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CS 601 Christian Ethics

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CS 601: Christian Ethics
Asbury Theological Seminary
Spring 2003

Section A: 2/11-4/17, 2003 *Tues. & Thurs. 9:30 - 10:45am * M202

Christine Pohl, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: T & Th 12:30 - 3:00 pm & by appointment

Purpose:

To prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding moral responsibility and for practicing ministry with integrity. To assist in training ministers who will draw all persons, including those who are excluded by society, into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ. To assist in the training of ministers who will exemplify the Gospel-mandated holy life.

Objectives:

Students will be able:

- To provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
- To describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
- To use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
- To use basic tools of social analysis.
- To explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
- To recognize and explain at a basic level: the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in society and in the church (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic locations).
- To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

Texts: Dayton, Donald W., Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).

Miles, Rebekah L. The Pastor as Moral Guide (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).
Packet (*readings are not necessarily in order*)

Evaluation:

- 35% Take-Home Integrative Essay on Module #1 of course
- 35% Take-Home Case Study on Modules #1 and #2
- 30% Final Examination (short answer, 45 minutes)
- Debit: For inadequate class participation and/or late or incomplete reading.

Grade Range: Work for CS601 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

A = (4.0) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = (3.0) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = (2.0) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = (1.0) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

F = (0) Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. Attendance will be taken. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Take-Home Integrative Essays (due 3/18, 5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Three essay questions will require moral reflection on, and integration of, the various biblical and historical materials covered in Module #1.

Final Examination (4/17, 45 minutes in class) The examination is oriented toward objective knowledge of ethical theory and historic traditions.

Take-Home Case Study (due 4/24, 5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Case Study will describe an issue in ministry and will require analysis from various moral and social perspectives.

Module #1: FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Week 1 (2/11) Overview of course & introduction to terms, Role of Scripture in ethics, overview of central biblical themes

Plantinga, Cornelius "Spiritual Hygiene and Corruption," in Not the Way It's Supposed To Be (Eerdmans, 1995)

Week 2 (2/18) Historical Foundations for Christian Ethics

Assigned Scriptures

Plato, "Parable of the Cave" & "Ring of Gyges" Republic

"Didache," in The Apostolic Fathers: An American Translation (Harper, 1950)

Augustine, "Of the Morals of the Catholic Church," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1, Vol IV
Benedict of Nursia, selections from "The Rule of Benedict in English" (Liturgical Press, 1982)

Week 3 (2/25) Historical Interpretations of God's Rule over the World and the Christian's Relation to the World

Augustine, selections from Book XIX, The City of God (NPNF1, Vol. II)
Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (Luther's Works, Vol. 45)
John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion (selections on human nature, sin, and the Christian Life)
"Schleitheim Confession," in The Reformation: A Narrative History (Baker, 1982)
Allen, Joseph, "Moral Conflicts IV: Wrongdoers & the Wronged," in Love and Conflict: A Covenantal Model of Christian Ethics (Abingdon, 1984)

Week 4 (3/4) Wesleyan Insights and Practices for Christian Ethics

Wesley, John "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," Sermon CXX
Marquardt, Manfred, "The Social Work of the Early Oxford Methodists" and "Wesley's and the Methodist Societies' Aid to the Poor," in John Wesley's Social Ethics (Abingdon, 1992)
Dunning, H. Ray, "Salvation as Restoration" & "Christian Ethics for the People of God," in Reflecting the Divine Image (InterVarsity, 1998)
Heitzenrater, Richard, "The Imitatio Christi and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor," in Portion of the Poor (Kingswood Books, 1995)
Dayton, Donald, Discovering an Evangelical Heritage, entire book

Week 5 (3/11) Wesleyan Insights, continued

Module #2: THE CHURCH AS MORAL COMMUNITY AND THE PASTOR AS MORAL GUIDE

Week 6 (3/18) The Church as a Community of Personal and Social Holiness

TAKE-HOME INTEGRATIVE ESSAYS DUE IN CLASS—TUESDAY 3/18

Gutierrez, Gustavo, "Introduction to Rev. Ed.," A Theology of Liberation (rev.) (Orbis, 1988)
Volf, Miroslav "Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections in the Wake of 'Ethnic Cleansing'" in Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology, ed. William Dyrness (Zondervan, 1994)
Callahan, Sidney, "To Bear Wrongs Patiently," in With All Our Heart and Mind (Crossroad, 1988)
Hauerwas, Stanley, "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics," in The Peaceable Kingdom (Univ. of Notre Dame, 1983)

Week 7 (3/25) Pastors, Church Leaders, and Moral Formation

Miles, Rebekah, The Pastor as Moral Guide, pages 1-59, 103-126.

Week 8 (4/1) The Church as a Community of Reconciliation: Race and Ethnicity

Wesley, John, "Thoughts Upon Slavery"
Douglass, Frederick "Appendix," Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Dover, 1995)
Wallis, Jim, "America's Original Sin," in America's Original Sin: A Study on White Racism (Washington, D.C.: Sojourners Resource Center, 1992)
Perkins, Spencer & Rice, Chris, "More Than Skin Deep" and "Kingdom Choices" in More Than Equals (InterVarsity Press, 1993)
González, Justo L., "The Significance of a Minority Perspective" and "Who Are We?" in Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective (Abingdon, 1990)

4/8 READING WEEK

Week 9 (4/15) The Church as a Community of Reconciliation: Gender

Sojourner Truth, selections including "Arn't I a Woman" and "Ain't I a Woman" in Can I Get a Witness?, ed. Marcia Riggs (Orbis, 1997)
Koch, Margaret & Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart, "Feminism and Christian Vision," in After Eden (Eerdmans, 1993)
Gilligan, Carol, "Moral Orientation & Moral Development," in Women and Moral Theory (Rowan & Littlefield, 1987)

FINAL EXAM IN CLASS THURSDAY, APRIL 17.

CASE STUDY DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 24.