

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond in Writing

Course Number BIBT 470 or Degree Plan(s) _____
 State the requested change and reason. A memo may be attached if more space is necessary.

Add course to Catalog:

BIBT470 is a needed addition to upper-level Bible electives for a few reasons. First, we currently offer three Ethics courses, but none of them is Christian or theological ethics; they are philosophical, social, and biomedical. Second, each of those ethics courses is technically housed elsewhere than in the DBMM, whether in sociology, the sciences, or philosophy (a minor). Christian ethics is explicitly theological and rooted in Scripture, hence the BIBT prefix to this course. Third, this class provides an opportunity to build on concepts learned in freshman and sophomore Bible courses, providing an extension and application of those concepts into pressing questions of daily life.

Indicate the requested change.

	Change to a Course	Dept./School ¹	College	Dean	TFC	UGEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost	President
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	—	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	—	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	—	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	—	I	A	I
5.	Number of hours (lecture, lab, contact)	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	—	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	—	I	I	I
9.	Course fee(s)	A	—	A	—	—	—	A	I
10.	From U to G or G to U	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
11.	Cross-list course	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
13.	Close a course	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I
14.	New course (includes combining or splitting courses)	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	I

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond in Writing

	Change to the University Requirements (All Campuses)	Dept./School ¹	College	Dean	TEC	UGEC	AUAC/Grad	Provost	Faculty	President	Trustees
1.	University Requirements — Change course outcomes of an included course ²	A	A	A	—	A	—	A	—	A	—
2.	University Requirements — Add or drop a required course from the University Requirements ²	A	A	A	—	A	—	A	A	A	—
3.	University Requirements — Add or drop a course from a menu within the University Requirements ²	A	—	—	—	A	—	A	—	A	—
4.	University Requirements — Change hours within a menu in the University Requirements ²	A	A	A	—	A	—	A	A	A	—
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)										
1.	General Requirements for Bachelor's Degrees and Associate's Degrees	—	—	—	—	—	A	A	A	A	—
2.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	—	—	—	—	—	A	A	A	A	—
3.	Requirements for graduating with honors	—	—	—	—	—	A	A	A	A	—
	Change to a Degree Plan Proposed by Faculty or College										
5.	Educational Program — Revise ³	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
6.	Educational Program — Adopt/change admission requirements	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
7.	Educational Program — Add ³	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	A	A	I
8.	Educational Program — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	A	A	I
9.	GPA — Revise program-required GPAs	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
10.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	I	—	I	I	—	I	—
11.	Minor — Add	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
12.	Minor — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
13.	Degree — Add	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	A	A	I
14.	Degree — Discontinue	A	A	A	A	—	A	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan Proposed By Provost										
15.	Educational Program — Discontinue	R	—	R	A	—	A	A	A	A	I
16.	Minor — Discontinue	R	—	R	A	—	A	A	—	A	—
17.	Degree — Discontinue	R	—	R	A	—	A	A	A	A	I

¹ When an academic unit does not have a council, the UGEC and/or UUAC will serve as its academic council, depending on the nature of the issue.

² Courses that satisfy ACU's University Requirements will normally have lower-level numbering, be free of prerequisites and co-requisites, appeal to more than one or two majors, and "not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession" (SACS 2.7.3). Departments may request exceptions to the first three criteria.

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible.

Revised 8-29-22

Department/School Chair(s)	
<u>Robert Ashford</u>	<u>4-5-23</u>
Signature	Approval date
Signature	Approval date

College Academic Council(s)	
<u>Christopher DeHaven</u>	<u>4-24-23</u>
Signature	Approval date
Signature	Approval date

Dean(s)	
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>4-24-23</u>
Signature	Approval date
Signature	Approval date

Teacher Education Council	
Chair's signature	Approval date

University General Education Council	
Chair's signature	Approval date

Abilene Undergraduate Academic Council	
Chair's signature	Approval date

Graduate Council	
Chair's signature	Approval date

Provost	
Signature	Approval date

Faculty	
Chair of Faculty Senate	Approval date

President	
Signature	Approval date

BIBT470: Christian Ethics DBMM FAQ

What is this document?

A brief list of answers to frequently asked questions about this new course proposal.

What is the course?

BIBT470: Christian Ethics.

What is that?

A course for upper-level ACU students that introduces them to the history, methods, authorities, and practices of Christian moral-theological reasoning and teaching.

Have we taught it before?

Yes: Brad East piloted a Special Topics course in theological ethics in spring 2022 and spring 2023.

Is this Brad's baby alone?

No: it's Vic McCracken's, too. He's the bona fide ethicist around these parts; Brad is an interloper.

Could anyone else teach this course?

Yes: Myles Werntz and Fred Aquino (both in the GST).

Is this our long-discussed course in professional ethics for ministers?

No; sorry to disappoint. This is a course about *Christian moral theology*. It is for any and all students, not just students planning to serve in formal ministry. (Though professional ethics is a great topic for an experiential learning workshop!)

Don't we already have Ethics courses on campus?

We do. But, oddly enough, none of them is either *Christian* or *theological*. That is, they do not presuppose a Christian framework, Christian teaching, or Christian authorities.

What do they teach then?

Philosophical ethics; *biomedical* ethics; and *social* ethics. None is BIBL, BIBM, or BIBT.

I'm not an ethicist. What makes these so different from one another?

Each asks about what makes human life and behavior good or bad, right or wrong. But each does so from within its own disciplinary or ideological perspective. Whereas Christian ethics presupposes the truth of the gospel, the authority of Scripture, and the wisdom of the church's tradition. It is about the business of living faithfully as followers of Christ in relation to pressing moral matters, with scriptural teaching as a premise and the church as a given (rather than either as one among many possibilities). None of the other courses does this.

Why in the world has ACU gone so long without teaching *Christian* ethics?

Good question.

How did the two pilot courses go?

Great. About 20 students in each. A handful of majors in both, but mostly non-majors. Good course evals, good classroom participation; an overall success.

Do we have reason to expect this class to be of interest to students?

Yes, many reasons in fact. Two for now. First, our students are hungry to learn and talk about the kinds of issues they encounter online and wonder about on a daily basis. This is a course in which that happens. Not only do we talk about pagans and Christians, Catholics and Protestants, Saint Augustine and Peter Singer; we talk about sex, gender, marriage, abortion, climate change, immigration, poverty, capital punishment, war, euthanasia, and more. It's a training ground for civil discourse and principled argumentation—as Christians.

Second, multiple majors from other departments are required to take *some* ethics course in order to graduate. Once this course is officially approved, it will be included in the menu of options for such students. The truth is, we have to cap Philosophical Ethics and Biomedical Ethics—and could teach one or more sections per semester—because there is so much need as well as student interest.

Do we require our own Bible/ministry majors to take an Ethics course?

Alas, we do not. Most of our majors graduate and go into ministry without ever being introduced *formally* to moral-theological concepts, theories, arguments, and questions. (Think: relativism, utilitarianism, objectivism, deontology, natural law, virtue, and so on.)

Should we make it a requirement for our majors?

I'm so glad you asked. Yes, we should. Care to move to vote?

But say more. Why isn't this class redundant? We teach the Bible, and the Bible is our moral guide.

True. But the Bible doesn't teach moral theories; doesn't explain how to make or defend a moral argument; and doesn't contain explicit teaching about topics that have arisen in the centuries since its writing (such as, e.g., nuclear weapons, or CRISPR, or physician-assisted suicide). We inevitably presume and think within frameworks; these in turn guide, dialogue with, or even determine what we find in Scripture and how we interpret and embody it in our lives. Moreover, our students swim in a cultural and technological sea that alternates between relativism and consequentialism. They need help.

What, then, is the overall *approach* of this course? Does it have a "take"? How advanced is it?

As currently constructed, it is an *introductory* course. Students often walk in not knowing the meaning of the word "ethics." Other students walk in taking biblicalism for granted—i.e., the Bible answers every question in advance (and if it doesn't ... well, we make it up as we go). This is not a graduate seminar. The students are learning the *basics*. The course presupposes exactly zero background knowledge (aside from BIBL101–102–211). So if you are wondering whether the class covers advanced topic X or theory Y, you may be confident the answer is No.

What do students read in the course?

A handful of introductory books written for college students on the subject: accessible, relatively short, meant for beginners. Also Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* and a social encyclical. In addition, primary texts by, inter alia, Saint Thomas, John Calvin, Martin Luther King Jr., and others. Having said that, there is no fixed reading list. The field is enormous and instructors (will) have wide latitude in selecting appropriate texts.

What is the status of the course at present?

The application document and sample syllabus were approved by both the Adams Center and the Library. All documents are in order and, we hope, will go to council sometime in the coming weeks.

Application for a New Course v10.7

Discard instructional pages A-C before submitting application

Course ID (<i>Subject and Number</i>)	BIBT470
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I. Systems and Catalog Information Complete each item.

1	Course Developer	Brad East
2	Course Instructor	Brad East (other possible instructors: Vic McCracken, Myles Werntz, Fred Aquino)
3	Course Title	Christian Ethics
4	Course Abbreviation for Banner if title is more than 30 characters	
5	College	Bible
6	Department or School	Dept Bible, Missions, and Ministry
7	Number of Credit Hours	3
8a.	Number of contact hours – lecture	45
8b.	Number of contact hours – lab/activity	
9	Is the course for a fixed or variable number of credit hours?	Fixed
10	Explanation for variable credit	
11	Is the course repeatable for additional credit?	No
12	Maximum total number of credit hours a student can earn for this course	3
13	What type of course is this? (Select one option. Please see Schedule Type definitions on Page C.)	☒ Traditional lecture ☐ Traditional lab ☐ Traditional lecture/lab ☐ Experiential Learning ☐ Seminar ☐ Studio ☐ Thesis ☐ Dissertation

07/23/2019

14	Number of faculty workload hours	?
15	Grade Mode	☒ Standard ☐ Credit/No Credit (undergrad only)
16	Maximum Enrollment	Variable. Ideal is 15-30. Could hold some sections 25-40. Hard cap at 40 for now, though a gifted instructor could probably teach up to 60.
17	Catalog Description (50 words or less)	How should Christians live? What is God's will for human morality? How do we know? How is it related to Jesus, the Bible, and the church? These are the questions of Christian ethics, or moral theology. Come explore the pressing questions of our day from a Christian perspective.
18	List any prerequisites (course/s, test scores, class standing, major, etc.)	BIBL101, 102, 211 (or any future sequence that replaces the typical sequence: i.e., the first three required Bible courses for all gen-ed students)
19	List any corequisites (these <i>must</i> be taken at the same time; note that a single requirement cannot be both a prerequisite <i>and</i> a corequisite)	
20	If the course is cross-listed, specify the Course ID(s)	
21	Does this course require any additional student course fees?	☒ No ☐ Yes If yes, attach a completed "Request to Add or Change Course Fees" form. Describe in section IV-8.
22a	Will the course be offered in fall terms?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes: all, even, or odd years? *No answer as yet. If there is student interest and faculty capacity, I could easily imagine having a section of this course every fall and every spring.
22b	Will the course be offered in spring terms?	☐ No ☒ Yes If yes: all, even, or odd years?
22c	Will the course be offered in summer terms?	☒ No ☐ Yes If yes: all, even, or odd years?

23	First semester this course will be offered under new Course ID. <i>May not be earlier than the coming fall semester.</i>	Spring 2024 (if it goes through councils fast enough!).
24	Is this course required for a degree/s?	☒ No ☐ Yes If yes, attach a revised degree plan(s) reflecting the placement of the new course. *We are hoping, subsequent to getting this course approved, to vote as a dept to make this course, whether in its gen-ed form or as a majors-only section, a requirement for graduation for all Bible/ministry majors.
25	Should the addition of this course be retroactively applied to the degree plan it supports? <i>This is rare, and rationale should explain compelling extenuating circumstances.</i>	☒ No ☐ Yes If yes, provide rationale:
26	Has this course been offered as a Special Topics course? <i>New courses are not required to be taught as Special Topics courses prior to approval.</i>	☐ No ☒ Yes If yes, provide course ID, term, and enrollment: BIBT440.M1 (spring 2022): 18 (+2 auditors) BIBT 440.01 (spring 2023): 17
27	List any courses in which the content overlaps the proposed course. (Course ID and Name) <i>Attach a statement from the instructor/dept chair of the existing course justifying the new offering in Section IV-D.</i>	BIBP486: Philosophical Ethics. For years we have taught this course, which is often just called "Ethics," but which is technically a philosophy course; it is not itself about Christian morality or even theological. We saw the need for a distinct class dedicated to <i>Christian</i> (theological) ethics. The courses overlap in the sense that they are about ethics, but they come at the topics, questions, and methods from profoundly different angles. There is also a course in Biomedical Ethics and another in Social Ethics, housed in depts other than the DBMM.

II. Curriculum

- A. Explain effect on degree plans. If the addition of the course alters degree requirements, submit a separate Approval Chart for Curriculum Change to update the degree plan.

It should not have any such effect. It will merely be one more upper-level elective course for students to meet their gen-ed Bible requirements.

As a dept, we are hoping to vote to make this course a requirement for our majors alone. But that vote has not taken place yet, and would not affect any majors other than our own.

- B. Justify the addition of this course to the current curriculum, explaining the gap it meets.

07/23/2019

This course—which I have piloted twice now, spring 2022 and spring 2023—arose out of conversations in the DBMM about what our students both need and want out of their two Bible electives. They are not the same students as generations past. They do not come in with the Bible memorized, wanting to focus on the minor prophets or the Corinthians correspondence. They want to understand how and why the Christian life bears on the daily challenges of today's world. They want to put the pieces together and to go deep on why any of it matters in the first place.

“Christian Ethics” is where that can happen. Students are introduced to rich, thought-provoking streams of philosophical and theological and biblical tradition regarding right and wrong, good and evil. They are no longer allowed to resort to emojis and online flame wars for their moral positions. They actually have to understand their opponents and formulate counter-arguments. But they *do* get to talk about the “big issues,” rather than avoiding them. And they love it.

Our current Ethics offerings are all good as they are, but it was clearly never the conscious intention of anyone to teach three varieties of ethics on ACU's campus *but not Christian ethics!* It happened by accident. We wanted to rectify that (“we” meaning the DBMM but in particular Vic McCracken and myself). We realized we were sending students into churches and jobs as 22-year-olds having never been exposed to, much less trained in, serious practices of Christian moral reasoning—that is, methods of thinking about and coming to convictions regarding pressing moral questions on the basis of explicit Christian authorities and teachings. Hence this course application.

The two pilot semesters have gone very well. I think this course will quickly become a mainstay in our upper-level elective offerings, not least because once it's an official course, then those depts and majors that require an ethics course can choose to take it as one option alongside social, philosophical, and biomedical ethics.

III. Course Design

A. Audience and Course Goal

1. Describe the intended audience, including prerequisite skills.
2. State the overarching course goal(s) in performance terms.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Measurements

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
1	identify the difference between ancient-Greek, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and modern ethics	Reading quizzes
2	formulate a moral argument from within a variety of ethical theories (including arguments and theories with which they disagree)	Class participation, papers
3	recognize the underlying premises or principles that inform opposed moral	Reading quizzes, class participation, papers

	arguments (for example, whether an opinion or perspective is relativistic, utilitarian, Kantian, or Thomistic)	
4	engage in civil and respectful conversation with others over highly charged and contested matters (such as abortion, sexuality, war, and immigration)	Class participation
5	construct a specifically Christian moral-theological defense of their own most cherished views, rooted in the authorities of Holy Scripture, sacred tradition, natural law, and personal experience	Papers

3. Text and Resources

Give the full publication information of the textbook/s and other required resources and outside readings. For **combined undergraduate/graduate** courses, make two lists:

- A. full publication information; label **Undergraduate**.
- B. full publication information; label **Graduate**.

Required

Victor Lee Austin, *Christian Ethics: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark, 2013)
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition; Fortress, 2015)
 Pope St. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae]* (Times Books, 1995)
 D. Stephen Long, *Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010)
 James Mumford, *Vexed: Ethics Beyond Political Tribes* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2020)

Optional

S. Hauerwas and S. Wells, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Wiley, 2011)
 Pope St. Paul VI, *On Human Life: Humanae Vitae* (Ignatius, 2014)

Primary Texts

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (selections)
 Barmen Declaration
 John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* (selections)
 Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
 Schleithem Confession

*NB: This is simply the list of texts that I am requiring in spring 2023. I required different texts in 2022 and I would probably change it again in 2024. The field of Christian ethics is enormous, and the history of Christian moral writing is 2,000 years old. Scholars with training in Christian ethics will and should have wide latitude here—so long as they recognize that entering students *have no background or experience with Christian ethics whatsoever*. This is not a graduate seminar. It is an introductory course to a complex topic for juniors and seniors who may walk in not knowing the meaning of the word “ethics,” much less the names of Aristotle and Kant, Augustine and Aquinas.

IV. Supporting Documentation

Required of all applications	
1	Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes
2	Syllabus — Attach the syllabus for the course based upon the anticipated first-semester offering.
3	Instructional Design — The syllabus must be reviewed by the Adams Center. Attach a copy of the Adams Center letter.
4	Library — Submit new course application and syllabus to the Library dean’s office. Attach the Library’s memo.
Attach if applicable	
5	Content Overlap — Include one document for each course you listed in Section I-27. Attach statement from instructor/dept chair of existing course justifying the new offering.
6	Departmental Resources — List the resources that support the course and are available only through the department, if applicable. Attach the list of the holdings and the location/s.
7	Resources — List resources (other than library or departmental resources) that are needed to support this course (computers, lab equipment, other technology, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items and indicate possible sources or estimated cost of each. List the sources of any needed funds.
8	Expenses — List additional expenses needed to implement this course (full-time or part-time faculty, graduate or lab assistants, student employees, travel, special student costs, room renovation, storage facility, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items, the estimated cost of each and the source of the funds.
9	Justification — Attach any documents to which you refer in Section II-B.

Abilene Christian University
Spring 2023

BIBT470: Christian Ethics

Dr. Brad East
Assistant Professor of Theology

General Information

Class meetings: T/Th 1:30–2:50pm (BSB 129)
Office hours: Thursdays, 8:00am–12:00pm; Fridays, 12:00–3:00pm
Office: BSB 236
Email: brad.east@acu.edu
Phone: (325) 674-3736
Credit hours: 3
Prerequisites: BIBL101, 102, 211

Course Description

How should Christians live? What is God's will for human morality? How do we know? How is it related to Jesus, the Bible, and the church? How does it interact with other sources of knowledge as well as the wider society? What place does it have in a pluralistic, democratic, and globalized culture? These are only some of the questions at the heart of this course. The subject matter is Christian ethics, otherwise known as moral theology. It is an exploration of the shape of faithful human life in accordance with the will of God, the example of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit. It engages moral philosophy, Christian tradition, Holy Scripture, and relevant moral topics facing all of us today: abortion, sex, war, poverty, embodiment, politics, and much more. Students at ACU ought to be well trained not only in actual moral formation but also in moral-theological *reasoning*, given the challenges confronting Christian life and witness in our time and place.

Course Goals

This course is designed as an upper-level elective for students of all majors and backgrounds. It seeks (1) to introduce students to mainstream historic traditions of Christian moral reflection; (2) to frame Christian ethics in terms of the church's corporate journey toward God's kingdom, in imitation of the life of Christ, as led by the Spirit of Christ; (3) to ground the Christian moral life in the triune God's mighty acts to create, to redeem, and to unite human creatures with himself; (4) to coordinate moral-theological deliberation in relation to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the treasures of sacred tradition, and the natural law; (5) to display responsible practices of dialogue with secular and philosophical sources of moral theory and discernment; and (6) to inculcate in students at once the desire and the preliminary skills necessary to reason with Christian wisdom about the moral issues, questions, and demands of our time.

Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking this class, students will be able (1) to identify the difference between ancient-Greek, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and modern ethics; (2) to formulate a moral argument from within a variety of ethical theories (including arguments and theories with which they disagree); (3)

to recognize the underlying premises or principles that inform opposed moral arguments (for example, whether an opinion or perspective is relativistic, utilitarian, Kantian, or Thomistic); (4) to engage in civil and respectful conversation with others over highly charged and contested matters (such as abortion, sexuality, war, and immigration); and (5) to construct a specifically Christian moral-theological defense of their own most cherished views, rooted in the authorities of Holy Scripture, sacred tradition, natural law, and personal experience.

These outcomes will be measured by (1) active class participation, which weekly and sometimes daily involves sustained discussion of challenging case studies and hypotheticals about serious matters; (2) weekly quizzes over the reading, which includes both survey textbooks and primary sources; (3) two papers, a midterm and final one, that require students to represent what they have learned at a descriptive level as well as fashion more than one moral-theological argument rooted in their own understanding of how Christian ethics does and ought to work.

Institutional Missions

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The mission of the College of Biblical Studies is to provide leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ. The mission of the Department of Bible, Missions, and Ministry (DBMM) is twofold: (1) to equip all departmental majors with a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills, and experiences in preparation for further study or for engagement in ministry; and (2) to provide all ACU students with biblical and spiritual resources with which they may live as committed disciples.

Course Texts

Required

Victor Lee Austin, *Christian Ethics: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark, 2013)
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition; Fortress, 2015)
Pope St. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae]* (Times Books, 1995)
D. Stephen Long, *Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010)
James Mumford, *Vexed: Ethics Beyond Political Tribes* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2020)

Optional

Pope St. Paul VI, *On Human Life: Humanae Vitae* (Ignatius, 2014)

Further Reading

Michael Banner, *Christian Ethics: A Brief History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)
Katie Geneva Cannon, Emilie M. Townes, and Angela D. Sims, eds., *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011)
James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis Books, 1975, 1997)
Margaret A. Farley, *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics and Other Questions* (Paulist Press, 2003)
John Hare, *Why Bother Being Good? The Place of God in the Moral Life* (InterVarsity Press, 2002)
Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1981)

Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (University of Chicago Press, 2012)
 Dennis Hollinger, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Baker Academic, 2002)
 Pope St. John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth [Veritatis Splendor]* (USCCB, 1993)
 Vincent W. Lloyd, *Black Natural Law* (Oxford University Press, 2016)
 Servais Pinckaers, OP, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 3rd ed., trans. Mary Thomas Noble (Catholic University of America Press, 1985, 1990 1993)
 Samuel Wells, ed., *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
 Steve Wilkens, *Christian Ethics: Four Views* (IVP Academic 2017)

All other texts (essays, articles, and chapter excerpts) will be available as PDFs or handouts.

Assignments

1. *Participation (10%)*: The success of this course depends on your active participation. Please be engaged and attentive to both the professor and fellow students. Communicate in civil, respectful, and productive ways, and your grade will be just fine. If you are disruptive, a distraction to others, disrespectful, disengaged, regularly tardy or absent, and/or (without permission) on a technological device, your participation grade will be docked significantly.
2. *Weekly quizzes (40%)*: Every Thursday there will be a short quiz over the assigned reading for that week. The quiz will be closed-book, but open-note. You may take handwritten notes on a single piece of notebook or printer paper, front and back. The notes may be as detailed as you would like. The quizzes are not meant to trick or confuse or frustrate you, but to ensure that you are reading. If you read and take notes on the text, you should do quite well on the quizzes. Of 15 total quizzes in the semester, students' two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.
3. *Midterm paper (20%)*: This 3-4-page paper will use what you have learned from the lectures and readings from the first half of the course to outline, first, your own understanding of Christian moral theory (i.e., its purpose, shape, audience, and authorities); second, the role of Scripture, tradition, and natural law in Christian moral deliberation; and, third, how this cashes out (for you) in terms of a particular moral issue. A printed copy of the paper is due in class on Thursday, March 9.
4. *Final paper (30%)*: This 4-5-page paper will use what you have learned from the whole course as well as from the final two books assigned in the course (*Discipleship* and *Evangelium Vitae*) to lay out a vision of the moral life for the Christian community. Specifically, you will summarize the contents of each book before aligning yourself with and against particular authors, traditions, and/or sets of ideas discussed in the course. You will then select a major social or moral issue (not the same as the one you treated in the midterm paper) and make an argument not only for what *you* think about it but for what *the church* ought to teach all Christians to believe and to do in relation to it. A copy of your paper is due in my office by NOON on Friday, May 12.

Grading Comments

The following are the criteria (the skills and virtues) that will most factor into the grading of your written assignments:

1. *Clarity*: Do you communicate clearly, or am I left wondering what you are trying to say? Is your language cluttered, or is it free of unnecessary distraction?
2. *Depth*: Do you remain at the surface, or penetrate to the heart of the matter? Is what you say are significant and compelling, or superficial and clichéd?
3. *Accuracy*: Do you understand the text, argument, or idea you are engaging? Do you represent its meaning or argument correctly?
4. *Charity*: Are you sympathetic to your subject matter, or do you bypass understanding for “cheap shots”? Do you put yourself in the other’s shoes, or simply assume they’re wrong?
5. *Voice*: Is your writing “your own” or does it sound like you are parroting someone else, whether a professor, an author, or another?
6. *Argument*: Do you take a position and support it with reasons? Or do you merely discuss without arguing, exposit without engaging, assert without defending?
7. *Grammar*: Is your writing riddled with errors, or is it clear that you re-read and revised it?

Written assignments should be *double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins & NO cover page.*

Grading

A: 90-100	Excellent work; mastery of the material; superlative engagement and assignments.
B: 80-89	Good work; solid understanding of the material; fine, commendable assignments.
C: 70-79	Average work; basic grasp of the material; rudimentary, acceptable assignments.
D: 60-69	Below average work; bored, distant engagement; shoddy, deficient assignments.
F: 0-59	Unsatisfactory work; lack of engagement; little effort; extremely poor assignments.

Quarantine and Infection Contingencies

If you are sick, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. Always play it safe. Just email me. I will have buckets of grace for everyone. I will be responsible for coordinating with students unable to attend due to Covid exposure, quarantine, or sickness. If you are too sick to do work from home, then we’ll work that out. If you are able to do work online, we’ll figure that out, too. If I have to quarantine from home, whether to be safe or because I am ill, then I will clarify my expectations in that case, too. In sum: Don’t let uncertainty or anxiety overwhelm you. We’ll figure this out together.

Zoom Etiquette

Here are my expectations for how students should comport themselves on Zoom. The big picture: Be professional; treat it like a meeting for an internship or job, not a FaceTime with a friend or significant other. The details: Be fully clothed, and wear appropriate clothing. Please don’t be lying down. Be somewhere other than your bed. Don’t be playing video games or busy with other distractions while we are “together.” Should your internet connection allow—and if you are on campus, it will—then use the video function so we can see your face. Be alert and engaged and present, so far as that is possible and within your control. Should extenuating circumstances not permit your full engagement on Zoom, please communicate those to me directly and privately. I will keep such information confidential, and I will be happy to facilitate alternative arrangements if necessary.

Technology Policy

Use of tablets or laptops is not permitted without written permission to do so. If you have a good reason for requiring technology in the classroom, meet with me in person or send me an email. If you would like to take notes, therefore, please come prepared with pen and paper. If you are using technology for email, texting, internet browsing, etc., you will be docked attendance points.

Unless you are instructed to do otherwise, please keep your phone away during class. Do not leave it out on the table in front of you, even if it is turned off. I suggest you keep it in a bag rather than your pocket or lap, lest the itch to check it prove too difficult to resist.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class each day. Tardies will be noted, as will absences. Three tardies will count as one unexcused absence, and beginning with the third unexcused absence, each one will reduce a student's final grade by 4 percentage points (e.g., a 92 with 4 absences becomes an 84). More than six absences will be cause for an automatic failing grade.

Excused absences include university-sponsored events, verified illness, and a family emergency (such as a death). You will find that I am an immovable stickler on tardies and absences for mundane or unimportant reasons, but also that I am understanding and receptive regarding absences for good reasons. **NB:** I retain full discretion regarding particular situations and their consequences for a student's grade. Be conscientious and unanxious, come to class unless something very serious arises, and don't try to take advantage of the policy, and all manner of things shall be well.

Academic Integrity

Ethical behavior and personal integrity are expected of all men and women at a Christian institution. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God.

Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of the first-year program, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residence life education and academic departments.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will be dealt with as explained above in the policy on Academic Honesty. Plagiarism occurs whenever a person offers someone else's writing, research, or ideas as their own. Some common cases of plagiarism are: (1) lifting a paper off the Internet, or from a fellow student, even if you alter it a bit; (2) lifting sentences or whole paragraphs from other's work without clearly putting the material in quotation form and giving full credit in proper citation form; (3) using another's research results without giving them credit; (4) putting someone else's ideas in your own words without giving them credit.

Please avoid these and other kinds of plagiarism. Like all cheating, it is sinful and it robs students of the educational gain they should have had. **NB:** I retain full discretion regarding consequences for plagiarism, including the possibility of a student automatically failing the course and/or having the incident noted in his or her permanent academic record.

Harassment Policy

At ACU, we strive to comply with all applicable legal requirements prohibiting, preventing, and responding to harassment against any member of the ACU community (e.g., Title VI, VII, and IX). Moreover, as a Christian community, ACU has committed itself, unequivocally, to ensuring a working and learning environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected. Our Anti-Harassment Policy outlines specific definitions and procedures related discriminatory and sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, assault, stalking, and relationship violence. If you experience harassment in any of these forms, we encourage you to report it so that we can help maintain a work and academic environment free of unlawful harassment.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call the office directly at (325) 674-2667.

Recording Policy

The classroom is a private space, where all members of the class have a reasonable expectation of privacy. As a member of this class, you must respect the privacy of all other members of the class by not sharing any recording of class conversation without the express, written consent of all people who are seen or heard in the recording. Students are not permitted to record a class by any means without **prior**, express authorization from the course instructor. The instructor may permit a student to record a class session (1) for the personal use of the student, (2) for the benefit of another student who is unavoidably absent, or (3) as part of an accommodation for a student with a disability. Permission given by an instructor to record a class is limited to permission to record for personal use only. It is **never** permissible to copy, email, file-share, sell, Web-serve, or otherwise distribute such recordings without the express, written consent of all participants in the recording. **NB:** This policy still applies even in a pandemic-influenced semester. If students are unable to attend class for Covid-related reasons, my goal will be *either* to supply them the content from class via alternative means *or* to stream/record my lecture from class for their viewing. In any case, **neither streaming nor recorded content from class is free for distribution to others, by any means whatsoever.** Transgression of this rule will be taken with the utmost seriousness and reported to the relevant campus or legal authorities.

Class Schedule

PART I: FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: Moral Theology: What is Christian Ethics?

Jan 17:

Jan 19: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 1

Week 2: Moral Authorities: Why is Christian Ethics?

Jan 24: Long, *Christian Ethics*, Introduction

Jan 26: Long, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 1

Week 3: Moral Community: Where is Christian Ethics?

Jan 31: Long, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 2

Feb 2: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 2

Week 4: Moral Theories: How is Christian Ethics?

Feb 7: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 3

Feb 9: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 4

PART II: TRADITIONS

Week 5: Roman Catholic: Revelation & Natural Law

Feb 14: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 5

Feb 16: St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* (excerpts); Hauerwas & Bennett, "Catholic Social Teaching"

Week 6: Reformed: Three Uses of the Law

Feb 21: Calvin, *Institutes* II.6-7

Feb 23: Calvin, *Institutes* II.8-9

Week 7: Radical: The Law of Christ

Feb 28: Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, chs. 1-2; Yoder, "The Otherness of the Church"

Mar 2: Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, chs. 3-5; Schleithem Confession

Week 8: Modern: The Law of the Self

Mar 7: Long, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 3

Mar 9: Long, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 4; Mumford, *Vexed*, Introduction

→ MID-TERM PAPER DUE

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Mar 14: NO CLASS

Mar 16: NO CLASS

PART III: TOPICS

Week 10: Annunciation: Life & Sex

Mar 21: *Humanae Vitae*; Mangina, "Bearing Fruit"

Mar 23: Lenow, "Protestants and Contraception"; Eberstadt, "Vindication" & "Prophetic Power"

Week 11: Christmas: Sex & Marriage

Mar 28: Jenson, "Male and Female"; Davison, "Marriage"

Mar 30: Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 3 [→ Summit using our classroom this day]

Week 12: Flight to Egypt: The Poor & the Stranger

Apr 4: St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* (excerpts); Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 2

Apr 6: Johnson, "Interceding"; Fowl, "Being Blessed"

Week 13: Good Friday: Peace, Violence, & Punishment

Apr 11: St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* (excerpts); Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 4

Apr 13: Cavanaugh, "Killing in the Name of God"; Hauerwas & Wells, "Breaking Bread"

Week 14: Holy Saturday: The Mortal Body

Apr 18: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 6; Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 1

Apr 20: Austin, *Christian Ethics*, ch. 7; Greene-McCreight, "Receiving Communion"

Week 15: Easter Sunday: New Life for All Creation

Apr 25: Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 5

Apr 27: TBD

Week 16: Pentecost: The City of God in the City of Man

May 2: Calvin, *Institutes* IV.20 (selections); Mumford, *Vexed*, ch. 6 + Conclusion

May 4: Barmen Declaration; King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Week 17: FINALS WEEK

May 8: DEAD DAY

May 12: **FINAL PAPER DUE IN MY OFFICE BY NOON**

2.24.23

Brad East, Ph.D.
Brad.east@acu.edu
(325) 674-3736
Assistant Professor of Theology
Department of Bible, Missions, and Ministry
BSB 236
Abilene Christian University

Re: Review of BIBT 470 – Christian Ethics

Dear Dr. East,

Thank you for the submission of BIBT 470 – Christian Ethics. I reviewed the syllabus based on the ACU syllabus guidelines listed on the ACU website. The syllabus meets the guidelines and recommendations outlined for the university.

This letter is not meant to be a final approval in the course application process. Instead, it is intended as a reference that will be read by members of the council, who may also have questions or comments of their own.

Thank you for allowing the Adams Center team to review your course application. We would love to work with you on your syllabus, as well as the design, development, or revision of this and other courses. If there is anything else we can do to help you, please feel free to let me know.

On behalf of the Adams Center for Teaching & Learning,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott E. Hamm", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Scott E. Hamm,
Assistant Director

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 27, 2023
TO: Dr. Brad East
FROM: Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Library Services
RE: Course Application BIBT 470– Christian Ethics

After reviewing the course application and course syllabus, the library can adequately support the proposed course. If additional resources are needed for the course, please contact Craig Churchill (churchillc@acu.edu), Theological Librarian. Thank you for letting us review the course application.