

BRDG 105T-06: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL REASONING

10-10:50AM – M, W, F Spring 2023 · Fisher Hall 607

Instructor: Greg Jones · jonesg3@duq.edu · Zoom Office Hours: T, R 10-12pm or by appt.

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, it is helpful to see how various religious and philosophical traditions have answered these questions. 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 religious 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, play, and talk through in this course! Each class session is an “interactive lecture” in three parts:

- > First, there will be an optional opportunity to open the class with “Music/Visual Presentation” (MVP) that explores an ethical theme from a song/music video from the class playlist or from their personal collection (4-min max).
- > Second, we will talk through the featured reading via a class-wide discussion. These discussions are guided by “reading guides,” which are explained in further detail in “Reading Guides.” I expect students to remain current with these readings and to speak often in class discussions.
- > Third, there will be an optional opportunity to conclude the class with a brief presentation of a key phrase or sentence from the reading, and an overall decision as to whether the presenter agrees or disagrees with the reading, supported by several reasons (4-min max).
- > There are three “units” in this course. The first unit offers *An Introduction to Christian Ethics*, as Robin W. Lovin describes the Christian ethical “stance.” The second unit offers Catholic theologian James F. Keenan’s ethical assessment of the college context, in selections from *University Ethics* and *Moral Wisdom*. The third unit offers Brian McLaren’s vision of *The Great Spiritual Migration* that anticipates one possible future direction of Christian ethics.

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

Informed to Learn the 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.

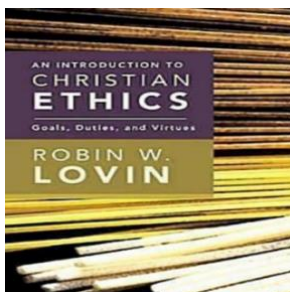
4. COURSE TEXTS / MEDIA:

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

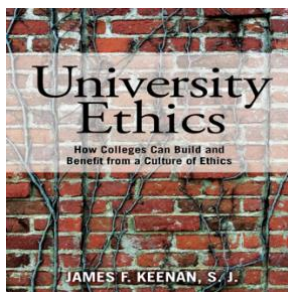
Keenan, James F. *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics*. 2018.

McLaren, Brian D. *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian*. 2016.

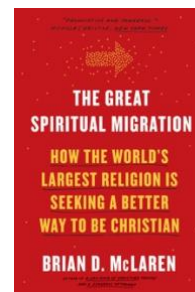
Other readings/materials are available on Canvas.



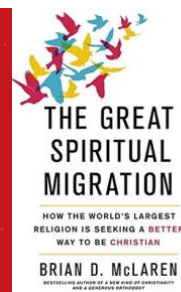
Lovin



Keenan



McLaren



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