

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THST 550  
PRINCIPLES OF  
CHRISTIAN ETHICS

*Summer 2013*  
*July 14-18*

*Dr. Jo Ann Davidson*

InMinistry Center Intensive  
MA in Pastoral Ministry





central reference of Christian ethics is God Himself, who is the source of all moral requirements. Christian ethics begins with God and ends with Him. In this it is distinguished from other types of ethical thinking which ground morality within human nature or define human happiness or perfection as the ultimate goal. When divorced from its theological ground, the study of Christian ethics becomes nothing more than a humanistic ideal.

There are two main classifications of ethical theory, formulated in response to the problem “why right is right”:

1. Formal (deontological) theories which regard rightness as an intrinsic quality of the action itself; and
2. Teleological theories which consider morality to be determined by the ends, goals and objectives of that action.

Emmanuel Kant’s ethic of duty is an example of the former; the Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham is a representative of the latter. Characteristic of both, however, is their human reference center. Christian ethics, with a biblical foundation, views right conduct as being the appropriate response of the total human being to divine revelation.

More specifically, an examination of biblical and theological resources suggests that the righteousness of God is the “plumb line” for human goodness. How we relate to God affects what we do (Col. 3:12). However, Christianity maintains that we cannot *be* good by thinking good, nor *do* good by trying hard. Rather, goodness is a “fruit of the Spirit.” It stems from our response to the status conferred upon us by a sovereign, loving Creator and Savior.

### **Course Content**

Introduction: The Study of Human Behavior

Definition of Christian Ethics

Nature and Function of Moral Values

Teleological Theories of Ethics

Deontology and Ethics

The role and authority of Scripture in Christian Ethics: the Genesis of Ethics

Ethical decision-making: Morality of the Heart

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### **COURSE MATERIALS**

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Required:

1. Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996) [ISBN: 9780060928070].
2. Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) [ISBN: 9780310291091].
3. Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010) [ISBN: 9780816324170], chapters 39-44, on Daniel.

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## OUTCOMES

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### Program Learning Outcomes (PO)

#### *MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPMin) English Program Outcomes*

1. Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills and application of biblical teachings.

### Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) The student should be able to:

1. Conduct graduate level theologically sound research.

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## GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

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### Criteria for Grades

The final grade for this course will be based on the total accumulation of points from the written exam and your written assignments with the following percentages applied. Class absences and late assignments will also affect your final grade.

A	=	94 – 100%	C	=	64 – 79%
A-	=	90 – 93%	C-	=	60 – 63%
B	=	84 – 89%	D	=	50 – 59%
B-	=	80 – 83%			

### Assignment Submission

All assignments should be submitted to me as MS Word documents via [jad@andrews.edu](mailto:jad@andrews.edu) dated no later than the day the assignment is due.

### Extra Credit

There is no extra credit work available in this course.

### Academic Integrity

Please make sure that there are no traces of any form of plagiarism in your written work. If any form of plagiarism is detected, the assignment will receive 0 points. For more information, please see Class Policies. For more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, please visit <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

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## BEFORE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

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1. **Reading** Carefully read the required reading materials:
  - a. Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996) [ISBN: 9780060928070].
  - b. Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) [ISBN: 9780310291091].
  - c. Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010) [ISBN: 9780816324170], chapters 39-44, on Daniel.

2. **Reflection Paper on *Prophets and Kings*.** Prepare a 3-4 page response (typed, double spaced) to Ellen G. White's chapters 39-44 in *Prophets and Kings*. Recount how your own ethical thinking has been challenged. **This paper is due on the first day of the intensive.**

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**DURING THE INTENSIVE**

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1. I suggest that you spend 2-3 hours studying each evening, in addition to the time spent in class. This additional study time should be largely directed toward preparation for the **final examination** which is scheduled for **Thursday, July 18, 2-4 pm.**
2. Only one course examination will be given during the intensive. The material for the examination will cover both class lectures and textbooks. The format will be essay questions (no true-or-false or multiple choice).
3. Academic policy requires regular attendance at all lectures during the intensive. Absences of more than 10% may jeopardize your final grade.

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**AFTER THE INTENSIVE**

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1. **Position Paper.** Write a position paper, minimum 15 pages (excluding the title page and bibliography) on a topic on which you have agreed with the professor. This paper needs to include your personal position regarding the ethical issue involved, supported by resources (books and articles) that have informed your thinking. You will be evaluated on BOTH the substantiation AND the cogency of your argument. **This paper is due on December 1, 2013.** Late papers will lose points.

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**ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES**

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**REFLECTION PAPER RUBRIC**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Level 5 Exceptional 5 points</b>	<b>Level 4 Proficient 4 points</b>	<b>Level 3 Satisfactory 3 points</b>	<b>Level 2 Emerging 2 points</b>	<b>Level 1 Unsatisfactory 1 point</b>	<b>Weight x Level</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Material clearly introduced; a concise and succinct summary is presented, along with a well-crafted, thought-provoking thesis statement		Material clearly introduced; a two sentence summary presented; leads into thesis statement		Material not introduced; summary not included; no clear thesis sentence	20%  Out of 5  _____  x 4
<b>Body</b>	Thesis is supported with five insightful points that not only support argument but also address personal philosophical perspective		Thesis adequately supported by 3-5 points; insightful and well integrated argument			40%  Out of 5  _____  x 8
<b>Conclusion</b>	Main points summarized, thesis freshly restated, and significance noted		Main points summarized, thesis restated, and significance noted		No restatement of main points and thesis statement, or reference to significance of material	20%  Out of 5  _____  x 4
<b>Mechanics</b>	Free of all mechanical errors		One or two mechanical errors		More than five mechanical errors	20%  Out of 5  _____  x 4
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>/100</b>  <b>=</b>  <b>/10</b>

**POSITION PAPER RUBRIC**

Criteria Category		Exceeds Standard (5)	(4)	Good (3)	(2)	Does Not Meet Standard (1)	Absent (0)	Score	
10 %	<b>Introduction</b>	The introduction is engaging, states the main topic and clearly previews the paper.		The introduction states the main topic but does not adequately preview the paper.		Unclear and convoluted introduction.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____
10 %	<b>Purpose</b>	Clearly and concisely states the paper's purpose in a single sentence, which is engaging, and thought provoking.		The purpose is stated but is not succinct, not very clear and has more than one sentence.		The purpose is not clearly stated or not understandable.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____
20 %	<b>Content</b>	Balanced presentation of relevant information that clearly supports the purpose. Thoughtful, in-depth analysis of the topic. Reader gains important insight.		Information is only partly related to the purpose.  Some analysis of the topic.  Reader gains some insight.		Information is disconnected from the purpose.  Analysis is vague or confused.  Reader gains no insight.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 10 _____
20 %	<b>Organization-Structural Development of the Idea</b>	The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose, flowing smoothly from one to another and clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.		The ideas are arranged in a somewhat logical way, although occasionally they fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about the writer's intentions.		The writing is not logically organized. Ideas frequently fail to make sense. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 10 _____
10 %	<b>Conclusion</b>	The conclusion is engaging, restates the purpose, concisely summarizes the paper and states the main conclusions.		The conclusion does not refer to the purpose. The main ideas and conclusions are somewhat logically arranged.		The conclusion is confusing, does not re-state the purpose, is incomplete or unfocused, and introduces new information.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____
10 %	<b>Mechanics</b>	No errors in spelling, capitalization or formatting. Clear headings and subheadings.		Some errors in spelling, capitalization or formatting. Headings and subheadings are generally clear.		Numerous and distracting errors in spelling, capitalization and formatting.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____
10 %	<b>Citation</b>	All cited works are presented in the correct format with no errors.		Cited works are presented in a mostly correct format. Inconsistencies somewhat evident.		Few cited works with inconsistent formatting.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____
10 %	<b>Bibliography</b>	Presented in the correct format with no errors. Includes more than 10+ major references (books and articles) but no more than two internet sites. Evidence that most references were used in text.		Presented in the correct format with some errors. Includes 5-10 major references but no more than 2 internet sites. It is clear that some references were not used in text.		Many errors in formatting. Fewer than 4 major references, with some listed as internet sites. References are mostly unrelated to the text.		Out of 5 _____	Out of 5 _____

**Total (out of 50)** \_\_\_\_\_

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## CLASS POLICIES

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### **Submission of Assignments**

Late assignments will lose points. Plagiarism of other student materials or any published materials results in an automatic failing grade.

### **Other Policies**

Students are responsible for the material presented in class. It is acceptable to share one's notes with a student who missed a lecture or part of its contents. However, class notes are not to be distributed to individuals not registered for this course either free of charge or for a fee. The instructor reserves all author's rights to the lecture material.

### **Recordings**

Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classroom presentations must first obtain written consent from the Seminary dean and then obtain consent from the course instructor.

### **Examinations**

"Credit is not granted in courses unless the required examinations are completed by the student. Students are expected to follow the published examination schedule. In cases where the schedule requires a student to complete four exams in one day, arrangements may be made with the dean to complete one of the examinations at another time." *AU Bulletin*

### **Class Attendance**

"Regular attendance at all classes, laboratories and other academic appointments is required for each student. Faculty members are expected to keep regular attendance records. The syllabus notifies students of the attendance requirements." *AU Bulletin*

### **Teacher Tardiness**

"Teachers have the responsibility of getting to class on time. If a teacher is detained and will be late, the teacher must send a message to the class with directions. If after 10 minutes no message has been received, students may leave without penalty. If teacher tardiness persists, students have the right to notify the department chair, or if the teacher is the department chair, to notify the dean." *AU Bulletin*

### **Class Absences**

"Whenever the number of absences exceeds 20% (10% for graduate classes) of the total course appointments, the teacher may give a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

Registered students are considered class members until they file a Change of Registration form in the Office of Academic records." *AU Bulletin*

### **Excused Absences**

"Excuses for absences due to illness are granted by the teacher. Proof of illness is required. Residence hall students are required to see a nurse on the first day of any illness which interferes with class

attendance. Non-residence hall students should show written verification of illness obtained from their own physician. Excuses for absences not due to illness are issued directly to the dean's office. Excused absences do not remove the student's responsibility to complete all requirements of a course. Class work is made up by permission of the teacher." *AU Bulletin*

### **Academic Integrity**

"In harmony with the mission statement (p.18), Andrews University expects that students will demonstrate the ability to think clearly for themselves and exhibit personal and moral integrity in every sphere of life. Thus, students are expected to display honesty in all academic matters.

Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) the following acts: falsifying official documents; plagiarizing, which includes copying others' published work, and/or failing to give credit properly to other authors and creators; misusing copyrighted material and/or violating licensing agreements (actions that may result in legal action in addition to disciplinary action taken by the University); using media from any source or medium, including the Internet (e.g., print, visual images, music) with the intent to mislead, deceive or defraud; presenting another's work as one's own (e.g. placement exams, homework, assignments); using material during a quiz or examination other than those specifically allowed by the teacher or program; stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials; copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz; assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., falsifying attendance records, providing unauthorized course materials).

Andrews University takes seriously all acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts as described above are subject to incremental discipline for multiple offenses and severe penalties for some offenses. These acts are tracked in the office of the Provost. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to the Committee for Academic Integrity for recommendations on further penalties. Consequences may include denial of admission, revocation of admission, warning from a teacher with or without formal documentation, warning from a chair or academic dean with formal documentation, receipt of a reduced or failing grade with or without notation of the reason on the transcript, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university.

Departments or faculty members may publish additional, perhaps more stringent, penalties for academic dishonesty in specific programs or courses." *AU Bulletin*

### **Language and Grammar**

There is an expectation that a student enrolled in a graduate program possesses advanced written language skills, particularly in the language in which the degree is acquired. Thus, no special consideration will be given to English as a second language learners or native-English speakers who have yet to obtain mastery in written English. Such students are advised to seek the assistance of the campus writing lab or procure the services of an editor prior to the submission of their assignments. *Tips for success* include reading your assignments aloud and having someone else do likewise prior to submission. This practice will provide you with immediate feedback on your written assignments.

### **Emergency Protocol**

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

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## INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

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Daughter of missionary parents, Jo Ann Davidson is also a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist. She recalls her mother saying to her, "the blessings of being a Seventh-day Adventist have surely seeped into your genes and chromosomes by now!"

Formerly a home schooling mom and music instructor, Jo Ann now teaches in the Andrews University Theological Seminary—the first woman to teach in the Theology department. She earned her Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, IL) in 2000.



Articles she has written have appeared in the *Adventist Review*, *Signs of the Times*, and the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, along with a column, "Let's Face It," in the journal *Perspective Digest*. She has also authored the books *Jonah: The Inside Story* (Review and Herald), *Toward a Theology of Beauty: A Biblical Perspective* (University Press of America), and *Glimpses of Our God* (Pacific Press).

Jo Ann finds great fulfillment in her many roles as wife, mother, daughter, sister, auntie, teacher, musician, student and Seventh-day Adventist Christian.