



MIN 344 Professional Ethics for Ministry

Syllabus

Course Description

This course is designed for the officer, minister, or lay leader who faces ethical issues in Christian ministry. The focus is on professional ethics and decision-making skills using the case-study format.

Ethics lies close to the heart of leadership in all parts of the church. Those charged with Christian ministry leadership need, first, to understand the ethical values and principles that are foundational to Christian ethics, and second, to have skill in connecting these values and principles with the ethical challenges inherent in very specific situations. Christian ministers also need ethical character; they are rightly expected to *be* ethical as well as to *know* ethics. This course is about all these matters.

Instructor

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The Salvation Army Ethics Centre
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Course Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, you should expect to have:

- acquired a basic grounding in Christian ethics theory as it bears on the practice of ministry as a Salvation Army officer;
- understood the ethical character required of Christian ministry leaders;
- become acquainted with how Christian ministry ethics is informed by the Bible, Christian tradition (especially but not exclusively the Salvation Army part of that tradition), personal and corporate experience, and sound reasoning;
- developed a basic ability to a) discern and analyze a range of ethical problems as they occur in the practice of Christian ministry, and b) arrive at ethical decisions;
- exhibited knowledge and skill in these areas by means of classroom discussion and the completion of assignments;

- demonstrated the ability to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for discussion of sensitive ethical issues, showing a capacity for active, attentive, and respectful listening; and
- a deepened appreciation of ethical wisdom and personal integrity in the practice of Christian ministry.

Course Readings

For purchase:

The Bible. NRSVUE or NRSV.

Wheeler, Sondra. *The Minister as Moral Theologian: Ethical Dimensions of Pastoral Leadership*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2017. ISBN: 9780801097843

Willimon, William H. *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000. ISBN: 0687090334

Available online or through the course website:

“Job – Selected Portions.” NRSVUE.

Pallant, Dean. “Christian Ethics for Every Christian” and “Talking About Human Sexuality—An Introduction.” In *To Be Like Jesus: Christian Ethics for a 21st-Century Salvation Army*, 16–34 and 141–150. London: Salvation Books, 2019.

Patterson, Aimee. “Lament.” In *Suffering Well and Suffering With: Reclaiming Marks of Christian Identity*, 83–95. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2023.

The Salvation Army. “Building Deeper Relationships using Faith-Based Facilitation.” London: Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2010. <https://www.salvationarmy.org/fbf>.

----- “International Positional Statements.” <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isic/ips>.

The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory. “Position Statements of The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory.” 2019.

----- “Territorial Operating Policy MN 01.002.” 2021.

The Salvation Army Ethics Centre. “Toolkit for Ethical Decision-Making.” 2021. <https://salvationist.ca/ethics-centre/resources/toolkit-for-ethical-decision-making>.

Shakespeare, Karen. “Living with Difference: What is Good Disagreement?” *Salvationist* (January 30, 2023). <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/articles/living-difference>.

Note: You will occasionally receive additional materials for classroom use.

Course Requirements and Grading Outline

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE(S)	VALUE
Attendance and Participation	Throughout the course	14%
Reflection Journals	January 30, February 13, March 5, March 26	16%

	11:55 p.m. (Eastern)	
Case Study: Small Group Work	In class, February 13	15%
Case Study: Written Analysis	February 27 11:55 p.m. (Eastern)	25%
Ethics Analysis Conversation Proposal	March 26	5%
Ethics Analysis Conversation	Week of April 18 11:55 p.m. (Eastern)	25%
TOTAL		100%

Assignments

Attendance and Participation

Value: 14%

You are expected to attend each class session. Your attendance is critical for understanding course content and learning from both the instructor and your fellow student colleagues. Please join with your required readings at hand as they will be helpful for contributing to conversation.

- Active participation contributes to your learning process. This includes asking questions, responding to questions, and engaging in conversations and other activities.
- We are all responsible for the quality of our learning environment. In the study of ministry ethics, it is necessary to consider sensitive matters. Each one of us must feel safe enough to test out new ideas. Please keep the following guidelines in mind as we nurture a culture of trust together:
- Be respectful. Respect begins in the ways you think about others. Respect is demonstrated to others in the words you choose, the tone of your voice, and your body language. Also, be respectful when referring to people or groups outside the virtual classroom.
- Listen attentively. Everyone should have time to talk. Don't interrupt someone who is speaking.
- Maintain confidentiality. Give your fellow students the freedom to test out ideas and say whatever they think is pertinent to the course. Unless permission is given, all personal remarks are to be kept confidential.
- Put yourself in their shoes. If someone has a view that is different from yours, don't dismiss them. Instead, try to see things from their perspective. This may mean asking questions like, "Tell me more about...."
- Don't debate. Have constructive conversations, recognizing that faithful Christians can come to different conclusions.

This virtual course requires you join in from private space with no distraction. Please keep your camera on when we engage in conversation. Please mute your mic when not speaking to avoid background noise.

If you miss course content, you are responsible to contact your student colleagues for assistance. Session slides will be made available on the course site following each session. The instructor does not share copies of lecture notes.

Note that attendance during Weeks 5 and 6 is necessary for the completion of other assignments.

Electronic devices, such as cell phones and tablets, may be used only for the purposes of direct course engagement and with the express permission of the instructor. The use of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter is not permitted. For further instruction see the course syllabus for Booth University College's policy on the Use of Personal Computers, Electronic Devices and Cell Phones in Booth Classrooms.

If you anticipate an absence, late arrival, or early departure, this must be cleared in advance with the instructor. In the case of an unanticipated absence, you are required to offer a timely and satisfactory explanation. In all cases, approval is at the instructor's discretion.

Grading

You begin with 14%. Any session in which you do not abide by the content in the Assignment Description above, you will incur a grade penalty of 1 out of 14. Likewise, any unapproved absence, late arrival, or early departure will incur a grade penalty of 1 out of 14.

Reflection Journals

Value: 16% (each journal is worth 4%)

Each of the four Reflection Journals will address something significant you have learned over the past two sessions and how you think this learning relates to your future ministry in The Salvation Army.

Journal 1 will focus on ethics and/or character and the Christian minister.

Journal 2 will focus on power dynamics in ministry and/or ethical decision-making.

Journal 3 will focus on your reflections about the film watched at the Week 6 session.

Journal 4 will focus on ethics in preaching and/or sexuality and ministry.

This assignment gives you time and space to understand where you are in your learning process, identify your own ethical strengths and weaknesses, and begin the habit of ethical self-reflection in active ministry. Feel free to draw on content from the readings, a lecture, or a comment you or someone else made in a class discussion. You are also welcome to include questions you think the instructor may be able to respond to.

If possible, some quiet time will be allotted at the end of the sessions one week before a Reflection Journal is due. Otherwise, you are responsible for carrying out your assignment outside of the virtual classroom.

Tips

Imagine that you are writing a letter or note to a friend. Express your own ideas, opinions, questions, and concerns. Feel free to share personal experiences as clarifying examples.

I've got writer's block. How do I begin?

If you can't think of what to write, start with a prompt like the ones below and expand from there.

- One thing that resonates with me is [x], and here's why...
- One thing I disagree with in our [readings, class discussions, etc.] is..., and here's why.
- I'm not sure how [x] will factor into my ministry...
- Something I learned challenges my belief about...
- I used to think that...
- I'm beginning to wonder if...

Formatting

Each Reflection Journal will be between 200 and 250 words in length. Write using first-person language (e.g., "I think..."). You may write informally but avoid slang. Ensure your writing is virtually free of stylistic and grammatical errors as even simple errors can reduce the "readability" of your submission. For assistance with written assignments, consult the John Fairbank Memorial Library's Subject Guide on Writing and Grammar.

Format each Reflection Journal as a Microsoft Word document using 12 pt font, double spacing, and standard margins. At the top, include the number of the Reflection Journal, your name, and the submission date. If your Reading Journal is more than a single page, include page numbers and your name on each page.

Submission and Grading

Submit each Reflection Journal via the course website. Please include your last name in the file name.

Each journal assignment is worth 4% and will be given full marks if it meets the requirements listed above. Any journal submitted one day late will incur a penalty of 2 out of 4%. Later submissions will not be accepted.

Case Study – Small Group Work

Value: 15%

The purpose of this assignment is to apply your understanding of Christian ethics to a practical ethical problem in Christian ministry, also seeking to learn from the perspectives of your student colleagues in the process.

This assignment will be followed up with a Written Analysis.

At the February 27 session, join with a copy of the Toolkit for Ethical Decision-Making. Be prepared to take notes. You and your fellow students will be assigned an ethical case. Together, you will use the Framework for Ethical Decision-Making to work through the case and arrive at a course of action. Throughout, practice attentive listening to discern what others add to the conversation.

What if we don't agree about how we should respond to the case?

It may be that group members are not in full agreement about a chosen course of action. If there is disagreement, this should be openly addressed. Each member should sincerely attempt to understand where and why disagreement exists.

What if we agree on a course of action for different reasons?

It may be that group members arrive at a course of action but for different reasons. In this case, each member should sincerely attempt to understand where and why any difference exists.

This component of the Case Study assignment will take up the entirety of the class session. The use of personal electronic devices is permissible for the sole purpose of gaining information to inform the conversation.

Grading

You will receive full marks for this component of the assignment unless you a) interrupt or talk over another person, or b) fail to speak more than twice. No marks will be deducted for disagreement so long as there is evidence that you have explored the reasons behind it.

Note: Auditing students are required to participate in this part of the Case Study assignment but are not subject to grading.

Additional details will be provided prior to February 27.

Case Study – Written Analysis

Value: 25%

Your Written Analysis of the case study must include the following:

1. Case Description: Offer a brief but accurate description of the case. Please do not cut and paste text from the case or include a copy of the case in your submission. Instead, use your own words to describe case, highlighting what you consider to be its most salient aspects. Clearly indicate if your group noticed any missing information that might be significant to responding to the case, or any provided information that was unclear.
2. Ethical Analysis:
 - a. Clearly indicate the course of action you have decided upon. Drawing on the Framework for Ethical Decision-Making, explain how you came to this decision. If there was disagreement about the course of action, or if group members came to shared a course of action but for different reasons, provide an explanation.
 - b. Reflect on the following questions:
 - How has my analysis of the case been enhanced or changed by the perspectives of other members?
 - What comments or questions posed by other members challenged me?
 - When did I disagree with something said by another member, and why?

Throughout your Written Analysis, there must be clear evidence that the Framework for Ethical Decision-Making has informed your ethical analysis. There is no need to cite it. No additional research is required.

Formatting

The Written Analysis must be between 1200 and 1500 words. Format it as a Microsoft Word document using 12 pt font, double spacing, and standard margins. Your title page should list the course number, the case title, your name, the submission date, and the word count. Include page numbers and your name on each page. Your analysis is to be written in formal language and virtually free of stylistic and grammatical errors. Even simple errors can reduce the “readability” of your submission.

Submission and Grading

Submit this assignment via the course website. Please include your last name in the file name.

If your Written Analysis is submitted one day late it will incur a penalty of 10 out of 25. Later submissions will not be accepted.

The grading rubric is as follows:

Case Description	- case is described briefly, accurately, and in the author’s words - salient aspects of the case are identified - any information perceived to be missing or unclear is indicated	10%
Ethical Analysis	- all requirements for ethical analysis are met - evidence that the Framework has been used is provided	10%
Clarity and writing style	- formatting requirements are met - minimal stylistic errors do not affect clarity of writing - length is between 1200 and 1500 words	5%

Ethics Analysis Conversation Proposal

Value: 5%

Your proposal prepares you to analyze an ethical matter related to Christian ministry. The instructor will alert you to any concerns about the topic, the amount of research required, and available sources. It is likely that this assignment will strengthen your Ethics Analysis Conversation.

You are encouraged to identify a topic early in the course. You are invited to consult with the instructor as soon as possible. For your benefit, the instructor will provide feedback and confirm your Ethics Analysis Conversation time and date as soon as possible following your submission.

Structure your proposal in this way:

1. Topic: Identify the matter you intend to address.
2. Thesis: State the primary claim(s) or conclusion(s) you will make about your topic.
3. Analysis: Provide a basic outline of the argument that will support your thesis, including primary points.

4. Brief Bibliography: Include three scholarly sources that support your analysis.
Note: In addition to the three scholarly sources, you may include non-scholarly sources.
5. Ethics Analysis Conversation Schedule: Identify three dates and times in order of preference over the week of April 18 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. Also indicate any times at which you are unavailable (e.g. exam or employment conflict). Each time slot is 30 minutes. The instructor will attempt to grant your preferred time but cannot guarantee this.

Clarity and Style

Indicate the item to which you are responding by using the number. Do not repeat the item.

Your assignment must be between 500 and 800 words in length.

Grading

Should you fail to submit the assignment on time, there are two consequences. First, your proposal will not be graded. Second, you will receive an automatic deduction on your Ethics Analysis Conversation of 5 out of 20.

Content	• Your topic, thesis, and analysis outline are feasible. • Your bibliography includes three scholarly sources that support the analysis. • Your Ethics Analysis Conversation Schedule is completed.	3%
Clarity and Style	• Your ideas are expressed clearly. • Stylistic requirements are met.	2%

Ethics Analysis Conversation

Value: 25%

This assignment contributes to each of the Learning Outcomes. It encourages you to use both your personal experience and your course learning to address an ethical matter related to medical ethics at the end of life from a perspective informed by Christian ethics. It also allows you to engage directly with the instructor in dialogue about that ethical matter.

You are asked to offer a presentation to the instructor. It must be supported by supplementary materials you prepare and submit in advance. Your presentation is followed by a structured dialogue with the instructor.

1. Supplementary Materials. The following materials must be submitted to the instructor no less than 24 hours in advance of your Ethics Analysis Conversation. They include:
 - a) Bibliography: Your bibliography includes the sources used in your presentation. It consists of at least one required course reading and no fewer than six additional scholarly sources.
Note: In addition to these sources, you may include non-scholarly sources.
 - b) Slides: Your slides feature an outline of your thesis and analysis. They also include brief citations to sources used in your presentation. Submit slides in pdf format.

OR

Handout: Your handout features an outline of your thesis and analysis. It also includes brief citations to sources used in your presentation. It must be one page (single-sided) in length.

Note: Ensure your supplementary materials include basic content that supports your presentation. Do not supply a “script” of your presentation. Also, you may submit both slides and a handout, but this does not lead to a higher grade.

2. Presentation (approx. 10 minutes). Describe your thesis and offer a clearly structured supporting analysis. In justifying your ethical claims and conclusions, your analysis must be original, thoughtful, organized, intelligible, and robust. It must also be consistent with the content provided in your supplementary materials.
3. Dialogue (approx. 10 to 15 minutes). The instructor will engage you in conversation by asking questions related to your thesis and analysis. These questions will be shaped by your Ethics Analysis Conversation Proposal, your supplementary materials, and your presentation. Prepare for this dialogue by attending to the following matters:
 - Have a close familiarity with the facts, ideas, and sources that support your analysis. Your own interpretation of them should be persuasive to the instructor.
 - Be acquainted with ethical claims and conclusions that differ from your own. You will be asked to elaborate on any differences you name and, if applicable, those that have gone unnamed.
 - Your analysis might be a springboard for related ethical matters. What are they, and how does your analysis prepare you to explore them?
 - Not all ethical issues can be resolved in a manner that is fully satisfactory. If this is the case for you, be prepared to explain why the issue remains problematic.

Clarity and Style

Your camera and microphone must be on throughout the presentation and dialogue. You must join from a quiet, private space.

Speak clearly. Be honest if you don’t have an answer to a question posed by the instructor.

Grading

Submit your supplementary materials through the course website. Should you fail to submit your supplementary materials 24 hours in advance of your Ethics Analysis Conversation, they will not be graded. You may still submit them within that 24-hour period for the sake of informing the instructor.

Your Ethics Analysis Conversation will last between 25 and 30 minutes. It must happen at its scheduled time. The instructor will change the scheduled time only in the case of an emergency.

Following the conversation, the grade for this assignment, along with instructor feedback, will be both added to the website and sent to you by email.

Supplementary Materials	• Your bibliography includes all the sources used in the analysis, including at least one required course reading and no fewer than six additional scholarly sources.	5%
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	- Your slides/handout feature(s) the thesis and analysis, including any bibliographical sources cited or quoted in the presentation. Ideas are expressed clearly. - Stylistic requirements are met.	
Presentation	- Your thesis statement is identifiable and clearly stated. - Your supporting analysis is original, thoughtful, organized, intelligible, and robust. It addresses alternative perspectives and identifies areas for further exploration. - Your ideas are expressed clearly.	10%
Dialogue	- Your responses show close familiarity with the facts, ideas, and sources that support the analysis. - Your responses show creative thinking when engaging new ideas and areas for further exploration. - Your ideas are expressed clearly.	10%

Course Schedule

SESSIONS	TOPICS	REQUIRED READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1	Introduction to the Course Christian Ethics	Pallant: "Christian Ethics for Every Christian" Wheeler: Introduction, Chapter 1	<i>(Attendance and participation are assessed each week.)</i>
Week 2	Character and the Christian Minister	Willimon: Introduction, Chapter 2	-----
Week 3	Power Dynamics in Ministry Relationships	Wheeler: Chapters 4, 5 Willimon: Chapters 3 (only pages 70-94), 4, 5	<i>Reflection Journal 1</i>
Week 4	Ethical Decision-Making	Wheeler: Chapter 3 <i>Toolkit for Ethical Decision-Making</i>	-----
Week 5	Case Study – Small Group	<i>Toolkit for Ethical Decision-Making</i>	<i>Reflection Journal 2</i> <i>Case Study: Small Group Work</i>
READING WEEK			

Week 6	Ministerial Virtues and Vices I (film)	-----	Case Study: Written Analysis
Week 7	Ministerial Virtues and Vices II (critical discussion of film)	-----	Reflection Journal 3
Week 8	Practical Issues: Ethics in Preaching	Wheeler: Chapter 2 Willimon: Chapters 1, 3 (only pages 60-70)	-----
Week 9	Practical Issues: Sexuality and Ministry	<i>Building Deeper Relationships</i> Pallant: "Talking About Human Sexuality" Shakespeare: "Living with Difference"	-----
Week 10	Practical Issues: End-of-Life Care and Ministry	International Positional Statement on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide Territorial Position Statement on Care at the End of Life Territorial Operating Policy MN 01.002	Reflection Journal 4 Ethics Analysis Conversation Proposal
Week 11	Practical Issues: Suffering and Compassion in Ministry	"Job – Selected Portions" Patterson: "Lament"	-----
Week 12	Concluding Conversations	-----	-----