

HT 267W Lutheran Ethics

Instructor: Craig Nesson

Fulfills WTS ethics requirement.

Open to all; priority to those fulfilling WTS ethics requirement.

3 credits; grade or credit/no credit

DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the field of Christian ethics, paying attention to distinctively Lutheran themes. Presentations and readings examine how Lutheran theology shapes ethical reflection for the church in mission. How do the Word of God, law and gospel, sacraments, liturgy, reason, science, theology of the cross, Christian freedom, vocation, and two kingdoms teaching inform ethical deliberation? Analysis of ELCA social statements and case studies provide the basis for articulating ethical method. We will consider how to give leadership so that congregations become communities of moral deliberation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To articulate the meaning of basic ethical terms and concepts (practice of complex analysis).
2. To explain the core themes of a Lutheran perspective on Christian ethics (practice of biblical and theological wisdom).
3. To examine the life and thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a case study in ethical responsibility (practice of engagement with cross-cultural and global dimensions).
4. To engage ELCA social statements focusing on use in congregations (practice of complex analysis, practice of ecclesial partnership).
5. To formulate a method of ethical reflection related to a specific social ethical issue (practice of biblical and theological wisdom, practice of personal faith and integrity).
6. To form leaders for congregations as communities of moral deliberation (practice of collegiality, practice of immersion in context).

PROCEDURE:

The course will consist of presentations, discussion of readings, analysis of ELCA social statements, engagement with ethical arguments, and case studies.

EVALUATION:

1. Regular attendance and demonstration of informed participation in class.
2. Completion of assigned readings.
3. Leadership in group teaching project.
4. Two written assignments 1) six one-page papers to explain the ethical importance of Lutheran theological themes and 2) completion of summative project.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: **Required

**Walter Altmann, *Luther and Liberation: A Latin American Perspective*. Second Edition.

Bruce C. Birch, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, and Larry Rasmussen. *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation*. Third Edition.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Bonhoeffer Reader*. Edited by Clifford J. Green and Michael P. DeJonge.

Lisa Dahill and James Martin-Schramm, editors. *Eco-Reformation: Grace and Hope for a Planet in Peril*.

George W. Forell, *Faith Active in Love*.

Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*.

Stanley Hauerwas & Samuel Wells, editors. *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*.

Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious Creativity*.

William Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics*.

Timothy Lull, editor, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, Third Edition.

Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological -Economic Vocation*.

Mary Solberg, *Compelling Knowledge: A Feminist...Epistemology of the Cross*

Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*.

**ELCA Social Statements , < <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements.aspx>>

**Selected Articles as assigned.