

## **Theological Ethics and the Public Life** **Fall 2018**

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**Course Description:** This course will examine issues of public morality and faith from a Christian perspective. We begin with a brief introduction to theological ethics, and then move to look at major issues in society: justice, economics, war and peace, the environment, as well as relationships and racial/ethnic divisions. Attention will be given to how one's theological commitments inform one's actions and moral decisions.

**Aims of the Course:**

1. To understand how the discourse of faith can apply to issues of public morality
2. To learn the key approaches to Christian ethics
3. To apply those approaches to specific moral dilemmas
4. To learn how to dissect the central ethical issues of a given situation

**Course Requirements:**

### **One Book Review** **20 points**

Should be 3-5 pages. The book review should provide both summary and analysis, including what messages this book has to offer the average Christian on how to live a moral life. It is due via email on November 1. See below for book choices.

### **Case Study Analyses (Four Total)** **15 points each (60 points total)**

Four times during the semester students will be required to submit a case study analysis. The paper will be 3-5 pages in length. It will use one of the case studies in *Morality Play* as its basis. The paper will be in three parts:

- 1) Identifying major ethical issue(s)
- 2) Propose a course of action or resolution, providing theological and/or biblical justification, citing Scripture and the textbook
- 3) Summary statement of why this issue should matter to contemporary Christians

### **Weekly Online Posts** **20 points**

Each week students need to complete at least three posts in the online platform.

Students should do one on the materials for the week (no more than 300 well chosen words) posted by Wednesday at 11pm. In addition students must engage and comment on at least one post written by another student (no more than 200 words) posted by Friday at 5 pm.

Each week students should also post a news story that contains an ethical issue. In addition to the link to the news story, please post a paragraph indicating why you chose the story, what the ethical issue(s) is/are, and what you would do in the situation. News Stories should be posted by 5pm on Wednesdays.

### **A Note About Plagiarism**

Hartford Seminary strictly adheres to the Plagiarism Policy. Written papers and theses must be typed and should conform to the styles and format for footnotes and acknowledgments announced by the course instructor. For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the *Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper*. These

guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/> . Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian's, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, (6<sup>th</sup> Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1996), upon which the guidelines are based.

Grading Scale (within letter grades there will be +'s and -'s)

90-100%    A    75-89%    B    60-74%    C    below 60%    F

## **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

### **Required Texts**

Robin Gill, A Textbook of Christian Ethics, 4th edition.

Jessica Pierce, Morality Play: Case Studies in Ethics, 2nd edition

### **Book Reviews:**

*No Future without Forgiveness* by Desmond Tutu

**OR**

*Public Faith in Action: How to Engage with Commitment, Conviction, and Courage* by Miraslov Volf and Ryan McAllen-Linz

**OR**

*Thank you for being late* by Thomas Friedman

### **Week 1: Introductions**

### **Week 2: Methodology**

Read Gill, section 1, Intro & Texts I - III

### **Week 3: Methodology**

Read Gill, section 1, Extracts 1-8 (including analysis & critique)

### **Week 4: Politics, Economics & Justice**

Read Gill, section 2, Intro & Text IV-VI

**Case Analysis #1 Due (on a case from Chapter 1 or 2)**

### **Week 5: Politics, Economics & Justice**

Read Gill, section 2, Extracts 9-16 (including analysis & critique)

### **Week 6: War and Peace**

Read Gill, section 3, Intro & Text VII-IX

### **Week 7: War and Peace**

Read Gill, section 3, Extracts 17-23 (including analysis & critique)

**Case Analysis #3 Due (on a case from Chapter 3)**

### **Week 8: Book Reviews Due (online discussion will focus on books)**

### **Week 9: The Environment**

Read Gill, section 4, Intro & Text X-XII

**Week 10: The Environment**

Read Gill, section 4, Extracts 24-29 (including analysis & critique)

**Case Analysis #3 Due (on a case from Chapter 4)**

**Week 12: Human Life and Relationships**

Read Gill, section 5, Intro & Text XIII & XV

**Week 13: Human Life and Relationships**

Read Gill, section 5, Extracts 34-37(including analysis & critique)

**Week 14: Wrap Up**

**Case Analysis #4 Due (on a case from Chapter 5)**