ET 681 Issues in Sexual Ethics and Bioethics  
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President &  
Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Christian Ethics

Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 p.m., Spring 2019

For an appointment, contact Mia Ertel, Executive Assistant to the President.  
mertel@gcts.edu 978-646-4030, Kerr 396

Description

The complexities of our contemporary world raise ethical questions that the Church and Christians are often not equipped to tackle. This course will explore some of those issues in the areas of sexual ethics and bioethics, in light of God’s Word and a Christian worldview. Among the issues to be addressed are: a theology of sexuality, premarital sex, homosexuality, reproductive technologies, abortion, stem cell research, bio-technologies, treatment termination, and euthanasia. Attention is given to how the Church and Christians can address these issues in congregations as well as secular, pluralistic contexts. (This course meets the ethics requirement for various degrees or can serve as an elective.)

Course Objectives

1. To gain a descriptive understanding of the issues.
2. To learn to apply biblical and theological (i.e. Christian worldview) thinking to the issues.
3. To develop spiritually-informed, discerning wisdom in seeking the ethically good amidst moral ambiguities and complexities.
4. To develop sensitivity in our pastoral responses to people grappling with these issues.
5. To develop appropriate responses to our culture as it faces these ethical issues.
6. To gain perspective for applying ethics to professional settings.

Texts


Sprinkle, Preston et. al. Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible and the Church. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. (ISBN 9780310528630)

Course Requirements

1. Attend class and enter into discussions.
2. Do all the required reading and report the amount read in Canvas by April 30.
3. Write one position paper on either an issue in sexual ethics or bioethics. The paper is to be 8-10 pages (double spaced; no longer). In the paper cover the following: (1) the nature of the issue; (2) various positions on the issue; (3) a description and defense of your own view; (4) a description of how you think the church should concretely respond to this issue. You are to do solid research with at least six sources (books or articles, but go light on the internet sources that are not vetted). Rubrics to guide the paper are at the end of the syllabus. The paper is due April 9. Late papers will be docked: 4 points for one to seven days late, 10 points thereafter.

Alternate Paper: For those in or anticipating church ministry you are encouraged to do your paper as a sermon or teaching lesson, which is appropriate for a church context (Sunday morning, youth group, Sunday school class, etc.) The sermon or lesson should involve the same amount of research, with bibliography sources listed at the end of the sermon/lesson. But the paper must be contextualized for the setting, translating theological and ethical language into the church setting. You can be creative, using power point, visuals, etc., to supplement the sermon or lesson paper, but not in place of the written material. Length is 8-10 pages. Due date and late penalties are the same as above. Due April 9.

Note on Papers: All papers should use size 12 font, and be double spaced. No paper should be longer than 11 pages! All papers must be submitted on Canvas.

Please note that all papers are run through a Vericite scan. This scan is very sensitive, catching outright plagiarism (which I would not expect from you and is unethical), as well as sloppy citation, including paraphrasing which is too close to the original to be acceptable without proper citation. The Vericite database includes published material as well as a wide range of student papers. Therefore, make sure to use the highest levels of academic and ethical integrity in properly citing your source material as you write your papers.

4. Take the mid-term exam (first half of class on March 12) and the final exam April 30. The exams will involve multiple-choice questions and an essay. We expect you to take the exam in Canvas.

5. Extra Credit – A student may earn two extra percentage points on his/her final grade (i.e. 87-89) by writing a three-page review of Two Views on Homosexuality, Sprinkle et. al. Highlight the main arguments of the writers and your assessment. Due April 25. Submit through Canvas.

*Note: The grading of the exams and position paper will be done by Tyler Lenocker, Ph.D. cand. Tyler is a GCTS graduate doing Ph.D. work at Boston University and serves as an adjunct here at Gordon-Conwell. With the rubric guidelines, he will be objective and do an excellent job. His email is tlenocker@gordonconwell.edu.

Grading: Exam I- 30%; Exam II- 30%; Paper- 40% (Failure to read the texts and missing classes will adversely affect one’s grade if you are on the bubble; conversely reading all material and faithful attendance can positively affect one’s grade if you are on the bubble; you will report what you have read on Canvas by April 30.) Grade Scale: 94-100 A; 91-93 A-; 88-90 B+; 84-87 B; 81-83 B-; 78-80 C+; 74-77 C; 71-73 C-; 68-70 D+; 64-67 D; 61-63 D-; 60- F
Course Outline

I. Introduction: The Nature of Ethics  
   Jan. 29

II. Sexual Ethics  
   A. Historic and Contemporary Views of Sex (Hollinger, *Meaning* Intro-2)  
      1. Sex and Ethical Theories  
         Jan. 29  
      2. Worldviews and Sex  
         Feb. 5
   B. A Theology of Sex (Hollinger 3)  
      Feb. 5, 12
   C. The Purposes of Sex (Hollinger 4)  
      Feb. 12
   D. Sex Before Marriage (Hollinger 5)  
      Feb. 26
   E. Sex Within Marriage (Hollinger 6)  
      Feb. 26
   F. Homosexuality (Hollinger 7; Hill, Sprinkle)  
      March 5
   G. Responding to the Culture (Hollinger 9)  
      March 5

Midterm Exam  
   March 12 (first half)

III. Biomedical Ethics  
   Introduction to Biomedical Ethics (Meilaender, Intro; Vandr Intro- Part I)  
   March 12
   A. Issues at the Beginning of Life (Meil 1-3, 5; Van Part II)  
      March 26
      1. Reproductive Technologies (Hollinger 8)  
      2. Abortion  
         April 2
      3. The Stem Cell Debate  
         April 9
   B. Issues in the Course of Life (Meil 4, 9-12)  
      April 9, 16
      1. Organ Transplants
      2. Genetic Engineering, Biotechnologies and the Redesign of Humans

   NOTE: Paper due April 9

   C. Issues at the End of Life (Meil 6-8; Van Part III)  
      April 23
      1. Defining Death
      2. Treatment Termination
      3. Active Euthanasia/Physician Assisted Suicide

Final Exam  
   April 30
Selected Bibliography

Sexual Ethics


**Bioethics**


Evans, Abilgail Rian. *Is God Still at the Bedside? The Medical, Ethical, and Pastoral Issues of


Rhonheimer, Martin. *Ethics and Procreation and the Defense of Human Life: Contraception,*

Journals in Bioethics:
Christian Bioethics
Ethics and Medicine: An International Perspective On Bioethics
Hastings Center Report

Helpful Websites for Bioethics:
www.bioethics.com
www.cbhd.org
www.ncbcenter.org
# Rubrics for Ethics Paper Spring 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubrics or Criteria</th>
<th>Potential Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the Issue:</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is this issue all about? What are the ethical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>considerations? What are the facts (empirical</td>
<td></td>
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<td>judgments) surrounding the issue?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Various Ethical Positions on the Issue:</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the different perspectives on this issue?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do proponents hold these perspectives? Be as</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>faithful as you can to the proponents arguments even</td>
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<tr>
<td>though you may disagree with them.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Own View:</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearly state your own ethical position on the issue.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why do you hold it?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the compelling arguments biblically, theologically, rationally?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Church Addressing this Issue:</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>How should the church address this issue within the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Church? Within society?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the pastoral and tactical approaches the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church should use? In reflecting on this, set forth</td>
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<tr>
<td>your own Christ-culture position with rationale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing, Sources and Documentation:</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write clearly, concisely and with a clear road map.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proper grammar and correct spelling is expected. Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at least 6 varying sources (books and journals), and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use proper citation, either endnotes or (Smith, 1998,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 35), with bibliography at end.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Points and Grade:
## Rubrics for Issues Sermon/Lesson 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubrics or Criteria</th>
<th>Potential Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly focused purpose: The sermon or lesson should be clear in purpose, main ideas and major arguments.</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of the ethical issue: In popular style present a clear overview of what the issue is all about. What is at stake in this issue? Why is it important for Christians?</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical analysis and presentation of your view: While the sermon should not present ethical theory per se, it should reflect familiarity with various positions on the issue and the arguments employed by those positions. A clear presentation of your own position is a must.</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate use of scripture: The sermon should be built from a single biblical text (expository) or several biblical texts and themes (topical). It should show clear understanding of the text(s), good interpretation and presentation of the text(s).</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral context: The sermons should reflect appropriateness to the setting, the nature of the issue addressed, and the potential pastoral implications for the church and for the church’s involvement with society on the issue.</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and Sources: Write clearly and concisely and with a style that is appropriate for a Sunday morning sermon. Use at least 6 sources (books and journals) cited appropriately and listed at the end in a bibliography. Accurate grammar and spelling is expected, along with good movement of ideas.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total points and grade: