ET501 Christian Ethics | Fall 2020

Dr. Laura Miguélez Quay
lquay@gordonconwell.edu

Credit Hours: 3

This course occurs completely online with no scheduled classroom time. This course follows a weekly schedule that runs for 15 Weeks from Tuesday, September 8, through Monday, December 21, 2020. A week in this course begins on Tuesday and ends on Monday. You will have required activities due on certain days each week.

Course Information

Office Hours

Your instructor is available for email correspondence. If you have a question about the course, you can contact your instructor via email.

Technical Support

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary offers technical support during regular business hours. If you have a technical issue with your course, please email tech@gordonconwell.edu.

Course Description

This course will examine: (1) the foundations of Christian Ethics; (2) contexts of contemporary ethical choices; (3) methods of moral decision-making; (4) the relationship of biblically informed norms, values and virtues to culture and society, (5) the Church's role therein; and (6) the application of the above in specific spheres.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives:

- Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry.
- Article 4: To work with the churches towards the maturing of students so that their experiential knowledge of God in Christ is evidenced in their character, outlook, conduct, relationships and involvement in society.
- Article 5: To provide leadership and educational resources for shaping an effective evangelical presence in Church and society.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will

1. Gain a working knowledge of the various ethical theories and concepts utilized in grounding and making ethical decisions and developing Christian character.
2. Understand and appreciate the ways that the Bible and a Christian worldview (i.e. Theology) can guide our moral judgments and actions.
3. Understand the contemporary contexts in which Christians make ethical decisions, and how those contexts can shape our thought and response for good or ill.
4. Utilize wisdom and spiritual resources in making moral decisions in the pastoral context, including attention to one's own pastoral responsibilities.
5. Develop a personal Christ-culture stance for applying Christian ethics in a complex, changing world.
6. Develop sensitivity to issues of justice, compassion and righteousness in our world.
7. Develop an understanding of the church's role in society and culture.
8. Gain a grasp of how the above concepts can provide guidance in several of the pressing issues of our time.
9. Develop an in-depth understanding of one issue through research on the issue.

Weekly Lessons

Over 15 weeks, you will cover the following lessons:

- **Module A: Introduction to the Moral Life and Christian Ethics**
  - Week 1: The Objects, Categories, and Complex Nature of Ethical Studies
- **Module B: The Foundations of Christian Ethics**
  - Week 2: Consequences versus Principles and Character or Virtue Ethics
    - Case Study: Should we lie to do good?
  - Week 3: Christian Worldview Framework, part 1
  - Week 4: Christian Worldview Framework, part 2
    - Case Study: Creation Care; Environmental Ethics
- **Module C: The Contexts of Christian Ethics**
  - Week 5: Modern and Postmodern History and Culture
- **Module D: Making Ethical Decisions**
  - Week 6: Three Motifs for Making Ethical Decisions
    - Case Study: War
  - Week 8: The Bible in Ethical Decisions
    - Case Study: Sexuality
  - Week 9: Empirical Judgments in Ethical Decisions
    - Case Study: Hunger and Poverty
- **Module E: Applying Christian Ethics in Culture and Society**
  - Week 10: Christian Stances toward Culture
  - Week 11: Christian Approaches to Justice Issues

    - Case Study: Racism
  - *Week 12: Thanksgiving week, no class requirements*
  - Week 13: Christian Engagement with a Pluralistic Society
  - Week 14: Christian Strategies for Social Influence

*Note that you will not cover new material in Week 7 and 15, but you will take a Midterm Exam by the end of Week 7 and a Final Exam by the end of Week 15.

Required Materials

Before enrolling in this course, you must ensure that you have regular access to the required materials you will use in this course.

Reading

Links to catalog items are provided. E-book editions may be available in GCTS collections, so check the library catalog item to see if electronic resources are available.

- Hollinger, Dennis. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002.
- Hunter, James Davison. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail."
- NAE, "Code of Ethics for Pastors."
- Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 4th edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. Note that Rae has made significant changes in the 4th edition of his book. You will need to access that edition in order to complete all of the assignments for this course.

You may be assigned other articles or selections, which will be available on the course site.

Technology

You will need the regular access to the following equipment to complete this course:

- A computer with high-speed internet and capable of downloading files and streaming multimedia presentations
- Microsoft Word or comparable word processor

Required Activities

To demonstrate achievement of course objectives, you will participate in various required activities. You will find detailed descriptions of these activities on your course site, but an overview of these requirements is given below:

Watch Lectures

Unless otherwise noted, you will begin each lesson by watching assigned lectures. These lectures will orient you to lesson content and goals. By the end of the course, you must have watched all the lectures in their entirety.

Read Required Texts

Unless otherwise noted, once you have viewed the lectures, you will read the required texts as assigned. By the end of the course, you must have read all the required texts in their entirety.

Contribute to Discussions

Unless otherwise noted, after you have watched the lesson lecture and read the assigned readings, you will contribute to a class discussion. These posts should demonstrate understanding of and critical engagement with lesson material. For each discussion, you will also respond to at least one of your peers.

Take the Midterm Exam

By the end of Week 7, you will take a Midterm Exam, which will measure your level of comprehension of material covered in Weeks 1-7 of the course.

Write an Integrative Ethics Paper

By the end of Week 14, you will write an Integrative Ethics Paper. You will research and write on a particular issue in ethics and propose how the Church ought to address the issue.

Take the Final Exam

By the end of Week 15, you will take a Final Exam, which will measure your level of comprehension of material covered in Weeks 7-15 of the course.

Grading

Your assignments are categorized and weighted for grading as follows

Course Assignment	% of grade
Discussions	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Integrative Ethics Paper	25%

One weekly Discussion grade from weeks 1-9 or 11-14 will be dropped. The Week 10 Discussion is required for all students, and the grade for that week cannot be dropped.

You must follow the criteria detailed in the Assignment Instructions posted on your course site. Grading will be based on your work's alignment with the performance criteria in the Assignment Instructions.

You must also submit work by the "due by" dates listed in the Course Summary on the Syllabus tool of the course site. Any work submitted after these "due by" dates will be penalized 5 points per day beyond the due date unless you make arrangements with your instructor ahead of time.

Refer to your Student Handbook for point values and grading scale of letter grades.

Course Policies

Instructor Feedback

Your instructor will reply to email within 1-2 business days. He or she will give feedback on assignments within one week of submission and post grades and any additional comments in the course gradebook within two weeks of submission.

Writing Standards and Submitting Written Assignments

Papers must be double-spaced with 1" margins (side margins as well as top and bottom margins of each page), using Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font. Do not exceed page limits. Sources must be properly documented using notes and bibliography. Citations should be professionally formatted, meaning that it should adhere to either Turabian or APA style. Written assignments should be submitted as a Word or PDF file.

ADA accommodations

Gordon-Conwell is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you have a special need or disability, please refer to the ADA Accommodations section of your home campus's Student Handbook for information about the accommodation process. Students who have a special need are asked to discuss the provisions of their accommodation with the appropriate office at their home campus as soon as possible.

Violations of Academic Integrity

The seminary considers all breaches of personal and academic integrity to be serious offenses. As such, the seminary has zero tolerance for such behaviors. Cheating involves, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination. Duplication of course requirements involves the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructor. Plagiarism involves the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one's own instead of giving proper credit to the source (taken from the *Hamilton Student Handbook 2018-2019* – please be sure you understand your campus's most current Academic Integrity Policies).

Discussion Posts

When quoting from or paraphrasing course readings, provide the author's name and page(s) in parentheses. If quoting from other sources, provide appropriate documentation. Similarly, when referring to a specific lecture, identify it using the title of the segment.

Netiquette

Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

Seminary Policies

You must be familiar with current seminary policies, which are in place for academic activities. Please refer to the Student Handbook for your home campus to familiarize yourself with policies pertinent to participating in academic activities at the seminary. Policies pertaining to this course would include those on Academic Integrity, Late Work and Accessibility, among others.