Course Syllabus
EMT 2902HF Christian Ethics in Context
Emmanuel College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2019

Instructor Information
Instructor: Néstor Medina, Ph.D.
Office Location: 210
Telephone: 416 585 4537
E-mail: netto.medina@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: TBD or by appointment

Course Identification
Course Number: EMT 2902
Course Format: In-class
Course Name: Christian Ethics in Context
Course Location: TBD
Class Times: TBD
Prerequisites: none

Course Description:
Survey introduction to contemporary sources, norms, and methods for doing Christian Ethics. It aims to equip students to refine ethical awareness and skills that they can bring to a variety of moral challenges, within their lives, within their communities, churches, religious groups, and within society. An introduction to Christian Ethics and tools for moral reflection. Exploration of notions of morality, human activity, and other theo-ethical issues in conversation with multiple ethnocultural traditions. Lectures, discussions of readings, short written assignments, major student presentation, research paper.

Prerequisites:
Basic Bible and Theology

Course Website:
• Quercus: https://q.utoronto.ca/
This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the My Courses module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canv.aslms.com/docs/DOC-10701. Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask for further help.
Required Course Texts/Bibliography


This course also requires various articles and sections of books. The readings for the course will be collected and posted on Quercus unless otherwise indicated. Other readings are available in digital format in the University library system. See course schedule for assigned weekly readings.


Leonore Pietersen & Willem Fourie, “The Bible, culture and ethics: Trickery in the Narrative of Judah and Tamar.” *HST Theologische Studies/Theological Studies* 71 No. 3 (July 2017): e1-e8


**Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

**Emmanuel College Learning Outcomes**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes

**Culture and Context**
- Identify and employ diverse methods of contextual analysis in religious-ethical reflection from cultural, pluralist, gender, and decolonizing perspectives, among others.
- Give evidence of critical self-awareness with regard to their own religious and cultural tradition and social location and that of others in relation to faith perspectives and practices.

**Spiritual / Vocational Formation**
- Display capacity for self-reflexive and spiritual practices within ethnoculturally diverse communities of faith.

**Ministerial and Public Leadership**
- Begin to articulate sound processes and guidelines to enable ethical leadership and decision making that is rooted in the student’s religious tradition but sensitive to contemporary diverse and religiously plural contexts.
- Show ability to integrate theory and practice in conversation with multiple cultural contexts and ethical/religious traditions.

**Basic Degree Level**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

**In respect of general academic skills**
- Demonstrate crucial and constructive skills in reading, writing, and research skills in oral in-class presentation and written assignments.

**In respect of the understanding of the content of one or more theological disciplines**
- Recall, name, describe, analyze and evaluate key ethical thinkers and features from the student’s religious tradition.
• Discuss aspects of the relationship between the sociopolitical context, the ethical task and the pastoral dimension, with special attention to the conditioning role of culture in the religious-ethical task.

In respect of personal and spiritual formation
• Develop and employ ethical competency for use in personal practices and in the engagement of religious and ethical ideas from other cultural backgrounds and faith traditions.

In respect of ministerial and public leadership
• Practice and apply ethical frameworks, inter-cultural skills, and interfaith sensibilities to the task of reading about, reflecting upon, and critically interacting with contemporary ethical issues and currents.

Evaluation

Requirements
The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

Basic Degree Students:

Attendance, Participation and Reading: 10%
All students are required to attend all classes, read the weekly readings, and to participate in the in-class discussion.

Class Presentation: 15%
All students are required to make a class presentation introducing the readings for the day and to provide a couple of leading questions to facilitate group discussion. This means that in each class, one person will take 10-15 minutes to initiate discussion. You must prepare a two-page reflection to be shared with classmates as part of initiating discussion. Please feel free to go outside the required reading for this assignment, but make sure you remain within the scope of the issues discussed.

Some important things you need to keep in mind as you prepare for this assignment:
(a) Identify the main ethical issue(s) raised by the authors and relate them to everyday life questions;
(b) Think of particular ways in which one could engage ethical issues drawing on the wisdom of the weekly readings in order to provide adequate pastoral responses.
(d) Think of pedagogical alternatives, of how you can teach and talk about ethical issues in your own community in ways in which people can relate. Be Creative!

Personal Journal 15%
Students will document their own learning process by keeping a journal exploring some of the personal learning and insights gained in class and through the readings. Each time after doing the readings and after class you will note in your journal specific moments in which you think you learned a new idea, skill, or insight that you find helpful in developing your sense of an ethical self and which aids you in understanding the Christian ethical task. Each entry must be a brief
paragraph 3-4 sentences describing your newly acquired insights. Journal entries will be handed in every four weeks. Please consult class schedule for submission dates.

**Ethics Working Group 15%**
Students will organize in groups of three and reflect on specific ethical case studies related to the weekly topic. The goal will be to tease out some of the ethical challenges of the case study, develop strategic ways to respond to the ethical concerns they highlight, and report to the larger group their findings. Key questions to ask from case studies: What is the ethical concern? What are the values, norms, and sources operating? What are some ethical principles that can be gleaned? What does the case study tell us about morality and human activity? What is the role of faith?

**Book Review: 15%**
Students will write a single-author short essay book review, aiming at critically engaging each author’s central concerns, and the answers s/he gives to the contemporary ethical questions as they are raised in the book. Students must choose books from cultural and religious traditions that are different from their own. Students are expected to analyze the author’s arguments in light of their social, historical, and intellectual context. Pick from the suggested books listed at the end of the syllabus. The total length of this assignment should be 5 pages, double space, 12 pt font New Times Roman. In consultation with the professor, students are welcome to propose alternative books for review.  
**Due Date: Week 8**

**Final Paper: 30%**
In order to examine more in-depth any of the issues raised in class, by the lectures, readings and discussions, students will write a final constructive essay (15 pages, double space, 12 pt font New Times Roman). Please feel free to consult with the instructor before choosing a paper topic. The purpose here is to provide a platform for critical thinking and in-depth religious-ethical engagement.  
**Due Date: Week 13**

As you prepare to write this paper, keep in mind the following:
(a) identify the main ethical issue you wish to engage;  
(b) discuss some of the connections you see between the ethical issue and the contemporary questions you choose to discuss;  
(c) outline your own ethical thinking process. Discuss systematically how you connect ethical issues with contemporary reality, and some of the pastoral/ethical recommendations you see as appropriate.

While you will find great resources in the required readings, you are expected to go beyond what we read in class and include other sources in your bibliography.

For all written assignments  
- Give reasons for your positions and arguments and back them up with material from required and recommended materials and/or other research.  
- Use the system of documentation described in Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition. You may use either footnotes or endnotes, but you must be consistent.
Note: All written works are to be turned in by the end of class on their due date. Students can email their assignments using their utoronto email or submit their assignments via Quercus. All assignments will be returned via email.

**Grading System – Basic Degree Students**

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 (A+)</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89 (A)</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 (A-)</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79 (B+)</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76 (B)</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72 (B-)</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-69 (FZ)</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner. This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at [www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf), policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

**Policies**

**Attendance:**

*Attendance is mandatory.*
A high rate of attendance is key to student success, given the nature of theological education and the importance of classroom interaction and learning at Emmanuel College. Students should not accept significant outside obligations during the academic term.

For a regular course, students who register and miss two (2) classes may receive a lower or failing grade for the course. In order to avoid this penalty, students must notify their instructor with a valid reason for any absence before class. Students missing twenty-five (25) percent or more of a course will be automatically withdrawn from that course.

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto Code of Academic Behaviour on Academic Matters http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaviorac.htm.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases,
messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

**Course Schedule**

**Setting the Context: From Ancient to Contemporary Ethics**
Week 2: Bible and Ethics  
Read: Enrique Dussel, “Hermeneutics, Translation and Liberation”; Leonore Pietersen & Willem Fourie, “The Bible, culture and ethics”.
Week 3: Ethics and Early Church  
Week 4: Ethics as a Theological task  
* First Section of Journal Due

**A Changing Landscape II: Recent Voices in Ethics**
Week 5: Economics and Ethics  
Read: Enrique Dussel’s *Ethics of Liberation*;  
Week 6: In the Face of Racial Injustice  
Read: Jennifer Harvey, “White Protestants and Black Christians”; “Black Manifesto”  
Week 7: Gender & Ethics  
Week 8: Culture and Ethics of Intersectionality  
* Book Review Due  
* Second Section of Journal Due

**A Changing Landscape II: New Issues in Ethics**
Week 9: Environmental Ethics

Week 10: Food in the City

Week 11: Ethics and Interculturality
Read: Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, “An Alternative to Globalization”

Week 12: Immigration and Hospitality

* Third Section of Journal Due

Where do we go from here?
Week 13:
* Major Paper Due

Recommended Books for Review


Miguel De la Torre, *Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004


