

M-HT3400 Christian Ethics
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Online
3 Credit hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

For the instructor's contact information, please see the Course Instructor section in the Canvas course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to matters of right and wrong from a biblical perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Students who complete this course should be able to:

1. Articulate a Christian stance on various moral issues of importance, such as the sanctity of human life, marriage, and sexuality.
2. Explain how a Christian worldview contributes decisively to various ethical debates.
3. Identify definitive statements made in Scripture on topics of ethical concern such as the sanctity of human life, marriage, and sexuality, and apply them appropriately.
4. Integrate Christian ethics into various areas of ministerial competency.

TEXTBOOKS & REQUIRED READING

- Ken Magnuson. *Invitation to Christian Ethics: Moral Reasoning and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2020. 544 pages. **ISBN: 978-0825434457**.
- J. Alan Branch. *50 Ethical Questions: Biblical Wisdom for Confusing Times*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021. 272 pgs. **ISBN: 978-1683595595**.
- A sturdy copy of the Bible (in CSB, ESV, or NIV translations).
- Additional Resources will be assigned (and provided) as weekly readings throughout the course.
- *Midwestern Style Manual* (Current Edition), **ISBN: 978-1483586373**.

Required textbooks can be purchased at the MBTS Online Textbook Store:

<https://shop.mbts.edu/textbooks>.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE CREDIT

		A	96+ points	A-	93-95 points
B+	90-92 points	B	87-89 points	B-	84-86 points
C+	80-83 points	C	77-79 points	C-	73-76 points
D+	70-72 points	D	67-69 points	D-	64-66 points
F	63 or fewer points				

Grades for this course will be based upon the following percentages:

Unit Quizzes: (Credit Only)	10%
Discussion Boards: (Earned through weekly in-person attendance)	15%
Case Studies: (All Students)	20%
Position Papers: (All Students)	20%
Mid-Term/Final Exams: (Credit Only)	30%
Local Mentor Assignments: (Earned through weekly in-person attendance)	5%

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Check Your Knowledge Quizzes (10% of Course Grade)

Aligned with Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Purpose: To provide students with opportunities to further interact with the course reading which in turn serves as much of the foundation for the knowledge presented in the course.

In Units 1-7, students will complete a check your knowledge quiz. The quizzes will be based upon the reading from the respective unit. The quizzes will be open-book and untimed. Students will be allowed to take each quiz three times during the respective Unit with the highest score being the one recorded in the grade book. Additional instructions are provided with the quizzes in Canvas.

Discussions (15% of Course Grade)

~~Relates to Course Objectives: 1-4~~

~~**Purpose:** The purpose of the discussions is to provide the students the opportunity to interact with their classmates while they practice and respond to realistic ministry scenarios, identify and critique ethical arguments and worldviews, based on the unit content from a Christian ethical worldview based on Scripture.~~

~~Students will be required to participate in weekly discussion boards. These discussions may cover a wide range of course issues and allow the students to practice the concepts, collaborate with their peers, and receive feedback regarding their understanding of Christian Ethics.~~

~~**Discussions will follow a three-part format:**~~

- ~~1. Initial Post: In 200-300 words, answer the prompt in Canvas with parenthetical references to Scripture and the relevant reading. Initial posts are due by **Wednesday at 11:59 PM (CT)**.~~
- ~~2. Responses: In 100-150 words each, respond to two other students' initial posts. While encouragement and affirmation are welcome, responses should be thoughtful and critical. Ask clarifying questions, present alternative positions, and be sure to end each response with a meaningful question that keeps the discussion moving forward. Responses are due by **Friday at 11:59 PM (CT)**.~~
- ~~3. Replies: In at least 25 words, reply to each response on your post, addressing each major point and attempting to answer each question. Replies are due by **Saturday at 11:59 PM (CT)**.~~

~~**Additional instructions provided with the discussions on Canvas.**~~

Case Studies (20% of Course Grade)

Relates to Course Objectives: 1-3

Purpose: This assignment is designed for students to connect Christian Doctrine to ethical issues through case studies.

Students will compose responses (no more than 1,000 words) to real-world ethical issues based on a Christian Worldview. The essays will conform to the Midwestern Style Manual (current edition) including footnotes for sources (except Bible verses).

- **Unit 2 Case Study: (No More than 1,000 words)**
 - Will be in response to Humanist Manifesto II.
- **Unit 6 Case Study: (No More than 1,000 words)**
 - Will be in response to a practical scenario on the topic of the sanctity of human life.

Additional instructions provided with the assignment on Canvas.

Position Papers (20% of Course Grade)

Relates to Course Objectives: 1-3

Purpose: To provide the students the opportunity to compose position papers on ethical topics.

In Christian Ethics, a position paper is a short document designed to state the student's moral stance about a particular subject. A position paper can serve to transfer knowledge and understanding of a particular topic, provide information to aid in making a decision, or present a ministerial and theological perspective. Position papers rely on critical evaluation that goes beyond a mere surface reading or a passionate personal reaction. The position paper will articulate a thesis statement that contains an overall claim, develop an argument with reasons and evidence, and use transitions and reader cues for coherence.

The position papers will not exceed 2,600 words, not including the title page and bibliography.

The following outline is the template for the project:

1. **Introduction and Thesis:** A thesis is a specific claim regarding marriage which you intend to defend. This section should include an abstract containing the purpose of the paper. Give a very high-level overview of the content of the paper and include a clear summary of the stance you will be defending. The intent is to convey to the reader why this is important. Most abstracts are written in the future tense, because the reader hasn't read the paper yet, so explain what they will read, not what they already know.
2. **Counterarguments:** A strong position paper acknowledges counter-arguments and presents the opposing view accurately and in its strongest possible form.
3. **At least three points of argumentation supporting the thesis:** This should be the longest section of the paper.
4. **Conclusion:** A conclusion with possible applications for ministry or considerations of future challenges Christians may expect regarding marriage in your culture.

The position paper should include serious interaction with Scripture. Effective argumentation will explore the grammar, syntax, and context of particular passages of Scripture. Long, extensive block quotes of Scripture should be avoided. Biblical and theological terms central to the argument should be clearly defined.

The position statements will use at least **five** sources beyond the Bible itself. Study Bibles, blogs, podcasts, YouTube videos, and audio sermons should **not** be used as sources.

Position papers should be written in present (not past) tense.

Additional instructions provided with the assignment on Canvas.

Mid-Term/Final Exams (30% of Course Grade)

Relates to Course Objective: 1-4.

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to give students an opportunity to integrate Christian ethics into various areas of ministerial competency through responding to practical ethical issues. Students will complete two exams (a Mid-Term Exam in Unit 4; and a Final Exam in Unit 8) that will include essay questions concerning practical ethical issues.

Each week students will take open-book quizzes (**worth 10% of the Course Grade**) which will have objective questions based on the content for that week. Students will be able to take the quiz three times (with an hour in between each attempt). These objective questions (true/false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple answer, and multiple choice) will also be on the Mid-Term and Final taken by the students in Units 4 and 8.

The exams are based on the assigned content for the course. The exams are closed-book (though students may use a print Bible for the essay questions). The exams will consist of true/false, fill in the blank, multiple-choice, multiple answer questions along with essay questions.

NOTE: While the quizzes are open-book; the **Mid-Term and Final are CLOSED BOOK!**

Students MUST secure a proctor for their exams, and may only take the exam ONCE.

Additional instructions provided with the exams on Canvas.

Local Mentor Assignments (5% of Course Grade)

Possibly Related to Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

~~At the Global Campus, you study where you're called, how you can, fully connected.~~

~~In all Global Campus courses, you will meet at least once with a qualified Local Mentor, learning from his or her unique experience and expertise. The Mentor's role is to help you consider how to apply what you're learning to where you're called.~~

~~Read the instructions below for requirements and recommendations to enlist your Mentor, meet with your Mentor, and reflect on the conversation.~~

Enlisting Your Mentor

- You'll identify and enlist a qualified and available Mentor in your area, according to the following requirements and recommendations:
 - ~~Mentor Requirements: Mentors contribute to your theological and spiritual formation for ministry. Thus, Mentors must (1) wholeheartedly affirm basic Trinitarian and Evangelical convictions, (2) agree to supervise according to the mission and doctrinal standards of MBTS, and (3) hold an appropriate combination of education and experience (see the Local Mentor Qualifications). At the beginning of the course, you will submit your proposed Mentor's information for a member of the Global Campus team to verify (see the Week 3: Enlist Your Local Mentor assignment).~~
 - ~~Mentor Recommendations: Mentors play a valuable role in connecting your theological education to your unique gifts, calling, and context. Thus, students should consider enlisting a Mentor who is familiar with that context, especially in the same local church when possible. Consider whether one of your pastors, another pastor or retired pastor in a like-minded church, a denominational or para-church employee, or another qualified person who knows you well might be able to serve. **Students may enlist the same person as Mentor for more than one course; in many cases, this continuity is preferred.**~~

Note: Students who are unable to enlist a qualified Mentor should ask their Instructors for direction and alternative instructions.

Meeting with Your Mentor

- You'll collaborate with your Mentor to determine when to meet and what to discuss, according to the following requirements and recommendations:
 - ~~Meeting Requirements: Local Mentor Meetings must be (1) in person except in cases of health emergencies, (2) at least one hour long, and (3) focused on applying the course content to the student's calling and context. **Staff meetings, project planning meetings, etc. do not count toward this requirement unless they are directly focused on the course topics and/or requirements.**~~
 - ~~Meeting Recommendations: Mentors and students should consider discussing specific course content (e.g., one of the textbooks or videos) and assignments (e.g., one of the writing assignments, projects, or discussion prompt), how to apply them in the student's current ministry context, and how they connect with the Mentor's own experience and expertise. Mentors may consider setting an agenda or asking the student to set an agenda ahead of the meeting. If multiple students in the same area are taking the course together, they should consider meeting together with the same Mentor.~~

Reflecting on the Conversation

- ~~You'll share about your Local Mentor Meeting, according to the following requirements and recommendations:~~
 - ~~Reflection Requirements: At the end of the course, you will submit a 2-4 page reflection on the Local Mentor Meeting. Reflections should include a title page and the following sections in Midwestern Style:~~
 1. ~~A section titled "Date and Time" with a single sentence giving the date and time of the Local Mentor Meeting.~~
 2. ~~A 1-2 page section titled "Meeting Summary" that summarizes the key points of the conversation.~~
 3. ~~A 1-2 page section titled "Meeting Reflection" that shares what you have learned from the conversation and how you might apply what you are learning in this course to your life and ministry context.~~
 - ~~Reflection Recommendations: Students should consider taking notes during the conversation and writing a brief summary immediately afterwards. Students should also consider journaling about their ministry application throughout the course to better recollect and reflect for this assignment.~~

Note: You will submit your Reflection in the Week 7: Local Mentor Meeting and Reflection assignment.

Evaluating Your Engagement

- ~~Mentors will verify and evaluate students' engagement in the Local Mentor Meeting, according to the following requirements and recommendations:~~
 - ~~Evaluation Requirements: At the end of the course, the Local Mentor will submit an evaluation of the student's engagement in the meeting. Mentors will rate the students' preparedness for the meeting and engagement during the meeting. **Staff meetings, project planning meetings, etc. do not count toward this requirement unless they are directly focused on the course topics and/or requirements.**~~
 - ~~Evaluation Recommendations: Mentors should consider sharing their evaluations with students before or after submission to offer encouragement and constructive feedback. Mentors should consider requesting the course syllabus from students in order to assess the student's progress regarding the course objectives.~~

Note: You will be provided a link for the Mentor's Evaluation and complete a quiz in the Week 7: Local Mentor Evaluation and Confirmation assignment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. No late work will be accepted, except in extraordinary circumstances. What constitutes an extraordinary circumstance is at the discretion of the course instructor. Be aware that work responsibilities, church activities, mission trips, family vacations/events, or other such activities do not constitute extraordinary circumstances. Adjustments to this policy may be made by the course instructor. Any questions concerning this policy and its enforcement should be directed to the instructor.
2. Plagiarism is a serious ethical and legal matter and instances of plagiarism will result in an “F” for an assignment and possibly an “F” for the course. Students are to read and abide by the section entitled “Integrity in Seminary Studies” in the MBTS Academic Catalog.
3. Midwestern is committed to facilitating students with disabilities. Students seeking effective auxiliary aids for a current documented disability including exams, classroom participation or assignments, should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester or term in order for special arrangements to be considered. Students should conform with institutional policies and procedures as listed in the Midwestern Students with Disabilities Information Brochure available on the website at <http://www.mbts.edu/consumer-information>.
4. Class Attendance: Attendance is considered a necessary factor in the learning process. **Absences, for any reason, should not exceed 25% of the total class time.** Withdrawal from the course is required after a student is absent from more than 25% of the class sessions, except in cases of confining illness or serious circumstance.
5. To assist Midwestern in the ongoing assessment of student learning and achievement, students are asked to complete the confidential, internet-based assessment of learning for each classroom experience. Course assessment(s) are available at the end of each semester or term and may be accessed at https://portal.mbts.edu/student_portal/login.asp. Students have the option of completing the online course assessment after the end of the semester or term and then being able to retrieve the grade(s) for their course(s). Students who do not have internet access may obtain access and/or assistance in Midwestern’s Library. Students having difficulty accessing their online course information should contact the Information Technology department at (816)414-3763 or helpdesk@mbts.edu.
6. Questions regarding: course content, a correct understanding of the course syllabus, or assignments should be addressed to the instructor.
7. In Christian higher education institutions, it can be assumed that each believer-learner is at a different place of personal maturity and educational preparedness. For these reasons, it is requested and expected that each student exhibit mutual respect, even when divergent viewpoints are expressed in the classroom. Students should refrain from behaviors that negatively affect the teaching environment. Students should conduct themselves as ministerial professionals who give, and are worthy of, a high level of respect.

MBTS Policy Regarding Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct. Academic misconduct includes cheating and plagiarism. Students are to refrain from the use of unauthorized aids on examinations and assignments. Students are to turn in only those assignments that result from their own efforts and research.

Cheating is utilizing unauthorized materials or aids to complete an assignment or part of an assignment. Cheating may include:

- cutting and pasting from the internet
- taking ideas from peers
- copying answers from a textbook in a manner prohibited by the Professor.

Plagiarism is presenting an assignment or part of an assignment as your work when it has been compiled, written, produced, or substantially edited or revised by others, **including artificial intelligence or any other software**. In this manner, it is also a form of cheating. Proper citation is to be given for all quotations and/or paraphrasing in accordance with the current edition of the *Midwestern Style Guide*. Students with questions should consult with their faculty or the *Midwestern Writer's Studio*.

Self-Plagiarism is presenting work developed by the student that has already been submitted in full or in part in a different class. Self-plagiarism constitutes a form of cheating as the student is “double-dipping” and seeking credit from work that has already contributed to the final grade of a different course. Students are expected to produce new, unique contributions in every course.