

ST5500– Pastoral & Social Ethics

Reformed Theological Seminary
Summer 2020 – Remote Residential
Dr. Mark McDowell

Summer A Term
June 8th – July 3rd
2-4pm EST/1-3pm CST

I. Details

Instructor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell

Contact: mmcdowell@rts.edu

Executive Assistant: Grace Ann Finley (gfinley@rts.edu)

II. Course Description (3 credits)

This course will examine the biblical and theological material that constitutes the foundational elements of ethical and moral reflection. To understand Christian ethics requires attention to its sources, norms, authorities and forms of practical reasoning. The course is divided into three sections: the first is a general consideration of ethics from an historical perspective with particular attention to the theological virtues; the second examines the law from a distinctly reformed perspective as a framework for the Christian life; and the third section looks with a more specific focus at a series of concrete ethical matters.

III. Course Objectives

- a.** To acquaint students with the sources, questions, conversations, challenges and tasks of Christian ethics.
- b.** To introduce students to a deep reflection about the moral life that is shaped and formed by theological convictions rooted in and governed by Holy Scripture.
- c.** To help students cultivate the biblical and theological skills and virtues necessary to engage in ethical issues and disputes.

IV. Course Requirements

- a. **Class Participation:** Students will listen to asynchronous lectures that will be posted on the website
 - i. Each student is required to engage in 15 professor-to-student and 5 student-to-student interactions on canvas.
- b. **Reflection Paper:** Students are expected to write a 3-page reflection paper that looks at the 'Third Use of the Law' as it is defined and put to use in Reformed Theology. The aim of this short paper is for students to be able to grasp the theological importance of this significant feature of the Reformed tradition and to articulate its significance for Christian discipleship. **Due: Friday, July 24th 11:59pm.**
 - i. For their own instruction, students should consult the following readings to help write this paper: Ferguson and Hesselink. See the Reading List below.
 - ii. Also, note that Dr. Cara's lectures on Galatians (posted on canvas) ought to serve as key resource for this paper.
- c. **Reading:** Students must complete all required reading by the last day of class. As a theological student, good reading and the virtues that attend reading well are essential to pastoral ministry and the Christian life. Learning key texts and the ability to engage them charitably and fairly is an exercise central to good theology. *Your final exam will include a final question that will ask you how much of your reading you completed.* **Due: Friday, July 24th 11:59pm.**
- d. **Research Paper:** Each student will write a research paper, no longer than 15 pages, on a topic that will be addressed in class and from the reading. **Due: Friday, July 24th 11:59pm.**
- e. **Final Exam:** The format of the exam will include a number of short questions that test the students understanding of ethics, important figures connected with schools of thought related to the discipline, as well as a shorter series of questions that will be essay questions that test students' ability to articulate matters covered in class. **Due: Friday, July 24th 11:59pm.**

V. Grading

- a. Class Participation – 20%
- b. Reading – 20%
- c. Final Exam – 20%
- d. Perspectives Paper – 15%
- e. Research Paper — 25%

VI. Required Reading

- a. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics: Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, ed., John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker 2019)
- b. Jochem Douma, *The Ten Commandments*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Philadelphia: P&R, 1996)
- c. Sinclair Ferguson, 'The Law Goes Deep' in *Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2016), 161-88 (On Canvas)
- d. J.I. Hesselink, 'Christ, the Law, and the Christian: An Unexplored Aspect of the Third Use of the Law in Calvin's Theology', in B. A. Gerrish and R. Benedetto (eds), *Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation in Honor of Ford Lewis Battles* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick, 1981), 11-26 (On Canvas)
- e. John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991)

VII. Course Outline

- a. Introduction
- b. Ancient & Modern Ethics
- c. Introduction to Moral Theology & Christian Ethics
- d. Sources & Norms of Ethics
- e. Virtues, Fruit, Gifts, Beatitudes & Wisdom
- f. Law and Commandments
- g. First Table of the Law
- h. Second Table of the Law
- i. Keeping the Commandments
- j. Good Order – Statecraft, Justice & Punishment, War
- k. Good Life – Money, Work
- l. Good Relationships – Friendship, Race, Gender, Marriage & Sex
- m. Good Relationships II – Economics, Immigration, Incarceration & Policing
- n. Good Beginnings and Endings – Birth, Contraception, Abortion, Euthanasia & Suicide

VIII. Academic Policies

- a. Plagiarism – intentional and unintentional plagiarism will lead to a failing grade for the course

- b.** Extensions to Course Assignments – if an extension is needed, it must be requested early in the semester and it will only be granted under the most exceptional circumstances
- c.** Assignments – all assignments must be submitted on Canvas and in PDF format.

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes
With Mini-Justification**

Course: Pastoral and Social Ethics (ST5500)
 Professor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell
 Campus: Remote Residential
 Date: Summer 2020

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Reading, exam and research paper
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Lectures and reading focus on scripture as the basis and primary resource for ethical reflection and judgements
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Central to this course
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Study of Scripture and the Reformed Tradition issues in the godliness required for ethical behaviour and practice
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Emphasizes the holistic horizon of Scripture for all of life

Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Careful interaction and engagement with other views that also entails an appreciation of ethical insights.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Course requirements provide framework for preaching and assess issues that ought to be understood and addressed
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	Sound understanding of biblical and theological loci encourages and promotes faithful worship
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Class material and readings shape the pastoral imagination
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Engages key ideas of the public square