

KNT2963HF (LEC9101) - Christian Ethics  
Knox College,  
Toronto School of Theology  
**Fall/ 2020**

**COVID-19 Notice:** *As a result of public health events requiring physical distancing, this course is offered using a remote delivery method. In this circumstance, the course outcomes and requirements will remain unchanged, but some accommodations may be made in the areas of content delivery and the manner of assessment. This format will require a computer with a webcam and microphone as well as access to high speed internet. If you have questions about what remote delivery might mean for you, please feel free to contact the course instructor or the Knox College registrar.*

### ***Instructor Information***

**Instructor:** Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo  
Phone (416) 886-8904  
Email: [hye.heo@utoronto.ca](mailto:hye.heo@utoronto.ca)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 -2:30 pm by appointment

### ***Course Identification***

Course Number: KNT2963HF  
Course Format: In-class/ on-line  
Course Name: Christian Ethics  
Course Location: Knox College (Room #3)  
Class Times: Tuesday 11:00 am-1:00 pm  
Prerequisites: no prerequisites but an introductory theology course recommended

### ***Course Description***

This course examines various theories of ethics and the practical ethical issues that Christians face in today's changing society, which include ethics of life, ethics for the earth, and ethics of just peace. The course consists of two parts: 1) the theoretical foundations for Christian ethical thinking, and 2) various practical ethical issues for today. The classes will be led in a lecture and discussion format. Students are required to write a major paper (10-12 pages), short weekly reading reports, and a presentation.

### **Course Resources:**

#### Required Course Texts

- Grenz, Stanley J.. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Mortmann, Jürgen. *Ethics of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 2012.
- Heo (Han), Hye Kyung. *The Liberative Cross: Korean-North American Women and the Self-giving God*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015.

Course Website

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

## *Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes*

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

(A) In respect to General Academic Skills, they will be able to

- Describe the ultimate differences between the enterprise of philosophical ethics / general ethics and the Christian ethics.
- Explain biblical, theological ethical values within their cultural context.
- Define their operative ethical system and apply it to justice, social and ecclesial issues today.
- Apply ethical themes and values to various contexts in congregational and community life.

(B) In respect of Ministerial and Public Leadership, they will demonstrate:

- the ability to recognize the methods discussed in class and apply them as well as evaluate them critically, and also pose appropriate questions and start to formulate answers.
- the ability and willingness to adapt to change and manage conflicts arising from the changes in socially constructive and professional manners (e.g. show a willingness to enter into discussion with others in conflictual situations and to listen to them reflectively)
- the ability and willingness to identify pastoral boundaries that raise ethical and pastoral questions and to formulate appropriate responses to such boundary issues.

## *Evaluation*

### **Requirement:**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas:

#### **(1) Attendance and Participation (10%)**

#### **(2) Ten Weekly Reading Reports (30%)**

- Two components: a) a concise summary of the reading, b) personal reflection and questions.
- Ideally 2-3 pages, double space. (80% of the paper should be about the reading material and 20 % for your own reflection and questions.)
- Due at each class before it begins. (either in hard copy or by email)

#### **(3) Presentation on a Practical Ethical Issue (20%)**

- On ways of **making a difference as a Christian and as a congregation** in regard to the themes dealt with in the course. If you want to deal with other issues (e.g. sexuality, AI, etc.) arrange with the instructor.
- One individual or two students paired up for a 10-15 minute presentation.

- This presentation could be in following forms: congregational education or other creative form.
- Exhibition of research and theologico-ethical knowledge of the subject
- Articulation, persuasiveness, practicality, passion, and creativity

**(4) Final paper (40%):**

- 10-12 pages (double space)
- Taking one of the ethical issues dealt with in this course, discuss it from your contextual, theologico-ethical perspective. This is a research paper; therefore, proper documentation is required (\*footnotes and bibliography in the Chicago/Turabian style).

\* **Attendance:** A minimum attendance of 80% is required for a passing grade. Habitual lateness for class will be counted as absence (cf. *Knox College Student Handbook section 2.3*)

## Grading System

The grading scheme for this course, as with all TST courses, is as follows:

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

### *Late Work*

**Completion of Course work:**

All course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the due date of final paper.

Only in the case of illness (with a note from a doctor), bereavement or other unusual circumstances will an extension be considered, and this must be authorized by the faculty adviser or basic degree director who should make a recommendation on the matter to be the Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.

**Email assignments:**

Due to the emergency situation because of Covid 19, you can email the assignments but make sure you do before the class begins.

**Late Penalty:**

4 points deducted per week late. This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the due date of final paper scheduled for the course or sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the due date of final paper. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed

work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

## ***Policies***

### ***Accessibility.***

Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Service offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

### ***Plagiarism.***

Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuations such as brackets and ellipses but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics.

As instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behavior on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges <http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/LibraryArchives/TheologicalResources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm>.

### ***Other academic offences.***

TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behavior on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

### ***Back-up copies.***

Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

### ***Obligation to check email.***

At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the information Commons can answer questions you many have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-con-joint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

### ***Email communication with the course instructor.***

The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email

communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses from students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

## ***Course Schedule***

### **Part 1: The Theoretical Foundations for Christian Ethics**

#### **Week 1 (September 15): Introduction of students and the course**

1. Syllabus and Introduction
2. Discussion: What is unique about today's world? What ethical questions are we facing today? Why is it difficult to determine the ethical life today? What is the basis for my moral decision as a Christian?

\*Read and Report for next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. Chapter 1 ("Christian Ethics and Ethical Task"): 22-58 (36 pages).

#### **Week 2 (Sept. 22): Christian Ethics and the Ethical Task**

1. Lecture: Aspects of General Ethics, Constructing a Normative Ethic of Doing, Constructing a Normative Ethic of Being, Constructing a Justification for Ethics, The Ethical Cul-de-Sac and the Value of General Ethics.
2. Group discussion: Why is religious insight important for the human ethical quest?

\*Read and report for next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. Chapter 3 ("Ethics in the Bible"): 95-128 (33 pages)

#### **Week 3 (Sept. 29): Ethics in the Bible**

1. Lecture: Brief introduction of the Greek Ethical Tradition & Moral life in the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus and the Moral Life, the Ethics of the Early Church
2. Group discussion: What should be some of the characteristics of *Christian Ethics*?

\*Read and Report for next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. Chapter 4 ("Model Christian Proposals"): 129-164 (35 pages)

#### **Week 4 (Oct 6): Model Christian Proposals**

1. Lecture: Augustine (Ethics as the Love of God), Aquinas (Ethics as the Fulfillment of our Purpose), and Luther (Ethics as Obedience)
2. Group discussion: In what respect do you think each theologian and their theological ethics can serve you as you engage critically with an ethical situation today?

\*Read and Report for next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. Chapter 5 (“Contemporary Christian Proposals”): 165-203(38 pages)

### **Week 5 (Oct. 13): Contemporary Christian Proposals (20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

1. Lecture: Seven major trajectories that emerged and continued in one form or another as the ethical discussions of the century unfolded.
2. Group Discussion: Bonhoeffer’s ethics as holy worldliness. “...to be a Christian means to participate in the life of the world. The church, Bonhoeffer argued, is ‘to stand in the center of the village.’” (180). Discuss in detail how you as a Christian can participate in the life of the world. Discuss also what does it mean for you as a pastor that your church “stands in the center of the village” in this pluralistic world?

\*Read and Report for next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. **Chapter 6** (Christian Ethics and the Contemporary Context) 204-239 (35pages).

### **Week 6 (Oct. 20): Christian Ethics, the Contemporary Context**

1. Lecture: Contemporary Context of Christian Ethics, Christian Ethics and the Human Ethical Quest, Christian Ethics as a Community-based Ethic of Being.
2. Group Discussion: What is the ultimate difference between the enterprise of philosophical ethics / general ethics and the Christian ethics? How will you explain that the Christian vision sets forth more completely the nature both of community and the good life that all human ethical systems seek to foster?

\*Read and Report for the next week:

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest*. **Chapter 7** (Foundations of a Christian Ethics) 240-275 (35 pages)

### **Week 7 (Nov 3): Foundations of a Christian Ethics**

1. Lecture: The Revelational Source of Christian Ethics, the Theological Foundations of the Christian Ethic.
2. Group Discussion: What does it mean that God is none other than the social Trinity, the eternal community of Father, Son and Spirit? How is this understanding of God as the social Trinity affect us to live in our context as *imago Dei*? According to this understanding of God what is the vision of God for the human community?

\*Read and Report for next week:

Heo (Han), Hye Kyung. *The Liberative Cross: Korean-North American Women and the Self-giving God*. Eugene, Origen: Pickwick Publications, 2015: 136-184 (48 pages)

## **Part II: Practical Ethical Issues for today**

### **Week 8 (Nov 10): What does it mean to live as *imago Dei* in terms of the understanding of God as the social Trinity in our multicultural, multiracial, pluralistic society today?**

1. Lecture: Moltmann's understanding of *imago Dei* as *analogia relationis* and Social Trinitarian Praxis as who you are today.
2. Group Discussion: What is Sin? What is reconciliation? How is it possible to build a world in accordance with the social understanding of *imago Dei*? What does it mean that we Christians must follow Jesus by carrying our own cross every day?

\*Read and Report for the Next Week: Moltmann, "Earth Ethics" in *Ethics of Hope*: 140-162 (22 pages)

### **Week 9 (Nov 17): Christian Ethics on the Ecological Crisis: Responsible Living in the more-than-human world**

1. Lecture: Christian ethics on the Ecological Crisis. What are causes of the current ecological crisis and how seriously are we as Christian individuals and the community of faith taking this crisis into consideration?
2. Student's Presentation on Earth Ethics (Organic Farming, Pollution/Industrialization, Animal Rights, etc.)

\*Read and Report for the Next Class:

Moltmann, "Medical Ethics" in *Ethics of Hope*: 71-106 (35 pages)

### **Week 10 (Nov 24): Some conflicted areas of modern bioethics: Abortion, Birth-Control, Artificial Insemination, Assisted suicide/suicide, Euthanasia, etc.**

1. Lecture on a few essential benchmarks to form a judgment.
2. Students' Presentations on one of the issues listed above.

\*Read and Report for the Next Class on Moltmann, "Dragon Slaying and Peacemaking in Christianity" in *Ethics of Hope*: 189-204 (15 pages).

**Week 11 (Dec 1): Ethics of Just Peace**

1. Lecture on ethics of justice peace
2. Student Presentation on terrorism, war, nuclear armaments

\*No reading Report for the next class

**Week 12 (Dec 8): What does it mean to live ethically?**

1. Discussion on what you have learned about Christian ethics and how you have been challenged throughout the course
2. Students' Presentations on the topics other than mentioned above

**10-12 page term paper in hard copy is due today at the class!**