**COS 424 – Ethics**

**2022 Winter Online Session**

**Teacher:** Rev. Dr. Wonchul Shin

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January 17- February 26, 2022

**Mississippi**

**Course of Study**

**School**

**When Will the Live Zoom Sessions for this Class Meet?**

* Friday, January 21 7:30pm – 9:30pm  CST
* Saturday, January 22 9:00am – 11:00am  CST
* Friday, February 11 7:30pm – 9:30pm  CST
* Saturday, February 12 9:00am – 11:00am  CST
* Friday, February 25 7:30pm – 9:30pm  CST
* Saturday, February 26 9:00am – 11:00am  CST

**Attendance Policy**

Students must attend all 20 hours of class to receive course credit. A student may miss up to four hours of class time due to illness or emergency and still receive credit for the course if that absence if excused by the instructor and the director of MSCOS. A student missing more than 20% (4 hours) of class time for any reason *shall not* receive credit. Unexcused absences of any length of time may be the cause for loss of credit or dismissal. **Requests for excused absences must be submitted to the director via email (johnssa@millsaps.edu) in addition to phone calls or in-person conversations.**

**About the Class**

**Course Description and Outcomes**

This course introduces ethical frameworks, as well as biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior. The course emphasizes pastoral skills needed for moral leadership in the congregation  
and community—specifically, skills in moral discernment and ethically responsible decision-making and action. *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 reasoning 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 Texts**

* Wheeler, Sondra. *The Minister as Moral Theologian.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.   
  **ISBN: 9780801097843**
* Lovin, Robin W. *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.  
  **ISBN: 9780687054626 (paperback)  
  ISBN: 9781426713415 (e-reader)**
* United Methodist Publishing House. *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church   
  2017-2020*. Nashville: Cokesbury, 2017. **ISBN: 9781501835773**
* Additional required readings will be available on the Course Connect site (free)

**Recommended Texts**

* Stephens, Darryl W. *Methodist Morals: Social Principles in the Public Church’s Witness*.   
  Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016. 2013. **ISBN: 9781621902409**  
  ***Please note:*** *course readings will include a few essays from this book and copies of those essays will be distributed for in-class discussion. Hence, you do not have to buy this book, but it is a great ministry resource to understand the UMC’s Social Principles.*

*Assignment due dates are highlighted throughout the syllabus*

**Assignment Modules**

**PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT: MODULE #1 – Self-Introduction with a Photo**

*This assignment is due by Tuesday, January 18 at 5 PM*

In the discussion board, please introduce yourself with a photo. Select one photo that best represents who you are and post a short story about the photo (and you!)

**PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT: MODULE #2 – Forming an Identity as the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence** *(10% of final grade)*

This section is devoted to help you form and/or transform your pastoral identity as a Christian ethicist/moral theologian within your church. Whether you are aware of this or not, you are the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence for the community you serve!

**Assigned Reading**

Wheeler, Sondra. *The Minister as Moral Theologian.*

**Online Lecture Videos**

Video 1: “Introduction to Your Teacher”

Video 2: “Course Introduction”

Writing Video – “How To Set Up Your Paper”

Writing Video – “The Content of Your Paper”

Video 3: “You are the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence!”

**Writing Assignment**

*This assignment is due by Friday, January 21 at 5 PM (CST)*

Write a short reflection paper (600 words) on how you have practiced as the Christian Ethicist-in-Resident in your church; carefully reflect on your sermons, teaching, counseling, and life as a moral exemplar for your church community and articulate how these practices communicate certain moral lessons with your congregation. Specifically, as Wheeler points out in her book, please pay attention to what you have NOT spoken or addressed and articulate how they reflect your ethical reasoning and decision. Upload this assignment to Course Connect by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 21.

**MODULE #3 – Formulating Your Own Moral Question** *(10% of final grade)*

This section will help you formulate your own moral question. I certainly believe that you have at least one pressing moral issue in your ministerial setting, your own life situation, or both. This is YOUR chance to articulate it, and this course is designed to help you to find your authentic moral voice on this pressing moral question.

**Assigned Reading:** N/A

**Online Lecture Video**

Video 4: “Formulating Your Own Moral Question”

**Writing Assignment**

*This assignment is due by Friday, January 28 at 5 PM (CST)*

On “Discussion Board – Moral Question,” post your own moral question meeting the four conditions of a “good moral question” and explain why this question matters to you (500 words) Upload this assignment to Course Connect by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 28.

**MODULE #4 – Understanding Four Moral Sources for Doing Christian Ethics** *(15% of final grade)*

In this section you will learn about four moral sources for doing Christian ethics. In the Wesleyan tradition, they are called the *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*: (1) Scripture, (2) tradition, (3) reason, and (4) experience. This section will provide you with foundational building blocks for your ethical reasoning on your moral question that was developed in Module #2.

**Assigned Readings** *(the links to all of these readings are in Course Connect)*

* + Gustafson, James. “Ways of Using Scripture” in *From Christ to the World*, 21-26.
  + Ottatti, Douglas. “What It Means to Stand in a Living Tradition” in   
    *From Christ to the World*, 79-87.
  + Gustafson, James. “Relationship of Empirical Science to Moral Thought” in   
    *From Christ to the World,* 164-171.
  + Farley, Margaret. “The Role of Experience in Moral Discernment” in   
    *Christian Ethics*, 134-151.

**Online Lecture Videos**

Video 5: “Wesleyan Quadrilateral”

Video 6: “Moral Source 1\_Scripture”

Video 7: “Moral Source 2\_Tradition”

Video 8: “Moral Source 3\_Reason”

Video 9: “Moral Source 4\_Experience”

**Writing Assignment**

*This assignment is due by Friday, February 11 at 5 PM*

Write 1,000 words analyzing moral resources in MLK’s *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* (the link to this reading is in Course Connect).

For this assignment, you are required to (1) state the main moral argument in this letter and (2) analyze moral sources that MLK utilized in order to support the main moral argument. For this analysis of moral sources, you need to use the assigned readings and provide proper citations, if necessary (please review “A Note on Citations” on page 7 and “Writing Tips” in the Files folder of our class Course Connect site). Upload this assignment to Course Connect by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 11.

**MODULE #5 – Understanding Three Moral Methods for Doing Christian Ethics** *(15% of final grade)*

After understanding moral sources, this section will help you to understand HOW to utilize these moral sources. If you imagine to build a moral “house,” moral sources are “building materials” such as timber, bricks, windows, etc., and moral methods are “styles of building.” There are three major moral methods:

(1) teleology (goal-driven ethics)

(2) deontology (duty-driven ethics)

(3) virtue ethics (virtue/character-driven ethics).

**Assigned Reading**

Lovin, Robin. *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* (Focusing on Chapter 2, 3, and 4)

**Online lecture videos**

Video 10: “Moral Method 1\_Teleology”

Video 11: “Moral Method 2\_Deontology”

Video 12: “Moral Method 3\_Virtue Ethics”

**Writing Assignment**

*This assignment is due by Friday, February 25 at 5 PM*

Write 1,000 words analyzing moral sources and methods in MLK’s sermon *Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence* (the link to this reading is in Course Connect). Upload this assignment to Course Connect by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 25.

For this assignment, you are required to (1) state the main moral argument in this sermon and (2) identify moral sources and analyze moral methods focusing on **HOW** MLK utilized the moral sources in order to support the main moral argument. For this analysis of moral sources and methods, you need to use the assigned reading and provide proper citations, if necessary (please review “A Note on Citations” on page 3 and the Writing Videos on our class Course Connect site).

**MODULE #6 – Practicing as the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence within Your Church***(30% of final grade)*

*This assignment is due by March 11 at 5PM*

This assignment is meant to give you a chance to formulate your own ethical reasoning on your own moral question and practice what you have learned in an actual ministry setting.

You are required to submit an **ANNOTATED SERMON** that aims to ethically address your own moral question. This final assignment must include (1) **sermon manuscript** (no word limit) AND (2) an **ANNONATION** (1000 words) that ***carefully analyzes what moral sources are and how you utilize these sources through moral methods***. More details, including grading rubric, will be provided. Upload this assignment to Course Connect by 5 p.m. on March 11.

**A Note on Citations**

When referring to an author’s ideas or quoting the author’s words, cite the author by last name and page number in a parenthetical reference—for example: (Lovin, 89). Be sure to use quotation marks when you use an author's exact words—for example: As Lovin argues, “…” (89). Do ***NOT***, however, simply quote the author for an entire answer. You should primarily use your own words to explain and analyze what the author is saying and include quotes as evidence to support your points and to show precisely from where in the author's text you're drawing your understanding. Keep these quotes as brief and focused as possible and be sure that it's clear why the quote is significant and relevant to your answer.

**Guidelines & Grading Policies**

**What Is Plagiarism?** Plagiarism is a combination of stealing and lying.

Emory COS uses plagiarism-detection software on every paper you turn in. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive academic consequences and your district & annual conference will be notified.

“You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person, leading your readers to think that those words are yours”(201-202).

Booth, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams.   
*The Craft of Research, Second Edition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

**Grade Deduction Policy**

Work that is not received by the deadline will receive a grade deduction of 1/3 letter-grade per day it is late. For example: If your “A” assignment is one day late, it will drop to an A-. If it’s two days late, it will drop to a B+ and so on.

**Guidelines for Written Assignments**

* All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and on 8.5”x11” paper.
* Submit all papers to the instructor by uploading them to Course Connect.
* The font should be Times New Roman, 12 point.
* Margins should be 1” on all sides.
* All papers must include a page number and the student’s last name in the header or footer. Example: “Walker – page 2”
* All quotations must be properly cited.
* Please see the module title “COS Writing & Research Tips” in your class Course Connect site for more help.

**How Your Final Course Grade Is Determined**

10% Module #2 – Forming an Identity as the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence

10% Module #3 – Formulating Your Own Moral Question

15% Module #4 – Understanding Four Moral Sources for Doing Christian Ethics

15% Module #5 – Understanding Three Moral Methods for Doing Christian Ethics

30% Module #6 – Practicing as the Christian Ethicist-in-Residence within Your Church

20% Class Participation

**COS Grading Scale**

A+ 97-100 B+ 87-89 C+ 77-79 D+ 67-69

A 93-96 B 83-86 C 73-76 D 65-66

A- 90-92 B- 80-82 C- 70-72 F 0-64

**Inclusive Language Covenant**

The faculty of Emory Course of Study School has adopted a covenant statement encouraging inclusiveness in the use of language, as follows:

The Inclusive Language Covenant is designed to create a linguistic environment in which all students, staff, and faculty can grow in understanding and appreciating the rich diversity of God’s people. The COS faculty commits itself through continued discussion, reflection, and exploration to using language in such a way that we respond to the fullness of God’s presence among us as much by our choice of words as by our care for one another. Recognizing that our experience with inclusive language is an integral part of theological formation, we invite students and others to share as partners with us in this learning process.

We understand “covenant” more in terms of its biblical and theological meaning than in a legal or contractual context. Covenant signifies the common commitment of a community of faith in response to God’s revelation and in participation with one another. The values implied in the covenant have morally persuaded us to try to generate patterns of speech and behavior that bond the members of the community in mutual respect. We expect all members of the community to address issues of diversity constructively. The entire Inclusive Language Covenant can be found on the COS website, and you are encouraged to read the whole covenant.