

KNT2964HF

Christian Ethics

Professor: Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo

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This course examines various theories of ethics throughout Christian history 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 three parts: 1) the theoretical foundations for Christian ethical thinking, 2) various practical ethical issues for today, 3) integration. The classes will be led in a lecture and discussion format. Students are required to write a major paper, short weekly reading reports, and a presentation.

Prerequisite: An introductory theology course.

Schedule: Mondays, 2 – 4 pm.

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo (**Info**)

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES:

The student will demonstrate the ability to

- Describe ethical themes within the Old and New Testament
- 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 within congregational and community life

CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE (USE OF KNOWLEDGE)

- a willingness to use thinking, problem solving and decision making abilities to achieve personal, ecclesial, and societal goals
- an ability and willingness to use knowledge sufficient for professional levels of interaction
- an ability to think, problem solve, and make decisions at a critical level of operation and act to improve (e.g. require students to recognize methods, etc. modeled in class and apply them as well as evaluate them critically (e.g. they pose appropriate questions and start to formulate answers))
- the ability and willingness to adapt to change and manage conflict arising from change in socially constructive and professional ways (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.

COURSE POLICIES

Policies for courses are contained in the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the Knox Student Handbook. In particular note:

Late Policy: 4 points deducted per week late (2 off by Monday, 2 more by Thursday)

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 Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.

Style Guidelines for Papers: see Knox "Style Manual" booklet and A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, by Kate L. Turabian

Email assignments: Papers and assignments are not accepted by email, except by prior permission by professor. SHOULD SUCH PERMISSION BE GRANTED IT REMAINS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE PROFESSOR HAS RECEIVED THE SUBMISSION.

Plagiarism Policy: See TST Basic Degree Handbook

Consultation: Please do not hesitate to consult with me about any questions you may have.

EVALUATION:

1. Weekly Reading Report (20%)

- Three components: **1) a concise summary of the reading, 2) personal reflection and questions.**
- Ideally 2-3 pages, double space. (80% of the paper should be about the reading material and only briefly (20%) for your own reflection and questions.)
- Due at each class before it begins in hard copy. (No email submission allowed, if not arranged separately.)

2. Student presentation (30%)

- On ways of **making a difference as a Christian and as a congregation** in regard to the themes dealt in the course
- One individual or two students paired up for a 10-15 minute presentation.
- This presentation could be in following forms: preaching, congregational education, worship plan, church outreach plan, event plan, combination of any of these or other creative form.
- Exhibition of research and theologico-ethical knowledge of the subject
- Articulation, persuasiveness and **practicality**
- Passion and creativity

3. Term paper (50%):

- 10-12 pages (double space)
- Taking one of the ethical issues dealt in this course, discuss it from your contextual, theologico-ethical perspective.

TEXT Books:

Grenz, Stanley J.. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Mortmann, Jurgen. *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 SCHEDULE:

Part 1: The Theoretical Foundations for Christian Ethics

Week 1: Introduction of students and the course

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

Read and Report for next week:

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

Week 2: 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 and report: Why is religious insight important for the human ethical quest?

Read and report for next week:

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

Week 3: 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 and report: What should be some of the characteristics of *Christian* Ethics?

Read and Report for next week:

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

Week 4: 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 and report: 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 Request*. Chapter 5 (“Contemporary Christian Proposals”): 165-203(38 pages)

Week 5: 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 and report: 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 Request*. Chapter 6 (Christian Ethics and the Contemporary Context) and 7 (Foundations of a Christian Ethics) 204-275

Week 6: Christian Ethics, the Contemporary Context and the Foundations of a Christian Ethic

1. Lecture: Contemporary Context of Christian Ethics, Christian Ethics and the Human Ethical Quest, Christian Ethics as a Community-based Ethic of Being, Foundations of a Christian Ethic.
2. Group Discussion and report: 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? 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 7: 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 and report: 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 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 the 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 Week:

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

Week 9: 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.

No Reading or report for the next week.

Week 10: Continuing with the issues of modern bioethics

1. Students' Presentations continued.

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

Week 11: Ethics of Just Peace

1. Lecture: ethics of creative love
2. Students' Presentations on terrorism, war, nuclear armaments

No Reading or report for the next week.

Part III: Integration

Week 12: What does it mean to live ethically? What is the role of worship in Christian ethics?

1. Lecture and Discussion on what you have learned about Christian Ethics and how you have been challenged throughout the course.
2. Students' Presentations (on any other issues you are interested) continued.

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