

ETH 500: Introduction to Christian Ethics

Thursdays 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Location HyFlex: Classroom (TBA) / Online

Instructor: Rudolph P. Reyes II

Instructor contact information:

Stead 304 / rudolph.reyes@garrett.edu

Office hours: Via calendly (Posted on Moodle)

Updated: 8.4.22



Note: This syllabus is a living document. It is subject to further change or revisions based on the learning outcomes of this course. Changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and through Moodle.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce you doing Christian ethics from the margins at the intersections. The first section of this course takes a thematic approach. It focuses on motifs as a heuristic to distinguish between different forms of ethical thinking and action. The second section of the course explores doing Christian ethics at the intersections and examines constructions of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, and the environment.

Course Modality

This course is a hyflex course. A hyflex course allows students to choose in-person or online from session to session; if student attends more than 50% in-person, counts as an in-person course; if student attends more than 50% online then it counts toward online course limits.

Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of the course, you will be able to:

1. identify implicit ethical assumptions of society
2. critically examine your own ethical assumptions
3. develop an understanding of ethics you can articulate and advocate as religious leaders
4. relate theoretical ethical perspectives to select issues in church and society

Contacting the Instructor

You can set up a time to meet with me during student hours through calendly. The link is available on Moodle.

Please note that I typically check email between 9am and 5pm on weekdays. I do not check my email at all on the weekends or holidays to devote time to family, rest, and God. Messages received during these times will receive attention once I am back online. Otherwise, you can expect to receive a response to your message within 36 hours, often much sooner.

Seminary's Inclusivity/Diversity Statement

“The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed.... All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues.” (Access 19-20 Handbook, 9)

Inclusive Learning Environment

I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official Garrett records, please let me know!
- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.
- I am multiply neurodivergent and have used accommodations as a student, and I want you to tell me what you need best participate in class. I have focused on accessibility in the design of this course.

Academic Accommodations

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to **providing the most accessible learning environment** as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience **disability-related barriers** in the academic setting, please contact Student Access to move forward with the established accommodation process (e: student.access@garrett.edu; p: 847- 467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with Student Access, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we **can work together** to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is **confidential under FERPA regulations**.

Wellness Resources

Wellness Resources available to Garrett students are posted in the myGETS 'Community Life' section (login to myGETS required). They include Counseling and Spiritual Direction resources, discounted LA Fitness Gym membership, childcare grants information (pre-school aged children), and free local food access resources.

<https://mygets.garrett.edu/ICS/Community Life/Wellness and Health Care/>

Required Readings and Materials

Articles or chapters are provided as pdfs on Moodle or accessible online through Styberg Library.

Course Requirements

Final grades are determined by a portfolio and participation. They are weighted as follows:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Paper 1 | 20% |
| Paper 2 | 25% |
| Paper 3 | 25% |
| Participation | |
| Facilitation | 10% |
| Discussion Notes | 20% |

Participation in Learning Community

Students are expected to attend and come prepared for class through reading the material and offer their insights, confusions, and interests based on the readings. Participation is worth 30% of your grade.

Discussion Notes

Students are required to write weekly one page double-space discussion notes that answer the questions under "Reading Criteria." These discussion notes are based on the material and serve as a basis for class discussion and aid you in your paper. These discussion notes can be in the form of bullet points, sentences, full paragraphs or a mind map.

Reading Criteria:

Who is the author? What is the author's social location?

What is the author's thesis? (In one sentence)

The thesis question should be answered in one sentence: this is a valuable skill to practice that will enable you to process information efficiently and effectively.

What is the author's method and theory?

Method is the means by which the author conducts research. Is it history? Sociology? Literary criticism? If interdisciplinary, what are the composite disciplines? Theory is how the author explains the research findings.

How did this reading further your self-understanding of ethical issues?

Discuss the contributions the reading has made to your understanding of the topics in this class; or whether the reading has raised more questions than answers; if so, articulate those questions.

How did this reading further your understanding of this motif/topic?

In light of the reading and class lecture, suggest a specific act of justice you feel motivated to do?

Facilitation

You are asked to facilitate a discussion based off one of the readings using the discussion notes as your guide.

Papers

There are three papers for this course. Paper #1 is a 2-to-3-page double space paper. Paper # 2 & #3 are 5-page double space papers. These paper topics and grading rubrics will be announced in class and posted online.

Basis for course grades

Final course grade is based upon the follow scale:

| | |
|----|---------------|
| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 84-86% |
| B- | 80-83% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 74-76% |
| C- | 70-73% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 59% and below |

Class Schedule (Topics and Readings):

| Week | Date/ Mode | Topic | Reading |
|------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | 9/8 | Intro to Christian Ethics | |
| | | | |

| Motifs | | | |
|--|-------|------------------------|---|
| 2 | 9/15 | Liberative Motif | <p>Miguel De La Torre, "Doing Latina/o Ethics from the Margins of Empire: Liberating the Colonized Mind." <i>Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics</i> 33, no. 2 (2013): 3-20.</p> <p>Emilie M Townes, "Ethics as an art of doing the work our souls must have" in <i>Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader</i></p> |
| 3 | 9/22 | Relational Motifs | <p>Riggs, Marcia. "What Do Nineteenth-Century Reformers Have to Say to Twentieth-Century Liberations?" in <i>Awake, Arise, and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation</i>.</p> <p>Ismael García, <i>Dignidad</i>, 53-64</p> |
| 4 | 9/29 | Virtue Motif | <p>Melanie L. Harris, "Doing the Work: Building a Womanist Virtue Ethic" "Take Back Your Life: Virtues to Live By," in <i>Gifts of Virtue, Alice Walker, and Womanist Ethics</i>.</p> <p>Paper #1 Due: Tu 9/27</p> |
| 5 | 10/6 | Deliberative Motifs | <p>Grace Kao, <i>Grounding Human Rights in a Pluralist World</i>, 1-10.</p> <p>Ismael García, <i>Dignidad</i>, 35-44</p> |
| Doing Christian Ethics at the Intersections | | | |
| 6 | 10/13 | Hermeneutical Circle | <p>Miguel De La Torre, "The Liberation of Ethics" in <i>Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins</i>.</p> <p>Kim, Grace Ji-Sun and Susan M. Shaw, "Introduction to Intersectionality" in <i>Intersectional Theology: an Introductory Guide</i></p> <p>Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, "Un Poquito de Justicia/ A Little Bit of Justice" in <i>Mujerista Theology</i></p> |
| 7 | 10/20 | Reading & Writing Days | No Class |

| | | | |
|----|-------|---------------------|--|
| 7 | 10/27 | Race | <p>Choi, Ki Joo (KC). "Asian American Christian Ethics: The State of the Discipline." <i>Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics</i> 38.2 (2018): 33–44.</p> <p>Douglas, Kelly Brown. "Stop the Violence: Breaking the Cycle of Anti-Black Violence." <i>Interpretation</i> (Richmond) 71.4 (2017): 398–407.</p> |
| 8 | 11/3 | Ability | <p>Creamer, Deborah. "Understanding Disability" in <i>Disability and Christian Theology Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities</i>.</p> <p>Walker, "Throw Away the Master's Tools"</p> <p>Paper #2 Due Tu 11/1</p> |
| 9 | 11/10 | Gender | <p>Emilie M Townes, "The Womanist Dancing Mind," in <i>Deeper Shades of Purple : Womanism in Religion and Society</i>. Ed. Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, New York: New York University Press, 2006.</p> <p>Jeanette Rodríguez, "Latina Activists: Toward an Inclusive Spirituality of Being in the World" In <i>A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology : Religion and Justice</i>.</p> |
| 10 | 11/17 | Sexuality | <p>Ellison, Marvin. "Why Do We Have to Keep Talking about Sex All the Time" in <i>Making Love Just: Sexual Ethics for Perplexing Times</i>.</p> <p>West, Traci C. "Black Bisexual Queering of Anti-VIOLENCE Christian Ethics." <i>Modern believing</i> 60, no. 1 (2019): 15–28.</p> |
| | 11/24 | Thanksgiving Recess | No Class |
| 11 | 12/1 | Class | <p>Keri Day, "The Myth of Progress" in <i>Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism</i></p> <p>Joerg Rieger, "Welcome to the Great American Middle Class: From the American Dream to Deep Solidarity," in <i>Theological Perspectives for Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness</i></p> |

| | | | |
|----|--------------|-----------|--|
| 12 | 12/8 | Ecology | <p>Melanie L. Harris, "Ecowomanism: Black Women, Religion, and the Environment." <i>The Black scholar</i> 46, no. 3 (2016): 27–39.</p> <p>Grace Y Kao, "The Universal versus the Particular in Ecofeminist Ethics." <i>The Journal of religious ethics</i> 38, no. 4 (2010): 616–637.</p> <p>Paper #3 Due Tu 12/6</p> |
| 13 | Tu. 12/13 | Wild Card | |