



Fall 2016

## EMT 2902 Christian Ethics in Context

Tues 2 – 4 p.m.  
Room EC 108

Dr. Marilyn Legge  
Room 210  
Office Hour: 4 -5 p.m. or by appt  
[m.legge@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.legge@utoronto.ca)

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### Course description

### *Pre-requisites: Introductory Bible and Theology*

This course is an introduction to sources, norms, and methods for doing Christian ethics. It aims to equip students to refine the ethical awareness that they can bring to a variety of moral challenges, within their lives, within communities, churches/religious groups, and within society. It provides an introduction to Christian ethics and some tools for moral reflection and action, with particular attention to poverty and ecological destruction as urgent theo-ethical issues. Lectures, discussions, small groups; 3 essays—on moral formation; on one figure or on love and justice in Christian ethics; and a final integrative project – a mentor in doing ethics, *or* professional ethics in ministry, *or* wealth and poverty.

**Goals.** We assume that living in a highly complex, pluralist and interrelated world, the question of what is a distinctively Christian ethics and how it both borrows from and differs from non-Christian frameworks is a constant challenge and now we live in a time when there is acute recognition and negotiation of moral differences. Consequently, a key purpose of this course is to help all of us by the end of this course be more able to negotiate the moral complexities and uncertainties constantly presented to us, and to be more able both to know positions others take and to express one's own moral stance.

### Primary Learning Outcomes re: Emmanuel College and TST Basic Degree Programs

The outcomes of the Emmanuel College and Toronto School of Theology basic degree programs to which this course primarily relates are: **Christian Faith and Heritage**

- Demonstrate knowledge of the Christian heritage, and articulate clearly their own theological positions.
- Interpret scripture and Christian texts using a variety of methods, sources, and norms.
- Identify and respect the diversity of theological viewpoints and practices within the Christian tradition.  
(HOW? In class use of guiding questions; moral formation paper; final project to meet learning outcomes of Practices of Church Leadership, Culture and Context.)

### Culture and Context

- Demonstrate critical understanding for ordered and lay ministries of the relationship between faith practices and cultural contexts; Employ diverse methods of contextual analysis.
- Give evidence of critical self-awareness with regard to your own and other faith perspectives and practices.  
(HOW? Show familiarity with ethical method (sources of authority and norms) by learning from several Christian ethicists, developing skills in constructive engagement by applying guiding questions; moral formation paper; figure or norms paper; final project to meet learning outcomes of Christian Faith and Heritage, Culture and Context, Spiritual and Vocational Formation and to develop moral insight into the implications for ministry/work and multiple/overlapping communities and to articulate clearly own theo-ethical position.)

### Required Texts (1 + 2 from *Crux Books*, Wycliffe College **and on reserve at Emmanuel Library**)

Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in Christian Life* (Abingdon, 1989)

John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*

*EMT 2902 Course Reader.* @The Print Shop in basement of Old Vic (cash only circa \$40) first week of semester.

### FYI Recommended: Robin Lovin, *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* (2000)

*The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Gill

*The Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics*, eds. Meilaender and Werpehowski

*The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, eds. Childress and MacQuarrie



## COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES

- Every one of us deserves respect—this does not mean we need to agree with each other (in fact expressed and responsible disagreement can be a sign of deep respect). Participation with *R-E-S-P-E-C-T* involves *responsibility* for what you say and feel without blaming; *empathic* listening; being *sensitive* to difference, including communication styles; *pondering* what you hear and feel *before* you speak; *examining* your own assumptions and perceptions; keeping *confidentiality*; *tolerance of + even trusting* ambiguity. (See Eric Law, [www.ladiocese.org/](http://www.ladiocese.org/))
- Teaching Team: Legge is responsible for class structure, maintenance (including focus and weekly topics), and for providing and evaluating assignments. Kampen and I are available after the class or by appointment.
- Students are responsible for becoming familiar with and following THIS SYLLABUS, for attending class, doing the weekly readings, participating in small group discussions, and for timely completion of assignments.
- All of us are responsible for trying to develop an atmosphere of hospitality where we can learn, risks can be taken, and feedback can be constructively given and received.

**CLASS STRUCTURE.** We will study and learn together with a compassionate, lively and mindful curiosity, likely in this format: A/ Opening, including announcements; B/ Lecture and Framing of Topic of the day ... *APB Break* C/ Small Group Topic Discussion; D/ Plenary Discussion + Look Ahead to Next Week

**WRITTEN WORK.** If you want to write well, please use the site: [www.utoronto.ca/writing/](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/) for excellent advice on how to write a good essay, on proper citation of references, and on how not to plagiarize. Also go to the free VIC WRITING CENTRE.

1. All written work is to be submitted twice: as **both a hard copy and an email copy** for purposes of programme evaluation. Emailed-only assignments will **not** be graded (except in rare cases with Legge's prior permission).
2. Please put your name, college, title of the assignment and date at the start. **Font size:** 11 - 12 points;  
**Line spacing:** one-and-a-half - double-spaced. Single spacing may be used for long quoted passages and footnotes.  
**Footnotes and references:** Use footnotes at bottom of page and as per TST use the conventions of Kate L. Turabian et al., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th ed., Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013). **NUMBER and STAPLE pages** and do not use folders.
3. All work is due at the end of class. The late penalty is one point per day. Note next point.
4. **Extensions** can be granted for personal and immediate family illness/crisis, but will not be given for any sudden church-related issues or demands of other classes. Seek permission for extensions in advance of the due date via email or appointment. Grade reductions as in 5 above of one point per day will be made for late papers without approved extensions.
5. **Accessibility.** Special consideration is of course given for students who have a learning disability who register via UT Accessibility Services. You are also invited to meet with the professor to discuss accommodations. See **Accessibility Disclosure Statement** <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/Faculty-and-Staff.htm>
6. **Policy on Late Work.** Each assignment will be submitted **AT THE END of class** on the day it is due. It is very important that all students have the same amount of time to work on an assignment. This is an issue of fairness. If there is an emergency, Dr. Legge is (generally) understanding. However, poor planning or working on another paper do not constitute emergencies. Late papers will be deducted one point per day.
7. **Academic Honesty:** All students are expected to abide by the rules of academic integrity. Plagiarism, in particular, will be treated as of utmost significance and is ground for immediate failure of that assignment and will be further handled by the Academic Director of the college of registration. See Code of Academic Matters @ <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>

## Evaluation of Written Work

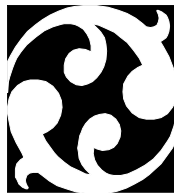
Grading in this course follows the TST Grading Scale as published in the TST BD Handbook. Also

- Overall clarity of your thinking, expression and organization.
- Content: research and critical engagement with texts, including demonstration of your comprehension of the author's points, your ability to present them accurately and to evaluate them fairly
- Ability to state and justify your own position in dialogue with the assigned material and topic (e.g., engage one point with which you agree and one with which you differ.)

## Inclusivity Policy

“Emmanuel College is intentionally inclusive, welcoming people regardless of ethnic or racial origin, faith expression, gender, age, or sexual orientation. The current community of faculty, staff and students is composed of a variety of people who come together for the common purpose of theological study in the Torontonion, Canadian, North American and global contexts.” *Emmanuel College Basic Degree Handbook.*

*For all other academic policies please consult and follow the TST BD Handbook.*



## EMT 2902 ASSIGNMENTS

★ **Initial Learning Inventory** (5%) Due September 18. (3-5 pages, 750 – 1000 words) **Due** 20 Sept.  
Bring hard copy to class *and email* to Kampen and Legge

Initially, study the syllabus and peruse the topics. Then do the readings and respond to these questions:

- In terms of this course, what particular topics, issues or ideas interest you most?  
What key question(s) do you bring to this course? Why?
- What background do you bring to this course? What do you hope to get out of this course? Why?
- What do you think you can contribute to this course (for example, prior experience, knowledge skills, values)?
- How do you learn? For example, free-range group discussion on a topic; small groups with a process; listening and thinking on your own; giving a presentation; hearing presentations and then responding; research and writing ... etc.
- Is there anything else you want to let us know (e.g., something that particularly worries or delights you about this course)?

★ **1. Moral Formation in Context** (25%) Due October 18 in class. (5 -7 pages, 1250 – 1750 words)

Bring copy to class + also email to Legge and Kampen.

An abiding concern in Christian ethics is to understand moral formation, i.e., *becoming persons and groups of character and conduct (moral agents) within specific contexts* who develop particular virtues, values, obligations and responsibilities, and moral vision (learn the definition in Birch and Rasmussen, ch.3). To write a version of your moral formation, think of this essay as a dialogue with one or two authors from each of Sessions 2 + 3 (i.e., 2 – 4 authors max). In your paper make sure to note/quote *your selected authors* with reference to:

- One or two ideas that resonate with your experience as a moral agent;
- An idea that challenges or deepens your understanding of yourself as a moral agent (person who acts);
- some key terms and their definitions that help you explore your moral identity, compass and formation.

The following questions will guide your discussion in dialogue, citing specific influences that have shaped you as a moral person/moral agent situated in specific contexts.

1. Name an experience, group or community that has been especially formative of your moral life. How have key factors of social context contributed to your moral sensibilities (for example, intersections of family/upbringing, education, economics/work, friendship, nature, race/ethnicity, physical and/or mental ability, gender/sex, nation, language/culture, and/or education) etc?
2. How has religion or church shaped you, as a moral agent, whether for better and/or for worse? Name any other groups, communities or influences that have been particularly formative of your moral agency.
3. Name a particular *scripture* text and/or theme (e.g., compassion, exile, forgiveness, hospitality, justice, grace, love) and an *image of God* that has been important for being a moral agent.

**2. Paper on Figure or Norms** (6-8 pages, 1500 – 1750 words)

Bring copy to class + also email to Legge and Kampen.

**Figure Paper** (30%) Due **Oct.2** *Bonhoeffer* **OR** **Nov. 6** *Harrison*

Choose ONE figure as a mentor in ethics, either Dietrich Bonhoeffer OR Beverly W. Harrison. You will write a short essay that presents what concerned them theologically and morally in their own historical context -- and *thus their theo-ethical work*. You will discuss how they “justified” (made) their case – e.g., what reasons, understandings of divine-human relation, and sources of knowledge (experience, tradition, scripture) did they use? Then say what you appreciate or/or dispute in relation to your figure *and why*. A worksheet will be given out in class.

**OR**

**Love and Justice as Theo-ethical Norms** (30%) (6-8 pages, 1500 – 1750 words) **Due:** 1 November

After doing the assigned readings and reflecting on the topic and study questions for Week 7, review the *Twenty Questions for Doing Christian Ethics*. Then use the following guidelines to engage the texts:

- i) At the outset briefly identify your own interest or stake in the topic.
- ii) For each text, state the context and purpose, issue or main concern of the author, and who the audience is (given or likely). What is the problem the author is trying to address?
- iii) Then ask the “how” and “why” questions. How does the author *support the basic claim*? (A claim is a position on which the author is taking a stand or making a point about something.) What *evidence or examples* does the author give? What are the *critical steps* the author takes to build their case? To which *sources of knowledge* does the author appeal?
- iv) Finally respond to something you have learned, had affirmed or challenged that contributes to your understanding of the work of Christian ethics. *Be sure to give your reasons.*

- ★ **Final Project** (40%) **Due: Tuesday December 13** (7 - 8 pages, 1750 - 2000 words)  
Option A: “Mentor in Christian Ethics” /Option B: “Professional Ethics in Ministry” [order of ministry candidates]  
Option C: “A Christian Stance on Wealth and Poverty”

★ **Option A** “Mentor in Christian Ethics”

Choose ONE of the following mentors in theological ethics:

Christine Gudorf, *Comparative Religious Ethics: Everyday Decisions for our Everyday Lives*  
Eleanor Haney, *The Great Commandment: A Theology of Resistance and Transformation*  
Beverly Harrison, *Making the Connections*  
Karen Lebacqz, *Justice in an Unjust World: Foundations for a Christian Approach to Justice*  
Grace D. Cumming Long, *Passion and Reason: Woman Views of the Christian Life*  
Robin Lovin, *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* (2000)  
Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*  
Traci West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women’s Lives Matter*

Feel free to refer to other authors from class in your discussion to support some connections that resonate or challenge something you find significant. Write about what excited you, frustrated you, and/or you have learned from this author about doing Christian ethics. Write a dialogue with your mentor:

- Introduce the author, the audience (stated or intended), and purpose of the book. Cite definitions of key terms as you proceed with your essay.
- What method do they use? What is at stake and for whom? What sources of theological ethics (scripture/tradition, reason, experience, imagination, difference) do they draw on? With what moral norm(s)?
- What do you find agreeable with your theo-ethical approach or stance, and why? If something was missing, jarring, or dissonant for you, state what, and why. What keys or insights into the moral life will you take with you? Note any other considerations or concerns about how this mentoring has enriched your understanding of ethics and could be a resource for you and your organization or community/ies.

★ **Option B** “A Sustainable Professional Ethics of Ministry” (for ordered ministry candidates)  
(40%) Due Tuesday December 13 (7- 8 pages, 1750 - 2000 words)

For research

- a. Review the assigned course readings relevant to this topic, especially Week 9.
- b. Find and study the ethical guidelines for the practice of ministry in your denomination (or use those of the UCC).
- c. “Professional Ethics in The United Church and its Intercultural Ministries: Becoming an Intercultural Church” ALL links @ <http://www.united-church.ca/intercultural/resources>
- d. **Choose** Karen Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox*

**OR**

Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation*

And for writing use this three-part framework:

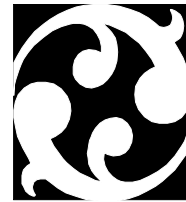
1. What is the context of doing ministry that challenges and excites the authors? What are key moral challenges and issues identified? Do you agree or not? Why? Is there something missing?
2. Given your assessment of today’s contexts of ministry, what moral norms and images encourage ministry that befits the context today? Name some specific roles and accountabilities for ministers as Christian moral agents.
3. In conclusion, are there particular insights and concrete suggestions that will help equip your own work/ministry and your peers? E.g., name several *practices* you connected to in your research to help shape necessary virtues, values, and/or obligations of paid accountable ministry. Finally, choose one metaphor, image or a biblical passage that depicts your current understanding of ministry as fitting for Christian moral life.

★ **Option C** “What should the Christian community teach and do about wealth and poverty?”  
(40%) **Due Tuesday December 13** (7- 8 pages, 1750 - 2000 words)

- To begin, review your notes for this course, especially those pertaining to this topic, e.g., B+R on roles of church; Moe-Lobeda’s “Framework” in Week 3, plus Week 10 *Wealth and Poverty* and Week 11 *Economy and Ecology*.
- Then, choose a statement of a Christian/religious position on wealth and poverty, e.g., from texts in this class, your denomination (Quakers, Unitarian etc) or an ecumenical body such as KAIROS or World Council of Churches. N.B. *Be sure to attach a copy of the statement to your paper.*

The following three-part outline will facilitate your research and writing of this paper:

1. Introduce the statement, its context and audience, purpose and key claims. In doing so, note the sources, norms and reasons used in the document. The moral grounds/reasons are what justifies/supports the main claims. Discuss these in relation to a minimum of three (3) relevant readings from your work in this course, including at least one of Brubaker, Gnanadason, Lind, or Peters.
2. In relation to this statement, locate yourself in this discussion in dialogue with your selected statement and authors: I.e., Where do you stand and why (give reasons)?
3. Finally, develop an action plan in response to a concrete situation related to the statement (feel free to use a current news item, case study, etc.) for a specific group -- your household, congregation, neighbourhood, or other civic community. While the focus is on possible or sustaining action, give a justification for these actions that situates your reasons in 2 above in that particular context of moral agents.





## EMT 2902 CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

1. September 13 Getting Started -- Genesis 1: 26-31; Hosea 4: 1-3; Romans 8: 18-24a.
2. September 20 Contexts and Charting Moral Life -- Jeremiah 1: 4-5; 18: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 13.  
(*Learning Inventory due*)
3. September 27 Doing Christian Ethics - Exodus 20: 1-17; Matt.25: 31-34; Luke 11: 1-9
4. October 4 Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Figure Paper Option due*)
5. October 11 Scripture and Ethics - Genesis 32:22 ff; Matthew 26: 6-13; Matthew 22: 37-39  
1 Timothy 2: 13-15; 2 Timothy 3: 16 - 17
6. October 18 Moral Formation of Agency in Context - Matt. 22: 34-40 (*Assignment #2 due*)

October 24 -28 Reading Week = **NO CLASS**

7. November 1 Theological Framings: Love and Justice in a Violent World  
Micah 6: 6-8; Luke 10: 25-37; 1 Corinthians 13 (*Love and Justice Option due*)
8. November 8 Beverly Wildung Harrison (*Figure Paper Option due*)
9. November 15 Professional Ethics - 1 Corinthians 12: 4-13
10. November 22 Wealth and Poverty - Amos 5: 11-24; Matthew 25: 31-4
11. November 29 Ecology and Economy - Genesis 1: 26-31; Hosea 4: 1-3; Romans 8: 18-24a.
12. December 6 Christian ethics in a global world: LAST CLASS

Tuesday December 13 ★ **Final Paper DUE**

HARD COPY to Emmanuel College Main Office by 4 p.m.

ALSO email [m.kampen@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:m.kampen@mail.utoronto.ca) and [m.legge@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.legge@utoronto.ca)



## 1. September 13 - Getting Started

**Skill Focus:** Christian Ethics as a Theological and Practical Discipline

**Opening: Territorial Acknowledgement**

**Skill Focus:** *Locating ourselves in relation to Christian ethics as a theological and practical discipline*

Introductions of ourselves and to the course

**In 3's:** Name one or two practices that indicate the relationship of your faith/spirituality and your moral life.

Who and what inspires, challenges, guides you?

What is "context"? Does it matter? Why or why not?

**Review Syllabus +Research Skills** – *Librarian Karen Wishart can be booked for a tutorial!*

**Class guidelines** (respect, hospitality, sharing space ...) **Discuss.** Others to add?

**In-Class exercise:** "Tracing my Moral Formation" = good base for assignment due 19 October

**Reflection in threes, then in Plenary**

**Lecturette:** "Necessary Considerations: Christian Ethics as a Theological and Practical Discipline"

**Looking Ahead**

## 2. September 20 – Charting Moral Life and Contexts of Moral Formation



Learning Inventory DUE (hard copy and email [m.kampen@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:m.kampen@mail.utoronto.ca) + [m.legge@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.legge@utoronto.ca))

**Skill Focus:** Setting moral life in context; locating ourselves in dynamics of social power relations

**Study Focus:**

How do you imagine yourself in relation to your context?

How does each author describe moral life, its main concerns, and its context? How do you relate?

What sources and norms do they appeal to in discussing moral life?

**Read:** Wenh-In Ng, "Reflecting on Identity\*" and "Diversity and Difference\*"

Birch and Rasmussen, ch. 3 "Charting the Moral Life" in *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* (35-65)

Jennifer Henry, "Decolonizing the Heart" (pdf to be emailed to class)

Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, 3 – 23

Michelle Landsberg, "Unpacking the Backpack of Privilege" \*

Tracey Ore, "The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality" \*

"Toward 2025: A Justice Seeking/Justice-Living Church," (UCC identity, GCE March 2012)

**Recommended:** Allen G. Johnson, "Privilege, Oppression and Difference"

William Schweiker, "One World, Many Moralities"

**Small Group Discussion // Debrief // Looking Ahead to next week**



### 3. September 27 METHOD: Ways of Doing Christian Ethics

**Skill Focus:** Methods (how to proceed, how to do ethics): sources, norms; practical moral reason, knowledge in and of context (political, economic and social analysis)

**Study Guide:** 1. How do you connect scripture, tradition, religious and public life? Why?  
2. Recall a recent moral decision you made and how you discerned. What makes it a moral question?  
3. What are your assumptions about how Canadian churches and society have dealt with and should deal with issues of human and ecological need? (Then read and consider UCC's in "Towards 2025")  
4. REVIEW Study Pages in Course Reader: Sources + Norms; *Methods*: Spiral of Engagement; Analyzing a Moral Position – Taking a Stand; Handling a Specific Case in Context.  
5. CHOOSE A CASE STUDY below. Use one method presented to think it through. E.G.:  
a. What are your assumptions about what was at stake in either case?  
b. How does Charry make her case? How does KAIROS present the process and why it is urgent?  
c. Note your feelings and thoughts about the Ellen Charry essay or the KAIROS process.  
d. Now, take a stand in relation to the case. What should be done? By and with whom?

**Read:** Matt. 25: 31 – 34

Christine Gudorf, *Comparative Religious Ethics*, 15 – 30\*

Roger Hutchinson, "Appendix: Levels of Clarification," 2009 Camrose Lectures

Birch & Rasmussen, ch. 6, "Decision Making" Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life, 100-119

Case Study: Either Ellen Charry, "When generosity is not enough" **OR**

KAIROS "Strength For Climbing" is a resource and a life-long process for seeking right relations among indigenous peoples and non-Aboriginals, e.g. white settlers, other immigrants, refugees...)

@ <http://www.kairoscanada.org/product/strength-for-climbing>

**Recommended:** Beverly Harrison, "Doing Ethics"; Karen Lebacqz, "Ruminations: On Ethical Method in an Unjust World" (51 -59); James Gustafson, "Relationship of Empirical Science to Moral Thought"; **Cynthia Moe-Lobeda**, "Love's Moral Framework" in *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*, 237 – 268 {**She is at event on this at Emmanuel College October 28 – 29**}

**Lecture // Small Group Discussion of Case Study // Plenary debrief // Looking Ahead to next week**

### 4. October 4 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Figure Paper Option)



**Skill Focus:** Mentor in doing Christian ethics

**Study Focus:** As you read, connect DB with Birch and Rasmussen's terms of virtues, values, obligations, visions. How does Bonhoeffer relate his experience of faith, the Bible, and tradition to moral life? Use the Guiding Questions to listen to, dialogue with and learn from this mentor. Note how you respond to Bonhoeffer, especially any similarities and/or differences.

**Read:** From *Testament to Freedom*, eds. Kelly and Nelson, Intro: Christ, Church, and Peace" -- Bonhoeffer, "The Nature of the Church" + "Thy Kingdom Come" (82-92); "On Forgiveness" (260-263); Kelly and Nelson, "Intro: Freedom and Responsibility" and Bonhoeffer, "Ethics" (352-372), "After Ten Years" (482-486), and selections from "Letters and Poems" (503-514).

Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (29-30; 35-37; 134-136; 271-273; 304 – 306; "Who Am I?").

**Recommended:**

Anthony B. Pinn, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Discipleship" in *Beyond the Pale: Readings in Ethics from the Margins* eds. Floyd-Thomas and De La Torre; John W. de Gruchy, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (1999); Larry Rasmussen et al, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: His Significance for North Americans* (1990)

**Lecture // Small Group Discussion – Debrief... // Looking Ahead to next week**

## 5. October 11 – Bible and Ethics

**Skill Focus:** Interpretation of Scriptures in Context

**Study focus:**

How and why does interpretation matter? Think about “hermeneutics” (ways of interpretation) as a resource.  
What factors of interpretive influence are named in the readings?  
How do scriptures, tradition and worship function in your life?  
What makes the Jewish and Christian Bible meaningful -- or not -- for you?  
Note down any strong affinities and disagreements you have with any of these readings.

**Read:** Genesis 32: 22-31; Matthew 22: 37-39; 2 Tim. 3: 16 – 17; John 4: 1- 42

The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture (UCC 1992), 22-26 \*

Margaret Farley, “Feminist Consciousness and the Moral Authority of Scripture”\*

James Gustafson, “Ways of Using Scripture”\*

Kelly Brown Douglas, "Marginalized People, Liberating Perspectives: A Womanist Approach to Biblical Interpretation" (pdf) *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 83, Issue 1, Winter 2001

Stan McKay, “Learnings from Scripture about Racism”\*

Birch + Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics* “Preface” “Intro, Consensus and Questions” ch. 8, 141- 158; if need a refresher, see also ch. 10, 159-188

Lois Wilson, “That’s Our Story Too!”

**Recommended:** Ellen Ott Marshall. “Theological Humility” in *Christians in the Public Square* (2008), 73 -105.

**Lecture //Small Group Discussion and Debrief**

**Looking Ahead to next week**

## 6. October 18 – Moral Agency: Persons in Contextual Relations



**Paper DUE**

**Skill Focus:** Becoming “self-reflexive” moral agents

**Study focus:** What is moral agency anyway? What sources and norms do you use to shape your moral life?  
Think of particular loyalties and accountabilities that guide your life.

**Read:** Emilie Townes, “Ethics as an Art of Doing the Work our Souls Must Have”

Birch and Rasmussen, review ch. 3 (34 – 65); chs. 4 & 5 in *Bible and Ethics*, 66 – 99

Sheila Neysmith, et al, “Shut Out: Uncovering the Dynamics of Social Exclusion” (case study)

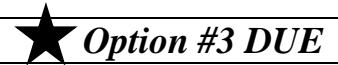
**Lecture**

**Small Group Discussion** of Case Study of “Shut Out” and Debrief

**Looking Ahead** = Mid-Term check in about how the course is going

**October 24 -28 Reading Week = NO CLASS**

## 7. Nov 1 – Theological Norms: Love and Justice in a Violent World



**Skill and Study Focus:** How are love and justice norms in Christian ethics? How are they enacted in contexts?

**Study Focus:** 1. How are love, care and justice related? How and with whom do you practice these norms?  
2. Consider the Good Samaritan story revisited with norms of love and justice in relation to seeking appropriate moral responses to the missing and disappeared Aboriginal women.  
3. Review again KAIROS Process <http://www.kairoscanada.org/product/strength-for-climbing>

**Read: Case Study:** “Request at the Doorstep of the Church”  
John Asling, “Moving from Charity Towards Justice”  
Beverly Harrison, “The Power of Anger in the Work of Love”  
Paul Tillich, “Justice in Personal Encounters”  
Daniel Maguire, “Theories of Justice: What’s so Good about the Common Good?” (51 – 60)  
Virginia Held, “The Meshing of Care and Justice”  
Dorothee Soelle, “Justice: A feeling in the pit of your stomach”  
John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, 23 - 72

**Recommended:** Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, “Love’s Moral Framework” in *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*, 237 – 268;  
Duncan Forrester, “Social Justice and Welfare,” *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics*\*  
Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “Un poquito de justicia – a little bit of justice”

**Topic Lecture // Small Group Discussion of Case Study // Looking Ahead**

## 8. November 8 - Beverly Harrison (Figure Option DUE)

**Skill Focus:** Mentor in doing Christian ethics

**Study Focus:** How does Harrison relate her experience of faith, the Bible, and tradition to moral life?

Use the Guiding Questions to respond. Dialogue with and learn from this mentor:

Note how you respond to her, especially any similarities and/or differences.

How do you connect to, struggle with, or resist the issues Harrison examines ?

How has your family/Christian tradition/church dealt with sexuality, class, gender, race and other power dynamics?

**Read:** Harrison, “Making Connections: Becoming a Feminist Ethicist”  
Harrison, “The Dream of Common Language”  
Harrison, “Reflecting on the Relationship of Politics to Economics”  
Harrison, “Toward . . . Demystifying Class Reality in Local Congregations”  
Harrison, “Living in Resistance: Interview with Pamela Brubaker”  
ALSO recall Week 5 Harrison “Power of Anger in Work of Love”

**Topic Lecture // Small Group Discussion // Looking ahead to next weeks**

## 9. November 15 – Professional Ethics in Ministry (Final Paper Option)

**Skill Focus:** Professional Roles, Rules and Relations: Moral agency (character and conduct) in Ministry

**Study Focus:** What are the roles of paid accountable ministers? How are they enacted in the moral formation of persons and congregations? In wider public life?

**Read:** Karen Lebacqz and Joseph Driscoll, “Ethics for Clergy”  
Karen Lebacqz and Ronald Barton, “Pastoral Power” & “Ethical Framework”  
Adele Halliday, “Becoming an Intercultural Church: Intercultural Ministries and Empire”  
<http://www.united-church.ca/intercultural/becoming/empire>  
Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, Foreword and Introduction, ix – 28

**Topic Lecture // Small Group Discussion // Looking Ahead**

## 10. November 22 – Wealth and Poverty (Final Paper Option)

**Skill Focus:** More on how charity and justice are related. Examining a contested moral issue, taking a stand.

**Study Focus:** In what ways are wealth and poverty of concern to you? What do you struggle with?  
Bring to class 2 definitions of poverty from the readings that make good sense to you.  
What is the relationship between economics and theological ethics? Why does it matter or not?

**Read:** David Gushee, “What Would Jesus Say About Wealth?”  
Fabrizio, “American Poverty” <http://www.intellectualconservative.com/2007/09/10/American-poverty/>  
Armine Yalnizyan, “A window into a world of need”  
Armine Yalnizyan + Jamie Swift. “Back to the Future: The Choice is Ours” in *Persistent Poverty*  
“Defining Poverty” google it in *The Toronto Star*  
“The Treadmill of Poverty”  
John Asling, “Moving from Charity Towards Justice”  
“Dignity for All?...” Citizens for Public Justice

**Recommended:** <http://intraspec.ca/povertyCanada.php>  
<http://www.ciw.ca/en/TheCanadianIndexOfWellbeing.aspx>  
“Shaping a Future for Everyone” Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives  
[www.united-church.ca/economic](http://www.united-church.ca/economic)

**Topic Lecture // Small Group Discussion // Looking Ahead**

## 11. November 29 – Ecology and Economics

**Skill Focus:** Connecting ecology and economics via a contested moral issue and aking a stand ...

**Study Focus:** 1. Consider one norm in any of the readings below that expanded or challenges traditional Christian notions and practices.

2. How has your household, congregation and/or workplace responded to environmental issues?

**Read:** Stan McKay, “An Aboriginal Perspective on the Integrity of Creation”

Aruna Gnanadason, “Women, Ecology and Poverty”

Ernesto Zedillo, “Give Globalization a Hand”

Christopher Lind, “Challenging the Ethics of Globalization”

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, “Climate Change and Climate Debt” *JSCE*, 36, 1 (2016): 27 - 49

David Hallman, “Spiritual Values and Earth Community”

Sallie McFague, “The Loving Eye vs. the Arrogant Eye” and “A Manifesto to North American Middle Class Christians”

Pam Brubaker, “What Does Faith Have to Do with Globalization”

**Topic Lecture // Small Group Discussion // Looking Ahead**

## 12. December 6 – Christian ethics in a global world

*LAST CLASS*

### **Skill Focus:**

What do I/we/the church do as Christians to be good disciples of Jesus Christ, following the promise and ways of relationship with God? Or, alternatively, how does our search for the good life relate to faith/religious life?

**Read:** 1. Birch and Rasmussen, “Summary and Challenge,” *Bible and Ethics*, 189 – 202.

2. M. Shawn Copeland, “Saying Yes and Saying No”

**Study Focus:** Evaluation of this course in Christian Ethics in Context.

Review the syllabus and your work in this course.

What appeals to you about doing Christian ethics? What challenges you?

Name one or two new or renewed insights you will take away from your work in this course.

### **Closure**



**Final Paper: DUE Thursday December 13**

By 3 p.m. in Emmanuel College Main Office

If you want your paper returned by post, just deliver your paper in a stamped self-address envelope.



## **Guiding Questions For Doing Christian Ethics in Context: Sources and Norms\***

*What do I/we/the church do as Christians to be good disciples of Jesus Christ, following that hope and ways of relating with God? Alternatively, how does our search for the good life relate to faith?*

While this question is quite clear, how to answer it is not at all simple. It may be helpful to see learning ethics this semester as a little similar to learning a language. To be learned, a language has to be broken down into parts, which are practiced separately, building toward the time when you can speak the language smoothly without, say, trying to remember the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural past, etc. The tricky part about working with morality is that we already think we ‘speak’ its language since we make moral decisions of lesser or greater importance all of the time. But one of the purposes of this course is to give you a chance to practice some of the parts of Christian ethics which will make you more aware of your own moral assumptions and, perhaps, deepen your ongoing moral work.

We will foreground the works of certain Christian ethicists as models of how they “spoke” Christian ethics. Analyzing their work will give you some background in Christian ethics and begin to help you think about your own ways of “speaking.” Please note that the authors we read answer these questions in very different ways! It is important to think about why some questions are important for an author and why some are unimportant.

We will also foreground some of the key components of ethics (i.e., elements of method include the 4 sources of any Christian approach--experience, scripture, tradition and reason) and focus on ways to work with these components by focus on urgent issues of our time (poverty, economics and ecology), giving you some practice with these components in class and in the Final Project.



### **20 QUESTIONS FOR YOUR WORK IN THIS COURSE**

#### **Using Experience**

1. How does the author draw upon human experience? Whose experiences?
2. Are these experiences filtered or interpreted in any particular way? What is at stake and for whom?

#### **Using Knowledge**

3. What kinds of knowledge does the author rely upon (e.g., social theories, historical, scientific, etc.)? How does the author appear to choose and/or interpret these sources?
4. How “knowable” does the author believe the world to be? Does it seem to be a world governed by laws? Does it seem to be able to be understood/analyzed through human understanding/knowledge? Does emotion have a place?
5. Does the author take historical and social context into consideration? How generalized a framework does the author present? (e.g., something that could be used at any time or place or something more specific to a particular context)

#### **Moral Reasoning**

6. Does the author seem to move deductively from principles/laws to outcomes or inductively from experience to norms? Or both? Or is the author more concerned with the virtues, or features of character?
7. What kind of agent does the author presuppose—a single actor? A collective actor? An interpreting responder? An isolated individual? A socially contextualized person? A person marked by sin and grace? Is the author concerned with the nature of this agent?
8. How does the author seem to locate/define moral work—is it aimed toward the future, to consequences? How much does it take into account the past or tradition as accumulated in certain beliefs and principles, and related to certain ends? Or is the focus on the present context? Is the concern more for action in the world or the nature of moral agent undertaking action?

### **Authority and Interpretation of Scripture**

9. What role does scripture appear to play in this ethics? Is it used as a general authority? Are particular verses or scriptural norms/themes key?

### **Theological Framings (doctrines)**

10. Is there predominant concern for certain theological or doctrinal themes—e.g., doctrine of sin or of grace/salvation; love or justice, forgiveness or reconciliation? How are these defined? soteriology
11. What role do God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit appear to play in this author's work? Are they defined in any way? How do they seem to "authorize" Christian morality? theology/Christology/ pneumatology
12. How is the "world" defined? Does it include the natural world? How is it related to God/Jesus? To the church? i.e., ecclesiology/ecology/eschatology
13. How are humans defined and theologically framed—e.g., as inescapably sinful? As redeemed? As flawed yet good? How does this frame appear to affect the possibility of moral action? theological anthropology/moral agency

### **Practicing Tradition**

14. How does the author define tradition? What seems to be included in that tradition? Does it appear univocal or multiple? What kind of authority does tradition have?
15. Is there attention to the church? If so, how does it seem to be defined (e.g., congregation, Universal Church, Protestant or Roman Catholic)?

### **Imagination and Difference**

16. What kind of audience does the author assume—any human? A Christian? Persons in certain locations (e.g., churches)? Social groups?
17. How does the author work with hope and vision?

### **Overall Assessment of Method (how ethics is done)**

18. What sources does the author require to be considered in Christian ethics—scripture, tradition, knowledge (philosophy, natural and social sciences etc), experience? How does the author suggest we draw upon these sources? Do the sources seem to be prioritized in any way?
19. What appeals to you about doing Christian ethics? Will you incorporate this into your life/work/ministry?
20. What new insights have you gained from reading Christian ethicists? How will you practice this?

(\*Adapted with permission from Elizabeth M. Bounds)