

KNT2963HF (LEC9101) - Christian Ethics
Knox College,
Toronto School of Theology
Fall/ 2023

Instructor Information

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 2:00 pm by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: KNT2963HF
Course Format: in person
Course Name: Christian Ethics
Course Location: Knox College
Class Times: Wednesday 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 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) Five Weekly Reading Reports out of nine readings (25%)

- 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 (25%)

- 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

Completion of Course work:

All course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term (Dec 6), the due date of the final paper.

Post each assignment on Quercus before the class begins.

Late Penalty and SDF:

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 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 Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. 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 punctuation 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 Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. 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: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019> .

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-conjoint 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 for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Inclusive Language Policy **Knox College – Policies and Procedures**

Policy: Use of Language

Applies to: All students, faculty, and instructors.

Approval: Academic Committee of the Board (3 October 2022)

Principles and Commitments – Mutual Respect

- In all matters we shall strive to respect one another in our use of language in teaching, conversation, worship, and writing.
- In matters of race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation we shall seek to respect the wishes of each other in how we will address each other in teaching, conversation, worship, and writing.
- We shall recognize and respect the metaphorical nature of language that speaks of God and will strive to use a variety of ways of addressing God and speaking of God which reflects the variety of descriptors of God in Scripture.
- In public worship we shall strive to address God and speak of God in ways that are sensitive to diverse experiences of God and the world within our community.
- In public worship we shall strive not to address God only in a male gendered way, but rather in a diversity of ways both gendered and non-gendered that reflect the anthropomorphic limitation of human language for the Divine.
- We shall respect one another in our use of language for God in personal prayer and piety.

Policy:

Following the principles of respect above, it is the policy of Knox College that inclusive language is to be used in teaching, public worship, class presentations, written assignments, and official communications. This means that:

- When referring to human beings in general, gender exclusive terms should be avoided or, in the case of pronouns, the sentence re-written so that gender-exclusive pronouns become unnecessary.
- Where possible will give preference to using terms such as spouse and sibling rather than gendered versions of family relationships.
- Images of and metaphors for God should reflect the variety found in Scripture.
- A diminished use of masculine pronouns with reference to God, where grammatically feasible, in order to refrain from encouraging a false male image of God.”
- Where the integrity of an historical text requires that exclusive language be retained, commentary on those texts should use inclusive terminology.
- Any language which demeans or stereotypes others because of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, mental and physical characteristics, or age is unacceptable.

Glossary of Terms that are important to understand re: Gender diversity and sexual orientation:

(The explanation below is an edited form of the Presbyterian Church USA brochure “Well Chosen Words” that can be found at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/well-chosen-words/> accessed September 13, 2022. This glossary represents an incomplete list of human experience and description.)

- a. **Asexuality** is the lack of sexual attraction to others, or low or absent interest in or desire for sexual activity. Some people who identify as asexual call themselves “ace.”
- b. **Gender-fluid** | According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

- c. **Gender identity** | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither - how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. A person's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- d. **Gender-nonconforming** | A broad term referring to people who do not conform to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.
- e. **Genderqueer** | People who typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as gender queer may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.
- f. **Gender transition** | The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with their outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.
- g. **Homophobia** | The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex in any expressed form.
- h. **Intersex** | An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.
- i. **Lesbian** | Someone who identifies as a woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.
- j. **LGBTQIA+** | An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and Asexual." The plus sign refers to the expansive nature of the term to continually include all identities. The number 2 is sometimes added to identify the North American Indigenous Culture understanding of "Two Spirited" persons.
- k. **Living openly** | A state in which LGBTQIA+ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity - where and when it feels appropriate to them.
- l. **Nonbinary** | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Nonbinary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all nonbinary people do.
- m. **Outing** | Exposing someone's identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, mental and emotional health, and religious or family situations.
- n. **Pansexual** | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
- o. **Queer** | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with LGBTQIA+.
- p. **Questioning** | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- q. **Same-gender-loving** | A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender. This term has its roots in the Black community and is generally used specifically by Black people.

- r. **Saposexual** | An orientation referring to people who are physically, emotionally, or mentally attracted based on expressions of intelligence.
- s. **Sexual orientation** | An inherent or immutable, enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.
- t. **Transgender** | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. The term also does not refer to nor imply any specific surgical procedures.
- u. **Transphobia** | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people in any expressed form.

Use of Generative AI in assignments

- The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for the assignments and the final paper in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing assistants, is prohibited.
- This policy is for your sake to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

Course Schedule

Part 1: The Theoretical Foundations for Christian Ethics

Week 1 (September 13): 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 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. 20): 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 religious insight is important for the human ethical quest?

*Read and report for next week:

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

Week 3 (Sept. 27): Christian Ethics and 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 3 (Ethics in the Bible’): 95-128 (33 pages)

Week 4 (Oct 4): 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 5 (Oct 11): 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 the next week:

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

Week 6 (Oct 18): 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 the next class on Nov 1.

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)

*** No Class on Oct 25 (Reading Week from October 23-27).

Part II: Practical Ethical Issues for today

Week 7 (Nov 1): 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 8 (Nov 8): 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 9 (Nov 15): Modern Bioethics (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.)

*No reading for the next week

Week 10 (Nov 22): Modern Bioethics continued (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: Moltmann, “Drago Slaying and Peacemaking in Christianity” in *Ethics of Hope*: pp 189-204 (15 pages)

Week 11 (Nov 29) Ethics of Just Peace

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

*No reading for the next week

Week 12 (Dec 6): Integration/ What does it mean to live ethically today?

1. Discussion on what you have learned about Christian ethics and how you have been challenged throughout the course.
2. Students’ Presentations on other issues

10–12 pages term paper is due today!

Working Bibliography

Sexuality:

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Brownson, James V. *Bible Gender Sexuality: Reforming the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013.

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Hamre, John J. "Democracy, Original Sin, and the Global War on Terrorism." *Word & World* 25, no. 2 (2005): 113-117.

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<http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

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