) Complete assigned reading in preparation for the class session for which it is assigned.
2) Participate fully in class discussions and activities.
3) Timely submission of written assignments.

Attendance Policy
Attendance at all class sessions is expected. If, for any reason, a student cannot attend a session, notice should be given to the instructors as early as possible, so that any appropriate make-up experiences can be assigned.

Course Reading
Students should purchase the following books:
- Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide by Robin Lovin
- The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith by Marcus Borg
- **Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women’s Lives Matter** by Traci C. West

**Course Assignments**
- One paper based on course material
- One case study analysis
- One written moral argument from one perspective on ethics as the center of ethics

All other readings will be available on SONISWEB.

**Introduction to Christian Ethics  (January 29 & February 12)**
What is Ethics?
Since everyone is in some sense a moral agent engaged in ethical reflection and action, how does informal, lived ethics differ from ethics as an academic discipline? How is the academic discipline of ethics helpful to moral life?
What makes Christian ethics Christian?
What are the connections between Christian ethics and Christian theology, and other theological disciplines?
Who ‘does’ Christian Ethics?
What are the Basic Building Blocks of Christian Ethics?

**Reading**
Robin Lovin, *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide*

**Some of the Voices in the Conversation  (March 5 & 26)**
Since the area of Christian ethics is varied and vast in terms of the identities of who “does” Christian ethics, the methods they use, and the issues they address, it is important to become familiar with some of the specific voices and issues in the field. Each has something to contribute to the wider conversation.

**Readings**
Marcus Borg, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*
Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics, When Racism and Women’s Lives Matter*
Leonardo Boff - chapter to be distributed
Stanley Hauerwas - article to be distributed
Larry Rasmussen - to be distributed

Assignment for this section of the course: do all the reading. Choose one perspective and be ready to argue for it as the core of Christian ethics.
Christian Relations with People of Other Faiths (April 23)

A long-standing and often contentious issue in Christianity is how Christians should relate to peoples of other faiths. This question has emerged as a central moral issue key to the nature of Christianity as a whole in the 21st century, and also key to ministry in local contexts, as families and individuals find themselves in contexts and relationships that are interfaith.

Paul Knitter - TBA

Wesley Ariarajah - TBA

Catholic Encyclical

WCC

Finally, it is important to consider the question of some of the ways in which Christian Ethics – through the thought and actions of individual Christians and Christian groups – has contributed (not always positively) to the larger world.

Readings

David Hollinger, After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History

2 chapters to be distributed