

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

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| Course | CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD THEO 0535 1S |
| Date, Time, and Delivery Format | SEPTEMBER 14 – DECEMBER 7, 2023 THURSDAYS, 8:15 - 11:05 AM SYNCHRONOUS, ONLINE |
| Instructor | PATRICK FRANKLIN, PhD Email: pfranklin@tyndale.ca |
| Class Information | The classes will start on Thursday mornings at 8:15 AM and run until 11:05 AM. Class combines livestream lectures with large and small (breakout) group discussions. Office Hours: Mondays: 1:00 - 3:00 PM. (Please email the professor to sign up for a time slot; other time slots are available by request). |
| Course Material | Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. |

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Equips students to navigate the complexities of following Jesus with faithfulness, integrity, and wisdom in our contemporary post-Christian world. While the course addresses classical and contemporary ethical issues and questions, its primary focus is on forming Christian character. Central questions include: How do we become the kind of people who reflexively think, act, and engage others as Jesus did? How do differing and changing worldviews and cultural narratives impact the way we approach and address ethical questions? What theological and spiritual commitments, disciplines, and practices are necessary to ground and sustain authentic Christian life and witness in the world?

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be equipped to:

1. Articulate the centrality of Jesus Christ to Christian Ethics
2. Identify central ethical concepts and differentiate various ethical traditions/systems
3. Synthesize the interrelation of Scripture, theological reasoning, and cultural understanding in a Christian approach to ethics
4. Express their understanding of the role of the church in ethical formation
5. Examine their own ethical formation and continued character development
6. Recognize ethical arguments, identify presuppositions, and evaluate relative merits
7. Apply formative practices to their own lives that 'form Christ' and embody the gospel
8. Communicate their own ethical convictions to others effectively

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Both of the Following:

Katangole, Emmanuel, and Chris Rice. [*Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing*](#). Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008. Available as an e-book online via Tyndale's library (unlimited copies available).

Wells, Samuel and Ben Quash. [*Introducing Christian Ethics*](#). Second Edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017. Available as an e-book online via Tyndale library (one copy available).

Plus One of the Following (choose 1):

Perry, Louise. *The Case against the Sexual Revolution*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022.

Trueman, Carl R. Trueman, [*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*](#) (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020). Available as an e-book (multiple copies available).

AND One of the Following (choose 1):

Fitch, David E. 2019. [*The Church of Us vs. Them: Freedom from a Faith That Feeds on Making Enemies*](#). Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2019. Available as an e-book (multiple copies available).

Hill, Wesley. [*Spiritual Friendship: Finding Love in the Church as a Celibate Gay Christian*](#). Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015. Available as an e-book (one copy available).

Sprinkle, Preston M. Embodied: [*Transgender Identities, the Church, and What the Bible Has to Say*](#). Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2021. Available as an e-book (multiple copies available).

Other assigned readings will be available via the course page, as per the schedule below ([Section IV](#)).

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Gushee, David P. and Glen Harold Stassen. [*Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

Wells, Samuel, ed. *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

*exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. of the assigned date and, to be submitted via Moodle.

1. Required Reading and Participation in class discussions (10%):

This assignment is related to Outcome #8.

Your participation in class discussions should demonstrate understanding and critical engagement with course materials (lectures, readings) and skill in interpersonal communication (clarity, logic, persuasion, charity, active listening and fitting or apt response to the comments of others).

To prepare for participation, beginning week 2 and ending on week 11, each student is required to submit to the professor, by 11:59 p.m. the night before class, 2-3 questions in response to the required readings. An excellent submission will articulate 2-3 insightful questions that represent a range of the required readings (if possible, not all drawn from the same source). You can miss one week without penalty (so, to qualify for full marks, you must submit on 9/10 weeks between week 2 and week 11).

2. Reflection paper on your own ethical formation (6 pp.; 20%; due Oct. 5).

This assignment is related to Outcomes #4, #5, and #7.

Write a 6-paged reflection paper on your personal ethical formation. Begin by describing your most basic convictions and / or core values and then reflect on how these developed or were formed in you. Your reflection should include the following:

- a) Some key formative events, life experiences, and people in your ethical formation (these may include cultural influences or religious background other than Christianity).
- b) The influence of Scripture, tradition, reason (and study), and personal experience of God on your ethical formation.
- c) The role that the church has played (or failed to play) in forming you ethically.
- d) The extent to which “secular liturgies” have shaped you (see the chapter by James K. A. Smith posted on Moodle; Email me if you have trouble finding it).

On the final paragraph of your paper, based on prayerful reflection, share how you feel God is calling you to grow ethically (or as a disciple of Jesus). This might include a plan for “counter formation” (see Smith chapter on “secular liturgies”) or the adoption of “transforming initiatives” (Stassen & Gushee chapter).

3. Theological Reflection Paper on Reconciliation (6 pp.; 20%; due Nov. 2).

This assignment is related to Outcomes #1, #3, and #4.

In close dialogue with *Reconciling All Things*, by Katangole and Chris Rice, write a theological-ethical reflection paper on the concept and practice of reconciliation from a Christian perspective.

In roughly the first half of the paper, engage the book descriptively. What do the authors argue? Identify their thesis. What key concepts and terms inform and/or characterize their argument? Identify and explain these. What are the central biblical and theological ideas, patterns, images, or metaphors that they draw on and/or employ? Describe these. In roughly the second half of the paper, engage the book critically and constructively. Critically, is the book convincing or does it fail to convince? Is its approach sufficient or is it lacking in some way? (Be careful here to evaluate the book according to its own aims and purposes.) Constructively, what insights have you gained from the book about reconciliation? How might these insights speak specifically into the personal and social ethics of Christians (and the church) today? (Choose perhaps one implication on which to reflect in some depth).

4. Theological Paper on Sex, Church, and Culture (10-12 pp.; 35%; due Nov. 16).

This assignment is related to Outcomes #2, #3, #4, and #6

There is much confusion, pain, relational breakdown, and moral polarization concerning sex (and gender) in contemporary North American culture. How should Christians (individually) and the church (as communities of faith) understand and respond missionally within this cultural context?

Write an in-depth theological reflection on one theme or topic related to sex or gender, in close dialogue with **either** Trueman **or** Perry (choose 1; see p. 2 of the syllabus) **and** one of Fitch, Hill, or Sprinkle (choose 1; see p. 2 of the syllabus). Trueman/Perry will help you to grapple with the cultural issues regarding sex, while Fitch/Hill/Sprinkle will help you attend to pastoral concerns (or those related to compassion, care, community, and redemptive missional engagement). Supplement your reading with other sources of your choice, drawing on your own research (via the ATLA database) and/or the Select Bibliography on Sex and Gender provided in Moodle. (Aim for 5 or more additional research sources, including articles and books.)

Begin by choosing a theme concerning sex and gender (in light of your reading of Trueman or Perry) and then try to narrow your focus to a question you can ask about that theme. Your paper will seek to express your answer to that question, making a case for your answer by providing reasons, arguments, and perspectives in light of your research and reflection.

In your paper, please address the following (the order and format is up to you):

- a) With the help of Trueman or Perry, describe the cultural context in which your question arises. Why does it arise? How does your reading of Trueman or Perry help to frame and illuminate the question in ways you had not considered before? (Approx. 4-5pp.)
- b) Analyze your question theologically and articulate your theological response. Based on your understanding of Scripture and Tradition, what do you think God says in response

to your question. Appeal here to biblical and theological scholarship to inform your theological thinking (see the Selected Bibliography for potential sources). (Approx. 4-5 pp.)

- c) With the help of Fitch, Hill, or Sprinkle, reflect on how the church (or Christians) should respond pastorally and missionally (or with truth, compassion, and care) to the question you posed. (Approx. 1-2 pp.)

Please consult the Grading Rubric Posted in Moodle for further details about how the assignment will be evaluated.

5. Exploratory Paper on an Ethical Topic of Interest (4 pp.; 15%; due Dec. 7):

This assignment is related to Outcomes #2 and #6.

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to learn about the ethics of a topic of interest to you. Accordingly, it's best to choose a topic about which you feel you are not sufficiently informed.

Choose a book from the bibliography for this assignment provided in Moodle. Read the book and provide a 4-paged summary of what you learned. Use the first page of your paper to summarize concisely the author's own thesis and to identify and explain the key concepts and arguments the author employs. Then, in the remaining three pages, reflect on 2-3 insights you gain from reading the book. Conclude with a statement (a few sentences perhaps) summarizing how your thinking on this issue has been impacted and how you might pursue this issue in more depth in the future.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

| Assignment | Due | Weight |
|--|---------|--------------|
| Participation in class discussions (weeks 2-11) | Weekly | 10% |
| Reflection paper on ethical formation | Oct. 5 | 20% |
| Theological-ethical reflection on reconciliation | Nov. 2 | 20% |
| Theological Paper on Sex, Church, & Culture | Nov. 16 | 35% |
| Exploratory summary paper on a topic of interest | Dec. 7 | 15% |
| Total Grade | | 100 % |

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Due dates & times (and late penalties): Assignments are to be uploaded to the assignment submission section of the course page in pdf or Microsoft Word format by 11:59 PM (Eastern Time) on the assigned due date. Papers submitted after 11:59 PM on the due date will receive a 1/3 grade deduction (i.e., B+ to B) per day (or part thereof) following the due date (to a maximum of 1.5 GP deduction per week). This late policy will apply to all assignments for which no extension has been granted. Extensions will be granted only for serious personal, family, or health situations.

Last Possible Date to Submit Assignments (no extensions possible beyond this date):

From the Registrar's Office: Professors may NOT grant an extension to a student past the last day of exams (December 15, 2023). Requests for extensions past this date may be granted only by the Registrar. Students should submit an Extension Request Form to the Registrar's Office latest by December 15, 2023.

Formatting: Assignments must be double-spaced, typed in 12 pt Times New Roman font (10-pt for footnotes), with 1" margins. The standard citation method for theological papers uses footnotes (not parenthetical citations or endnotes) with a complete bibliography in the Chicago style (not APA style). For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its

responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Please complete all readings prior to attending class, so that we can make the most use of class lecture and discussion time. Other required readings (articles, chapters not included in the required textbooks) will be posted or linked on the course page on Moodle (classes.tyndale.ca).

Week 1 (Sept. 14)

- Introduction; The Need for Christian Ethics
- Spirituality and Discernment in Ethics

Wells and Quash, chs. 1-2

Hays, "Why Love and Liberation are not Sufficient"

Week 2 (Sept. 21)

- Locating Christian Ethics; Holistic Christian Character Ethics

Wells and Quash, chs. 3-4

Stassen and Gushee on "Transforming Initiatives"

Wells, "Forming Habits"

Hauerwas, "The Narrative Character of Christian Ethics"

Week 3 (Sept. 28)

- Sources of Authority for Christian Ethics

Wells and Quash, chs. 5-7 (stretched between this and next week)

Smith, "Lovers in a Dangerous Time: Cultural Exegesis of 'Secular' Liturgies"

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (excerpt)

Week 4 (Oct. 5)

- Framing the Questions: Universal, Subversive, and Ecclesial Ethics

Wells and Quash, chs. 5-7 (stretched between this and last week)

DUE: Reflection Paper on Personal Ethical Formation (by midnight, via Moodle)

Week 5 (Oct. 12)

- Good Order

Wells and Quash, chs 7-8

Julian Savulescu and Udo Schuklenk, "Doctors Have No Right to Refuse Medical Assistance in Dying, Abortion or Contraception"

Blackwell, "Ban Conscientious Objection by Canadian Doctors"

The Barmen Declaration

Week 6 (Oct. 19)

- Good Life #1: Economics, Wealth, Poverty, Work, Stewardship

Wells and Quash, ch. 9

Stafford, "Ron Sider's Unsettling Crusade"

Adam Smith, "The Invisible Hand"

Medellín Conference on the Poverty of the Church

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I see the Promised Land" and "I have a dream"

NO CLASS on October 26 (reading days are Oct. 24-27)

Week 7 (Nov. 2)

- Good Life #2: Race

Bonhoeffer, "The Church and the Jewish Question"

Carter, *Racism: A Theological Account* (excerpts)

Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory* (excerpt)

DUE: Theological-Ethical Reflection on Reconciliation (by midnight, via Moodle)

Week 8 (Nov. 9)

- Good Relationships #1: Friendship, Community, Marriage and Family

Wells and Quash, ch. 10

Pierce, "Biblical Equality and Same-Sex Marriage"

Hollinger, "The Christian Worldview and Sex"

Klein, "Does 'solo polyamory' mean having it all?" (BBC article)

Optional Reading: N. T. Wright, "What is Marriage For?"

Week 9 (Nov. 16)

- Good Relationships #2: Engaging LGBTQ+ Issues in the Church

GLAAD, "Media Reference Guide and Glossary of Terms"

DUE: Theological Paper on Sex, Church, & Culture (by midnight, via Moodle)

Week 10 (Nov. 23)

- Good Beginnings

Wells and Quash, ch. 11, pp. 343-60

Harrison and Cloyes, "Theology and Morality of Procreative Choice" (excerpt)

Callahan, "Abortion and the Sexual Agenda: A Case for Pro-life Feminism"

Hauerwas, "Abortion and the Church"

Podcast (Please listen to the podcast episode in preparation for class; record your thoughts, insights, and questions for class discussion): *Undeceptions* Podcast, episode 49: "[Pro Life](#)," with Margaret Somerville and Emma Wood; download the podcast on your device or view it online.

Week 11 (Nov. 30)

- Good Endings

Wells and Quash, ch. 11, pp. 360-67

Canadian Catholic Bishops and EFC: "Declaration on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide"

"What is Palliative Care and Hospice?"

Podcast (Please view or listen to this podcast episode in advance of class; record thoughts, insights, and questions for discussion): *Unbelievable* Podcast (Sept. 25, 2021): “Should People of Faith Support Assisted Dying?”; download the podcast on your device, or view it online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XLdHtblzpQ&t=576s>

Week 12 (Dec. 7)

- Good Earth

Wells and Quash, ch. 12

Wendell Berry, “The Pleasures of Eating” (excerpt)

Kathryn Hayhoe, *Saving Us* (excerpt)

View in advance (record thoughts, insights, questions for discussion): Kathryn Hayhoe, “Christians, Climate Change, and our Culture” (Keynote address at the May 2018 national conference for the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation); online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GgcxIOegrI>

DUE: Exploratory Summary Paper (by midnight via Moodle)

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (posted on Moodle)

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Tyndale has an excellent online [Christian Theology Reading Room](#), which has extensive links to material available as full text eBooks, as well as partial-text books available on Google Books. Reading rooms have also been established on the [Doctrine of the Trinity](#), as well as theologians [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), [Eberhard Jüngel](#), [John Howard Yoder](#), [Jürgen Moltmann](#), and [Karl Barth](#).

To search topically for relevant journal articles, book reviews or collected essays, use the comprehensive *ATLA Religion Database*, or the *Proquest Religious Database*, *Religious and Theological Abstracts* and *JSTOR*. [Full-text versions of many theological journals](#) and book reviews can be downloaded from these databases.