This course notebook is for the coordination of your course materials, including reading assignments and lecture recordings. Each course notebook for RTS Distance Education is arranged by the GUIDE acronym. The five components of GUIDE are organized in each lesson by the following steps in the notebook:

**GUIDE**

- **Getting Started**: To do the lessons, reading and listening assignments are listed.
- **Understanding**: To maximize learning, the purposes are given.
- **Investigating**: To explore the content, outlines are provided for note taking.
- **Developing**: To expand content, readings are suggested.
- **Evaluating**: To help review, lesson questions are based on purposes.
Professor
Dr. James N. Anderson comes to RTS from Edinburgh, Scotland, and specializes in philosophical theology, religious epistemology, and Christian apologetics. He has a long-standing concern to bring the Reformed theological tradition into greater dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy. Dr. Anderson has a Ph.D. in philosophical theology from the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the British Society for Philosophy of Religion, and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Prior to joining the faculty at RTS/Charlotte, Dr. Anderson served as an assistant pastor at Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh where he engaged in regular preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry.

Course Description
Students are introduced to terminology, major views, and problems in the study of ethics and to a biblical basis for morality. Basic concerns and current issues in social ethics are covered.

Course Objectives
• To familiarize the student with standard terminology, concepts, and issues involved in ethics, both Christian and non-Christian.
• To provide the student with a survey and critique of non-Christian theories of ethics.
• To equip the student with a biblical model for ethical decision-making.
• To assist the student in thinking through the application of God’s Word to a range of contemporary ethical issues, primarily through an exposition of the Decalogue.
• To develop the student’s ability to think critically about contemporary ethical issues and to articulate a well-reasoned Christian position on those issues.

Required Textbooks
[This book is currently not available in any e-book format]


[This book is currently not available in any e-book format]
Online Student Handbook

The Online Student Handbook has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual. You will find it located at the RTS Distance Education website (www.rts.edu/distance) under the Student Services tab.

Summary of Requirements

• Listen to all Recorded Lectures
• Complete all Readings
• Participate in Forum Discussions
• Give one 10-Minute Video Presentation
• Take the Final Exam
• Write the Research Paper
• Submit the Mentor Report / Course Application Paper

Forum Discussions (15%)

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
   A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
   B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student’s answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question therefore requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts =10 total posts).
   C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.

2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
   • A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.
Examinations (Final 25%)

The format of the exam will be a series of short-answer questions plus one longer essay question. You will have 3 hours to complete it. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.

The final exam for this course is to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exam. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (30%)

You should write a paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) in the form of an extended letter to a friend who, on hearing that you have taken a seminary course in ethics, has written to ask your opinion on an ethical matter of personal concern to him/her (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1). You are free to choose the ethical issue to write on, but you should ensure that it gives you the scope to produce a satisfactory paper based on the criteria below. You may wish to base the paper on a real-life situation from your own experience; if you can, so much the better, but be careful to preserve anonymity where appropriate! Further requirements and guidelines for the course paper are located in section titled “Course Paper Instructions” in this syllabus.

Video Presentation (20%)

You will be required to give one 10-minute video presentation to be uploaded into the LMS. Your video will defend a particular ethical thesis. The thesis options can be found in the assignment description in the LMS. You may not personally agree with the thesis you choose. Nevertheless, you should try to present the best defense you can. You will not be penalized if your chosen thesis is one that would normally be considered difficult for a Christian to defend. Your presentation will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of Scripture, familiarity with the issues and arguments (both pro and con), creativity, clarity, and coherence.

Note: It is strongly recommended, but not absolutely required, that you write out your presentation in full (it should be around 1000 words) and read from it for the video recording. Given the ubiquity of recording capabilities, you will be expected to submit your presentation as a video. However, if you are not able to record a video presentation on your laptop, tablet, or smartphone, you may ask the professor to allow you to submit a written version of your presentation.

Reading Report (5%)

Students will be required to submit a reading report acknowledging how much of the required reading has been completed. No partial credit is given for readings that have not been completed.

Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)

Each Global/Non-Residential student is required to have a mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student’s grade. For students who are not Global/Non-Residential, you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive
what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

Assignments

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information

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Lesson One
   Introduction to Ethics

Lesson Two
   Non-Christian Ethics: Survey and Critique

Lesson Three
   Christian Ethics: A Biblical Model - The Normative Perspective

Lesson Four
   Christian Ethics: A Biblical Model - The Situational and Existential Perspectives

Lesson Five
   The Decalogue: Introduction and the First through Third Commandments

Lesson Six
   The Fourth and Fifth Commandments

Lesson Seven
   The Sixth Commandment

Lesson Eight
   The Seventh Commandment

Lesson Nine
   The Eighth Commandment

Lesson Ten
   The Ninth and Tenth Commandments
Write a paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) in the form of an extended letter to a friend who, on hearing that you have taken a seminary course in ethics, has written to ask your opinion on a ethical matter of personal concern to him/her (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1). You are free to choose the ethical issue to write on, but you should ensure that it gives you the scope to produce a satisfactory paper based on the criteria below. You may wish to base the paper on a real-life situation from your own experience; if you can, so much the better, but be careful to preserve anonymity where appropriate!

Your paper should include all of the following:

1. A clear explanation of the issue that demonstrates your understanding of its various dimensions.
2. A survey of the different conclusions that Christians have reached on the issue (and the reasons for those conclusions).
3. A defense of the position you advocate, which (a) engages with the course material, (b) engages with the other positions you have mentioned, (c) makes good use of Scripture, and (d) makes use of external sources (ethics textbooks, journal articles, biblical commentaries, etc.).
4. Any appropriate practical advice for your friend as he/she continues to wrestle with the issue.
5. A standard bibliography (see below on sources and citations).

Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of Scripture, responsible use of sources, extent of research, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, evidence of critical thinking, pastoral sensitivity, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

The paper should cite at least 8 scholarly sources.

- For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience)—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed.
- Wikipedia is clearly not a scholarly source.
- That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a useful pointer to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues.
- Please consult me if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly.
- You should not rely heavily on internet sources. Use the library!

The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.

- Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.
- Use section headings where appropriate to improve readability.
- Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
- Use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, SBL).
The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor’s name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).

You **will be penalized** if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.
You are not required to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.


[A “moral and legal case against abortion choice” from a natural law perspective. Beckwith does a fine job of refuting the popular and scholarly arguments for abortion.]


[A winsome defense of natural law understood as the moral law of God “written on the heart”. Budziszewski was an evangelical when he wrote this, but has since converted to Roman Catholicism—perhaps in part because Catholics are generally more sympathetic to the idea of natural law.]


[The first volume offers a selection of readings on theory and method, the second on issues and applications.]


[Very useful in providing background information relevant to ethical decision-making, but weak on methodology.]


[A highly regarded textbook on major topics in applied ethics from a conservative evangelical perspective. Updated and expanded in the second edition.]


[An influential text from a liberal Christian perspective. Fletcher was an Episcopal priest and Harvard professor who later declared himself an atheist.]


[An early application of Frame’s triperspectival approach to specific issues in medical ethics.]

[A thorough defense of the traditional Christian reading of Scripture on this issue in the face of recent revisionism.]


[A respected evangelical treatment, notable for its defense of “graded absolutism”.]


[An accessible introduction to contemporary moral philosophy. Valuable for its critiques of relativism and subjectivism, but its objections to ‘supernaturalist’ ethics are weak. Gensler is a Jesuit philosopher who ends up defending a Kantian deontologist approach and, along the way, develops an argument against abortion.]


[A hopelessly flawed attempt by a liberal Scottish Episcopal bishop to do ethics without God; fascinating and infuriating in equal measures.]


[A short but very insightful summary of the biblical teaching on homosexuality and its pastoral implications. Includes a helpful analysis of the notion of “sexual orientation”.


[A classic Reformed treatment.]


[Part 2 of this excellent work offers an explanation of the rationale behind the specific penalties of the Mosaic Law and how they apply today. Appendix B provides a lengthy, nuanced critique of Greg Bahnsen’s arguments for theonomy.]


[A defense of natural law theory from a Reformed scholar; a useful counterpoint to John Frame’s criticisms of natural law theory. The book can be purchased for a good price direct from the Acton Institute (http://www.acton.org).]


[A treatment of contemporary issues in bioethics from a conservative Reformed perspective.]


[A very thorough and helpful treatment from historical, scriptural, and pastoral perspectives by a study committee of the Presbyterian Church in America.]
## MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

_In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes._

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.

### Rubric

- **Strong**
- **Moderate**
- **Minimal**
- **None**

### Mini-Justification

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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</table>
| **Articulation (oral & written)** | **Moderate** | 1. Theory/application paper  
2. Final exam tests knowledge and articulation of course topics  
3. Student oral presentations with class discussion |
| **Scripture** | **Strong** | 1. Biblical framework for meta-ethics  
2. Emphasis on exegetical basis for judgments on ethical issues |
| **Reformed Theology** | **Moderate** | 1. Interacts with WLC’s exposition of Ten Commandments  
2. Discusses Regulative Principle of Worship, Sabbatarianism, etc. |
| **Sanctification** | **Minimal** | 1. Application for personal holiness  
2. Covers “third use” of the Law |
| **Desire for Worldview** | **Strong** | 1. Ethics placed in broader context of biblical worldview  
2. Ethics relevant to all aspects of life |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | **Moderate** | 1. Appreciation of ethical insights from non-Reformed traditions and non-Christian ethicists (common grace)  
2. Emphasis on charity and humility as Christian virtues |
| **Preach** | **Minimal** | 1. Role of moral exhortation in preaching  
2. Role of preacher as prophetic voice |
| **Worship** | **Moderate** | 1. Discusses application of Ten Commandments to individual, family, and corporate worship |
| **Shepherd** | **Strong** | 1. Covers issues in pastoral ethics  
2. Discusses importance of Christian virtues in pastoral ministry  
3. Discusses Christian social activism |
| **Church/World** | **Strong** | 1. Acknowledges insights from various Christian traditions  
2. Engages with prominent issues of public policy (abortion, euthanasia, marriage, church/state, economics) |