ST 528 Pastoral and Social Ethics
Dr. Michael Allen
July 27-31, 2015

Course Description

This course examines the relationship of the gospel to obedience. It considers the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. It then addresses the role of the law as a framework for Christian life, noting the impact of redemptive-historical and cultural shifts in our appropriation of the law.

The Learning Objectives

The student will grow in their ability to:

1. analyze various ethical visions according to biblical reasoning;
2. appreciate the relationship between the gospel and obedience;
3. exegete biblical texts which are critical to ethical thought (e.g., the Ten Commandments, Deuteronomy, the Sermon on the Mount);
4. describe the ethical emphases of varying figures in church history (e.g., Basil, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, the Puritans);
5. understand the ethical teaching of the Westminster Standards;
6. grasp the complexity of ethical reasoning in various contexts.

The Instructor

Michael Allen, Ph.D.
Email: mallen@rts.edu
Phone: 407-278-4445

Note: feel free to contact me whenever needed (preferably via email). When in doubt about protocol or processing, write and ask. We can set up meetings as needed.

The Texts

The following books are required:


Supplementary PDF readings will be available on Canvas.


The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas for each working group (assigned by the professor for the final paper). These materials will be read during the week of class.

*The Assignments*

The student is required to complete the following three assignments in whole:

(1) *Reading*

Reading must be completed before the class meets. Class discussions will focus on readings, so you must be prepared to talk.

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God’s grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God’s economy of grace.

Remember: reading is an active exercise, a conversation in which you participate.
(2) Reading Briefs

Students are expected to prepare a brief on each chapter read. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that chapter, as well as to state one’s own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the chapter (so long as page numbers are referenced).

Briefs should be no more than 500 words.

Briefs are to be submitted in hard copy. Bring them to class.

(3) Final Paper

Each student will write a critical analysis of an ethical issue. This final essay must be addressing one of the topics listed below. The analysis should be 2000-2500 words in length.

The professor will create working groups focused on key topics. Possible topics include: racial and ethnic reconciliation, marriage and divorce, genetic engineering, and war and violence. They vary year to year.

The professor will provide a few readings on each topic. These are required reading (roughly 150 pages specific to the topic, to be read over the course of two weeks). You will be assigned a topic, read the corresponding works, and discuss these with a group of classmates in preparation for writing your final paper (individually). The final two class sessions will allow time for groups to discuss their research and writing. Each group will be pursuing a common theme.

Final papers are due by midnight on August 14 via email.

Rules for Final Paper

Final papers will be docked for poor grammar and style. Edit carefully. Read and re-read what you have written. Ministry involves communication, so you should hone your speech even as you learn theological substance.

Note: I highly recommend that you read your paper backwards, sentence by sentence. This will force you to see that each sentence has a subject and predicate, that they they agree, etc.
Do not go over the word limit for any written assignments. I assign a particular length to be followed by all. A good thinker will have more information than can be said in the limit, but a good writer will be able to distill and shorten.

Note: I will stop reading your work when it reaches the word limit. If you keep going, I will toss this out and read your paper as if it has no conclusion (something which will certainly lower your grade).

All written assignments are to be emailed to the instructor in MSWord or PDF format. You will receive email confirmation that they have been received.

_Academic Honesty_ (adapted from Dr. Timothy Phillips of Wheaton College)

1. The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others’ studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.

2. Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to any information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does not apply only to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does not remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.

3. Cheating is the presentation of someone else’s work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.

4. Cheating or plagiarism results in the immediate failure of the entire course. Further disciplinary action may be taken as well.

_Computer Policy (Modified from Dr. Alan Jacobs of Baylor University)_

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. Think I’m over-reacting? Think you’re a master of multitasking? You are not. No, I really mean it. How many times do I have to tell you? Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are multiple
cognitive benefits to writing by hand. And people who use laptops in class see their grades decline — and even contribute to lowering the grades of other people.

The Grading Structure

Grades are apportioned as follows:

- Reading and Reading Briefs: 1/2
- Final Paper: 1/2

Grades may be adjusted based on issues regarding attendance and participation in class.

The Schedule (with some key themes noted)

Monday
Introduction to Christian Ethics
The Gospel and Good Works

Tuesday
Asceticism and the Reformation
The Law in Redemptive History

Wednesday
The Ten Commandments

Thursday
Contextualization
Imitation
Group Projects

Friday
Group Projects (cont’d)
## 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Reading briefs and final paper test ability to communicate in written form. Working groups provide form for development of group communication orally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Lectures and readings focus upon biblical ethics as interpreted in the Christian tradition (classical and Reformed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Lectures and readings focus upon Reformed distinctives regarding the nature of sanctification and good works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Every facet of class addresses the nature of, motivation for, and power for sanctification.</td>
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### Articulation (oral & written)

Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Reading briefs and final paper test ability to communicate in written form. Working groups provide form for development of group communication orally.

### Scripture

Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Lectures and readings focus upon biblical ethics as interpreted in the Christian tradition (classical and Reformed).

### Reformed Theology

Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Lectures and readings focus upon Reformed distinctives regarding the nature of sanctification and good works.

### Sanctification

Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Every facet of class addresses the nature of, motivation for, and power for sanctification.

### Desire for Worldview

Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Readings, lectures, and final paper address the construction of moral principles and a moral imagination that is conformed to Holy Scripture as its final authority and informed by the Christian witness of the past.

### Winsomely Reformed

Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)

- **Rubric**: Strong
- **Mini-Justification**: Readings and lectures address ethical instruction of Christians from beyond the Reformed world.

### Preach

Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.

- **Rubric**: Minimal
- **Mini-Justification**: Readings and lectures inform Christian ethics, which shapes
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Difficulty Level</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Pulpit ministry regarding exhortation and encouragement of good works by Christians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Readings, lectures, and final paper address moral issues which inform pastoral counsel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Final projects engage major public issues facing church and world</td>
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