

ST302 Christian Worldview and Ethics

June 30-July 14, 2017

Instructor: Dr. Luke Bobo [see Appendix B, page 11 for bio]

Meeting times: 1 to 3 pm.

E-mail: megatheos@sbcglobal.net

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE – WHY WAS THE CWV COURSE CHANGED?:

Sound theology includes not only what we believe but also how we live (ethics). For example, when the Apostle Paul talks about teaching "sound doctrine" in his pastoral letters (e.g., Titus 2:1-10), he has in mind not just personal beliefs but also how we ought to live. This is also implied in Paul's use of the word, "walk" as in Ephesians 4:1-2: 'to walk' means to act or behave in manner that is above reproach. Every doctrine we study in theology has ethical implications. There is no such thing as a neutral decision. Every decision, every action, every doctrine has an ethical implication. For example, the doctrine of creation teaches us to care for the environment, protect human life, treat all people with dignity as image-bearers, uphold human rights and affirm marriage as a life-long covenant between one heterosexual man and one heterosexual woman. Currently, we have no course in our IBS curriculum that addresses ethics--yet many of the most important issues we're wrestling with (e.g., sexual identity, gender identity, justice) are fundamentally ethical questions. We have redesigned our worldview course to focus on Christian ethics through the lens of a Christian world and life view. Indeed, it is a Christian worldview that provides a framework for Christian ethics.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A Christian worldview is the comprehensive framework for understanding God, the world, the nature of man, good and evil, and the reality of death and life after death. This comprehensive framework should inform our personal and public (social) ethics. The Bible defines ethics as "a way of life that conforms to the will of God as revealed in Christ and the Holy Scriptures and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. It seeks to answer the practical question, what is God calling us, his redeemed people *to be* and *to do*?" (David C. Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics*, p. 16). This course will inform us on what kind persons we are *to be* and this course will inform us on what we are *to do* while considering not only the Christian worldview but also rival worldviews (e.g., postmodernism, modernism, secular humanism, etc.).

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Bible (Any translation but better translations are ESV, NIV, N/RSV, N/KJV, NAS). Bring paper version of Bible to class.
2. James K. A. Smith. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1587433801.
3. David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, revised and updated. Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1414390383. Be sure to get this edition. I was released in February 2017.

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4. Supplemental reading (available on the IBS website):
 - a) "Biblical Perspectives on Migration and Mission: Contributions from the Old Testament," by Dr. Carroll Rodas; <https://immigrationmdcrdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/biblical-perspectives-on-migration-and-mission-contributions-from-the-old-testament.pdf>.
 - b) "A Theology of Immigration," by Matthew Soerens, U.S. Director of Church Mobilization, World Relief; <https://thinkchristian.reframemedia.com/a-theology-of-immigration>.
 - c) Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*.

COURSE OBJECTIVES. By the end of this two-week course, students will demonstrate that they:

- a) Understand core Christian moral convictions, values, worldview and virtues of Christian faith;
- b) Have learned the basic skills of critical moral thinking and analysis to reason ethically from the Scriptures;
- c) Understand and can assess different ethical systems or narratives and assumptions besides their own;
- d) Have learned how to identify and apply core Christian worldview, values and virtues to major contemporary ethical issues (e.g., immigration, xenophobia, racism, homosexuality, abortion, etc.)
- e) Better understand the importance of ethics for evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, and cross-cultural mission; and
- f) Have gained greater confidence in the Scriptures as "the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks" (Cru SOF).

CLASS ETIQUETTE:

- ✓ **Decorum.** Your classmates have varying opinions, beliefs, etc. regarding theology and its implications. This is true because your classmates come from different denominational and Christian backgrounds. Because of this wonderful diversity, it is imperative that we are hospitable, respectful and kind to each other.
- ✓ **Tardiness.** Getting to class on time is expected. However, 'life happens' and some situations are unavoidable. But unless providentially hindered, students are expected to be on time every class period. Otherwise, each unexcused tardy will **result in an automatic deduction of 50 points** for each occurrence.
- ✓ **Cell Phones.** They are a wonderful technological gadget. However, in class they are more wonderful when they are turned off or on silent mode and put away. **Upon entering the classroom, be a magician and make your cell phone disappear. Points will be deducted if this rule is violated.**

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SCHEDULE: (subject to change)

<i>Month</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment Due</i>
June		
30	Introduction [Review Grand Narrative of Scripture, Review Contours of a Christian Worldview & Our Cultural Moment]	Make journal entry.
July		
03	Introduction [Review Grand Narrative of Scripture, Review Contours of a Christian Worldview & Our Cultural Moment cont'd] and Introduction to Personal Ethics	Read Romans 12:1-2. Make journal entry.
05	Personal Ethics: What Kind of Person Are You Becoming?	Read Smith, Preface + Chapters 1-4. Make journal entry.
06	Personal Ethics: What Kind of Person Are You Becoming?	Read Smith, Chapters 5-7+Benediction. Make journal entry.
07	Being Public Disciple: "Obey Caesar or God"	Read Platt, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 10. Make journal entry.
10	Othering: Refugees & Immigrants	Read Platt, Chapter 9 and supplemental readings by Rodas and Soerens. Make journal entry.
11	Abortion & Other Bioethics Issues	Read Platt, Chapter 3. Make journal entry.
12	Personal Sexual Ethics, Sexuality & Same-Sex Marriage	Read Platt, Chapters 6-7. Make journal entry.
13	Race, Racism & a 'Racialized Society'	Read Platt, Chapter 8 and King's Birmingham Letter. Make journal entry.
14	Toward A Theology of Money & Ethics & Wrap Up	Read Platt, Chapter 2. Journal, Reading Report & Capstone Paper Due.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Practical Application Paper.** Christian theology is meant to be applied moment-by-moment, day-to-day. We are all practical theologians. So, read the local newspaper or a national paper (*Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *New York Times*) and look for an article discussing an ethical issue or moral dilemma. Write an email to the professor. No proofreader required. The email should include the following components:
 - Why did you choose this article? For example, did you choose this article because this is a personal struggle or did you choose this because you have faced this issue before in your ministry context or you anticipate facing this issue in your ministry context? (2 sentences)
 - What does the Bible say about this issue? Please don't just quote Scripture – *reason from the Scriptures* and argue why the Scriptures you have chosen speak to this issue. (one full paragraph, 4 to 5 sentences)

Use proper attribution and please properly reference the article in your paper. This is due Friday, June 30, 2017 by 9 pm. [100 points/11%]

2. **Write a Friend.** By **Friday, July 7**, write a friend an email or hand-written letter and share. You can share three new things you have learned in this class. You can share three things you are struggling with (e.g., a personal sin like idolatry, pornography, etc.). Or you can share a combination: that is, share two new things you have learned and one thing you are personally struggling with. New things could be something discussed in class and/or gleaned from the readings. This person should be a critical thinker and someone you can trust. **On Monday, July 10** turn in a hard copy of what you sent to this friend to the professor. No proofreader required. [150 points/17%]
3. **Craft a Case Study (Story).** Write a paragraph length case study detailing an ethical dilemma. The case study can be personal (about you) or someone you know. If the case study is personal, send it directly to the instructor at megatheos@sbcglobal.net. Please give all parties an alias. The case study can be related to a topic discussed in class. See Appendix A (p. 10) for samples of case studies. These case studies might be used in class. If you prefer that your case study not be used in class, please state that explicitly. No proofreader required. Turn in this paragraph length paper any time before the last day of class, Friday, July 14. [100 points/11%]
4. **Journal.** Students will be expected to maintain a journal during this two-week class. While journaling is often spontaneous and rarely structured, students will be expected to journal a 4 to 5 sentence entry every day. Journal entries can be, but not limited to, reflections on the readings, class discussions, their own personal struggles, etc. All entries should be written legibly – handwritten or typed. **Every student must journal answers to the following questions:**

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- i. Naming local liturgies. Why should you be an ethnographer and help your students name and 'exegete' their local liturgies? See Smith, p. 54.
 - ii. Take a liturgical audit of your life. What are the things you do that do something to you? What are the secular liturgies in your life? What vision of the good life is carried in those liturgies? What Story is embedded in those cultural practices? What kind of person do they want you to become? To what kingdom are these rituals aimed? What does this cultural institution want you to love? See Smith, p. 55.
 - iii. Please note that your journal entry for (i) and (ii) might be longer than 4 to 5 sentences.
- Due on Friday, July 14, 2017. [150 points/22%]
 - Sample entries are provided below.
 - "That story that Dr. B shared in class has been gnawing at me. And then he quoted Steve Garber and Bryan Stevenson who both said something like the following, "once you see the oppressed, you are implicated." And once implicated, morally obligated to do something. Lord forgive me for seeing people made in your image oppressed but I did not do a thing."
 - "Smith has convicted me again. He has forced me to ask, "what or who do I love more than God?" Honestly, I know I love my comfort more than God. I know that I love my desires more than God. Help me Lord."
 - "Thank you, brother Platt. You named on page 45 something that put into words something that I had no language for: slavery is any form of bondage. This makes sense now and I am not crazy. I need to share this with Patricia before I go to bed tonight."
5. Reading Report. Students will be expected to read 100% of the assign readings and submit a percentage read on the last day of class. See worksheet and table below. [100 points/11%]

Worksheet

Of the required reading, how many pages did you complete? _____

To determine the percentage of reading you completed, divide the number of pages you completed by the total number of required pages (416) and convert to a percentage.

- Example: Joe Cru staff completed 380 pages of required reading: $380 \div 416 = 0.913 \times 100 = 91.3\%$.

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Submit this percentage electronically to the instructor at megatheos@sbcglobal.net.

Assigned Reading	# of pages
Smith, Preface + Chapters 1-4	107
Smith, Chapters 5-7 + Benediction	79
Platt, Introduction + Chapters 1 & 9	51
Platt, Chapter 9 & supplemental readings by Rodas & Soerens	36
Platt, Chapter 3	21
Platt, Chapters 6-7	54
Platt, Chapter 8 & King's Birmingham Letter	35
Platt, Chapter 2	33
<i>Total pages</i>	416

*Points awarded for reading assignments will be based on this grid: 90% to 100% read – 100% of points possible; 80% to 89% read 80% of points possible; 70% to 79% read 60% of points possible; 60% to 69% read 40% of points possible.

6. **Final 'Capstone' Paper.** Students must choose an ethical issue that they are personally dealing with or an ethical issue that they anticipate facing as a Cru staff person. Alternatively, students can write on an ethical issue/question posed by a student prior to the class. Write a 3 to 4-page response. Proofreader required. Use the outline below. Due on Friday, July 14, 2017. [250 points/28%]

- Introduction
 - Describe the ethical issue
 - Explain why you choose this issue
- Discuss what other worldviews have said about this issue
- Provide a Christian response informed by the lectures, class discussions and most importantly, the Bible
- Discuss application to your personal life and your ministry and/or church life
- Conclusion

ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Staple all work and put page numbers on all work. If work is not stapled, if work has no page numbers, etc., professor will not accept. Absolutely no cover sheets and no headers. Specs for the header on final capstone paper:

Your name, date

Proofreader: typed name

2. Late work. Liberal due dates have been provided so all work is expected to be turned in on time. Thus, late work will be assessed a 20% late penalty each day the assignment is late.
3. You always have the option to submit any written work electronically.

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GRADING/ASSIGNMENTS:

Grading will be based on completion of assignments and assigned points (caution: please don't use points as a means of judging an assignment's importance or significance; all the assignments are significant).

Assignment	Percentage	Points	Due
Practical Application Paper	11%	100	Friday, June 30, 2017 by 9 pm
Write a friend	17%	150	By Friday, July 7; turn in to professor on Monday, July 10
Craft a case study (story)	11%	100	Any time before July 14
Journal	22%	200	Last day of class, July 14
Reading Report	11%	100	Last day of class, July 14
Final 'Capstone' Paper^	28%	250	Last day of class, July 14
	100%	900	

Grading Scale:

<i>A</i>	<i>A-</i>	<i>B+</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B-</i>	<i>C+</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C-</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
94-100	92-93	90-91	84-89	82-83	80-81	74-79	72-73	65-71	0-65

Notes:

A grade of C- or better is required to apply this course toward your IBS requirements.

^Proofreader required.

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Suggested Readings

Ethics

Davis, John Jefferson. *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing the Church Today*. Fourth Ed. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2015.

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

Jones, David Clyde. *Biblical Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Bioethics

Bauby, Jean-Dominique. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. NY: Vintage Books, 1997.

Film, *Gattaca* (1997).

Meilander, Gilbert. *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Moll, Rob. *The Art of Dying: Living Fully into the Life to Come*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010.

Public Discipleship

Bacote, Vincent. *The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Sherman, Amy. *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011.

Skillen, James. *The Good of Politics: A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation and Culture (www.washingtoninst.org).

Poverty

Bailey, James. *Rethinking Poverty: Income, Assets and the Catholic Social Justice Tradition*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

Fikkert, Brian. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody, 2014.

Race

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2012.

Cleveland, Christena. *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013.

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Emerson, M., & Smith, C. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Washington, James (Ed.). *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Harper, 1986.

Films, *Red Tails* (2012); *The Butler* (2013); *Hidden Figures* (2016); *Get Out* (2017).

Sexual Identity and Gender Identity

Butterfield, Rosaria. *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey into Christian Faith*. Pittsburgh: Crown & Covenant, 2012.

Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Yarhouse, Mark. *Understanding Gender Dyshoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015.

Yarhouse, Mark. *Homosexuality and the Christian*. Minneapolis: Bethany, 2010.

Immigration

Bauman, Stephen & Soerens, Matthew. *Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis*. Chicago: Moody, 2016.

Rodas, Daniel Carroll. "The Bible, the Church, and Human Rights in Contemporary Debates about Hispanic Immigration in the United States." <https://immigrationmdcrdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/the-bible-the-church-and-human-rights-in-contemporary-debates-about-hispanic-immigration-in-the-united-states.pdf>.

Soerens, Matthew & Yang, Jenny Hwang. *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion, & Truth in the Immigration Debate*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Worldview

Pearcey, Nancy. *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*. Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2015.

Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. Third Ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.

Wilkens, Steve & Sanford, Mark. *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

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Appendix A – Sample Case Studies (Stories)

Sample #1

Rosa Parks has been married to Mike for nearly two years. And like most young marriages, Rosa Parks and Mike have had their share of arguments. In the last six months, Rosa Parks was prescribed some medication that had an adverse reaction. In fact, the medication led her to attempt suicide at home. Rosa Parks was later hospitalized after this episode. After being released from the hospital, Rosa Parks stayed with her maternal grandparents because Mike was working long hours as a swim coach. When Rosa Parks felt well enough to return home, she discovered that Mike had changed the locks on the door and issued her an ultimatum to move her stuff out the house; otherwise, he would throw it out. Mike plans to file for divorce – citing that Rosa Parks has verbally abused him. Rosa Parks decided to move her things out the house and has moved to Ballwin, MO to live with her mother and her two younger brothers. Is there a biblical warrant for a divorce here? Should Rosa Parks sign the divorce papers?

Sample #2

Underaged drinking on American college campuses is ubiquitous. These minors – Christians and non-Christians - often attend parties on campus and off campus where alcohol is served. And the best part - these minors indulge in drinking without showing an ID. After speaking on Christian Freedom, Dr. B was asked this question by a Christian female at the University of Kansas (Lawrence), “should I give these inebriated minors a ride home in my parents’ car?”

Sample #3

Vicki and Paige are good friends with Sarah. In fact, they all went to high school together in Denver, CO. Vicki, Paige and Sarah all attend Grace University in Little Rock, AR. Sarah had pre-marital sex with her boyfriend, Brandon, and has recently discovered she is pregnant. Sarah and her boyfriend have agreed that she should get an abortion. Otherwise, they both will likely have to drop out of school, get jobs, and forfeit their life plans. Vicki and Paige, both Christians, are adamantly against abortion. However, Sarah has asked Vicki and Paige to accompany her to the abortion clinic. Should they honor Sarah’s request and accompany her to the abortion clinic?

Note: all persons referenced in these case studies are professing Christians.

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Appendix B – Instructor Bio

Dr. Luke B. Bobo ('Dr. B') is the Director of Resource and Curriculum Development for Made to Flourish (Overland Park, KS). He is the former Department Chair and Associate Professor for the Christian Ministry Studies (CMS) Program at Lindenwood University (St. Charles, MO). Prior to Lindenwood, Dr. Bobo directed the Francis Schaeffer Institute, at Covenant Theological Seminary, whose mission is "to train God's servants to demonstrate compassionately and defend reasonably the claims of Christ upon the whole of life." He holds degrees from the University of Missouri-St. Louis (PhD), Covenant Theological Seminary (M.Div., with an emphasis in Apologetics and Contemporary Culture), the University of Missouri-Columbia (M.S., Electrical and Computer Engineering) and the University of Kansas (B.S., Electrical Engineering). Dr. Bobo is an ordained minister and is the author of *Living Salty and Light-filled Lives in the Workplace* (Wipf & Stock, 2014) and *A Layperson's Guide to Biblical Interpretation* (Wipf & Stock, 2016). He co-authored the ebook, *Discipleship with Monday in Mind: How Churches Across the Country Are Helping Their People Connect Faith and Work* (Made to Flourish, 2016).

Dr. Bobo is married to Rita Holmes-Bobo and they have two children, Briana Amber and Caleb Avery. Dr. Bobo enjoys reading, traveling, drinking coffee, spending time with students, yard work, golf, analyzing contemporary culture, preaching, teaching and writing.