

Christian Ethics

Sex, Money, and Difference

REL 260 / 2 Credits / Northwestern College / Spring 2010

Instructor: Dr. Michael Andres, andres@nwciova.edu

Office/Hours: VPH115; Mon, Tue, Fri 3:30-5:00pm; ext. 7079

Class Time: MWF 10:40-11:40; 1/12-3/5

Class Location: VPH117

Course Description:

This course is a biblically based, theologically and historically informed study of both personal and social moral issues from a Christian perspective.

Course Objectives:

- Students will identify key resources necessary for responsible Christian ethical reflection.
- Students will develop not only a personal approach to ethical reflection, but to develop a pastoral and social approach to persons involved with given ethical issues.
- Students will identify some of the current areas of ethical debate, articulate various positions held by Christians in these areas, and formulate one's own moral beliefs.

Required Texts:

- Bible (modern translation, no paraphrase; bring to every class period).
- Clark, David and Rakestraw, Robert, eds, *Readings in Christian Ethics, Vol 2: Issues and Applications* (Baker, 2000).
- Simon, Arthur, *How Much is Enough? Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture* (Baker, 2003).
- Via, Dan and Gagnon, Robert, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* (Fortress, 2003).

Course Requirements:

- *Class attendance/participation:* Participation highly encouraged. Attendance is mandatory. After two unexcused absences, students will be graded down one half letter grade for every subsequent unexcused absence. Students may not use laptop computers in class. You may transfer written notes to your computer later. Please turn cell phones completely off before class begins (not on 'vibrate').
- *Readings:* Readings should be completed before class time listed. Students are responsible to be aware of forthcoming reading assignments given in syllabus.
- *Case Studies:* Students should read and prepare to participate in an informed discussion of given moral issue. In discussions students should make use of various sources for Christian ethical reflection (e.g. Scripture, tradition, reason, science, experience), and careful, sensitive application.
- *Quizzes:* Students are required to take six quizzes over terms from reading. Lowest score dropped.

- **Book Analysis:** Compare and contrast the views of Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views*, on biblical authority, interpretation, relation of OT to NT, the relevance of what is "natural" or "inborn", cultural relativity, and the role of experience. Give reasons for why you prefer one author's arguments over the others. Analysis should be 1500 words max and must accord with Writing and Submission Guidelines. Please note that a hard copy of written assignments should be submitted to instructor and an electronic copy to My Northwestern.
- **Exam:** One final exam consisting of short answers is given the last day of class (Mar 5).

Course Assessment:

- Quizzes (33%) = 50 points / 10 points each
- Book Analysis (33%) = 50 points
- Final Exam (33%) = 50 points

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Northwestern College is a Christian academic community committed to integrity and honesty in all intellectual and academic matters. Behavior that violates academic integrity can take a variety of forms including, but not limited to, cheating on tests, quizzes, papers, and projects; plagiarism using unauthorized material; willful misrepresentation of evidence and arguments. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words or ideas, with the intent of deceiving the reader concerning the origin of the words, ideas, or images. (Excerpts from *NWC Student Handbook*, 11)

Course Assistance:

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern College will provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact both their instructor and the college disability service provider to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

I have an open door policy. Please come by my office, preferably at office hours, if you have any questions or are having any problems with the reading, lectures, note taking, written project, etc. Or come by for a cup of tea and chat about life. For further assistance in academic matters help is available through Tom Truesdell at Academic Support (VPH 125B). Tutors are available.

Course Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READING / ASSIGNMENT
Jan 13	Introduction	
Jan 15	Christian Ethical Reflection	Clark/Rakestraw, "The Nature of Ethics"; "Grounding Moral Norms"; Hauerwas, "Virtue" (handout); <u>Quiz #1</u> (terms from articles)

Jan 18	Christian Ethical Reflection	
	SEX	
Jan 20	Reproductive Technologies and Abortion	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 1-2; <u>Quiz #2</u> (ch 2 terms)
Jan 22	Discuss Case Studies (Ch 2)	
Jan 25	Sexuality, Marriage, and Singleness	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 4
Jan 27	Divorce and Remarriage	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 6; <u>Quiz #3</u> (ch 6 terms)
Jan 29	Discuss Case Studies (Ch 4, 6)	
Feb 1	Homosexuality	<u>Book Analysis Due</u>
Feb 3	Homosexuality	Schmidt, "The Price of Love" (handout)
Feb 5	Discuss Case Studies (Ch 5)	
	MONEY	
Feb 8	Environment	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 10
Feb 10	Wealth and Economics	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 9; <u>Quiz #4</u> (ch 9 terms)
Feb 12	Consumerism and Affluence	Simon, Intro-ch 4
Feb 15	Material Possessions	Simon, ch 5-9

Feb 17	Material Possessions	Simon, ch 10-14
Feb 19	Discuss Case Studies (Ch 9-10)	
	<i>DIFFERENCE</i>	
Feb 22	Race	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 7; <u>Quiz #5</u> (ch 7 terms)
Feb 24	Race	
Feb 26	Peace and War	Clark/Rakestraw, ch 13; <u>Quiz #6</u> (ch 13 terms)
Mar 1	Discuss Case Studies (Ch 7, 13)	
Mar 3	Study Period	
Mar 5	<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>Final Exam Study Guide</u>