Course Syllabus
Summer 2017

NMC-ETHX500 Ethics In Intercultural Context

JULY 10-14, 2017
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the relation of the Christian faith to the responsibility of the Christian and the church in areas of social concern. Attention will be given to the biblical and theological basis for such responsibility.

The course will address itself, in an inter-cultural approach, to the study of the relationship of Christian faith to the responsibility of the Christian and the church in areas of ethical concern. Attention will be given to the biblical and theological basis for such responsibility.

Using a missiological approach to the nature and function of systems of values and ethics in various societies, the course will focus on various concepts such as culture and conscience, shame and guilt, individual and community, cultural relativism and moral absolutes, intercultural universals of human behaviour, conversion, values and ethics.

The adjective, “missiological” implies that our approach will be at once anthropological and theological, and that we will follow the process of ethical decision-making in a methodical way. The goal is to come to an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of values and ethical systems on the one hand, and the interaction of the gospel with these systems on the other.

The format will include lecture, critical reading, case analysis, and class discussion.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student should…

- Have read all the material, attended all the classes, and participated in class discussions.
- Understand the basic divisions of meta ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics and the primary schools of thought of each;
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• Understand the biblical and several traditional Indigenous bases for ethics and the task of bringing these into constructive dialogue with wider theories of ethics in an intercultural and inter-religious context;
• Have developed analytic skills for discerning key issues in cases of ethical conflict;
• Develop interpretative skills in relating Biblical narratives to cultural contexts to get at the meaning of events and behaviours for Christians in varying contexts;
• Be able to dialogue about the issues in the essays and cases concerning values and ethics and the problems involved in Christian decision-making in various contexts in the world;
• Have developed skills in applying the lessons learned about ethical discernment, cultural contexts, and ethical decision-making to new situations.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

M.Div. Academic Track


Non-Academic / Audit Track


B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING:

Please consult the referenced bibliography for further recommended reading. The following – along with additional readings selected by the instructor throughout the course - will be provided in class during the semester:


C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

NOTE 1: All papers should follow the Guidelines for Written Work including (if relevant) footnotes and bibliography.

NOTE 2: Assignments automatically receive a 5% penalty when they are late. Assignments late more than the period of time between due dates for subsequent assignments receive 0%. All assignments must be submitted by midnight in the student’s time zone on the day they are due – including completed cases. Please consult the VST Calendar for the grading system. Take note that simply fulfilling the basic course requirements rates a grade of C to C+.

1. Class Participation Discussion/Readings Daily 20%
   Given the nature of the course and its delivery over five days, it is imperative to attend, arrive to the conversations on time, and to be actively engaged in the discussion of topics. Participation will be graded as per the attached rubric.

2. Critical Reflection Paper Achebe Due: August 1 20%
   Each paper should be seven (7), double-spaced pages. The paper should:
   1. Summarize briefly the main argument of the book (2 pages);
   2. Identify areas of concern or questions you have about the ethical dilemmas portrayed in the book; suggest ways in which they might have been resolved. (2 pages)
   3. Explain any new insights about values and ethics you have gained from reading this book (2 pages);
   4. Apply some of these insights to your life and ministry, particularly in inter-cultural situations (1 page);

3. Case Study Main and Respondent Wolfe/Gudorf Due: TBD with class 40%
   There are 18 cases in Wolfe and Gudorf’s book. Students are expected to read all the studies, though time will only allow for a single selected case to be covered by each student for their assignment. This assignment has two parts:
   1. A write-up and submission of one of the case studies;
   2. The preparation of a response to a case study.
   Each part is worth 20% and 20% respectively.
Two case studies will be assigned to each person by the end of the first class session as determined by the instructor. For one, the student will present the main study; in the other, the student will present, as a respondent, one of the positions accompanying each main case. Presentations will be made in the last two class days with formal write-ups to be handed in on the due dates as noted above.

The main paper will be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages. The respondent papers will be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 double-spaced pages.

- The main case presentation will outline the events of the case in a timeline that highlights the events, twists and turns, and climax of the case.
  a) Point out the main issues involved in the case.
  b) Select what you think the main ethical conflict is.
  
  a. What does the culture in the case say about the issue?
  b. What does Scripture say?
  c. What does [their/your] conscience say?
  d. What does the social situation say?
  e. How, if at all, can this issue be resolved?
  f. Propose a way forward for the characters.

- The respondent presentation to the second case study will address itself to the same questions but from the position of the identified case study respondent.

4. Readings presentation Due: Day 3 & 4 morning 20%
A 4Mat reading interaction form is to be completed and e-mailed to the instructor on the morning that each readings presentation is due following the outline sample attached.

**SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading and Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Book Review (Achebe)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Response</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings Presentations (2 @10%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.
Due to the nature of Spring & Summer school, all assignments will be emailed to the instructor directly to avoid delay in time or even loss of paper in transition. The student will be expected to produce a time-stamped electronic confirmation that the paper was sent and received if requested.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Day 1
- course outline
  - Case study discussion/assignments
  - Readings presentations assignments
- information/discussion
- Ethics: Historical Development and Foundations – Adeney
- Information/discussion
  - Historical Developments and Foundations – Adeney
- information/discussion
  - Ethical Systems and Approaches - Adeney

Day 2
- information/discussion
  - Ethical Systems and Approaches – Adeney
- information/discussion
  - Moral Theology - Adeney
- information/discussion
  - Morality: Relativism and Absolutism - Fortosis
- information/discussion
  - Naturalism - Braaten

Day 3
- information/discussion
  - Ethics from other perspectives – De La Torre
- information/discussion
  - Ethics from other perspectives – De La Torre
- final discussion
  - Cultural Clashes: Ethical Considerations - Bretzke
  - Cultural Change and Ethics - Bretzke

Day 4,5
- Presentations by Students (timing to be determined in class)
  - Case study #1
  - Case Study #2
  - Case study #3
  - Case study #4
  - Case study #5

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

See the following handout: Comparative and Cross-Cultural Ethics Bibliography, compiled by James T. Bretzke, S.J. Professor of Moral Theology Boston College School of Theology & Ministry
# Grading Rubrics

## Student Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-Class</strong></td>
<td>Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor(s)</td>
<td>At times display lack of interest in comments of others</td>
<td>Dismissive of comments that disagree with their own</td>
<td>Projects lack of interest and demonstrates disrespect for others</td>
<td>0-100pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Arrives fully prepared with all assignments/readings finished complete with notes, questions framed.</td>
<td>Arrives fully prepared with all assignments/readings finished.</td>
<td>Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation.</td>
<td>Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about the assigned readings.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Contribution</td>
<td>Comments are relevant to the discussions in class and reflect understanding of assigned readings, class discussions and personal insights</td>
<td>Comments are relevant to the discussions in class and reflect understanding of assigned readings.</td>
<td>Comments are sometimes irrelevant, demonstrate lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to class discussion.</td>
<td>Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or class discussion.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Discussions</td>
<td>Comments almost always advance the class discussions.</td>
<td>Comments frequently advance the class discussions.</td>
<td>Comments at times advance the discussions but at times do little to move it forward.</td>
<td>Comments do little to advance the discussions; at times are actively harmful to it.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Participation</td>
<td>Actively participates at appropriate times.</td>
<td>Active participation, but sometimes with inappropriate timing.</td>
<td>Participates at times but at others is “tuned out.”</td>
<td>Seldom participates and generally not engaged.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td>At least on posting for every assignment posted when the thread is still alive. Multiple Postings.</td>
<td>Most contributions are made when the thread is still alive and flowing so the majority of students can profit from the information.</td>
<td>Typically one of the last to respond to an active thread. Generally only one posting per assignment</td>
<td>Posting is done after most students have finished participating in the thread. One or fewer postings per assignment.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness and Frequency</td>
<td>Positive responses to the work of others with pertinent and original insights. No effort to dominate.</td>
<td>Responds to the work of others. Comments are usually informative and/or original.</td>
<td>Appears unaware of or disinterested in responding to others without being prompted. May dominate conversation.</td>
<td>Offers inadequate responses to the comments of others; short or without new ideas.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Multiple postings contribute to the flow of conversation and also to class learning.</td>
<td>Multiple postings that contribute to the flow of the conversation.</td>
<td>May denigrate others’ point of view.</td>
<td>Posting does not advance the substance of the conversation.</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Includes analysis and/or synthesis of course readings, personal experience and postings from others with a high academic and experiential quality. Pertinent to the discussions.</td>
<td>Often includes analysis and/or synthesis of course readings, personal experience and postings from others representing original thought.</td>
<td>Significant elements of postings are from course readings or outside sources without adequate synthesis and little original thought.</td>
<td>No appreciable evidence of processing of the course readings or analysis of personal experience with them. Postings not relevant to the discussion/topic</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly and Experiential</td>
<td>No errors. Postings are always comprehensible</td>
<td>A few errors on occasion but does not impede understanding.</td>
<td>Errors more frequent with some that impede understanding</td>
<td>Multiple errors that impede understanding</td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, Grammar, Spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-100pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Written Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Excellent synthesis of research.</td>
<td>Adequate synthesis of research.</td>
<td>Superficial synthesis of research.</td>
<td>Little synthesis of research.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>Interacts with topic of study in insightful manner.</td>
<td>Demonstrates substantial interaction with topic of study.</td>
<td>Superficial interaction with topic of study.</td>
<td>Fails to engage topic of study.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>with subject matter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investigation</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argumentation</strong></td>
<td>Truthfully interprets evidence and offers sensible conclusions.</td>
<td>Reasonably interprets evidence and offers sensible conclusions.</td>
<td>Misinterprets evidence and/or offers unwarranted or fallacious conclusions.</td>
<td>Abuses evidence, arguing using irrelevant reasoning and does not justify claims.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Coherence</strong></td>
<td>Sustains a well-focused thesis throughout the essay in a well-organized and logical manner.</td>
<td>Sustains an acceptable thesis throughout the essay.</td>
<td>Thesis is unfocused and/or inconsistently threaded into essay.</td>
<td>Thesis is convoluted and/or essay is incoherent and rambling.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consideration of alternative ideas</strong></td>
<td>Identifies and insightfully engages major alternative points of view.</td>
<td>Identifies and adequately engages alternative points of view.</td>
<td>Fails to identify or hastily dismisses alternative points of view.</td>
<td></td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection of sources</strong></td>
<td>Uses a variety of scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles.</td>
<td>Adequate use of scholarly resources.</td>
<td>Utilizes a limited selection of scholarly resources.</td>
<td>Fails to utilize scholarly resources.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Insightfully applies conclusions to a specific context in a nuanced and detailed manner.</td>
<td>Adequately applies conclusions to a particular context.</td>
<td>Applies conclusions without sophistication or nuance.</td>
<td>Applies conclusions in a generalizing, trite, or unrealistic manner.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar/Style</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Footnotes &amp; Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>Less than one citation error according to Turabian.</td>
<td>2-3 citation errors according to Turabian.</td>
<td>4-7 citation errors according to Turabian.</td>
<td>More than 8 citation errors according to Turabian.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling &amp; Grammar</strong></td>
<td>Vocabulary and sentence structure adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Fewer than 3 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.</td>
<td>Vocabulary and sentence structure adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Includes 4-6 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.</td>
<td>Vocabulary and sentence structure less than adequate for the topic, discipline, and intended audience. Includes 7-9 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.</td>
<td>Simplistic word choice limits description and/or expression. Greater than 10 spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.</td>
<td>_/10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tone</strong></td>
<td>The writing is consistently academic in its tone.</td>
<td>The writing is generally academic in its tone.</td>
<td>The writing is sometimes academic in its tone.</td>
<td>The writing is largely sermonic and non-academic in its tone.</td>
<td>_/5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Meets requirements.</td>
<td>Within 250 words of length requirements.</td>
<td>Within 500 words of length requirements.</td>
<td>Deviate more than 500 words from requirements.</td>
<td>_/5 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Essay Grade** _/100pts
4Mat Method

1st Page:
Abstract Summary

2nd Page:
• Concrete Stories/ Memories Evoked by reading
• Reflection Expressed in Questions
• Action: What I Must Do with what I learned

Here are some guidelines adapted from Dr. Donald Joy, to help you get a better grasp of the four elements in the 4-MAT system.

(a) ABSTRACT: Reader’s Digest Summary. Simply summarize the content of the assigned reading in your own words. Avoid just indicating the topics. There should be NO personal commentary or attempt to evaluate the content of the materials. Just summarize what the author or authors say. Include as many of the key concepts and ideas as you can. Strive to be both comprehensive and intensive. Your summary should be stylistically correct, coherent and clear. The abstract should be one single-spaced page in length. Sorry, no type fonts below number 12 please! Some assignments include more than one chapter and some more than one author. Summarize the whole reading assignment. The readings are all related, so you can integrate the readings into one summary on page one. By this I mean that some readings may illustrate the material in other readings or modify it in some way.

Remember that meaning making requires first that you transform the reading materials into your OWN words. Effective "note taking" is more than capturing another person's words; it requires transforming a communication into your own language and symbols. Use explicit and visible QUOTE marks to identify the author's words. All other written material not clearly cited should be your own constructions and abstracted summaries of what you read.

(b) CONCRETE STORIES and MEMORIES EVOKED BY READING: Get Vulnerable! Describe one or two personal experiences which reading this material reminded you of. Here is your chance to be a storyteller. Tell it here in “first person,” describing action, quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. Be as specific and concrete as you can, including who, what, when, where details. Make sure, however, that your personal anecdotes are clearly grounded in the concepts of the reading assignment. The “Concrete” section should not exceed half a page.

If you can connect what you are reading and hearing with what you have previously lived or observed, you will be profoundly changed by the class. If you cannot connect the semester with past and present personal realities, you will never be able to teach or use what you are learning with any conviction and effectiveness.

(c) REFLECTION EXPRESSED IN QUESTIONS: What questions popped up as you read this material? Keep a rough note sheet at hand as you read so you can write them down. Then simply list three or four of them. Your questions may be critical or grounded in spontaneous curiosity or naive yearning for solutions. Make sure, however, they relate directly to the MATERIAL CONTENT of the reading materials NOT to the experience(s) you have just described in b. This section should take up about one fourth to a third of a page.

(d) ACTION: WHAT I MUST DO WITH WHAT I LEARNED. So What Are You Going to Do about it? All ministry related learning MUST lead to acts of ministry—whether through transformation
of your inner person or your acquiring of useful knowledge or skills. Here describe what you simply must DO if you keep faith with what you have now discovered as a result of reading this material. Ideally, your actions will comply with the acronym MAST. They will be **Measurable, Attainable, Specific and achievable within a given Time frame.** For example, “For the next month during my quiet time, I will meditate on a symbol called forth by my Bible reading.” Do not report reflective responses like “I need to learn or read more about Christian symbols.” This section should comprise one fourth to one third of a page.

**Application reflections.**

Although some of the readings originate from social science and religious studies, each reading assignment has been selected with the conviction that the material relates to Christian ministry in any cultural context. Part of your task is to apply the reading material to the life of the church and the practice of Christian ministry in your anticipated or actual setting. For this reason, it is important that the reflections on the second page of your 4-MAT INTEGRATE with what you have already experienced in ministry. For example, you may have given leadership in youth retreats without realizing they have the essential structure of a rite of passage or pilgrimage. Taking this important integrative function of your reflections seriously will prevent you from simply making "off the cuff" responses. I have specified the length of these application reflections partly to nudge you in the direction of selecting the most essential dimensions of the reading material. You may not include any commentary or evaluation on page one of your 4-MAT Reflection because one of the most basic tasks of ministry involves accurate discernment of what others are saying. Always understand the Other before reflecting and responding. Page one will therefore contain only a summary in your own words of what the authors of the reading material have written.

McCarthy, Bernice