



Queensland
Theological College



PE402/602

Theological Ethics

Unit Outline

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **Theological Ethics**. It provides a structure for your learning, giving details of lecture topics, assessment requirements, and key resources.

SEMESTER 1 2017



Important notice

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the information given below, **it is the personal responsibility of each student to check the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook**, copies of which may be found in the Library or online at www.actheology.edu.au

It is very important that students plan their time carefully to ensure that reading and especially assignments receive adequate attention and so as to prevent a bottleneck of work at the end of the semester.

It is very important that all quoted material in assignments be properly footnoted and acknowledged. The attention of students is drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed **"Academic Misconduct"**. Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook.

The attention of students is also drawn to the section in the current ACT Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook, headed **"Guidelines for Essays."** (see also the QTC Student Handbook) All essays should comply with these standards.

Information about this unit

Unit description

This unit will begin by considering biblical and theological ethics, including various hermeneutical issues which commonly arise as Christians and churches seek to frame their approaches to ethical matters. The major non-Christian approaches to ethics will then be briefly surveyed, in the form of philosophical ethics. The final six weeks of the Semester will be devoted to the consideration of a number of important ethical issues. Regrettably, in one Semester we cannot even cover all of the really critical issues, let alone others that are relatively common in some contexts.

Learning Outcomes

PE402 Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, students will:

Know and understand:

1. The foundations and shape of theological ethics
2. Major themes in philosophical ethics
3. The relationship between theological and philosophical ethics
4. A selection of contemporary ethical issues

Be able to:

1. Identify the foundations and components of Christian ethics
2. Discuss perspectives in theological ethics
3. Analyse the major themes in philosophical ethics
4. Present an analytical evidence-based argument or perspective in theological ethics

Be in a position to:

1. Integrate perspectives from philosophical and theological ethics into biblical interpretation and Christian thinking
2. Use philosophical and theological ethics for personal understanding and in ministry contexts

PE602 Learning Outcomes

Know and Understand:

1. The foundations and shape of theological ethics
2. Major themes in philosophical ethics
3. The relationship between theological and philosophical ethics
4. A selection of contemporary ethical issues
5. Historic and contemporary approaches to theological ethics

Be able to:

1. Analyse the foundations and components of Christian ethics
2. Evaluate perspectives in theological ethics
3. Construct a theory of Christian ethics
4. Critique the major themes in philosophical ethics
5. Present a critical evidence-based argument or perspective in theological ethics
6. Evaluate historic and contemporary approaches to theological ethics

Be in a position to:

1. Integrate perspectives from philosophical and theological ethics into biblical interpretation and Christian thinking
2. Use philosophical and theological ethics for personal understanding and in ministry contexts
3. Apply philosophical and Christian ethics to contemporary ethical issues

How this Unit Contributes to the Course

Theological Ethics concerns how we apply what has been learnt in the biblical and doctrinal units of your course to the questions of living and functioning as Christians in the real (God-created and now fallen) world.

At QTC, all students studying a two, three or four year course include this unit within their studies. It is an ACT elective unit which is a strongly-recommended option for those taking other, shorter, courses at QTC.

Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

To study PE402/602 Theological Ethics, you need to have completed at least 8cps (= 2 full units) of 300/500 level OT and/or NT, and/or CH, and/or TH and/or or PE units. At QTC, this unit is normally taken in the second or third year of full-time study, unless you are enrolled full-time in a one-year course (DipTh, DipMin, or GradDipDiv). Those studying in one year courses such as the DipTh or GradDipDiv may only take it in their first Semester of study if they are concurrently enrolled in 8cps of OT and NT.

How this unit is organized & what we expect of you

The unit is taught over a 13 week semester. There are three lectures each week, each of 50 minutes duration.

This unit will involve 3 hours per week of contact time. This unit is worth 4 credit points toward your qualification. At Diploma or Bachelor level, a 4 credit-point unit is considered to require a total time commitment of 6–8 hours per week, and 7–9 hours at Master of Divinity level. Students are required to attend all lectures, complete any set pre-reading and complete assessment tasks by the relevant due date.

Teaching staff

LECTURERS

Andrew Bain (Unit Coordinator)

E abain@qtc.edu.au

Robyn Bain (delivering section on bioethics)

E rbain@qtc.edu.au

Other Key Contacts

Registrar's office

Contact the Registrar's office for any queries about which unit to enrol in next, if you wish to change your enrolment, defer due to illness, family circumstances etc., or request an extension for your assessment (criteria apply).

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Moodle functions and queries

Contact the Registrar or the Assistant Registrar for help if something on Moodle is not working, if you need help using Moodle etc.

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Library/Resources

Contact the Librarian for help with finding resources for your assessment, finding full-text database articles, for help with logging into the library databases and catalogue, and for help with how to renew a book for longer or place a hold on a book currently out to another person.

E library@qtc.edu.au

Unit timetable: topics & teaching and learning activities

College Week	Lecture Topics
Week 1	Introduction to the Unit; Theories of Ethics
Week 2	Introduction to Philosophical Ethics
Week 3	Key Biblical Themes & Christian Ethics
Week 4	Key Doctrines & Christian Ethics
Week 5	The Old Testament & Christian Ethics
Week 6	Theological Ethics: Putting it All Together
Mid-Semester Break	
Week 7	Divine Sovereignty & Moral Responsibility
Week 8	Families, Marriage, Children
Week 9	Singleness, Divorce & Remarriage
Week 10	Work & Leisure
Week 11	Wealth & Money
Week 12	Beginning of Life Issues
Week 13	End of Life issues
Assessment Weeks	

PE402 Assessments

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Unless an extension has been applied for and granted in accordance with the Late Penalty Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of 3% of the total possible marks for the Assessment item per calendar day, up to 14 days late.

Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

ASSESSMENT TASK	DESCRIPTION
<p>Take-Home Exam 2000 words 40% of final grade</p>	<p>Students will answer two set questions in total, one relating to each of Sections A and B of the unit. Both set questions will be required, i.e. there will be only two questions on the exam paper.</p>
<p>Public Talk or Sermon, plus Explanation of Approach 3500 words total (Talk: 2000 words; Explanation: 1500 words) 60% of final grade</p>	<p>Students are to prepare the text of a public talk or sermon which would be suitable for delivery to a general Christian audience, on one of the following topics (you may choose your own title):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Christians should approach their paid work/employment (you may, if you choose to do so, address the self-employed or business owners, instead) <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Christian understanding of marriage. <p>The talk should be approximately 2000 words in length. You should include with your talk script a 1500 word explanation / justification of the approach you have taken, which explains how you have applied sound principles of theological ethics in developing your talk, and how you have sought to situate it with respect to relevant approaches within philosophical ethics. It will also, where necessary, supply background to the talk in terms of discussing relevant academic issues which you have identified in your preparation but which cannot easily be directly included in a talk for a general Christian audience.</p>

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Your essays must also be within 10% of the required word limit and your ability to meet this requirement will also be taken into account in determining your mark. QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

ASSESSMENT TASK	DESCRIPTION
<p>Take-Home Exam</p> <p>2500 words</p> <p>40% of final grade</p>	<p>Students will answer three set questions in total, relating to Sections A and B of the unit. All three questions will be required i.e. there will only be only three questions on the exam paper. There will be at least one question relating to each of Sections A and B.</p>
<p>Public Talk or Sermon, plus Explanation of Approach</p> <p>4000 words total</p> <p>(Talk: 2000 words; Explanation: 2000 words)</p> <p>60% of final grade</p>	<p>Students are to prepare the text of a public talk or sermon which would be suitable for delivery to a general Christian audience, on one of the following topics (you may choose your own title):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Christians in a developed country such as Australia should approach the issue of stewardship of personal wealth, money and material possessions; <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Christian understanding of and response to the circumstances and challenges of advanced old age. <p>The talk should be approximately 2000 words in length. You should include with your talk script a 2000 word explanation / justification of the approach you have taken, which explains how you have applied sound principles of theological ethics in developing your talk, and how you have sought to situate it with respect to relevant approaches within philosophical ethics. It will also, where necessary, supply background to the talk in terms of discussing relevant academic issues which you have identified in your preparation but which cannot easily be directly included in a talk for a general Christian audience.</p>

Guide to Assessments

What are we looking for?

Assessment 1

The Take-Home Exam is about breadth of knowledge and understanding, rather than depth. So it is quite a different kind of exercise from the second assessment item. In the take-home exam you have only a small number of words with which to answer each question, and so you should not waste words going into highly specific details, or into any matters which are only indirectly related to the question.

Your main aim in each of your take-home exam answers should be to summarize briefly the major important points in relation to the set question, in a way that directly answers the question.

The take-home exam is not seen as a research exercise, and so you are not expected to do a large amount of reading for it. You should answer the questions set from what you have learnt in lectures, and from a very small number of key works where you can usefully supplement the lectures by referring elsewhere without spending a lot of time reading.

The kinds of works which you refer to will ideally be ones which help you to understand and briefly write about the key points and the big picture in relation to the set questions: this will usually mean more general works or even reference or textbook-level works, rather than highly specialized scholarship which might cause you to focus so much on specific little details that you lose sight of the big picture. The books listed under Section 1 of the Bibliography given below (General Resources on Biblical & Theological Ethics) are the kinds of resources you will find helpful for the take-home exam: particularly Cameron, Hill, O'Donovan's *Resurrection & the Moral Order* (for advanced students), Atkinson, Fedler, and Jones, as well as some articles in the *Oxford Handbook* and *Cambridge Companion* listed. If you do dig up some good specialist resources beyond the lectures and use these very well, this will contribute to your mark – but the main thing you will be marked on will be your ability to clearly and accurately give a short answer to the question, and your ability to do this won't necessarily be helped by doing heaps of extra reading and research.

It is possible to give an adequate answer to the questions without doing any reading beyond the lectures, particularly at the undergraduate level (CH425). Your answers should argue a case rather than just list off or describe relevant facts and details. All direct quotations in your answers from books and articles should be footnoted, but there is no need to footnote the lectures.

Assessment 2

The second (and major) assessment, **the talk or sermon with an explanation**, has two parts to it: a talk, followed by a supporting explanation. Notice that all of the questions are asking you to engage directly with a particular ethical issue. The talk is to be given to a Christian audience, however it is up to you to decide whether you would like to write a general kind of

talk which could be given to any Christian group, or a talk written with a particular group / context in mind (e.g. high-schoolers). Either approach is acceptable, and in past years many students have written good talks of both kinds.

In the talk section of the assignment, you need to supply a full script rather than an outline of your talk. This should be presented in ordinary spoken Australian English, as would be appropriate in contemporary Australia for a sermon or public talk to a group of Christians (unless of course the particular context in which the talk is given calls for a different style). You should ensure that you write and communicate clearly, and structure the talk appropriately.

The talk section of your assignment should contain relatively few footnotes: you should only include these when you directly quote from another source, or refer to a distinctive or relatively unique idea associated with a particular person. A good way to work out whether to footnote something in your talk is to ask whether you would ordinarily indicate to your audience verbally that you are borrowing someone else's idea or words at a particular place (e.g. "John Jones says the following about abortion...").

The second section of your assignment should be written in regular "essay style" (academic prose), i.e. proper sentences, paragraphs, etc. Students should normally include more footnotes in this part of their assignment than in the talk section (about as many per page as in a normal research essay you would write for QTC). The aim of this section is to show the marker that you have researched, thought about, and understood the topic that you have addressed in the talk theologically, and from an academic point of view.

Although it is a great skill in and of itself to be able to write a talk on an ethical issue, generally speaking your talks will contain better content if you are able to locate a range of good resources and use these to help deepen your thinking and add insights beyond your own. An understanding of relevant academic debates and issues will also help you and your hearers to grasp things more thoroughly – and as you are receiving academic credit for this assignment, you need to demonstrate to the marker and to the ACT that you can do academic research related to ethical issues! You don't need to repeat points raised in the talk, so much as explain your thinking: in terms of the literature available on the issue at hand, and relevant biblical and theological considerations, why did you make the points you did, and why did you choose to make them in the way that you did? You should particularly concentrate on the key points and ideas in your talk, as well as any significant issues or questions where Christians tend to be divided, and/or where the literature you read indicated that there is not a consensus.

This is a research exercise, as well as an opportunity to communicate on an ethical issue. That is to say, it is not enough just to cite the Bible, your own ideas, and one or two other references. You are expected to find and use a good number of resources for this assignment, approximately the same number as you normally would for a research assignment at QTC (bearing in mind that some of the topics will have more resources available for them than others, as is typically the case with essays at theological college). Where possible, you should include academic-level as well as popular-level resources.

Learning Resources

There are no required textbooks for this unit. However it is strongly recommended that you do develop a good library of books (or e-books & resources) in the area of ethics. In both paid ministry and the Christian life in general, you will find that these books are among the most frequently-used among your collection.

The following list includes books which may be useful to you in working on your assessments, but which are also worth having on your shelf. Included are overviews of biblical ethics, theological ethics, and works on particular topics or areas within applied ethics. On the last of these three categories, the following list really just gives you some starting points on a small number of important issues – we will talk more about resources in class as we come to some of the topics.

For this course – and beyond it – at the very least it is worth owning a copy of one or two books that outline an evangelical and reformed approach to theological ethics, plus several books on key areas of ethics that will come up a lot in ministry, as well as any works that you find useful in relating the Bible / biblical passages to ethics and ethical questions. In terms of a book on theological ethics, personally I've found Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and Moral Order* to be my best contemporary guide over the past few years. However this book is difficult to read and will not suit the majority of students. Andrew Cameron's *Joined Up Life*, below, is more accessible and written for the Australian context, as is Michael Hill's *The How and Why of Love*. The second of these is written at a lower level and is a little easier to follow, but on the other hand provides less of a developed theological ethic. The *Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics* and the *Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics* both contain much that could be useful as you work on the assessments. The authors within these books will not always have written from your own theological perspective, but they will give you good overviews of current theological scholarship on a range of ethical matters.

Essential References – Textbook/s

None required, but see comments and advice above.

Other References

1. General Resources on Biblical & Theological Ethics

Atkinson, David J., David H. Field, Arthur F. Holmes and Oliver O'Donovan, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics & Pastoral Theology*. Nottingham: IVP, 1995.

Banner, Michael. *Christian Ethics & Contemporary Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Banner, Michael. *Christian Ethics: A Brief History*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

I.15-18; II.1-9; III.1-20; IV, 1, 12-13, 20 in: Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox, 1960.

Cameron, Andrew. *Joined Up Life*. Nottingham: IVP, 2011.

Fedler, Kyle D. *Exploring Christian Ethics*. Louisville, KY: WJK, 2006.

Hays, R. *The Moral Vision Of The New Testament*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

Jones, David C. *Biblical Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Hill, M. *The How and Why of Love: An Introduction to Evangelical Ethics*. Sydney: Matthias Press, 2002.

Meilaender, Gilbert and William Werpehowski eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Moore, Russell. *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.

O'Donovan, O. *Common Objects of Love: Moral Reflection and the Shaping of Community*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

O'Donovan, O. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Rosner, B., ed. *Understanding Paul's Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. Wenham, Gordon. *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Wogaman, J. P. *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*. Louisville: WJK, 2011. Wright, Christopher. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Nottingham: IVP, 2004.

2. Introductions to Philosophical Ethics

Berkman, John & Cartwright, Michael G., eds., *The Stanley Hauerwas Reader*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2001.

Deigh, John. *An Introduction to Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Graham, Gordon. *Eight Theories of Ethics*. London & New York: Routledge, 2004.

Selected articles in: Martin, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. (may be of interest in relating parts of the unit content to non-Christian perspectives).

See also: Williams, Bernard. "Ethics." Pages 545-582 in *Philosophy 1: A Guide Through the Subject*. Edited by A.C. Grayling. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

3. Books Addressing Particular Areas & Issues in Ethics

Ash, Christopher. *Marriage: Sex in the Service of God*. Vancouver: Regent, 2003.

Best, Megan. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. Sydney: Matthias Media, 2012.

Claar, V. V., and R. J. Klay. *Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choices*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP; 2007.

Frame, John. *Medical Ethics*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1989.

Gill, Robin. *Health Care & Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Hay, D. A. *Economics Today: A Christian Critique*. Vancouver: Regent College, 2004.

Hays, J. D. *From Every People And Nation: A Biblical Theology Of Race* (Leicester/ Downers Grove: Apollos/ IVP, 2003).

Kostenberger, Andreas. *God, Marriage & Family*. 2nd ed. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Long, D. S., N. R. Fox and T. York. *Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics, and Economics*. Waco, TX: Baylor, 2007.

Lysaught, M. Therese and Joseph J. Kotva, Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey. eds. *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives on Medical Ethics*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Meilaender, Gilbert. *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Moore, R. *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2015.

Moore, R. *The Christ-Shaped Marriage: Love, Fidelity, and the Gospel*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016.

O'Donovan, Oliver. *Begotten or Made?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

O'Donovan, Oliver. *The Ways of Judgement*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. See also his earlier and more advanced work on the same theme, *The Desire of the Nations* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Porter, J. *Nature as Reason*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Ray, D. K., ed. *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

Rosner, B. *Beyond Greed*. Sydney: Matthias Media, 2004.

Schweiker, W., and C. T. Mathewes, eds. *Having: Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Singer, Peter & A. M. Viens, eds. *The Cambridge Textbook of Bioethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Stott, John. *New Issues Facing Christians Today*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Swift, Adam. *Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians*. Cambridge: Polity, 2001.

Tripp, T. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995.

Van Til, K. A. *Less Than Two Dollars a Day: A Christian View of World Poverty and the Free Market*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 2007.

Verhey, Allen. *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Woodbridge, R. & D. W. Jones. *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.

Wyatt, John. *Matters of Life and Death: Human dilemmas in the light of the Christian faith*. Nottingham: IVP, 2009.

In addition, it is important and worthwhile to relate our thinking in this unit to the major historical creeds and confessions. In the case of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapters IV, VI, XVI, XIX-XXV and XXX are of particular relevance to the study of Christian Ethics.

The ACT Undergraduate/Graduate Handbook entry for this unit also provides a list of references which may prove useful to you. <http://www.actheology.edu.au/handbooks.php>

ACT Standards: Grades

Grades in assessment instruments are awarded in the following categories-

Grade	Score	GPA
Fail (F)	0-49%	0
Pass (P)	50-57%	1
Pass+ (P+)	58-64%	1.5
Credit (C)	65-74%	2
Distinction (D)	75-84%	3
High Distinction (HD)	85+%	4