

COS 424 Ethics

Appalachian Local Pastors School (ALPS)

May 21-25, 2018

Union College

Barbourville, Kentucky

Syllabus and Pre-Course Assignments

Instructor

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Textbooks

Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Abingdon, 2011)

Rebekah L. Miles, *The Pastor as Moral Guide* (Fortress, 1999)

Patricia Beattie Jung and Darryl W. Stephens, eds., *Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach* (Fortress, 2013)

Reference

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

Purpose

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to basic aspects of Christian ethics and to help equip students to provide faithful and effective moral guidance as pastors in local United Methodist congregations.

By the completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Describe and assess the three major approaches to ethics—goals/consequences, rules/principles, and virtues/character—and discuss what gives (or can give) specifically Christian content to each approach.
2. Discuss and assess some of the ways Scripture can inform moral issues, ethical reflection, and action.
3. Guide church members and constituents in responding faithfully and critically to moral issues and dilemmas that arise in their professional roles and personal lives.
4. Guide leaders and members of a congregation in responding faithfully and critically to a moral issue facing a congregation and/or its surrounding community.

5. Explain what the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church are and how they can inform moral action and ethical reflection.

Pre-Course Assignment

Read Robin Lovin's *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues*. Write a 1500-word paper (5 typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) describing the three major approaches to ethics: goals, rules, and virtues. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? What gives (or can give) specifically *Christian* content to each approach (e.g., divine command, natural law, covenant, etc.)?

Read pages xi-59 of Rebekah Miles's *The Pastor as Moral Guide*. Write a 1500-word paper (5 typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) describing the role of the pastor as moral guide. What are the four guiding questions Miles identifies as crucial to moral guidance? Why are they important? What steps for moral guidance does Miles suggest? What do you think of Miles's contention that pastors should offer normative direction to parishioners (rather than assuming a merely "listening" role)?

Read at least one chapter (you may read more than one) from each of the four parts of *Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach*. Write a 1500-word paper (5 typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font) discussing (1) what you found helpful about the chapter, (2) points made or issues raised in the chapter that were more or less new to you, and (3) follow-up questions that you would pose to the chapter author if you had the opportunity.

All pre-course assignments must be postmarked and mailed to the COS Director by April 5, 2017 as stated on the May School Registration form. Please carefully follow the directions for the pre-course assignments.

In-Class Assignment

This will be an opportunity to review and apply key ideas from material presented in lectures and class exercises and discussions. Students may refer to class notes and handouts.

Grading

Pre-Course Assignment: 50%

In-Class Assignment: 25%

Class participation: 25%