Course Profile

Course # and Title: RHTH/CC 420: Introduction to Christian Ethics
Instructor: Marvin Wickware
Semester/Year: Fall 2020

Course Rationale and Description
(Why do we offer this course? Which of LSTC’s degree program learning outcomes does it address?):

Ethics, as an area of study, deals with two fundamental questions: 1) What should we do? and 2) Why should we do it? In this course, we will examine a range of ethical frameworks including social ethics, virtue ethics, womanist ethics, and theological ethics. Leaning into the overlapping, intersecting relations of these frameworks, students will be encouraged to discern the framework(s) that best guide their ethical thought and action as they engage in ministry. The course will involve a particular emphasis on analysis and discussion of contemporary case studies as we work to sharpen our capacity to discern ethical responses to pressing issues and hold those responses accountable to Christian faith commitments.

This course addresses the following learning outcomes for each degree program.

MDiv learning competencies:
1) Personal and Spiritual Formation: Conveys a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community; (ELCA) Conveys a developed sense of being created and called to give witness to Jesus Christ, Trinitarian faith, care for creation, and community with human neighbors.
   • Connects personal faith and public witness
   • Reflects upon God’s grace, justice, and mercy in one’s own life and the life of the world
3) History & Theology: Draws the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges.
   • Connects Christian tradition with contemporary knowledge and experience
   • Identifies criteria/norms used in own analysis and assessment
   • Imparts results of historical and theological analysis
4) Ministry Arts and Public Leadership: Guides and supports communities that discern and develop the gifts of all people.
   • Articulates a sense of self as leader
   • Pronounces a personal and communal/ecclesial call to ministry and basic vision for ministry, informed by theological studies and vibrant personal faith
5) Cultural Context: Manifests the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one’s own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.
   • Analyzes and assesses social locations and cultural/religious contexts
   • Speaks theologically and pastorally about structural inequalities present in society
MAM learning competencies:
1) Personal and Spiritual Formation: Conveys a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community; (ELCA) Conveys a developed sense of being created and called to give witness to Jesus Christ, Trinitarian faith, care for creation, and community with human neighbors.
   • Connects personal faith and public witness
   • Reflects upon God’s grace, justice, and mercy in one’s own life and the life of the world
3) History & Theology: Draws the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges.
   • Connects Christianity, or other religious traditions, with contemporary knowledge and experience
   • Identifies criteria /norms used in own analysis and assessment
   • Imparts results of historical and theological analysis
4) Ministry Arts and Public Leadership: Guides and supports communities that discern and develop the gifts of all people.
   • Articulates a sense of self as leader
   • Appraises the intersections of church and world
   • Pronounces a personal and communal/ecclesial call to ministry and basic vision for ministry, informed by theological studies and vibrant personal faith
5) Cultural Context: Manifests the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one’s own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.
   • Analyzes and assesses social locations and cultural/religious contexts
   • Speaks theologically and empathically about structural inequalities present in society
   • Responds to the needs of those who are marginalized

MA learning competencies:
1) Personal and Spiritual Formation: Conveys a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community.
   • Connects religious commitments, public witness, and academic pursuits
3) History & Theology: Draws the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges.
   • Connects religious traditions with contemporary knowledge and experience
   • Identifies criteria /norms used in own analysis and assessment
   • Imparts results of historical and theological analysis
4) Cultural Context: Manifests the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one’s own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.
   • Analyzes and assesses social locations and cultural/religious contexts
   • Speaks theologically about structural inequalities present in society
Course Learning Outcomes (Learners will be able to):
(What difference will this course make to students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)

Learners will be able to:
1) identify a range of influential ethical frameworks.
2) situate their ethical thought in relation to those ethical frameworks.
3) discern contemporary ethical issues of greatest importance to self, church, and society
4) respond to contemporary ethical issues from within the ethical framework(s) they find most compelling

Strategies for Learning:
(How shall we go about achieving these outcomes?)
- Course readings
- Lectures
- Small group discussions
- Case study presentations: Each student will lead a discussion on a case study that highlights a contemporary ethical issue. Students will present the basic details of their case study, pose ethical questions for discussion, and guide the class in drawing theological connections to those ethical questions.
- Final project: Students will write a brief final paper in which they lay out the ethical framework(s) within which they engage in ministry. This brief paper will be accompanied by a project (e.g., sermon, adult forum series) in which they respond to a contemporary ethical issue from within their ethical framework(s).

Assessment:
(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the outcomes?)
- Written feedback on students’ presentations and final project
- Class discussions
- Feedback sessions: At several points during the course, the professor will take a small amount of class time to solicit feedback on the course.

Bibliography:

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