

Moral Problems in Theological Perspective

Theo 231 E
Fall 2014
TR 10:30-11:45; 1:00-2:15 p.m.
Office hours: M-F 10:00-11:00
Or by appointment

H.D. Baer
Office: Langner 248
dbaer@tlu.edu
Office tel: x6768
hdavidbaer.wordpress.com

Catalog Course Description:

A survey of contemporary moral problems viewed from theological perspective. Students will learn how theological commitments shape moral judgments and an understanding of the moral life. Topics covered will be selected from the following: human sexuality, just war theory, theories of justice and human rights, the death penalty, medical ethics, business ethics, the nature and meaning of work. Prerequisite: THEO 133.

Course Objectives:

This course examines contemporary moral problems from a theological perspective. Course objectives are as follows:

1. Students should gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding a set of contemporary moral debates.
2. Students should learn to think critically and rationally about an important set of contemporary moral debates that are often emotional
3. Student should gain a deeper understanding of how theological commitments shape moral judgments.
4. Students will be encouraged to engage in rational, critical argument with their peers on important and often emotional moral issues.

Course Requirements:

1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions, homework assignments, and in-class assignments. Students are also expected to exhibit *mature comportment*. Passing notes, giggling, chatter, and otherwise disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Cell-phones may neither be used nor handled during class. Students who cannot comport themselves appropriately will be asked to leave the classroom. Students asked to leave the classroom on two separate occasions will be dropped from the class.
2. *Two oral presentations*, done in a small group, in which students debate different sides of a moral issue. All students in the group are expected to participate actively, and each student will receive an individual grade for his/her contribution to the overall effort. Each individual oral presentation grade will count for 10% of the total course grade; together the two oral presentations will count toward 20% of the total course grade.
3. One five-page typed *argumentative paper*, written in response to a prompt, addressing a moral problem considered in class. The paper will count toward 26.67% of the total course grade.

4. **Two exams**, a mid-term and a final exam, each weighted at 26.67% of the total grade. Students who miss exams will receive a failing grade unless they have been required to attend a TLU event or unless their absence has been approved by the professor prior to the time of the exam. Mild forms of physical misery (e.g., things like allergy induced sniffles) do not constitute a legitimate reason for missing an exam. Students who unexpectedly miss an exam due to a serious illness must bring a letter signed by a doctor before they will be allowed to make up any exam.

Required texts:

1. Eryl W. Davies, *The Immoral Bible: Approaches to Old Testament Ethics*. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.
2. David D. Corey and J. Daryl Charles, *The Just War Tradition: An Introduction*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books,
3. Germain Grisez & Russell Shaw, *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibilities of Freedom*.
4. Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George, *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. New York: Encounter Books, 2012.

TLU Competency:

This course will assist students in achieving the Ethical Reasoning Competency within the general education program.

Students with disabilities:

TLU seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities. If you require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, it is your responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services in the Student Life Office and to contact the course instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be made.

Academic Honesty:

TLU's policy concerning cheating and plagiarism is found on pages 18-19 of the 2014-2015 *Student Handbook*. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a failing grade on that assignment. The student will also be reported to the Dean of Student Life and Learning, where the incident will be recorded in his or her academic file.

This syllabus is not a contract. It may be modified by the instructor in consultation with the students.

