



ETHC5300 CHRISTIAN ETHICS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological & Historical Studies
Defend Conference—January 2-5, 2024

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

In this introduction to the study and practice of Christian ethics, the student will examine philosophical and theological backgrounds for ethics, the role of biblical authority, and the historical relation between church and culture in order to develop a valid method of moral decision making, examine the importance of ministerial ethics, evaluate ethical issues, and lead the church in applying the gospel to life.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to provide moral leadership by modeling Christian character and communicating ethical truth, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. **Understand** the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic.
2. Be able to **apply** a Christian ethic to contemporary issues.
3. Be able to **communicate** Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly.

Required Texts

Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. 2nd ed. Updated and Expanded. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
Lemke, Steve. *Learning the Virtues: An Introduction to Christian Ethics*. New Orleans: NOBTS, 2000. Available free in .pdf format in Canvas. You are welcome to download it &/or print it, but please do not share with others without permission.

Course Teaching Methodology

This is an event course tied to attending the Defend the Faith Conference at NOBTS. The Breakout sessions for this course include lectures and class discussions. Each breakout session in the conference is recorded. Following the conference, students will continue to learn through

reading and writing assignments, examination, and audio resources.

Course Requirements

You must turn in all assignments to pass the class. Submit all assignments to the class Canvas Shell.

Conference Participation and Notes (100 points, 10% of final grade)

Due 2 weeks after the Conference -- Friday, January 19, 2024

Participation in the Conference requires that students do the following:

- Attend all Plenary Sessions.
- Attend break-out presentations, particularly topics related to Ethics.
- Listen to audio recordings Ethics breakout sessions not physically attended.
- Attend breakout sessions taught by Dr. Lemke, & other breakout sessions addressing Ethics that he points out in the schedule.
- Turn in notes for 10 sessions – five related to Ethics & five of your choice, either plenary or breakout sessions.

Textbook Reading Report (100 points, 10% of final grade)

Due 4 weeks after the Conference -- Friday, February 2, 2024

Each student is required to submit notes from our primary text, *Ethics for a Brave New World*, by the Feinbergs. The notes should include at least one page summarizing the key teachings and insights of each chapter. Each student should also affirm that they have read all of *Learning the Virtues* & the PowerPoints which will be shared through Canvas.

Two Book Reviews: (150 points each, 15% of final grade each)

Book Review One Due (6 weeks after the Conference) -- Friday, February 16, 2024

Book Review Two Due (8 weeks after the Conference) -- Friday, March 1, 2024

Students will write **two** book reviews from any two books the student chooses with asterisks (**) in the class bibliography. The reviews should be 4-6 pages each, single spaced, and include the following:

1. Each book review should be a thoughtful, informed response, taking into account biblical, theological, and ethical principles and sound reasoning.
2. The critique should be 4-6 single spaced typed pages.
3. Content should include the following, with a subheading for each of the bulleted items below. **Do not simply summarize chapters:**
 - A brief statement introducing the author and title of the book and communicating that the book has been read in its entirety. If the book has not been completely read, then communicate the truth about how much was read.
 - The primary thesis, purpose, and/or description of the book.
 - Major ethical insights communicated by the book. What points are particularly helpful for applying Christian ethics?

- Ideas that changed or challenged your thinking (Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic). How and Why?
- Insights in this book that relate practically to life and ministry, the life of the church, and to moral life in America.
- Major strengths and weaknesses of the book.
- In the conclusion, a brief statement of recommendation; why you would or would not recommend this book.

Final Exam (250 points, 25% of final grade)

Submitted via the Class Canvas—DO NOT EMAIL.

Due 10 weeks after the Conference -- Friday, March 15, 2024

Note: Exam will open in Canvas by March 1, 2024

Each student must complete a Final Take-Home Exam. The exam will be comprehensive in scope, drawing from the lectures and assigned readings, and essay in form. The exam will test both *mastery of content* and *critical thinking skills*. In addition to the course readings from both of the texts, the test questions will be drawn from the video presentations & PowerPoints by Dr. Lemke & the Ethics presentations at the Defend conference.

The first question on the Final Exam is a question that is asked in all NOBTS Ethics classes in order to measure student achievement of the course objectives, and will be assessed by other professors, so you will want to do your best work on this assignment. It is the “Letter of Christian Counsel,” described below. You can start preparing this assignment earlier than when the Final Exam is due, so you can take your time in doing it.

Letter of Christian Counsel – The assignment is:

Write a letter to a young believer (spiritual age, not necessarily physical age) who is struggling with how to relate to a friend who practices homosexuality or has strong same sex attractions. The friend makes statements like, “I believe Jesus is real and he died for me and all that, but I don’t understand how he could make it a sin for me to be a homosexual when I honestly can’t help it.”

Note that the letter is to a friend who has a friend who is practicing homosexuality. The friend is not a practicing homosexual. It is a letter of Christian counsel. Use Scripture. Be informative. Be sure your tone is gracious and helpful but informative about biblical standards.

For this assignment, use the following instructions:

- Single-space type your letter.
- Do not type more than 2 single-spaced pages.
- In your response, draw from the facts, concepts, judgments, and so forth that you have been learning in your readings and class notes in regard to the issue of homosexuality. Use some of the terminology from your studies.
- *Incorporate Scripture into your response*, utilizing good hermeneutical principles.
- Remember the tools you have been learning and use them when and where appropriate.
- Be alert to your tone. Be redemptive, while clearly communicating biblical moral truth.

- Some of you personally know people who practice homosexual behavior. You might keep them in mind while crafting your letter.
- This is your letter, so you have liberty in what you say and how you say it. You will not be able to say everything, so be fluid and succinct in what you do say while demonstrating that you can communicate moral truth effectively, graciously, and clearly.

Assessment Rubric for the Letter of Christian Counsel in the Final Exam
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Domain	Level	Inadequate (0 pt)	Basic (1 pt)	Competent (2 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Excellent (4 pts)
UNDERSTANDING	Able to understand the biblical and philosophical basis for a Christian ethic					
APPLICATION	Able to apply a Christian ethic to contemporary issues					
COMMUNICATION	Able to communicate Christian ethical and moral truths competently and convincingly					

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below. Borderline grades will normally be determined by the numerical grade received (I round up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in submitting assignments or extraordinary life situation and positive attitude warrant special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade. In special cases, extra credit can be arranged.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu -- Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site -- (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com -- Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu -- Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ -- General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Check the Defend Conference event schedule to see the topics, times, and locations for the Ethics Breakout Sessions. Any breakout session taught by Dr. Lemke will count towards the Christian Ethics course and must be either attended or listened to via recording to get full credit for conference participation. Dr. Lemke will suggest other sessions addressing Ethics.

Miscellaneous but Important Course Policies

1. **Participation.** You must attend the conference.
2. **Absences.** You must attend the entire Defend Conference to get credit for the course.
3. **Late Work.** Work turned in late will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per day) unless **prior permission** is sought and a legitimate reason warrants lateness. **Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.**

Selected Bibliography

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