

**Huntingdon College
Adult Degree Completion Program**

**COURSE NUMBER: REL250
COURSE NAME: Christian Ethics
Spring 2009, Session I, Center Point**

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Michael Wilkinson

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will present a historical survey of theological ethics. We will also reflect on ethical topics and movements as they relate to history.

PREREQUISITE: none

TEXT REQUIRED:

Wogaman, J. Philip, Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction, John Knox Press (**see Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

Wogaman, J. Philip and Douglas M. Strong, Readings in Christian Ethics: A Historical Sourcebook, John Knox Press, (**see Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: This course will present a historical survey of theological ethics. We will also reflect on ethical topics and movements as they relate to history. At the completion of this course, students can expect to have:

1. An overview of the range of topics in Christian Ethics.
2. More refined critical thinking skills concerning ethical questions.
3. Acquaintance with prominent theologians and their arguments
4. Experience in conducting in depth research on a topic of their choice
5. Experience in constructing and evaluating cogent and persuasive arguments..
6. Resources from which to do further study in this field.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA:

Note: All papers must answer the question assigned for each paper topic by formulating a thesis and defending the thesis. This is to say, that each paper must develop an argument that answers the question in a clear and systematic fashion. **The purpose of the weekly paper is to demonstrate you have read the assigned readings, which should be the primary source for the content of the paper.**

Papers should be written in MLA Format.

Final Paper

Prepare a paper (2500 word minimum **or 10–12 pages**) on one of the following topics:

The paper should be typed, double-spaced in Times Roman 12 font.

1. What is Clement of Alexandria's understanding of wealth in the Christian life?
2. What is Augustine's understanding of original sin?
3. What is Bernard of Clairvaux's understanding of love?

4. What is Thomas Aquinas' understanding of law?
5. What is Martin Luther's understanding of the role of the Christian to the "State"?
6. What is John Calvin's understanding of vocation?
7. What is John Wesley's understanding of the role of wealth in the Christian life?
8. What is Friedrich Schleiermacher's understanding of God consciousness?
9. What is Albrecht Ritschl's understanding of the Kingdom of God?
10. What is Walter Rauschenbusch's understanding of the relationship of Christianity and democracy?
11. What is Søren Kierkegaard's understanding of the teleological suspension of the ethical?
12. What is Karl Barth's understanding of the role of divine command in Christian ethics?
13. What is Reinhold Niebuhr's understanding of sin?
14. What is Bernard Haring's understanding of natural law?
15. What is James Cone's understanding of "blackness"?
16. What is John Howard Yoder's understanding of the relationship of Christians to the State?
17. What is Pope John Paul II's understanding of the relationship of the role of wealth in the Christian life?
18. How does the status and role of women change (or not change) in modern Christian ethics?
19. How does the status and role of slaves change (or not change) in modern Christian ethics?
20. What is just war theory?

- Each paper must be written in MLA format with at least four (4) sources cited beyond the textbooks and the Bible.
- Each paper is to be a critical analysis of the arguments developed by the theologians represented in the questions above.
- What are the strengths and limitations of the positions, or arguments articulated?

Grading Elements	Percentage:
Weekly Papers	50%
Class Discussion	25%
Final Paper	25%
Total Points	100%

GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS - Describe the point range for each letter grade.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59-below

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Absences and Tardiness – All students are required to attend the first session. Those who do not attend the first session will be automatically dropped from the course. Students with more than one absence will receive an "F" for the course. Since this class meets only five times, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing three weeks of a regular term. If you cannot attend a class you must let the instructor know via email as soon as possible. In case of

absences you are responsible for obtaining all handouts and assignments. Tardiness may result in a deduction in your class participation grade. Excessive tardiness may count as an absence.

Participation –Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation requires students to come to class prepared to actively participate, which makes the classroom experience more meaningful. However, participation is not just speaking out in class. The contributions made by the student should be related to the course content and meaningful to the class discussion.

Late Assignments – Explain whether late assignments will be accepted and what penalty might be imposed if the assignment is late. Also specify what assignments can be turned in late. This will allow the student to make informed decisions.

Accommodation of Special Needs- Huntingdon College makes every reasonable accommodation for disabilities that have been processed and approved through our Disability Services Committee in accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to request disability-related services at Huntingdon College, students must self-identify to the Disabilities Intake Coordinator, Camilla Irvin, and provide appropriate and up-to-date documentation to verify their disability or special needs. After the accommodations have been approved by the Disability Services Committee, the 504 Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Olenik Dorman, will notify your professor(s) of the committee’s decision. If you have any questions regarding reasonable accommodation or need to request disability-related services, please contact Disability Services at (334) 833-4432 or e-mail at disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu.

Academic Honesty –Plagiarism is literary theft. Failure to cite the author of any language or of any ideas *which are not your own creation* is plagiarism. This includes any text you might paraphrase, as well. Anyone is capable of searching the Internet or any printed media; your research paper is intended to broaden your knowledge, stimulate your creativity, and make you think, analyze, and learn. It is not consistent with the College Honor Code, nor with scholarly expectations to submit work which is not the product of your own thinking and research. Severe penalties will result upon the submission of any work found to be plagiarized, including potential failure of the entire course. It is easy and simple to properly cite all sources used in your paper. Take no risks – cite your sources.

First Night Assignment -

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Early Christianity

Text Readings and Class discussion:

Part I and II of *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*

Part I of *Readings in Christian Ethics*

Written Assignment:

Prepare a paper (750 words minimum or 2½ - 3 pages) on the following topic:

- How did the Church’s attitude toward the “world” change before and after Constantine?

Week 2: Medieval Christianity

Text Readings and Class Discussion:

Part III of *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*

Part II of *Readings in Christian Ethics*

Written Assignment:

Prepare a paper (750 words minimum) on the following topic:

- What was the role of the penitential system in the medieval Church? How did the Reformers react to the penitential emphasis of the medieval Church?

Week 3: The Reformation Era

Text Readings and Class Discussion:

Part IV of *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*

Part III of *Readings in Christian Ethics*

Written Assignment:

Prepare a paper (750 words minimum) on the following topic:

- How does the coming of the Enlightenment challenge Christian Ethics? How, generally speaking, does the Protestant Church respond differently from the Roman Catholic Church to the challenges of modernity?

Week 4: Christian Ethics and the 18th and 19th Centuries

Text Readings and Class Discussion:

Part V of *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*

Part IV of *Readings in Christian Ethics*

Written Assignment:

Prepare a paper (750 words minimum) on the following topic:

- How do the theological ethics of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Ritschl depict Christian ethics as distinct from a philosophical ethical system such as Kant's.

Week 5: Christian Ethics in the 20th Century & Beyond

Readings and Class Discussion:

Part VI & VII of *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*

Part V of *Readings in Christian Ethics*

Written Assignment

Prepare a paper (750 words minimum) on the following topic:

- How do the Social Gospel Movement, the Social Encyclicals of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Liberation Theology movement agree and disagree on the perils and/or benefits of capitalism?