



On-Campus Course Syllabus
PHI 620
Christian Ethics
Fall 2023

Class Information

Day and Time: Thursday 4:45-7:15

Room Number: E211

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Brent Thorn

Instructor Email: Bthorn@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: (enter your phone number(s))

Instructor Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9:00a.m.-10:00 a.m. or Friday 8-10 a.m.

Course Description and Prerequisites

A study of Christian ethics including biblical foundations, methods, and authority in moral decision-making. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary issues in culture and society as they relate to biblically informed values. Special focus will be given to understanding the role of the church in the public sphere as well as to the importance of ethical virtues in the life of a minister.

Course Objectives

1. Outline key theological concepts that relate to Christian ethics
2. Outline historic approaches to moral reasoning
3. Apply theological truths to contemporary issue

Required Textbooks

Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning

By Wayne Grudem

Crossway Wheaton, Illinois, 2018

ISBN: 978-1-4335-4965-6 (Hardcover)

Other Required Readings

Other

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Articles

1. Gowans, Chris, "Moral Relativism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/moral-relativism/>.

2. **Thomas Aquinas:** Section 12 Moral Doctrine

McInerny, Ralph and John O'Callaghan, "Saint Thomas Aquinas", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aquinas/>>.

3. **Immanuel Kant**

Johnson, Robert and Adam Cureton, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/kant-moral/>>.

Online Books

1. **Aristotle.** *Nicomachean Ethics.* Read Book 1, 5, and 9

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0054&redirect=true>
Journal

2. **Reading Assignment: Utilitarianism by J.S. Mills. Read all 5 chapters**

<https://www.utilitarianism.com/mill1.htm>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Technology Requirements:

- Students must be able to access the Internet and a printer for various purposes related to the course. Students will need to use a word processing program for all written assignments, and they must have a TJC student email account.

Additional Materials and Supplies Required:

Methods of Evaluation:

We will use a weighted grading method in this course.

- Weekly Journal Entry 25%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Essay 25%
- Final Exam 25%

Journaling

Students will write a written reflection over each weeks assigned readings. Each week a journal submission of 1-2 pages will be uploaded to Canvas. The journal will contain insights and analyses based on the weekly reading assignment. The reflections should include a broad overview of the material covered, a brief analysis of major themes and issues, and a critical evaluation of concepts including ideas the students agrees with and disagrees with, and why. The format will be standard Turabian (double spaced, 12pt type, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman font).

Tests

There will be a midterm and a final exam. Exams will be open book and open note. They are designed to demonstrate completion of reading assignments. The posted outlines will be the test reviews.

Research Paper:

Each student will write one Research Paper on a specific doctrinal issue in a specific time as it relates to modern or postmodern theology. Focus may be limited to one theologian or could explore differing views by several theologians. The paper will be 10-12 pages in length and written in Times New Roman font (12 Pt.), and it will be double-spaced. Page margins will be one-inch all the way around. The paper will need to include a Title Page

and a Bibliography in addition to the page limit. The topic must be approved by the professor prior to the student beginning the research.

Your thoughts should be supported by evidence in the paper. The paper should be typed with 1 inch margins on each side of the page.

Research Paper Grading Rubric:

Points	W (1) = Weak	D (3) = Developing	A (4) = Acceptable	E (5) = Exemplary
Ideas/Thesis (Does the Paper have a clear thesis statement?, Does the paper do what it claims to do?)	No main topic to theme, no clear purpose, ideas are incoherent	Limited theme, confused purpose, ideas are illogical and do not progress	Clear theme, consistent purpose, ideas are clear and progress	Engaging and confident theme, clear and enriching purpose Reasoned progression of sophisticated ideas
Parts of a Paper (Does the paper have a clear introduction and conclusion? Are footnotes cited properly? Is there an appropriate cover page? Is the Bibliography correct?)	Few elements of formatting are correct, some are missing	Elements are present, but not clear, errors in formatting	Elements are present with few errors in formatting	Elements are present, clear, and free of errors
Organization (Is the paper well organized? Does it stay on Task? Are the writer's thoughts clear and easy to follow?)	Opening not present, no transitional phases, no paragraph breaks, no closing	Opening does not identify main idea, attempted inappropriate transitions, paragraphs unrelated or illogical, closing does not address the main ideas	Opening identifies main ideas, transitions sometimes missing, paragraphs related with correct breaks, closing addresses main ideas	Opening draws reader into concern for main idea, ideas flow together, fascinating transitions, paragraphs purposeful and focused, fascinating closing synthesizing main ideas
Evaluation/ Evidence/ Claims (Are the claims made by the writer supported with good academic resources?)	No appropriate information presented, no attempt to	Information presented with inaccuracies, attempts judgment based on opinion	Accurate and appropriate information, compare and contrast	Detailed accurate and compelling, several perspectives with synthesis

Does the writer present enough evidence to prove his or her claims?)	evaluate information		strengths and weaknesses	
Argumentation/ Analysis (Does the writer deal effectively with the counterarguments? Does the writer analyze the evidence of the counterarguments as well as the arguments that support the thesis?)	No attempt to argue position	Limited and weak attempt to argue position	Focused and clear argument	Engaging and compelling arguments
Application (How does the research apply to the topic at hand? How does the topic apply to the church or the life of the believer?)	No attempt to apply information	Limited ineffectual attempt at application	Common and expected application	Unexpected, insightful application
Grammar (Are there few grammatical mistakes? Are there any spelling mistakes?)	Frequent mechanical and grammatical errors	Occasional mechanical and grammatical errors	Few mechanical and grammatical errors	Very few mechanical and grammatical errors
Voice (How are you conveying your point? Is the writing academic or conversational?)	Consistently inappropriate for genre, many variations in writer's attitude	Occasionally inappropriate for genre, a few variations in writer's attitude	Voice is consistently appropriate for genre, very rare variations in writer's attitude	Perfectly and creatively tailored, perfectly tailored attitude
Vocabulary (Word Choice)	Careless, inappropriate, inaccurate, trite, vague, flat	Unvaried, unsure, common, redundant	Varied and appropriate, clear meaning	Purposeful, precise, effective and engaging, interesting and brilliance in meaning
Fluency/Sentence Structure (Are the sentences complete as opposed to fragmented? Is the format of the paper	Frequent run-ons and fragments, no variety, many misplaced and	Some run-ons and fragments, little variety, some lack of agreement,	Simple compound sentences, no run-ons or fragments, few	Varied and complex sentences, fluent transitions, no misplaced and dangling modifiers

consistent? Is there a title page, a table of contents, and a bibliography? Is the paper typed in Times New Roman, Size 12 font, with 1 inch margins on the sides and 1 inch margins on the top and bottom? Are the pages numbered?)	dangling modifiers	some misplaced and dangling modifiers	misplaced and dangling modifiers	
Total Points:				

Essay Topic:

One essay will be submitted in the 12th week of the semester. The essay will be 10-12 pages long in standard Turabian format.

1. Choose a Cultural Issue/dilemma (see part 4-6 in the textbook i.e. divorce, gay marriage, socialism, euthanasia, abortion, etc.)
2. Discuss the history and trajectory of the chosen dilemma (how has it traditionally been dealt with, when did it change, and what is the current state of the issue)
3. Discuss the Biblical Teaching on the matter
4. Choose 1 of the philosophical ethical theories and discuss how it would propose to deal with the dilemma
5. Compare and contrast the biblical teaching and the philosophical theory
6. Discuss how the lack of a biblical response to the dilemma effects current culture/society as a whole and the Church specifically

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

(Delete section if not needed or enter policies and/or information applicable to your course or classroom. Create relevant subheadings as desired.)

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students’ ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be

forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

NOTE: Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

NOTE: A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of

the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus’s closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

Assigning grade definitions (i.e., above average, average, below average) is optional. Please delete the last column below if not assigning definitions. Additionally, delete these instructions when completing syllabus.

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar’s Office. The “I” must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,

- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

General Description of the Subject Matter of Lectures or Discussions by Week:

Week 1

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 1-4

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 2

Reading Assignment: Grudem 5-8

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 3

Read assigned online articles/books

Relativism: Read Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8

Gowans, Chris, "Moral Relativism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/moral-relativism/>>.

Reading Assignment: *Utilitarianism* by J.S. Mills. Read all 5 chapters

<https://www.utilitarianism.com/mill1.htm>

Thomas Aquinas: Section 12 Moral Doctrine

McInerney, Ralph and John O'Callaghan, "Saint Thomas Aquinas", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aquinas/>>.

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 4

Read assigned online articles

Immanuel Kant

Johnson, Robert and Adam Cureton, "Kant's Moral Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/kant-moral/>>.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Read Book 1, 5, and 9

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0054&redirect=true>

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 5

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 9-10

Read the Outline of Grudem on The Character of God

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 6

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 11-12

Read the Outline of Grudem on The Character of God

Writing Assignment Due: Submit Essay Topic and Outline

Week 7

Midterm Exam

Week 8

Reading Assignment: Canvas Article: *What Are We? Three Views on Human Nature*

Evangelical Philosophical Society Project: Theological Anthropology: Choose 2 read

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 9

Grudem Ch. 14-17

Writing Assignment Due: Submit Essay Bibliography

Week 10

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 18-22

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 11

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 23-27

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 12

Writing Assignment Due: Essay Due

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Week 13

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. Ch. 28, 32, and 33

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 14

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. Ch. 34-36

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 15

Reading Assignment: Grudem Ch. 37, 38, and 41

Writing Assignment Due: Journal Entry

Week 16

Final Exam: Comprehensive

Adjustments may be required to the schedule if Criswell is officially closed following policy guidelines.