

BRDGS 105T-07: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL REASONING

Canevin Hall 201, 1:40-2:55pm, Fall 2024

Instructor: Gregory Jones, Ph.D. · **Email:** jonesg3@duq.edu · **Zoom Time for Students:** M-F, by request

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is a “good life,” and how do we live it? How do I make decisions about my life and how I treat others? In our social-media-connected yet highly polarized times, where artificial intelligence is slowly but surely emerging, it is helpful to see how various religious and philosophical traditions have answered these questions in human ways. As Robin W. Lovin explains:

“[People’s] ideas about what it means to live a good life are shaped by their ideas about human nature, whether life has a purpose, and what they expect from the future. A Christian who believes that all things come from God will answer questions about living a good human life differently from a scientific materialist who believes that everything is just matter in motion...There are Buddhist ethics, existentialist ethics, free-market ethics, Muslim ethics, and even egocentric ethics alongside of Christian ethics, but there is never just plain ethics.”¹

TL;DR: everyone has their own way of defining and doing ethical reasoning! It is good to be a part of the conversation in which all of these ethical stances are in play. It is crucial to cultivate, understand, and express how one defines and lives out their own ethical “stance.” This class will help you begin to understand the way in which the Christian tradition defines and models ethics. No matter what background you come from, you can use this foundation as a launchpad for answering the questions about the good life and good treatment of others using your own thoughts, actions, and words.

2. COURSE PROCESS

What is my ethical stance? This is the question that we will think, read, watch, and talk through! Each class session involves a brief lecture and group discussions of the daily topic. There are four Units: Background, Context, Future, and Presentations.

3. COURSE GOALS

This course does not presume a religious background. Everyone will become:

Informed to Learn major concepts and ideas associated with Christian ethical reasoning,

Equipped to Adapt theological insights to examine their own choices, their lives, and their communities,

Inspired to Articulate one’s current level of ethical reasoning through improving skills in reflective reading and writing, and

Engaged to Examine a variety of questions and problems through a theologically ethical lens.

4. COURSE TEXTS / MEDIA (access to these and other readings are all found on Canvas, in the “Books” Module)

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

Keenan, James F. *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics*. 2018. McLaren, Brian D. *The Great Spiritual Migration*. 2016.

5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

You need certain hardware/software for this course. Please reach out to your Advisor or contact Gumberg Library if you need help accessing...

- Devices for recording audio and video in MOV, MP4, M4V format (tablet, computer, laptop, smartphone).
- Apps for creating and recording presentations (PowerPoint, Keynote, VoiceThread, Canva, Prezi, etc.).
- A reliable Internet connection for accessing Canvas, watching lesson videos, and completing Weekly Paths and Exams.

Technical difficulties do not excuse you from completing Paths/Exams on time (see 7. Course Conduct). If tech difficulties occur, please contact the IT Service Department first, and include my email address to the ticket as well, to keep me updated as you resolve the issue.

Gumberg Library Phone: (412) 396-6130 | Gumberg Library Email: ask@duq.libanswers.com

IT Service Desk Contacts: <https://www.duq.edu/about/departments-and-offices/cts/contact-the-it-service-desk.php>

6. COURSE ACTIVITIES / GRADING

All students start at zero and build points toward their grade, rather than start with a perfect score and lose points for mistakes. This approach emphasizes the paths to successful learning, rather than emphasizing the mistakes.

¹ Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), vii.