

ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

THS 602/CAP 651: Christian Ethics

Instructor: Paul Chamberlain, Ph.D.

Spring 2012

3 Semester Hours

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Time: Tuesdays 8:30am-12:10pm

Paul Chamberlain has taught at Trinity Western University since 1990 and at ACTS since 2001. During part of that time He has also been involved with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. His primary areas of teaching are Christian Apologetics, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion. He is the author of three books and a number of articles on social and apologetic issues. He currently serves as professor of Apologetics, Philosophy of Religion, and Ethics at ACTS and is Director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics at ACTS.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Ethics is a discipline which concerns right and wrong. The task of ethics is that of applying general moral principles to specific moral questions in a search for morally correct action. This course will introduce students to this discipline drawing upon both theological and philosophical resources and methodology. Issues examined will include proper ethical procedure, the question of moral foundations and the place of God as a foundation for objective moral value, the definition of personhood, and contemporary ethical issues such as: euthanasia/physician-assisted suicide, human sexuality, genetic engineering and cloning, abortion, animal rights, war and peace, affirmative action and quotas, bribery, reproductive technology, and marriage and divorce.

For each issue covered we will examine:

1. the fundamental ethical “issue” at stake,
2. different “views” on this issue,
3. supporting “arguments” for each of these views, and
4. underlying “assumptions” brought to the issue by various contributors.

We will also seek to determine the range of perspectives and viewpoints in each issue which are in harmony with Christian teaching and those which are not.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to:

1. become adept at applying proper ethical procedures to moral questions,

2. speak knowledgeably about the relevance of Christian teaching to a number of contemporary social issues,
3. have a strong grasp of the key questions, viewpoints and arguments related to a number of current social issues in our culture,
4. draw conclusions, however tentative, about what is morally right and wrong on these contemporary issues,
5. formulate a position about the relationship of God to objective moral value.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Beckwith, Francis. Do the Right Thing, 2nd edition. Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2001.

Sandel, Michael J. The Case Against Perfection: Ethics in the Age of Genetic Engineering. Cambridge: Belknap Press, c/o Harvard University Press, 2007.

Davis, John Jefferson. Evangelical Ethics, 3rd edition. Phillipsberg: P & R Pub, 1993.

Moreland, J.P. & Rae, Scott B. Body & Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

OPTIONAL TEXT TO BE USED IN PLACE OF SANDEL:

Hays, Richard. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, Harper, 1996

COURSE SCHEDULE: Readings and Student Presentations

Students should come to class with the following readings fresh in mind.

January 10 - Introductory lecture and syllabus

January 17 - Establishing Ethical Procedure, Davis (13-26)

January 24 - Morality & Culture, Beckwith (1-69)
 Pres (Beckwith xi-xviii, 6-21)_____

January 31 - Morality and Culture, Beckwith (70-131)
 Pres (Beckwith 70-93)_____

February 7 -Morality and Personhood, Moreland & Rae 1-345
 Pres (M&R 231-243) _____
 Pres (M&R 243-260) _____

February 14 - Isn't Christianity anti-gay? Davis 113-136
 Pres (Davis 113-136)_____

February 21 – Isn't Christianity anti-gay?

----- **Reading Week** -----

March 6 - Morality and beginning-of-life Issues, Beckwith 133-383
Pres (Beckwith 257-267) _____
Pres (Beckwith 268-283) _____

March 13 - Morality & Beginning of Life Issues, Beckwith (same reading: 133-383)
Pres (Beckwith (284-301) _____

March 20 - Genetic Engineering, Sandel (entire text)
Pres (Sandel TBA _____
Pres (Sandel TBA _____

March 27 - Human Sexuality & Reproductive Technologies, Davis (pages 27-98)
Pres (Davis 69-98) _____

April 3 - Divorce & Remarriage, Davis (pages 99-112)
Pres (Davis 99-112) _____

ASSIGMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

1. Careful reading of all assigned readings.
2. One reading summary/evaluation.....20%
3. Two in-class presentations.....40%
4. Research essay.....40%

READING SUMMARY

Students will select one chapter from one of the class texts. For the chapter you choose, summarize the author's most important ideas. Your rule of thumb as you summarize the chapter is that what is important to the author is important to you. Then evaluate the chapter. Do you agree with the main contentions of the chapter? Why or why not? Identify any ideas which seem particularly strong or weak to you. How might the chapter have been different if you had written it? The assignment should be four to six pages in length with approximately two-thirds summary and one-third evaluation.

Value: 30%

Due Date: February 15, 2012

Research Essay

For the essay you will choose a specific ethical issue which your essay will address. Please note that this is an *argumentative* essay and not simply a *discussion* essay.

The following elements must be included:

1. the fundamental questions in this ethical issue. This should be identified and explained early in your essay along with a few of the prominent views on this issue,
2. definitions of relevant terms,
3. a clear thesis statement which your essay will focus on and argue for,
4. the main arguments which you will advance in favour of your thesis,
5. a few key objections to your thesis along with your responses to them, and
6. an explanation of the significance of this issue for one or two specific Christian theological concerns and the ways in which Christians can demonstrate the relevance of Christianity through addressing this issue.

Please note that your research for the essay must include sources which are not Christian or supportive of your position. This will provide first-hand knowledge of opposing views and the rationale for them. This knowledge is indispensable in developing your own positions and in understanding other's perspectives.

Essay should be 16 – 20 pages (4,000 – 5,000 words)

Due March 30, 2012

Value: 40%

In-class Presentations

These are not intended to be prepared or even begun before the course begins. They will be prepared during the course and due at various times throughout the course as agreed upon at the first class session.

Each student will lead the class in one in-class seminar on assigned readings. Each seminar presentation will consist of:

- A basic summary of the author's most important ideas, e.g., significant facts mentioned, the moral position espoused, alternative moral positions, key rationale and argumentation used by the author, etc.,
- Your assessment of and response to them. For example, hi-light points of agreement and disagreement with the author, draw out assumptions you find the author making, and give thoughtful responses to them. Then respond to questions from your colleagues and professor.

Your presentation should be approximately half summary and half assessment. You will prepare a five to six page written document in polished form which you will read from and distribute to the class at the beginning of your presentation.

Value: 30%

GRADING SCALE:

A +	4.30	97 %
A	4.00	94 - 96%
A -	3.70	90 - 93%
B +	3.30	85 - 89%
B	3.00	80 - 84%
B -	2.70	75 - 79%
C +	2.30	70 - 74%
C	2.00	65 - 69%
C -	1.70	60 - 64%
F	.00	0 – 59%

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University’s campus

closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University's website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <http://www.twu.ca/conditions> for more details). An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at 11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 7th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 6th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List. Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian") or <http://www.sourceaid.com/citationbuilder/>

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important aspect of improving teaching outcomes and for students and faculty professional development. Therefore, completion of course evaluations are considered a course expectation. Professors will schedule time to fill out the online course evaluation (20-30 minutes) during their last scheduled class of the semester, for students to complete on their personal laptop or a collegium computer. Students who are absent or otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation in the last class, will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/>

Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self-running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://acts.twu.ca/library/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.