

FYI: This is a living document. The syllabus changes as we move through the course to be responsive to student needs and current events. The most up to date course information will always be found on Moodle!

ETH 500 Introduction to Christian Ethics

Instructor: Kate Ott, PhD kate.ott@garrett.edu

Email is the most efficient means of contact.

Course Description

A systematic treatment of the central themes and issues of Christian ethics, with particular attention to the life of the Christian community and its place in the social order. This course prioritizes the “doing of Christian ethics” from the margins at the intersections. The first section of this course focuses on the role of sources and methodologies in Christian ethics. The second focuses on applied ethics examining issues like race, gender, sexuality, economics, militarism and the environment.

Learning Objectives

Throughout the course students will:

- Become acquainted with a variety of approaches that inform and shape the field of Christian ethics.
- Identify social and personal ethical assumptions and how they relate to communities of accountability.
- Develop an understanding of ethics you can articulate and advocate as religious leaders in society
- Practice applying theoretical ethical perspectives to select issue in church and society
- Demonstrate critical thinking and communication skills, while exhibiting an openness to learning and a respectful attitude of others.

Learning Modality

This class is HyFlex: HyFlex is a course design model that presents the components of hybrid learning (which combines face-to-face with online learning) in a flexible course structure that gives students the option of attending sessions in the classroom, participating online, or doing both. Because of the use of small groups, you will need to notify the instructor the week prior to class about which modality you will use each week or you can select one for the whole semester (which is preferred). A hyflex course typically allows students to engage learning activities in three ways: in-person, synchronous online, and asynchronous online.

Required Texts

Bretherton, Luke. *A Primer in Christian Ethics : Christ and the Struggle to Live Well*. 2023 First ed. Cambridge United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. \$34.99 Amazon
Most reading material is available via Moodle article scans or online through Garrett’s library.

Course Requirements

Course grades are an average of the total points accumulated for each course requirement (100 total points possible).

Attendance and Fulsome Participation in Discussions and Case Study Analysis - 40pts
Methods and Communities of Accountability Paper – 30pts
Applied Ethics Case Study Paper - 30pts

Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

Writing

- Academic integrity and plagiarism: (See 22-23 Handbook, 12, 68-73). Instructors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.
- Writing and citations: The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See the "Writing Center" Moodle page for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

- Inclusivity/Diversity: 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.
(See 22-23 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (22-23 Handbook, 19)
- Some faculty may limit the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session. From Dr. Ott: *Non-instructional use of technology in the classroom or during online sessions is strongly discouraged. Creating an engaged learning environment is the responsibility of everyone. The teaching/learning experience is one that requires focus and attention. Please silence mobile phones and refrain from computer use (internet searches, emailing, sms, social media, etc.) that is not directly part of the classroom experience.*

Academic Accommodations

- Garrett's Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities policy and process is set out in the Academic Handbook (22-23 Handbook, 12). We are 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 (email: student.access@garrett.edu / phone: 847-467-5530) to move forward with the established accommodation process. If you already have established accommodations with Student Access, please contact the instructor prior to the first class session so the instructor can work with you to implement

your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential under FERPA regulations.

- Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (22-23 Handbook, 20)

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)

Course Schedule

Class 1: Introduction to Christian Ethics

Review Syllabus

Opening discussion of defining Christian ethics

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics - INTRODUCTION

Beverly Harrison, "Doing Christian Ethics" in Justice in the Making

Small groups for "Save the Last Word" will be chosen.

DOING CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Class 2: Human Agency and Action

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – part II intro and chapter 7

Darryl Trimiew, "For those affected by drugs" in To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians (moodle pdf)

Daisy L. Machado, "The Unnamed woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman" in A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology (moodle pdf)

Small groups for "Save the Last Word".

Class Three: Divine Command and Rule Following

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – part II Chapter 8 and 9

Marcia Riggs, "What do 19th Century Reformers Have to Say to 20th Century Liberationists?" in Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader (moodle pdf)

Small groups for "Save the Last Word".

Class Four: Virtue & Visions in Deliberation and Judgement

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – part II Chapter 10 and 11

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" (moodle pdf)

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz "La Palabra de Dios en Nosotras - The Word of God in Us" in Searching the Scriptures, Volume One: A Feminist Introduction, ed., E. Schussler Fiorenza (moodle pdf)

Small groups for "Save the Last Word".

Class Five: Describing Well – Familial and Creaturely Ancestors

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – part I Intro, Chapter 2, 6

Rudy Reyes, “Beyond the Prophetic Temptation of Ecological Disgust.” In Gonna Trouble the Waters: Ecojustice, Water, and Environmental Racism, ed. by Miguel De La Torre, 87-95, Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2021.

Optional Readings -

- Willis Jenkins, “Ethics in the Anthropocene” in The Future of Christian Ethics
- Melanie L. Harris, “Honoring Womanist Experience” chapter one in Ecowomanism: African

American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths

In class Discussion: Case Study on Food Ethics

Small groups for “Save the Last Word”.

Class Six: Describing Well – Listening to Scripture

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – Chapter 3

Optional Readings -

- Philip Wogaman, "The Biblical Legacy" Chap 1, in Christian Ethics: An Historical Introduction
- Ken Stone, “What the Homosexuality Debates Really Say about the Bible” in Miguel De La Torre, ed., in Out of the Shadows into the Light

Small groups for “Save the Last Word”.

Class Seven: Describing Well – Listening to Strangers and Cries for Liberation

Read: Luke Bretherton, A Primer in Christian Ethics – part I Intro, Chapter 4, 5

Laura Stivers, "Economic Liberative Ethics" in Ethics: A Liberative Approach

Optional Readings -

- Melissa Snarr, "Bridge building and political engagements in racialized economies" in All You That Labor: Religion and Ethics in the Living Wage Movement
- Keri Day, “The Myth of Progress” in Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism

Review Website: Poor People's Campaign

In Class: Case Study on Wage Equality

****METHODS PAPER DUE**

APPLIED SOCIAL ETHICS

Class Eight – Sexuality and Gender Ethics

November 2, 2023

Read:

- Traci West, Chapter 2, "Feminist/Womanist Terms and Sexual Violence" in Disruptive Christian Ethics
- Justin Sabia-Tanis, "Gender as a Calling" in Trans-Gender: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith
- Boyung Lee, “Teaching Sexual Ethics in Faith Communities” in Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach, ed. Patricia Jung and Darryl Stephens

Optional Reading:

- Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, “Trans-Forming Feminist Christianity” in New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Visions FYI - This file has other articles, only read the first by Mollenkott.
- Kate Ott, Chapter 1 “In the Image of God: To consume and make online pornography” in Sex, Tech & Faith: Ethics for a Digital Age
- Sylvia Thornson-Smith, "Becoming Possessed: Toward Sexual Health and Well-being" in Body and Soul, eds. Marvin Ellison and Sylvia Thornson-Smith

Review Website: UMSexualEthics.org

In Class Discussion: Case Study on Pastoral Responses to “Coming Out”

Class Nine - Race and Racism

November 9, 2023

Read:

Traci West, Chapter 4 “Liturgy: Church Worship and White Superiority” in *Disruptive Christian Ethics*
Choi, Ki Joo (KC). “Asian American Christian Ethics: The State of the Discipline.” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 38.2 (2018): 33–44.

“US Latino/a Contributions to the Field: Retrospect and Prospect” Author collective Rodríguez, Rubén Rosario ; Dávila, María Teresa ; Carmona, Victor ; Delgado, Teresa in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 2018, Vol.38 (2), p.45-56

In Class Discussion: Case Study on Whiteness as Christian Production

Class Ten – Culture

Read: Tink Tinker, “American Indian Liberative Ethics” in *Ethics: a Liberative Approach*
Chitando, “African Liberative Ethics” in *Ethics: a Liberative Approach*

In Class Discussion: Case Study on Cultural Appropriation and Historical Erasure

Class Eleven – Internet/Social Networking Ethics

November 16,

2023

Read:

John Dyer, “Imagination” in *From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology*

Philip Butler, Chapter 12, “Beyond the Live and Zoomiverse” in *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church: Theological Reflections on a New Normal* eds. Heidi Campbell and John Dyer

Kate Ott, “How should Christians respond to the challenges of AI?” *US Catholic*,

<https://uscatholic.org/articles/202307/how-should-christians-respond-to-the-challenges-of-ai/>

Optional reading:

- Eds. Pauline Hope Cheong and Heidi Campbell, [Thinking Tools for AI, Religion & Culture](#), Digital Religion Publications, TAMU

Visit: Global Network for Digital Theology, <https://gonedigital.media/>

In Class Discussion: Case Study on Social Media and Public Religious Leadership

Class Twelve – Healthcare and Bioethics

- Marvin Ellison, “Is Pro-life or Pro-Choice What We Mean to Say?” in *Making Love Just*

- Dorcas Olubanke Akintunde “Women as Traditional Healers: The Nigerian (Yoruba) Example” in *African Women, Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, eds. Isabel Apawo Phiri and Sarojini Nadar

- Don E. Messer, “When It’s My Turn, How Shall I Decide?”

Visit: The Conversation Project at <http://theconversationproject.org/> - Starting End of Life Discussions

In Class Discussion: Case Study on End of Life Decisions

Final Class & Group Case Studies

Bring your final project case study and paper outline to class on Dec 12 for small group workshopping.

Final paper - written evaluations of individual case studies due on Moodle

Save the Last Word Class Discussions

The first half of classes 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be fulsome peer-to-peer learning groups.

Save the Last Word Class Discussion Protocol is as follows:

The assigned group leader for the specific class period (Class 2, 3, 4, or 5) will select 1 passage from each of the course required readings for that date that exemplify how you answer the discussion question. For example, the class three discussion question is: "How do you prioritize the use of Scripture when doing Christian social ethics?" Come to class prepared to share your passages and describe how the passage illustrates your answer to the question. (Hint: you can even pick passages you disagree with, they illustrate your answer to the question by showing the opposing argument.)

Forum Topic Questions:

- How should Christian social ethics be done?
- How do you prioritize the use of Scripture when doing Christian social ethics?
- What are the primary Christian theological tenets that you prioritize when doing Christian social ethics?
- What role should the use of personal experience play when doing Christian social ethics?

The group leader will serve as the scribe. They should come to class with a document that has their original passages and an outline of their answer to the days question. During discussion as they facilitate, they will add notes from other group members. Group participants will take turns respond to the group leader's chosen passages by affirming or proposing other passages from the readings that best answer the question from their point of view.

***FYI:** All passages must be quoted and cited with page references.*

Every class period, these materials will be added to the moodle assignment individually by each group member. In other words, while one member is the leader and scribe, everyone uploads the shared notes to demonstrate individual participation.

****If you are sick or need to miss class for some excused reason, you will need to add your own response to the group shared notes in order to receive attendance points for that class day.**

Group Name	Members	Class 2 Leader Sept 14	Class 3 Leader Sept 21	Class 4 Leader Sept 28	Class 5 Leader Oct 5
Aka – Ethics Nerds	Jennifer Harvey, August Venuh, Rudy Reyes, Kate Ott	Kate	August	Rudy	Jen

