

**CAREY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**THEO 630 Christian Ethics**  
**Master of Divinity (all graduate credit students)**

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June 19 – August 25, 2017  
3 graduate credits

*While every effort has been made to be accurate as of June 3, 2017 syllabi produced before the beginning of class are subject to change.*

### **Course Description**

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God's people are graciously instructed in and empowered for living life redeemed from sin and death. This "way of life" enables them to participate in the love of God, bear witness to it, and invite others into it. This course will help you understand Christian ethics as disciplined reflection upon the life of the people of God as the fulfilment of our mission. Another way to think about this work is to understand ethics as the embodiment of the practical force of Christian convictions. To bring this all together, think of this course as "missional theological ethics," enabling us to be faithful to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Because this task is so large and significant, we are dependent upon God's grace and the whole range of theological education—biblical, theological, historical, and practical.

### **Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Distinguish the discipline of "Christian ethics" from ethical systems and schools.
2. Reflect upon God's redemptive work in Christ as the source of corporate and personal living in specific areas of life.
3. Practice biblically faithful ethical reflection and identify practices that will form us in Christ by the work of the Spirit to the glory of the Father and lead us further into life as the disciple community as witnesses to the good news of God's work redeeming creation.
4. Develop a hunger for God's kingdom of justice and peace.

### **Required Reading**

The Bible.

Stassen, Glen H., and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics*. 2nd edition. (Eerdmans 2013).

[Note that this is the second edition, published by Eerdmans, not the first edition published by IVP Academic.]

Wilkins, Steve. *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics; An Introduction to Theories of Right and Wrong*. 2nd edition. (InterVarsity Press 2011).

Wilson, Jonathan R. *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: From After Virtue to a New Monasticism*. 2nd edition. (Cascade 2009).

### Time Investment

<i>Activity/Assignment</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Online class work	44
Reading	30
Bible and Christian Ethics (1500 words)	11
Forming communities of faithful witness and practice (1500 words)	11
Love and Justice (1500 words)	11
Christian Character essay (2000 words)	12
Final essay	16
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Please note:</b> Refer to the Carey Reading /Writing Scale. The amount of time taken by students will vary. This information is intended to be used as an approximation for planning purposes.	

### Evaluation (135 hours)

#### Reading

Course texts plus other assigned readings

<b>Discussions and short essays</b>	25% of grade
<b>Writing</b>	
Bible and Christian Ethics (1500 words)	15% of grade
Forming communities of faithful witness and practice (1500 words)	15% of grade
Love and Justice (1500 words)	15% of grade
Christian Character essay (2000 words)	15% of grade
Final essay	15% of grade
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The online course materials will give extensive instructions about these assignments. Their purpose is not to set obstacles in your way or hoops to jump through, but to provide opportunities for you to increase your knowledge, understanding, imagination, passion, and practice.

### Assignments

#### Bible and Christian Ethics essay

Draw on your reading of the texts to complete the following assignment.

Imagine that someone in your church says to you: “How am I supposed to get guidance and instruction from the Bible in my life today? I certainly want to obey God and I want to be faithful to the Bible, but I have a hard time applying the truths of the Bible to my life. I keep looking in the Bible for guidance about all the ethical challenges that I face, but everything

seems so different today. Can you help me?"

Write a 1500 word essay in response to this friend. You may want to imagine someone you actually know. Do not write for your professor but for this person. Make sure that you draw on your reading, and note in parentheses where you have been helped by what you have read. Also, be sure to provide Scriptural support for what you write.

### **Forming Communities of Faithful Witness and Practice essay**

Draw on your reading of the texts to complete the following assignment.

How does worship help to form the community of disciples and equip that community to be engaged in missional theological ethics. Please note in your writing specific ideas that have come from your reading.

In this 1500 word essay, reflect on the role of worship in shaping community – and describe how specific aspects of worship deeply affect the development of community. Think about the connection between corporate worship and the ethical life of God’s people.

### **Love and Justice essay**

Draw on your reading of the texts to complete the following assignment.

Write a 1500 word essay on love and justice. Imagine that you are talking to a friend who is struggling with the idea that God is both loving and just. How can God be consistently both loving and just? And how is it possible for us to live that same way? (Or is it possible?) What will you say to your friend? How do you live within the tension of love and justice?

### **Christian Character essay**

Draw on your reading of the texts to complete the following assignment.

Write a 1500 word essay on the development of Christian character. What exactly is Christian character? How do we develop character? What is the role of the church, Scripture, community (etc.) in the development of character? How do we explain situations where followers of Jesus don’t seem to be people of character? How can you insure that you will be a person of character?

### **Final Essay**

This essay is meant to give you an opportunity to bring together what you have learned in this course by focusing on one topic and having a word limit that enables you to develop your thinking more fully.

Choose one of the following and send an email through the course website to the instructor notifying him of your choice by July 20. The essay itself is due August 25, midnight.

1. Revise and expand one of the previous assignments in the course. If you choose this option do at least 200 additional pages of reading from books and journals. Incorporate the reading into your essay by assimilating and wrestling with the reading, not merely citing passages from the reading. In addition to footnoting your reading and citations, report the additional 200 pages in a bibliography. In your revision do not neglect the reading that you have already done for the course. That is, do not rely solely on the additional reading. This essay should be 3000-4000 words. (If you exceed 4000 words—text and footnotes but not bibliography—your grade will be reduced.)

2. Write on a new topic—one that our reading covered but for which there was no writing assignment. In this case, follow the instructions for additional reading above. This essay should be 2000-3000 words. (If you exceed 3000 words—text and footnotes but not bibliography—your grade will be reduced.)

3. Write on the formation of character in ministry. (This option is especially appropriate for students taking this course in place of Pastoral Ethics or Character and Call.) Draw on readings from the course and an additional 200 pages. Write 2000-2500 words on the formation of character for ministry. (If you exceed 2500 words—text and footnotes but not bibliography—your grade will be reduced.) You may organize this essay as you choose. I give you the following suggestions because this assignment is relatively unfamiliar. In this essay you may want to identify the most important marks of character (virtues) necessary for ministry, explain why these are most important by giving examples of their relevance, describe practices that help cultivate these virtues, and incorporate these into an account of your own life in ministry. Submit your essay as a Word document so that I can easily comment on it and return it to you. (Do not submit a pdf, which is difficult to comment on.)

### **Academic Writing**

You must seek to be truthful, thoughtful and careful in your communication. God's grace is no excuse for lazy, careless, or undisciplined thinking and writing. The Carey website has links to writing resources under "Current Students." To reinforce good writing and improve bad writing, I recommend the following books.

McEntyre, Marilyn Chandler. *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Eerdmans, 2009).  
\$15.15  
ISBN: 0802848648

O'Conner, Patricia T. *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English* (Riverhead Trade, 1998). \$12.50. ISBN: 1573226254

\_\_\_\_\_. *Words Fail Me: What Everyone Who Writes Should Know about Writing*  
(Harcourt Trade Publishers, 2000). \$17.95. ISBN: 0156010879

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* (Longman, 2002). \$49.00  
ISBN: 0321095170

All prices are in CAD. Less costly editions may be available. Joseph Williams' book is available used in earlier editions, which from the second edition on are just as helpful as the latest edition (this is one of those examples of a publisher producing a "new" edition annually to cut down on the resale market among student textbooks). Watch out for the nearly identical title by Williams, *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*, which is much cheaper, but also less helpful.

## Course Outline

### Tentative

#### Week of June 19:

Stassen and Gushee: chapters 1-3

Wilkens: chapters 1 and 2

Wilson: chapter 1

#### Week of June 26:

Stassen and Gushee: chapters 4-6

Wilkens: chapters 3 and 4

Wilson: chapter 2

#### Week of July 3:

Stassen and Gushee: chapters 7-9

Wilkens: chapters 5 and 6

Wilson: chapter 3

"Bible and Christian Ethics" essay due by July 7

#### Week of July 10:

Stassen and Gushee, chapters 10-12

Wilkens: chapters 7 and 8

Wilson: chapter 4

#### Week of July 17:

Stassen and Gushee, chapters 13-15

Wilkens: chapters 9 and 10

Wilson: chapter 5

"Forming Communities of Faithful Witness and Practice" essay due by July 21

#### Week of July 24:

Stassen and Gushee, chapters 16-18

Wilkens, chapters 11-13

Wilson, chapter 6

**Week of July 31:**

Stassen and Gushee, chapters 19-22  
Wright, chapters 1-3

“Love and Justice” essay due by August 4

**Week of August 7:**

Wright, chapters 4-6

**Week of August 14:**

Wright, chapters 7-8

“Christian Character” essay due by August 18

**Week of August 21:**

Final assignment due by August 25

**Academic Policies**

Please see the **Carey Academic Catalog** for more details:

<http://www.carey-edu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Academic-Catalog-2016-2017-FINAL.pdf>

**Course Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions to fulfil degree requirements. This includes on-line webinars and/or live-streamed portions of courses.

**Carey Grading Scale**

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for details on the Carey grading scale.

**Course Withdrawal Policy**

A student who withdraws after the period for which tuition refunds are available within the first half of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. Beyond those dates, they will receive an “F.”

**Extensions**

Extensions for course work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If an extension will make it impossible for the professor to submit the final grade no later than one month following the final assignment, the student must petition the Registrar’s Office. If the Registrar’s Office grants such a request, the final extension deadlines will be clearly established. Work granted an extension may receive a grade reduction of up to one-third of the final mark.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. Students are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Academic dishonesty is acting in a manner to gain unearned academic credit. Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarizing by misrepresenting the work of another person (in whole or in part) as a student’s own work or failing to give credit for either wording or ideas that belong to another.

- Submitting the same material for credit in more than one course (whether the earlier submission was at Carey or another institution).
- Using unauthorized aids of any sort in examinations, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized recording and use of class lectures.

Penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense. All students are responsible for knowing and practicing academic integrity and must become familiar with the plagiarism student resource at: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>.

#### **Gender Language**

As language usage changes, the church must discern where its language must change in order to bear faithful witness to the gospel. Modern English usage has moved away from using masculine terms to refer to groups that include women. Using of such terms in worship, writing, or conversation miscommunicates the invitation of the gospel and the nature of the church. Assignments that don't conform to the gender language policy will be returned to the student for resubmissions. See the Carey Academic Catalogue for more details on this policy.