

COS 414 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS

January 22-23 and February 19-20, 2010

Class Times Friday 5:30-9:00 P.M.

Saturday 8:30 – 11:15 and 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.

Email: Esmithlove@aol.com (Home)

Dr. Ervin Smith

614-855-7705 (H)

614-353-5549 (C)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course analyzes biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior, personal, professional, and social with emphasis given to the acquisition of pastoral skills in moral discernment and ethically responsible decision making and action. It provides a study of the distinctive character of Christian Ethics and its moral ideal. Discussions and assignments will focus on “What type of person should I be?” and “What type of communities should I help to build?” in the context of the moral vision suggested by the student’s perception and experience of the Christian Faith. The relevance of these moral visions to selected contemporary social and moral problems will also be explored.

Objectives include:

1. Exploration of biblical and theological bases for ethical thinking and activity.
2. Survey of major approaches to ethical reasoning
3. Examination of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church as a frame of reference for ethical decision making.
4. Exploration of ways to deal with ethical dilemmas inherent in selected contemporary moral issues.
5. Reflection on case studies that challenge pastors to examine carefully their ethical responsibilities.
6. Focus on pertinent issues for personal and professional life with indication of guidelines for ministerial ethics.
7. Delineation of and reflection upon essential guidelines for Christian identity and moral behavior.

CLASS MANAGEMENT

Lecture and discussion by the Instructor on basic issues in Christian Ethics and material in assigned texts. Open discussion on course materials and responses to the primary ethical tasks of discovering “What type of person should I be?” and “What type of communities should I help bring into existence?”

REQUIRED TEXTS

Robin W. Lovin, Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2000

The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church (2008)

(Particularly the section on The Social Principles and those resolutions relevant to the cases under discussion in the course.)

COS 414 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS 2

SUPPLEMENTAL AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Bruce C. Birch and Larry L. Rasmussen, Bible and Ethics in The Christian Life
Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Rev. Ed., 1989)

Wayne G. Boulton, et als, From Christ To The World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics.
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994

Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics: The New Morality. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1966

Marie M. Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred?. Harper, San Francisco, 1989

Charles L. Kammer III, Ethics and Liberation: An Introduction. Orbis Books, Maryknoll,
New York, 1988

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Extensive reading in the assigned texts, and supplementary texts where relevant to course assignments.
2. Regular attendance and class participation. Students are expected to share with the class insights gained from the lecturers, readings, class discussions, and/or other experience and to raise significant questions that illumine the ethical issues under consideration in the course.
3. **FIRST PAPER.** Write a short paper (typewritten, double-spaced, not more than 10 pages) on the twin tasks of Christian Ethics, “What type of person should I be?” and “What type of community should I help to build?” Include in your paper a response (comment and signatures) from at least two other persons in Christian ministry. **Due: February 8**
4. **SECOND PAPER.** Write a response to four of the five ethical cases attached as case studies to the syllabus. In your response indicate (1) How you would have responded as Pastor and moral leader in each of these situations, (2) Identity biblical references and theological affirmations that inform your responses. (3) Identify the Social and Ethical Principles from the Book of Resolutions that most influence your responses. (4) Try also to indicate your understanding of the possibilities and limitations of your moral leadership as Pastor. (5) Identify stories and experiences in your own moral development that inform your responses. (6) Use resources from the course texts and other supplementary readings where relevant. **Due: February 20**

CLASS SCHEDULE

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| Friday, Jan. 22: | (5:30) Introduction: Discussion of Course Ideas, Readings, Goals | |
| | (7:10) Break | |
| | (7:20) Lovin, <u>Christian Ethics</u> , Chapters 1-2 | 7-40 |
| Saturday, Jan.23: | (8:30) Lovin, <u>Christian Ethics</u> , Chapter 3 | 41-60 |
| | (9:50) Break | |
| | (10:00) Lovin, <u>Christian Ethics</u> , Chapter 4 | 61-79 |
| | (11:15) Break | |
| | (11:30) Eucharist (Centrum) | |
| | (12:15) Lunch (Dining Hall) | |
| | (1:00) Lovin, <u>Christian Ethics</u> , Chapters 5-6 | 81-120 |
| | (3:00) Class Adjourns | |
| Friday, Feb. 19: | (5:30) Lovin, <u>Christian Ethics</u> , Conclusions, Comments and Reactions Indications from Moral Presence Papers | 121-125 |
| | (7:10) Break | |
| | (7:20) Discussion of Social Principles (BOR) | |
| Saturday, Feb. 20: | (8:30) Discussion of Cases 1 and 3 | |
| | (9:50) Break | |
| | (10:00) Discussion of Case 2 | |
| | (11:15) Break | |
| | (11:30) Eucharist (Centrum) | |
| | (12:15) Lunch (Dining Hall) | |
| | (1:00) Discussion of Cases 4 and 5 Billy Graham's Ideas of Ministerial Integrity Toward A Personal Code of Ethics Conclusions, Course Evaluations | |
| | (3:00) Class Adjourns | |



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COS 414

Personal & Social Ethics

Dr. Ervin Smith

Winter 2010

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|---|---|--------------|-------|--------------|
| Required Books | | | | |
| _____ | <i>Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide</i> | | | |
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| _____ | <i>Book of Resolutions of the UMC, 2008</i> | | | |
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| Supplemental & Recommended Texts | | | | |
| _____ | <i>Bible and Ethics in The Christian Life</i> | | | |
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| _____ | <i>From Christ To The World</i> | | | |
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| _____ | <i>Situation Ethics: The New Morality</i> | | | |
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| _____ | <i>Is Nothing Sacred?</i> | | | |
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| _____ | <i>Ethics and Liberation: An Introduction</i> | | | |
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| Cost Saving Packages | | | | |
| _____ | <i>Discipline & Book of Resolutions</i> | | | |
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