Description

The complexities of our contemporary world raise moral questions that the Church and Christians are often not equipped to tackle. This course will explore some of those issues in the areas of sexual ethics and bioethics, in light of God’s Word and a Christian world view. Among the issues to be addressed are: a theology of sexuality, premarital sex, homosexuality, reproductive technologies, abortion, stem cell research, genetic engineering, treatment termination, and euthanasia. Attention is given to how the Church and Christians can address these issues in secular, pluralistic contexts. (This course meets the ethics requirement for various degrees or can serve as an elective.)

Course Objectives

1. To gain a descriptive understanding of the issues.
2. To learn to apply biblical and theological (i.e. Christian worldview) thinking to the issues.
3. To develop discerning wisdom in seeking the ethically good amidst moral ambiguities and complexities.
4. To develop sensitivity in our pastoral responses to people grappling with these issues.
5. To develop appropriate responses to our culture as it faces these ethical issues.
6. To gain perspective for applying ethics to professional settings.

Texts


Course Requirements

1. Attend class and enter into discussions.
2. Do all the required reading and report the amount read at the final exam.
3. Write one position paper on either an issue in sexual ethics or bioethics. The paper is to be 8-10 pages (double spaced; no longer). In the paper cover the following: (1) the nature of the issue; (2) various positions on the issue; (3) a description and defense of your own view; (4) a description of how you think the church should concretely respond to this issue. You are to do solid research with at least six sources (books or articles, but go light on the internet sources). Rubrics to guide the paper will be forthcoming. The paper is due April 13. Late papers will be docked: 4 points for one to seven days late, 10 points thereafter.

Alternate Paper: For those in or anticipating church ministry you are encouraged to do your paper as a sermon or teaching lesson, which is appropriate for a church context (Sunday morning, youth group, Sunday school class, etc.) The sermon or lesson should involve the same amount of research, with sources listed in a bibliography at the end of the sermon or lesson. But the paper must be contextualized for the setting, translating theological and ethical language into the church setting. You can be creative, using power point, visuals, etc. It should be equivalent to the 8-10 pages of the position paper. Due date and late penalties are the same.

4. Take the mid-term (first half of class on March 9) and final exams (expected date is Thursday April 29 6 PM). The mid-term will focus only on sexual ethics and the final on bioethics. Both exams will involve multiple-choice questions and an essay.

*Note: The grading of the exams and position paper will be done by Esther Bruland, Ph.D. Esther is a GCTS grad with a Ph.D. in Ethics from Drew University and knows the professor’s thought very well. With the rubrics guideline she will be able to be objective and will do a good job.

Grading: Exam I- 30%; Exam II- 30%; Paper- 40% (Failure to read the texts can adversely affect one’s grade if you are on the bubble; conversely reading all the material can positively affect one’s grade if you are on the bubble)

Course Outline
(Topics to be covered each class are listed beside the date in the outline)

I. Introduction: The Nature of Ethics
   
II. Sexual Ethics
   A. Historic and Contemporary Views of Sex
      1. Sex and Ethical Theories
      2. Worldviews and sex
   B. A Theology of Sex
   C. The Purposes of Sex
   D. Sex Before Marriage
   E. Sex Within Marriage

January 26
February 2
February 9
February 23
F. Homosexuality

G. Responding to the Culture

III. Biomedical Ethics

Introduction to Biomedical Ethics

A. Issues at the Beginning of Life
   1. Reproductive Technologies
      March 16
   2. Abortion
      March 30
   3. The Stem Cell Debate

B. Issues in the Course of Life
   1. Organ Transplants
      April 6
   2. Genetic Engineering
   3. Biotechnologies and the Redesign of humans
      April 13
   4. Health Care

C. Issues at the End of Life
   1. Defining Death
   2. Treatment Termination
   3. Active Euthanasia/Physician Assisted Suicide
      April 20

Reading Schedule
(Reading to be completed prior to class)

January 26 – (Hollinger, Intro-2; Kuehn, Intro-4; Thobaben, 1-3)

February 2 – (Hollinger, 3; Kuehn 5-7)

February 9 – (Hollinger, 4; Kuehn, 8-9)

[February 16: NO CLASS – READING WEEK]

February 23 – (Hollinger, 5-6)

March 2 – (Hollinger, 7 and 9; Kuehn, 10)

March 9 – (Meilaender, Intro-1; Thobaben, 4 and 7)

MID-TERM EXAM

March 16 – (Hollinger, 8; Meilaender, 2; Thobaben, 14; Waters, 2)

[March 23: NO CLASS – READING WEEK]

March 30 – (Meilaender, 3 and 5; Thobaben, 5-6; Waters 4)
April 6 – (Meilaender, 4 and 9; Thobaben 15-16; Waters, 1 and 3)

April 13 – (Meilaender, 10-12; Thobaben 8-12; Waters 8-9)

PAPER DUE

April 20 – (Meilaender, 6-8; Thobaben 13 and 17; Waters 7)

Wednesday, April 28 – Friday, April 30: FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Thursday, April 29, 6 PM: FINAL EXAM for this class (pending finalization of schedule)

Selected Bibliography

Sexual Ethics


**Bioethics**


**Journals in Bioethics:**
Christian Bioethics
Ethics and Medicine: An International Perspective On Bioethics
Hastings Center Report
Second Opinion: Health, Faith and Ethics

**Helpful Websites for Bioethics:**
www.bioethics.com
www.cbhd.org
www.ncbcncenter.org