

Wesley Theological Seminary Course of Study
Summer Hybrid 2016 Weekend
August 2016 on-line and September 16-17, 2016 on campus

CS-424 Ethics
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Please read this study guide in its entirety before beginning your work.

Objectives:

This course introduces the biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior, emphasizing the pastoral skills needed for moral leadership in the congregation and community.

Goals:

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a biblical and theological basis for ethical thinking and moral behavior, and distinguish major approaches to ethical reasoning.
2. Comprehend the relationship between their personal stories, pastoral vocation, local contexts, and responsibility as moral leaders.
3. Develop a Christian framework for moral reason and action, and apply it to the use of power and the setting of boundaries in ministry.
4. Demonstrate familiarity with and make use of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church as a resource for ethical reflection and action.

Required Textbooks:

Robin Lovin. *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties and Virtues*
Patricia Jung and Darryl W. Stephens. *Professional Sexual Ethics*
Bruce C. Birch and Larry L. Rasmussen. *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: Revised and* Fortress Press, 1988. ISBN: 9780806623979

Reference Books:

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: Social Principles
The Book of Resolutions

Supplemental Texts:

Rebekah Miles. *The Pastor as a Moral Guide*
Richard Hays. *Moral vision of the New Testament*
Stephen Mott. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*
Joseph Bush. *Gentle Shepherding: Pastoral Ethics and Leadership*

Quiz!

There are quizzes on each of the required textbooks on Blackboard. You may take any of these quizzes at any time once you've completed the reading. You will have multiple

opportunities to pass each quiz. Please complete and pass all of them, though, **before proceeding to Part II of the Assignment below pertaining to Case Study.** The quizzes can be found on Blackboard by clicking on the “Quiz” button on the left side-bar menu. This is worth **30% of your grade** (10% per book). The quizzes are based on the entire book by Lovin, the entire book by Birch and Rasmussen, and the following 10 chapters from *Professional Sexual Ethics*: the Introduction and chapters 3, 4, 5, 8, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 20.

Assignment Instructions:

Part I, August: The Social Principles

The assignment for the first part of this course will have students and their congregants explore the United Methodist “Social Principles” within the communities surrounding their congregations. Students should proceed in these steps throughout the weeks in August.

First, preparation. Identify a group of individuals in your congregation and/or in the community surrounding your congregation to work with. This will be a group project. You will read the United Methodist Social Principles together, and you will explore your community together. **Get copies of the Social Principles** for your group to read. They are available in print from Cokesbury, or they can be read on-line at <http://umc-gbcs.org/social-principles>

Week 1, Aug. 8 – 15 and on-line discussion in the week following.

Early in the week, have your group **read the Preface and Parts I and II of the Social Principles** on “The Natural World” and on “The Nurturing Community.”

Then in the **middle of the week**, have your group explore the community surrounding the congregation with reference to these two areas of concern: the natural world and the nurturing community. What are the ecological issues affecting your community? How is the family and human relationships supported or challenged?

Then **over the weekend, meet together and discuss** what you have found in your community and how the Social Principles apply.

Due Mon. Aug. 15. Following your discussion, write a 4 page paper. Indicate on the first page your community and your group. Then, in three pages, discuss the issues you found in your community as they relate to the Social Principles. Be sure to make explicit reference to the Social Principles in your paper. Post on Blackboard on Monday.

Tues. Aug. 16, read each other’s papers on Blackboard Discussion Board

Wed. Aug. 17, respond to each other’s papers on Blackboard Discussion Board

Thur. Aug. 18, read all the responses from your classmates to your paper.

Fri. Aug. 19. Blog on Blackboard about what you have learned from each other.

Sat. Aug. 20. Read the blog.

Week 2, Aug. 15-22 and on-line discussion in the week following.

Early in the week, have your group **read Parts III and IV of the Social Principles** on “The Social Community” and on “The Economic Community.”

Then in the **middle of the week**, have your group explore the community surrounding the congregation with reference to these two areas of concern: the social community and the economic community. What are the issues of social justice and of economic justice affecting life in your community?

Then **over the weekend, meet together and discuss** what you have found in your community about issues of social and economic justice and how the Social Principles apply.

Due Mon. Aug. 22. Following your discussion, write a 3 page paper. Discuss the issues you found in your community as they relate to the Social Principles. Be sure to make explicit reference to the Social Principles in your paper. Post on Blackboard on Monday.

Tues. Aug. 23, read each other's papers on Blackboard Discussion Board

Wed. Aug. 24, respond to each other's papers on Blackboard Discussion Board

Thur. Aug. 25, read all the responses from your classmates to your paper.

Fri. Aug. 26. Blog on Blackboard about what you have learned from each other.

Sat. Aug. 20. Read the blog.

Week 3, Aug. 22-29 and on-line discussion following.

Early in the week, have your group **read Parts V and VI of the Social Principles** on "The Political Community" and on "The World Community."

Then in the **middle of the week,** have your group explore the community surrounding the congregation with reference to these two areas of concern. In your community, what are the important issues of political process and justice that you see locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Then **over the weekend, meet together and discuss** what you have found in your community about issues of political and international justice and how the Social Principles apply.

Due Mon. Aug. 29. Following your discussion, write a 3 page paper. Discuss the issues you found in your community as they relate to the Social Principles. Be sure to make explicit reference to the Social Principles in your paper. Post on Blackboard on Monday.

Tues. Aug. 30, read and respond to each other's papers on Blackboard.

Wed. Aug. 31, Read people's response to your paper **and Blog** on Blackboard about what you have learned from each other throughout this month!

Quiz! Reminder, please complete all the quizzes on the required reading **before proceeding to Part II.**

Part II. Case Study in Pastoral Ethics (Please post on Blackboard by the beginning of class time at Wesley) 10 double-spaced pages:

This written case is to be a paper of approximately ten pages, double spaced and will be discussed later in class. The case should be a real situation in ministry—preferably one in which you, yourself, are currently or recently engaged. The actual identities of the individuals involved in the case, however, should be disguised. If you are writing about a parishioner's moral dilemma, please make clear what your own role is as this person's minister.

These cases should involve a decision or a set of decisions that need to be made. In a well-written case, the decision should represent a moral dilemma. A moral dilemma occurs when a decision-maker is choosing between two moral goods in balance, two moral responsibilities in balance, two moral rights in balance, or between two moral evils in balance. The choices confronting the decision-maker should be made clear in the written case

presentation, and sufficient background should be provided so that classmates are able to understand the choices involved when the case is presented in class.

These papers should proceed then as follows:

- a) Brief introduction of the case and the dilemma involved as you see it (including any necessary descriptive background)
- b) Clarification of the choices involved and their moral dimensions

Please note: it is not necessary to resolve this dilemma in these written papers. We will be discussing and analyzing them further together in class. It is hoped, however, that you will be able to clarify the nature of the moral problem sufficiently, so that our class conversation can be helpful to you. (The written case is worth **10% of your grade**; your class presentation will be worth an **additional 10% of your grade**.)

Grading

On-line Quizzes	30%
Assignment Part I: Social Principles	30%
Assignment Part II: Written Case Study	15%
Class Presentation of Written Case	15%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Additional information:

1. All written work shall be submitted via Blackboard. You should received have a log-in to the Wesley system either with your confirmation packet if this is your first time to Wesley, or in previous mailings. **If you do not know your log on, please contact Sara Sheppard. ssheppard@wesleyseminary.edu** . If you have trouble with Blackboard please contact blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu .
2. Please be sure **to include the date, your name and conference on each paper** you submit via Blackboard.
3. Be aware of the Seminary policy on plagiarism. If you do not know what plagiarism is, please go to the website and find the policy in the student handbook. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade.
4. If you need help with writing, you can contact the Writing Center at Wesley. Their contact information is 202-885-8671. The staff there is happy is assist you with writing inquiries, ***but it not their job to write the paper for you.***

Grading:

Wesley grades on a standard A through C- scale. Late papers will receive a grade reduction. Assignments due June 1 that are received after the deadline will receive a reduction of a whole grade. Assignments received after the first day of class will receive a half grade reduction. ALL course work must be received before the end of the last day of class for each term. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade and the student will have to repeat the course.

Final grades will be mailed out to the student, the GBHEM in Nashville and the student's conference representative by the end of September. Grades are not submitted on-line.