

## Course Outline: 2017-18

Theological Ethics 5203b/  
Theological Studies 3312g



**Location:** W4  
**Day(s):** Wednesday  
**Time:** 2:30-5:30 pm

**Instructor(s):** Dr. Herb Gruning  
**Contact info:** [herb.gruning@sympatico.ca](mailto:herb.gruning@sympatico.ca), [hgruning@uwo.ca](mailto:hgruning@uwo.ca)  
**Phone:** 519-690-1598  
**Office:** 319C, office hours—Wednesdays 1:30-2:30

### Prerequisites for this Course:

None

### Course Syllabus:

The purpose of this course is to introduce each class member to a variety of historical and current religious and philosophical positions on theological ethical themes. A number of alternatives on morality will be outlined and assessed in preparation for informed debates on specific ethical topics.

As the course progresses, there will be a movement toward more verbal involvement on the part of the group. In the first segment, the various ethical options will be examined. In the second, there will be greater focus on debates concerning ethical topics. In the third, class members will present their own cases on ethical themes and will be doing most of the leading.

**Course objectives:** by the end of the course, each class member should be able to analyze and coherently communicate, both verbally and in written submissions, a variety of perspectives on theological ethics.

1. Class members will be able to identify and summarize critical issues in the debates surrounding the discipline of theological ethics.
2. Class members will be able to apply philosophical and theological tools in the academic study of ethics.
3. Class members will be able to compare and contrast several traditions of theological and ethical inquiry.
4. Class members will be able to evaluate the merits and demerits of the viewpoints presented.
5. Class members will be able to draw preliminary conclusions as to where they stand on certain ethical issues.

## Course Materials:

### Required texts:

Holmes, Arthur F. *Ethics : Approaching Moral Decisions*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. InterVarsity Press, 2007.  
Thielicke, Helmut. *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. Eerdmans, 1983.

Please also bring a Bible (preferably a NRSV, though most are welcome) to class each week.

## Assignments & Method of Evaluation of Assignments:

The course is divided into three roughly equally weighted parts:

The first essay (33%) due at the beginning of class on Week 6/ February 14, 2018.

The paper will be in two parts. The first will cover the philosophical question of which ethical position of the six covered in class you hold as the basis for your own moral decisions (using Holmes as a source). Responses are to be three pages/900 words in length. The second is the theological question of which ethical system you think the Bible portrays (using the Bible as a source). Responses are also to be three pages/900 words in length.

The second essay (33%) due at the beginning of class on Week 9/ March 21, 2018.

Students will provide position papers of two pages/600 words in length on each of three ethical topics covered in class. At least one outside source from our library must be consulted and cited for each of the three. Use of these sources must be demonstrated.

The third essay (34%) on an ethical topic to be approved in consultation with the instructor will include a class presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes delivery followed by approximately 10-15 minutes of leading a discussion. The final form of the paper, incorporating revisions arising from class discussion, will be handed in by April 18, 2018, one week after our final meeting, and will be six pages/1800 words in length for a course total of 18 pages/5400 words.

### Schedule of Events

Week	Lecture	Seminar Discussions
1. January 10	overview	
2. January 17	antinomianism, generalism	Thielicke
3. January 24	situationism, absolutism 1a	Holmes chapters 1 and 2
4. January 31	absolutism 1b, and 2	Holmes chapters 3 and 4
5. February 7	hierarchicalism, ecology	Holmes chapters 5 and 6
6. February 14	paper due, war	Holmes chapters 7 and 8
7. February 28	birth control, abortion	Holmes chapters 9 and 12
8. March 7	euthanasia, suicide, capital punishment	Holmes chapters 10 and 11
9. March 21	paper due, Niebuhr	
10. March 28	presentations	Holmes chapter 13 and 14
11. April 4	presentations	
12. April 11	presentation	
13. April 18	final paper due	

## Meeting format: 1.5 hours lecture, 20 minute break, 1 hour seminar

Please note that students should submit papers through both hard copy and electronic formats, and late penalties are applied at the rate of a loss of one sub-letter grade per business day late.

Class Decorum: All class members are expected at all times to conduct themselves in keeping with due courtesy and consideration toward all others in class.

### Additional Statements:

#### 1. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

#### 2. Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>.

#### 3. Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).

B) Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

#### 4. Support Services:

- UWO Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
- Huron's Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean:  
[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_of\\_theology/info\\_for\\_current\\_students](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students)
- Faculty of Theology office: [srice@uwo.ca](mailto:srice@uwo.ca), 519-438-7224, ext. 289
- Huron's Writing Skills Centre: [http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student\\_life/writing\\_services](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services)
- UWO's Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
- UWO Student Support and Development Services:  
[http://communications.uwo.ca/current\\_students/student\\_services.htm](http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm)

**5. Accommodation for absences:**

*If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty's Dean's office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.*

**a) Non-medical absences: N/A****b) Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness  
—Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

**For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course**, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), Huron University College Academic Counselling website ([www.huronuc.on.ca](http://www.huronuc.on.ca)) or from the Dean's Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.

**For work representing less than 10% of the overall grade for the course:** N/A