

Organizational Purpose

The Institute of Biblical Studies exists in order to help develop Christ-centered missionaries who possess the biblical and theological competencies they need (head, heart and hands) to live out the Great Commandment and helpfully fulfill the Great Commission through the ministry of Cru. This course addresses three areas of Christian doctrine that are foundational to our life and mission.

Course Description

Theology involves not only how we speak correctly about God but also how we respond and live faithfully as God's people. Christian ethics considers not simply moral choices but the manner in which our ethical decisions emerge from our understanding of Scripture and Christian doctrine. Thus ethics is not a branch of theology, but equivalent to theology because theology answers ethical questions.

Following Jesus in our contemporary context is complex. We face decisions and questions that require thoughtful reflection, Scriptural study, and concrete action in our personal, ecclesial, and public lives. This course seeks to answer the practical question, "What is God calling us *to be* and *to do*?", particularly in view of the call to discipleship and ministry in Cru.

Learning Outcomes

1. Deepen your motivation to know, love and worship the triune God and to reflect God's character as an image-bearer in your relationships.
2. Better understand how a distinctly Christian ethic emerges from a Christian Worldview.
3. Better understand the ethics of serving as a missionary with Cru.
4. Develop a deeper desire to be faithful to the way and truth of Jesus in our personal, ecclesial and public decisions and practices.
5. Discover the importance of ethics for evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, and cross-cultural mission.
6. Become more aware of how the student and other Christians have approached ethics and moral formation.
7. Better understand the wide variety of factors that shape your ethical decision-making
8. Grow in your capacity to reason ethically from the Scriptures (the capability to walk through a biblically sound evaluative decision-making process which enables the person to thoughtfully analyze ethical issues, even when not explicitly addressed by the scriptures, and then articulate biblical perspectives and act morally on the basis of that process.)

Required Texts

David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, revised and updated. Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1414390383. Also available in Kindle format.
Sam Alberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?* The Good Book Company, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1908762313

Chapter excerpts and articles:

David P. Gushee and Glenn Stassen, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*, 64-85.
Carl Ellis, "Biblical Righteousness is a Four-Paned Window"(2pp)
Carl Ellis, "It's Time to Emancipate our Theology from Western Culture #AlwaysReforming(3pp)
Matthew Eppinette, "Human 2.0" in *Everyday Theology* ed. Vanhoozer, Anderson, and Salesman. Baker Academic: 2007, 191-207.
Antonios Kireopoulos, ed. *Thinking Theologically About Mass Incarceration : Biblical Foundations and Justice Imperatives*. Paulist Press, 2017, 3-14.
Brett McCracken, *Gray Matters : Navigating the Space between Legalism & Liberty*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013, 225-243.
Kate M. Ott, *Christian Ethics for a Digital Society*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. 43-70
Preston Sprinkle (Transgenderism paper)
John Swinton and Richard Payne., Eds, *Living Well and Dying Faithfully : Christian Practices for End-Of-Life Care*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 107-138.
Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 172-191

Learning Tasks

1. **Pre Course Assignment (400-500 words):** In ministry you may encounter issues related to sexuality/cohabitation/marriage, domestic violence, conscience in relationship to military service, abortion, drug use, environmental concerns, and many others. Reflect upon a situation in ministry where a person with one these ethical issues just came to you for advice. How would you guide them through a decision-making process as a follower of Christ? We'll be discussing what you wrote in class the first day. **Due: Monday, January 6 at the beginning of class. (10%)**
2. **Reading:** You will be reading select chapters from Platt's *Counter Culture* as well as selected excerpts from books and articles. Your reading should be done thoroughly and thoughtfully with a sincere attempt to learn all you can. **Given the compressed nature of this course, it will help if you complete the reading prior to the first class session.** **DUE: Thursday, January 9 by the beginning of class. (20%)**
3. **Participate in Class Discussion:** This class will include a mixture of lecture combined with abundant classroom discussion. Each day we will discuss at least one ethical issue and consider not only how to address it but also consider how to navigate these matters in your ministry context. You will also be asked to respond to questions from the instructor. You are free to raise questions as well.

4. **Daily Journal:** Daily journal describing how the class is shaping their understanding of ethics. The last journal entry will describe how you would change their pre-course assignment in view of what you have learned throughout the course **(20%) DUE: Thursday, January 9 at the beginning of class.**

5. **Ethics Project:** Pick an ethical challenge you face in your ministry. Walk through a process of how you would address this ethical challenge. What questions need to be considered?
 - a. **Choose:** Pick an ethical issue you have faced in your ministry (different from the one you chose for your initial writing assignment):
 - b. **Explore:** Look up articles or book chapters about your topic to help you understand more about the issue. Then explore relevant Scriptures and Christian doctrines that speak to your ethical issue.
 - c. **Discern:** Consider how the issues are addressed in terms of commands, consequences, and character (it may be one, two or all three of these) as well as the role of context in evaluating and responding to your ethical issue.
 - d. **Write:** Drawing your work together, write a paper (7-9 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font) expressing how you address this issue in your ministry. It will be important to think about how best to structure your presentation. Be sure to make sure your ethical issue is clearly stated, that your decision making process is clear, as well as making clear how you would respond to the issue in the context of ministry. On the last page of your paper, address the following questions for personal application: What was the most helpful thing you learned about Christian ethics from your study? What implications does this have for ministry going forward? **DUE: Monday, January 13 by 11:59pm. (50%)**

Course Grade

Pre-Course Assignment	10?
Reading Report	20%
Journal	20%
Ethics Project	<u>50%</u>
	100%

IBS Grading Scale:

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

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

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Pages
January 6 Morning	<i>Christian Worldview and Ethics</i>		
	<i>How Do You Make Ethical Decisions?</i>	Gushee and Stassen	21
January 6 Afternoon	<i>Ethics in Ministry?</i>		
	<i>Ethical Priorities – Which Issues are Most Important?</i>	Cru Missionary Vows	1
January 7 Morning	<i>Technology</i>	Ott (optional)	27
	<i>Transhumanism</i>	Eppinnette	16
January 7 Afternoon	<i>Sexuality (and Marriage/ Singleness)</i>	Alberry, Sprinkle, Platt 4, 6	123
	<i>Abortion</i>	Platt 3	21
January 8 Morning	<i>Race</i>	Platt 8, Tisby	46
	<i>Stopping the Exodus: Race part 2</i>	Ellis	5
January 8 Afternoon	<i>Mass Incarceration</i>	Kireopoulos	11
	<i>Politics and Protest</i>	Platt 5, 9, 10	65
January 9 Morning	<i>Personal Ethics – Alcohol</i>	McCracken	18
	<i>Personal Ethics – Money and Economics</i>	Platt 2	23
January 9 Afternoon	<i>Medical Technology/The End of Life</i>	Swinton	
	<i>Christian Ethics and your Ministry: Where from Here?</i>		31
Total Reading			435

Reading Report

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 and convert to a percentage

- Example: Joe staff completed 400 pages of required reading. $400 \div 492 = 0.866 \times 100 = 86.6\%$.

Submit this number electronically to the instructor using the link on the Google form