COURSE AIMS:

Before we dive right in, we should pause to acknowledge how wonderful a privilege it is to study what God has revealed to us in the Scriptures. Ethics is the study of living in the presence of God in reliance upon his infallible and authoritative Word and by the ministry of his wise Spirit, and I trust the time spent reflecting prayerfully on these things will be of great spiritual benefit to you and those to whom you minister.

The goal of this course is for you (1) to gain a solid grasp of the basic questions, issues, and formulations in theological and pastoral ethics; (2) to learn how to approach questions in ethics from historical, exegetical/biblical-theological, and systematic theological perspectives; (3) to become familiar with the best work in these areas within the Reformed tradition; (4) to learn what are the important questions, theologians, and proposals currently under discussion in and outside the circles of conservative Reformed Christianity; and (5) to begin to think through the implications of Reformed ethics for church life in general and pastoral life in particular.

Though the lectures will vary in emphasis as the material requires, we will try to focus our limited time on the following priorities: (1) cultivate a nuanced sensitivity to the exegetical, biblical-theological deep structures of a Reformed theological handling of the Scriptures for ethical questions; (2) develop a sound understanding of the various models, terms, and approaches to ethics in the Christian tradition; and (3) become familiar with the issues and questions that have figured prominently in recent Reformed debates over ethics. Especially because of our intensive format, in this course the readings are just as important as the lectures, and the final exam will require a familiarity with both.

ASSESSMENT:

20% Completion of all course readings
20% Digests
60% Final Exam

READINGS:

N.B.: If you have not done so in the past few years, please read the following first:


Required readings include:

**Westminster Standards**

I will provide a fuller bibliography during our meetings in June for eager students interested in further study.

**Final Exam:** This will cover both the lectures and the readings, and will include both objective (fill in, multiple choice) and subjective (essay) questions. I will ask you on the final exam if you have completed 100% of the required readings.

**Digest:**

In place of a regular research paper, you are to put together a thoughtful digest that has the following elements:

1. Summarize the content of each of the required articles/essays (not the books!). This should be approximately 1-2 pages for each article/essay. Please don’t quote the author unless absolutely necessary to your summary: no filler!
2. Choose one of the article/essay readings and provide 3-4 pages of your own brief, coherent, and fair interaction with it. Interact with Scripture, the history of theology, and the class lectures where appropriate.

This means you should end up with four separate digests, one each for Gaffin, Kline, Gordon, and Tipton. One of these four should be 3-4 pages; the other three should be 1-2 pages. You will find that the material you gather in these digests (and your book readings) helps you review for the final exam.