



TS253 Introduction to Christian Ethics

Prof Jeffrey P. Greenman | 1.5CR

About the Course

Christian ethics is about the ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in the course of living the Christian life in the modern world. These issues and dilemmas have largely resulted from the rapid and far-reaching changes that have been taking place across the world caused by movements like globalization and the rapid development of powerful technologies. Several of these issues and dilemmas are new to the 20th and 21st centuries.

These social and cultural changes in the modern world raise fundamental questions about the meaning and nature of human beings, what sort of behaviour is appropriate for us, what values we should hold, and the kind of society we should plan for the future. Because of our belief in the Bible as the living Word of God that provides moral wisdom and power for living in God's world, we can have confidence about finding guidelines and answers to our modern dilemmas.

This course focuses on the biblical and theological foundations for Christian moral thought and action, and the task of applying Christian ethical judgments to global, ecclesial, and personal issues. Special emphasis is given to issues related to political authority and civil disobedience, violence, peacemaking and war, and marriage, family and sexuality.

Credits

1.5CR

Fees*

S\$225(Credit)

S\$120 (Audit)

Class Format

Online

* Alumni are entitled to 10% discount on audit course(s)

About the Lecturer

Prof Jeffrey P. Greenman is President and Professor of Theology and Ethics at Regent College. An experienced leader in evangelical theological education, Prof Greenman has served as Associate Dean of Biblical & Theological Studies and Professor of Christian Ethics at Wheaton College, and as Vice President & Academic Dean at Tyndale Seminary (Toronto). Prior to this, he was the Canadian Executive Director of African Enterprise, and also worked for the US government in the areas of education and juvenile justice. Prof Greenman earned his PhD in religious ethics at the University of Virginia (17th-century Anglican moral theology). An author of eleven books, he has taught and written extensively on Christian ethics, the history of biblical interpretation, spiritual formation, theological education, leadership development, and global Christianity.



Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, it is hoped that the student will:

- Be familiarised with the major approaches involved in ethical reflections (for example, different typologies of ethics).
- Understand the main themes in biblical teaching about ethics and moral formation.
- Appreciate and understand the pertinent issues underlying some of the more significant ethical questions in contemporary society.
- Develop their ability to analyse ethical questions from inter-disciplinary perspectives (such as Scriptures, Christian theology, history and contemporary ethical philosophy).

Course Outline & Resources

VIDEO LECTURES & ACTIVITIES

For each topic, the relevant video lectures can be accessed through the video links provided on the course Moodle site. At the end of each set of video lectures, the lecture questions should be answered before proceeding to the next topic.

REQUIRED READING

All required readings are from Joel B. Green, gen. ed., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Baker Academic, 2011), and Samuel Wells & Ben Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Please see the Course Bibliography below for more details.

| S/N | Lecture Topic | Activities | Required Reading |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Lived Faith: The Challenge of Christian Ethics | Lecture 1 Questions | <i>Introducing Christian Ethics</i> , Chpt 7 |
| 2 | Lived Faith: The Biblical Logic of Christian Ethics | Lecture 2 Questions | - |
| 3 | Biblical Ethics 1: Old Testament and Ethics | Lecture 3 Questions | <i>Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics</i> , entries on: Covenant, Creation Ethics, Law, Sin, Ten Commandments, Torah |
| 4 | Biblical Ethics 2: New Testament and Ethics | Lecture 4 Questions | <i>Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics</i> , entries on: New Testament Ethics, Fruit of the Spirit, Golden Rule, |

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|---|--|---------------------|--|
| | | | Kingdom of God, Love Command, Love of Enemy, Neighbor, Neighbor Love, Moral Formation, Sermon on the Mount |
| 5 | Relational Ethics: Marriage, Family and Sexuality | Lecture 5 Questions | <i>Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics</i> , entries on: Children, Family, Marriage and Divorce, Sex and Sexuality, Homosexuality <i>Introducing Christian Ethics</i> , Chpt 10 |
| 6 | Political Ethics: Political Authority, Civil Disobedience, War and Peace | Lecture 6 Questions | <i>Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics</i> , entries on: Authority and Power, Civil Disobedience, Government, Political Ethics, Powers and Principalities, Resistance Movements, Deterrence (Nuclear), Force (Use Of), Holy War, Just-Peacemaking Theory, Just-War Theory, Pacifism, Peace, Violence, War <i>Introducing Christian Ethics</i> , Chpt 8 |

Course Requirements

1. **Video lecture questions:** Complete all video lecture questions.
2. **Reading reflection:** Based on the required reading, write a 750-word reflection addressing both of these questions:
 - a. What are the three most important insights you have gained from this course? Explain why.
 - b. What are the three most important unanswered questions you have?
3. **Essay:** Write a 3,000-word essay on a topic of your choice. The options for the kind of paper you can write are:
 - a. A study of the moral vision of a specific biblical book (e.g. the moral framework of the book of Proverbs)
 - b. A study of some aspect of the thought of an important Christian moral thinker (e.g. Augustine's view of war)
 - c. A study of a particular contemporary ethical issue (e.g. cloning)

ASSIGNMENTS BREAKDOWN

| S/N | Assignments | Grade Percentage |
|-----|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Video Lecture Questions | 10% |
| 2 | Reading Reflection | 30% |
| 3 | Essay | 60% |
| | Total | 100% |

GUIDELINES FOR ESSAY-WRITING

1. The paper must reflect graduate-level research skills. There must be a minimum of five sources in your bibliography (not including the Bible).
2. The paper must reflect academic integrity in that due credit must be given to every source quoted or used. Footnotes should be used to document the sources. Every source cited should also appear in the bibliography. Please abide by the Turabian or Chicago Style for all your footnoting and bibliography.
3. The paper must reflect a good command of English and organisation of thought. Writing must be concise and clear. Please proof-read your paper before submitting it.
4. The paper must reflect the customary hallmarks of academic writing: treat those who hold different opinions from you with respect, and avoid colloquialisms and slang.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the section on “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on the BGST Online Student Manual.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle. Alternatively, assignments can be sent via email to assignments@bgst.edu.sg without the need to cc. the lecturer (**unless requested by the lecturer**).
3. Students must submit all their assignments **6 months** after the course registration date

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST ‘Guidelines for Academic Papers’.

Course Bibliography

REQUIRED READINGS

Core Text

*Joel B. Green, gen. ed. *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Baker Academic, 2011)

*Samuel Wells & Ben Quash. *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Baker, David L. *The Decalogue: Living as the People of God*. IVP, 2017.

Banner, Michael. *Christian Ethics: A Brief History*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Barbour, Ian G. Vol. 2 of *Ethics in an Age of Technology: The Gifford Lectures 1989-1991*. HarperCollins, 1993.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Ethics*. Macmillan, 1964.

Clapp, Rodney, ed. *The Consuming Passion: Christianity and the Consumer Culture*. IVP, 1999.

Ellul, Jacques. *The Presence of the Kingdom*. SCM, 1951.

Gill, David W. *Becoming Good: Building Moral Character*. IVP, 2000.

Gill, David W. *Doing Right: Practicing Ethical Principles*. IVP, 2004.

Grant, Jonathan. *Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age*. Brazos, 2015.

Grenz, Stanley. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Apollos, 1997.

Gushee, David and Glen Stassen, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. IVP, 2003.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.

Hays, Richard. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Hollinger, Dennis. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Baker Academic, 2002.

Hollinger, Dennis. *Head, Heart, and Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion and Action*. IVP, 2005.

Hollinger, Dennis. *The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life*. Baker Academic, 2009.

- Kidwell, Jeremy, and Sean Doherty, eds. *Theology and Economics: A Christian Vision of the Common Good*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*. Westminster John Knox, 1999.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel*. Baker, 1993.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*. IVP, 1984.
- Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Baker Academic, 2009.
- Stassen, Glen Harold. *A Thicker Jesus: Incarnational Discipleship in a Secular Age*. Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Thompson, James W. *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics*. Baker Academic, 2011.
- Timpe, Kevin, and Craig A. Boyd. *Virtues and Their Vices*. Oxford, 2014.
- Samuel Wells, ed. *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Wilkins, Steve. *Christian Ethics: Four Views*. IVP, 2017.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Hearing the call: Liturgy, Justice, Church, and World*. Edited by Mark R. Gornik and Gregory Thompson. Eerdmans, 2011.
- Wright, Christopher J.H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. IVP, 2004.
- Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit agnus noster*. Eerdmans, 1972.
- Zizioulas, John D. *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*. Edited by Luke Ben Tallon. T&T Clark, 2011.