

KNT2963HF (LEC9101) - Christian Ethics
Knox College,
Toronto School of Theology
Fall/ 2021

Instructor Information

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 -2:30 pm by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: KNT2963HF
Course Format: remotely by zoom or in person (depends on the situation)
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.
- Moltmann, 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) Seven Weekly Reading Reports out of ten readings (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.

(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 the form of either 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:

If the emergency (because of Covid 19) continues, email the assignments but make sure you do before the class begins. Otherwise, submit them in hard copy 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.

An 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. 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 may 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 14): 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 your 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. 21): 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: On what bases do you form opinions or judgments about what is right, good or obligatory? For what reason do you think 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. 28): 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 makes Christian Ethics uniquely Christian?

*Read and Report for next week:

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

Week 4 (Oct 5): 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 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. 12): Contemporary Christian Proposals (20th 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 participate in the life of the world. What do you think it means 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. 19): 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 2): 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 to you that “the Christian ethical life is ‘*christopraxis*’”? What does the church need to do as a shaper of moral identity?

*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: 122-184 (62 pages)

Part II: Practical Ethical Issues for today

Week 8 (Nov 9): 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: In accordance with the social trinitarian understanding of the cross, what is sin? What is reconciliation? What is *imago Dei*? What does it to you that you live perichoretic life in your private and social spheres as Christian? Which aspect of the perichoretic approaches toward mission or religious dialogue, Hye suggests in the book, did you find interesting or challenging in your *Sitz im leben* (setting in life/context)?

*Read and Report for the Next Week: Moltmann, "Earth Ethics" in *Ethics of Hope*: 147-162 (22 pages)

Week 9 (Nov 16): 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. Students' Presentations 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 23): Some conflicted areas of modern bioethics: Abortion, Birth-Control, Artificial Insemination, Assisted suicide/suicide, Euthanasia, etc.

1. Lecture on modern bioethics
2. Students' Presentations on one of the issues listed above (i.e., Abortion, Birth-Control, Artificial Insemination, Assisted suicide/suicide, Euthanasia, etc.)

*Read and Report for the Next Class on Moltmann, "Dragon Slaying and Peacemaking in Christianity" in *Ethics of Hope*: 189-206 (17 pages).

Week 11 (Nov 30): Ethics of Just Peace

1. |Lecture on ethics of justice peace
2. Students' Presentations on terrorism, war, nuclear armaments

*No reading Report for the next class

Week 12 (Dec 7): 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 continued

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

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