

B50HF01 Ethical Principles

Bachelor of Divinity Degree

Pacific Theological College

Semester 2B, 2015

Course Lecturer: Dr Richard Davis, Richard.Davis@ptc.ac.fj

Course Description

This course deals with Christian ethics and ethical principles. The main approaches to ethics will be outlined and surveyed, and the course will focus on core ethical principles and the implications of such principles in making decisions on moral issues. The nature of ethics as community ethics will be highlighted and will provide the form and context of such decision-making, and the significance of the Christ Event will determine its content. The course will look into some specific examples of current moral issues in Oceania and provide students with the opportunity of engaging with such issues in view of making ethical decisions.

Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand the place of character, choices and community in Christian ethics
- Relate cultural stories to Christian ethics
- Understand the difference between ethics and Christian ethics
- Name several sources of Christian ethics
- Describe various philosophical and theological ethical theories
- Use the Bible in Christian ethics
- Face moral problems

Method of Teaching

A combination of lectures, readings, writing, and class discussion.

Assessment

In all assessment you must ANSWER THE QUESTION. If you do not answer the question you will not do well. If you don't understand what is required in the essay please speak to the lecturer, either in class or after class. To pass the course you must pass both pieces of assessment.

1) **Essay** of 1000-1500 words worth 40% of final grade. It is due in class Monday 12 October 2014. Select a traditional story from your culture (this could a fable, myth, legend, or tale). Examine the story for its ethical content and how it contributes to the formation of character and community in the place where the story is told and known.

Your essay must not simply be a retelling of the story. You must state in brief outline what the story is (and, if not too long, attached it as an appendix to the essay). Your essay must draw on research you have done into the relationship between stories and ethics. You must provide evidence of this research by citing appropriate sources (generally speaking books and journals from the library). Your assignment

must have a completed "PTC Assignment Cover Sheet" attached to the front of the assignment. This can be obtained from http://ptc.ac.fj/?page_id=1136.

Suggested reading from the library collections for the essay

- Anderson, Terence R. 1993. *Walking the Way: Christian Ethics as a Guide* Toronto: The United Church Publishing House. See Chapter 3 - 'Worldview and Basic Convictions: Eyes to See, Ears to Hear'.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. 1981. "A Story-Formed Community: Reflections on Watership Down." In *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, 9–35. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Hauerwas, Stanley, with Richard Bondi and David B. Burrell. 1977. *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations in Christian Ethics* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. Various chapters.
- Hill, Jack. 2001. "Doing Ethics in the Pacific Islands: Interpreting Moral Dimensions of Prose Narrative." *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 21 (2001): 341–360. ONLINE: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23560117>
- Jones, L. Gregory and Stanley Hauerwas, eds. 1989. *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Spohn, William C. 1990. "Parable and Narrative in Christian Ethics." *Theological Studies* 51 (1):100–114. ONLINE: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000824618&site=ehost-live>

2) **Final Exam** to be held in Assessment Week. Three hours worth 60% of the final grade. Details to come.

Textbook and Readings

The textbook for this class is Russell B. Connors, Jr., and Patrick T. McCormick (1998). *Character, Choices & Community: The Three Faces of Christian Ethics* New York: Paulist Press. This is available from the PTC bookshop and is also in the library. We are reading most of this book for the course so you need to have it.

This textbook is supplemented by a number of other readings from books or journals. As required these are taken will be kept on closed reserve in the PTC Library. Ask at the issue desk for them. It is up to you whether you read them in the library or photocopy them for your personal study. Journal articles and book chapters will either be available through the library's online ATLA Religion Database, or in the library's filing cabinet.

There are several reference works on Christian Ethics also held by the library. These include:

- *Pocket Dictionary of Ethics* by Stanley J. Grenz and Jay T. Smith (Illinois, US: InterVarsity Press, 2003).
- *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society* edited by Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1996).
- *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* edited by David J. Atkinson et.al. (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995).
- *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics* edited by James F. Childress and John Macquarrie (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).
- *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* edited by James F. Childress and John Macquarrie (London: SCM Press, 1967).

- *A Dictionary of Christian Ethics* edited by John Macquarrie (London: SCM Press, 1967).

There are some other general works on reserve for help with essays and exam preparation:

- Boulton, Wayne G., Thomas D. Kennedy, and Allen Verhey, eds. 1994. *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press.

Course Outline

Week 1 - (week beginning 07 September 2015)

Session 1: Introduction to Ethics

No reading.

Session 2: Introduction to Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- Fey, Bill. 2013. "Ethics in the Pacific." *The Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series II (49): 9–33.

Further Optional Reading

- James M. Gustafson, *Can Ethics Be Christian?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). [in library]
- Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, eds. *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980). [in library]
- Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1950). [in library]
- Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative: A Study in Christian Ethics* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1937). [in library]
- Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1948). [in library]
- John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972). [in library]

Week 2 - (week beginning 14 September 2015)

Session 1: Christian Ethics in the Pacific

Required Reading

- Ryan, John J. 1976. "Moral Theology in the South Pacific - Colonization or Liberation?." *The South East Asia Journal of Theology*, 17 (2):41–48. [in library]

Further Optional Reading

- Forman, Charles W. (1982). *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. Chapter 6 - 'Christian Ethics in a South Sea Setting'. [in library]
- Johnson-Hill, Jack. (1992). "Ethics in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Foundational Values in the Pacific Islands" *Pacific Journal of Theology* Series II, 8:65-76. [in library]

- Mantovani, Ennio. (1990). "Christian Dialogue with Melanesian Values and Ethics" *Catalyst* 20(2): 97-115. [in library]
- Scharen, Christian and Aana Marie Vigen, eds. (2011). *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*. London: Continuum.

Session 2: Sources of Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 1.

Further Optional Reading

- Anderson, Terence R. (1993). *Walking the Way: Christian Ethics as a Guide* Canada: The United Church Publishing House. Chapter 5 - 'Authoritative Sources: Where the Good Way Lies'. [in library]
- Gustafson, James M. (1971). "The Relationship of Empirical Science to Moral Thought." *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 26: 122-137. Online: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15126312/GUSTAFSON_relationship_science.pdf

Week 3 - (week beginning 21 September 2015)

Session 1: Character in Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 2.

Further Optional Reading

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book II: Virtue of Character (1103a15-1109b29). [in library in various editions] Online: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.2.ii.html>
- Hauerwas, Stanley. (1981). *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. [in library]
- Hauerwas, Stanley. (1972). "Toward an Ethics of Character." *Theological Studies*, 33(4):698–715. ONLINE: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000737699&site=ehost-live>

Session 2: Choices in Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 3.

Further Optional Reading

- Campbell, Cynthia M. and Lewis R. Donelson, eds. (1991). *We Decide Together: A Guide to Making Ethical Decisions* Louisville: Horizons. [in library]

Week 4 - (week beginning 28 September 2015)

Session 1: Community in Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 4.

Further Optional Reading

- Haughey, John C. (1977). *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Plato, *The Republic*. ONLINE: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>

Session 2: Morality and Stories

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 5.

Further Optional Reading

- Anderson, Terence R. (1993). *Walking the Way: Christian Ethics as a Guide* Canada: The United Church Publishing House. Chapter 3 - 'Worldview and Basic Convictions: Eyes to See, Ears to Hear'. [in library]

Week 5 - (week beginning 05 October 2015)

Session 1: Christian Stories and Christian Morality

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 6.

Further Optional Reading

- Spohn, William C. (1995). *What Are They Saying About Scripture and Ethics?*. New York: Paulist Press. [in library]

Session 2: Conscience in Christian Ethics

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapters 7 and 8.

Further Optional Reading

- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press. Several chapters.

Week 6 - (week beginning 12 October 2015)

Session 1: Moral Norms

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 9.

Further Optional Reading

- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press. Several chapters.

Session 2: Moral Reasoning

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 10.

Further Optional Reading

- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press. Several chapters.

Week 7 - (week beginning 19 October 2015)

Session 1: Sin and Morality

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 11.

Further Optional Reading

- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press. Several chapters.

Session 2: Moral Conversion

Required Reading

- *Character, Choices & Community*, Chapter 12.

Further Optional Reading

- Hamel, Ronald P. and Kenneth R. Himes, eds. 1989. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*. New York: Paulist Press. Several chapters.