

REGENT COLLEGE
Distance Education

THEO 630: PASTORAL ETHICS:
MINISTERING WITH INTEGRITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Dr. W. Ross Hastings
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3 Graduate Credit Hours

Your due date: _____

(See the last page of your Student Handbook for setting your due date)

600 level courses are usually more advanced and focused than 500 level courses and generally assume the completion of some theological studies.

A course may be dropped within two weeks of the course start date for a 100% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between two and four weeks of the course start date for a 75% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between four and eight weeks of the course start date for no refund; after this time the student is committed to receiving a grade for the course. All course materials must be returned in original condition before a drop or refund will be approved.

Course Description

Coming under the general area of the theological discipline of ethics, this course provides an introduction to the field of theological ethics within the framework of Trinitarian and covenantal relations, and as grounded in the Decalogue. It is designed secondly, to encourage the moral formation of the Christian leader. The book of Hebrews defines the mature as those “who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Ethical living is an inescapable requisite for ministry with integrity in any context. Thirdly this course will develop a familiarity with the theological discipline of ethical inquiry, especially as that relates to pastoral ministry. We explore the Christian moral ideal as well as Christian principles of judgement and action, especially as they relate to ministering as Christians in the contemporary world. While the course is designed primarily with a view toward what we often refer to as the "professional" Christian ministry, the principles explored are applicable to Christians in all vocational contexts.

Objectives:

Through this course you should gain an understanding of Christian ethics, while developing a foundation for, and expertise in thinking through the ramifications of Christian faith for living and serving as a Christian minister. To this end you should:

1. Become familiar with the discipline of ethical inquiry in general and the biblical/theological themes which as dimensions of the Christian faith commitment form the foundation for personal living as well as for providing ethical leadership to the people of God.
2. Develop an awareness of the various dimensions of ministry in which Christ’s servants are called to live with integrity.

3. Gain practical expertise as a minister-ethicist by exploring the implications of Christian faith commitment for the situations of life in the contemporary world.

Course Outline

Introduction: the challenge of living ethically as ministers of the gospel
The theological discipline and framework of ethics

Survey of approaches to Christian ethics – deontological ethics, utilitarian (teleological) ethics, virtue ethics and Trinitarian worldview ethics

A. The nature and task of ethics

B. The foundations of Christian ethics (meta-ethics) – creational ethics reaffirmed by the resurrection; the Love Commandment and the Decalogue; the Theistic Trinitarian nature of ethics; the Christian life as persons-in-communion and –in-context. Ethics in modern and post-modern contexts.

C. The material for Christian ethics – the Decalogue as reaffirmed and interpreted in the NT

C.1. Introduction to the Decalogue – the Decalogue in the Bible, hermeneutics of the Decalogue, the uses of the Law

C.2. Ethics and the Decalogue in Christian history

C.3. Exposition of the Decalogue – Commandments 1-3
(spiritual and moral formation of the Christian leader, integrity in the pastoral context)

C.3. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 4
- a theology of Sabbath (pastoral formation and integrity in the workplace)

C.5. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 7
- the pastor and sexual wholeness and integrity
- the ethics of sexuality
- the ethics of marriage and divorce

C.4. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandments 5 and 6
- the pastor and her/his family
- the pastor as ethicist in and for the community
- the pastor as ethicist in the context of issues of the sanctity of human life
- *in vitro* fertilization, abortion, euthanasia, suicide (Dr. Jennie McLaurin)

C.6. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 8

C.7. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 8
- a theology of work (pastoral integrity in the workplace)
- the pastor and personal finances
- the pastor and church finances

C.8. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 9

[Lawyers Bob Kuhn or Kevin Boonstra will teach for three hours]

- the pastor as an ethical “professional” – the nature of the pastorate as a profession
- the pastor and the law (legal liabilities)
- the pastor and confidentiality
- Employment/contract issues

C.9. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 9

- the pastor as prophetic ethicist
 - ethics in the ministry
 - the pastor as an ethical Christian
 - the church as an ethical community
 - the nature of church as a moral community
- (perspectives to be shared by members of a pastoral team)

C.10. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 9

- the Christian minister as an ethicist in and for the community
- the church and contemporary issues of social ethics
- the church and political action

C.11. Exposition of the Decalogue - Commandment 10

Dealing with ethical issues: *discussion of course projects*
Conclusion: ethics and ministering with integrity today

Academic Requirements and Time Investment

	<u>3 cr hrs</u>
Lectures	36 hrs
Reading Required Texts	32 hrs
Book Response Paper	8 hrs
Case Study	14 hrs
Course Project	<u>45 hrs</u>
TOTAL	135 hrs

Assignments

To assist you in accomplishing the course objectives, you will be required to complete adequately the following assignments:

1. Reading.

Dennis P. Hollinger, *Choosing The Good: Christian Ethics In A Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002). 289 pp.

Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993). 210 pp.

Stanley J. Grenz and Roy D. Bell, *Betrayal of Trust*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001) 175 pp.

Christopher Lind, “What Makes Good Ministry Good? Women in Ministry”, *Theology and Sexuality*, 11, No. 3 (2005), 65-88. (Available from:

http://christopherlind.ca/B_articles/articles_004_Women_in_ministry.html)

2. Response Paper (1,000 words).

Students have the option of writing *ONE* of the following:

- a. After reading the volume by Grenz & Bell, compose a 1,000-word (double-spaced) academic, yet personally based essay that explores the implications of the book for your ministry. Note that this is not a book review as such, but a personal response to the material presented in the book written from the vantage point of your calling as a minister of the gospel.
- b. On the basis of the material in the Grenz/Bell volume, compose a 1,000 -word (double-spaced) academic yet personally based essay that *either* explores the implications of clergy sexual misconduct for your ministry *or* deals with the topic, “What I Want My Colleagues to Understand about Gender Relationships in the Ministry.”

3. Case Study (1,750 words).

Throughout the course we talk about various "real life" situations vocational ministers face. For this assignment, choose **ONE** of the following

- a. Choose a situation from your ministry involvement (or that of someone you know) which poses an ethical problem or question. Write up the situation in case study form (250-500 words). Then offer a 1,500-word interaction and response to the case. Your case should provide an ethical rationale for taking the position you do as to how the person(s) involved ought to respond to the situation.
- b. Write a 1,750-word (double-spaced) paper that engages with a case (and discussion) featured in any book or movie or on any websites on pastoral ethics

4. Course Project. Reading: 420 pp. Paper: 3,000 words.

For this assignment, choose **ONE** of the following:

a. Ministry context essay: “Ethical Living in the Context of My Ministry”

Write a 3,000-word (double-spaced) academic essay in which you delineate what it means for you to live as an ethical Christian in the context of your calling, vocation or ministry. While you will speak about Christian ministry in general, your essay should focus on the specific context of ministry to which you sense God's call.

En route to this goal, your essay should draw from the Christian worldview to understand your vocation theologically: What place does this context have in God's program? Then speak about the challenges involved in living as a Christian in this context. Suggest as well how Christian theological commitments provide the intellectual foundation and thereby facilitate ethical living in this context.

In completing this assignment, draw from the various materials of the course, the assigned texts and 420 pages of additional reading from competent sources.

b. Integrative Project

Choose one major contemporary ethical issue. Using the materials of the course as well as 420 pages of additional reading, write a 3,000-word (double-spaced) academic essay interacting with the issue. Your essay should include answers to five questions (although you may use your own creativity in presenting your material):

- (i) What is the ethical issue? (a description and clarification of the issue itself),
- (ii) What are the options? (a presentation of the various positions and arguments as articulated in the contemporary debate)

- (iii) What should Christians consider in seeking to respond to this issue? (What insights can be gained from the Christian ethical tradition and what theological commitments have significant bearing for us?)
- (iv) How should we respond, in your estimation? (a proposed Christian response to the issue)
- (v) What are the implications of your findings for ministry?

Your essay ought to include a bibliography that includes what you found to be the most helpful resources.

Evaluation

	<u>3 cr hrs</u>
Book Response Paper	20%
Case Study	35%
Course Project	45%

NOTE: Assignments will only be graded once they are all handed in.

NB: The Course Evaluation Form must be returned by your due date

Late Policy and Extensions (please read carefully!)

For every week that your course requirements are submitted late, there will be a deduction of a third of a letter grade per assignment accordingly. Only under circumstances that are both *unavoidable and unforeseeable* are extensions considered (please refer to your student handbook for specific details

<http://www.regent-college.edu/academics/cstudies/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf>). Weddings and births do not count as *unavoidable and unforeseeable*. If you need to go beyond the six-month time limit, you must contact the Coordinator *first* for an extension. Contact information is provided in your **Student Handbook**. Please note that extensions are not automatically granted, and must be applied for before your original due date.

ACADEMIC HONOUR Regent College upholds the highest standards of academic responsibility as part of our commitment to Christ in all of life. Students are required to familiarize themselves especially with the discussion of “Academic Integrity” in the College Catalogue.

Bibliography

Required Texts:

Dennis P. Hollinger, *Choosing The Good: Christian Ethics In A Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002). 289 pp.

Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993)

Stanley J. Grenz and Roy D. Bell, *Betrayal of Trust*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001)

Christopher Lind, “What Makes Good Ministry Good? Women in Ministry”, *Theology and Sexuality*, 11, No. 3 (2005), 65-88. (Available from:

http://christopherlind.ca/B_articles/articles_004_Women_in_ministry.html)

Additional Reading Resources:

Pastoral Theology

- Anderson, Ray S. *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Anderson, Ray S., ed. *Theological Foundations for Pastoral Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Arens, Edmund. *Christopraxis: A Theology of Action*. Trans. John F. Hoffmeyer. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

Pastoral Ethics

- Basham, Don. *Lead Us Not Into Temptation*. Old Tappan, NJ: Chosen Books, 1986.
- Battin, Margaret P. *Ethics in the Sanctuary*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Berkley, James D. *Making the Most of Mistakes*. Waco, Texas: Word, 1987.
- Bondi, Richard. *Leading God's People*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989.
- Browning, Don S. *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976.
- Browning, Don S. *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Cole-Turner, Ronald and Brent Waters. *Pastoral Genetics: Theology and Care at the Beginning Of Life*. Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1996.
- Exley, Richard, Mark Galli and John Ortberg. *Dangers Toils and Snares*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1974.
- Gill, Margaret. *Free to Love: Sexuality and Pastoral Care*. London: HarperCollins, 1994.
- Lebacqz, Karen. *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1985.
- Noyce, Gaylord. *Pastoral Ethics*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1988.
- Taylor, Thomas F.. *Seven Deadly Lawsuits: How Ministers Can Avoid Litigation and Regulation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Wiest, Walter E. and Elwyn A. Smith. *Ethics in Ministry*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
- Wind, James P., et al, eds. *Clergy Ethics in a Changing Society*. Louisville: WJK, 1991.

General Resources

- Atkinson, David J., et al, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Boulton, Wayne G., Thomas D. Kennedy and Allen Verhey, eds. *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Clark, David K. and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Readings in Christian Ethics, Volume 1: Theory and Method*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994.
- Clark, David K. and Robert V. Rakestraw, eds. *Readings in Christian Ethics, Volume 2: Issues and Applications*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996.
- White, R.E.O. *Christian Ethics*. Reprint edition. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995.

General Treatments of Christian Ethics

- Adeney, Bernard T. *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Allen, Joseph. *Love and Conflict*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1984.
- Bloesch, Donald G. *Freedom for Obedience: Evangelical Ethics in Contemporary Times*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Bonhoeffer, D. *Ethics* (ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Neville Horton Smith) (London: SCM Press, 1955) (NY: Touchstone, 1995)
- Brown, William P. (ed.) *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002)
- Carmody, Denise Lardner. *Virtuous Woman: Reflections on Christian Feminist Ethics*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993.

- Gustafson, James. *Ethics From a Theocentric Perspective* Vol.1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Happel, Stephen and James J. Walter. *Conversion and Discipleship: A Christian Foundation for Ethics and Doctrine*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997). 260 pp.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.
- Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing The Good: Christian Ethics In A Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002)
- Jones, L. Gregory. *Transformed Judgment: Toward a Trinitarian Account of the Moral Life*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.
- Layman, C. Stephan. *The Shape of the Good*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.
- Murphy, Nancey and George F. R. Ellis. *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- O'Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Sedgwick, Timothy F. *Sacramental Ethics: Paschal Identity and the Christian Life*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- Stassen, Glen, H. and Gushee, David P. *Kingdom Ethics: following Jesus in contemporary context*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Torrance, Alan J. and Banner, Michael, eds. *The Doctrine of God and Theological Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2006)
- Wiebe, Ben. *Messianic Ethics*. Waterloo, Ont.: Herald, 1992.
- Wogaman, J. Philip. *Christian Moral Judgment*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989.

Biblical Ethics

- Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- Bockmuehl, Klaus. *The Christian Way of Living: An Ethics of the Ten Commandments*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998.
- Bockmuehl, Markus. *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakkah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003
- Farley, Benjamin Wirt. *In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Christian Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995)
- Fowl, Stephen E. and L. Gregory Jones. *Reading and Communion: Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991)
- Harvey, A.E. *Strenuous Commands: The Ethic of Jesus*. London: SCM, 1990.
- Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: Harper, 1996.
- Jersild, Paul T. *Spirit Ethics: Scripture and the Moral Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000)
- Kaiser, Walter. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Ogletree, Thomas W. *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Sampley, J. Paul. *Walking between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- Scrage, Wolfgang. *The Ethics of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
- Spohn, William. *What Are They Saying about Scripture and Ethics?* Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1983.
- Verhey, Allen. *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Wright, J. H. *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsityPress, 1983.