

**Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington DC**

**Pastoral and Social Ethics (6ST528)**

**3 credits**

**Spring 2012**

Instructor: Geoffrey M. Sackett

Contact info: gsackett@rts.edu

Wednesdays, February 1 – April 25 (no class week of April 1)

12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**I. Office Hours**

By appointment. I'm delighted to meet with you – please feel free to contact me.

**II. Course Description**

This course examines biblical Christian ethics – its foundations, norms, and application to pastoral and social issues. We will also consider alternative ethical systems and the apologetic function of Christian ethics.

**III. Goals and Expectations**

We will seek to –

- a. Grow in our confidence in scripture as the ultimate norm for ethics
- b. Improve in our ability to make ethical decisions that are honoring to the Lord
- c. Enhance our ability to evaluate alternative ethical systems
- d. Grasp the centrality of God's grace as we seek to live the blessed life as defined by scripture

Since we will spend a portion of class time analyzing and discussing our texts, along with the ramifications of their ideas for life and ministry, it is important that we have read our texts by the assigned date. Please bring the assigned reading with you to class each day.

**IV. Required Texts**

J. Douma, *The Ten Commandments*

David Clyde Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics*

Jay Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*

Various articles will be made available via Self-Service.

## **V. Evaluation and Assignments**

1. Ten quizzes. (20%) No quiz the first day of class.
2. Précis on Adams. (20%) Due February 22.
3. Mid-term exam. (20%) Due March 14. Covers lectures and reading.
4. Paper. 5-7 pages. (20%) Due April 11.
5. Final exam. (20%) Due May 2. Covers lectures and reading.

More information about the assignments will be given in class early in the semester.

## **VI. Readings and Schedule**

### February 1

Lectures:

- Course introduction

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 1

### February 8

Lectures:

- Virtue ethics
- Natural law

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 2

### February 15

Lectures:

- Deontology
- Utilitarianism

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 3

February 22

**PRECIS ON ADAMS DUE**

Lectures:

- Contemporary non-Christian ethics

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 4

February 29

Lectures:

- Christian ethical norms – God and scripture

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 5

March 7

Lectures:

- Scripture and ethics – the coherence and relevance of scripture, biblical decision-making

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 6
- Douma, Appendix

March 14

**MID-TERM EXAM DUE**

Lectures:

- Introduction to the Decalogue

Reading:

- Jones, chapter 7
- Douma, Prologue

- John Murray, “Law and Grace”, from *Principles of Conduct*

### March 21

Lectures:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> commandments

Reading:

- Douma, the first commandment
- Douma, the second commandment

### March 28

Lectures:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> commandments

Reading:

- Douma, the third commandment
- Douma, the fourth commandment

### April 4 – NO CLASS

Lectures:

- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> commandments

Reading:

- Douma, the fifth commandment
- Douma, the sixth commandment

### April 11

#### **PAPER DUE**

Lectures:

- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> commandments

Reading:

- Douma, the seventh commandment

- Douma, the eighth commandment

### April 18

Lectures:

- 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments

Reading:

- Douma, the ninth commandment
- Douma, the tenth commandment

### April 25

Lectures:

- Christ and culture

Reading:

- TBD

### May 2

## **FINAL EXAM DUE**

### **VII. Grading Policy**

The standard RTS grading scale will be used.

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	.66
F	(below 70)	0.00

### Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Pastoral and Social Ethics

Professor: Geoff Sackett

Campus: Washington

Date: October 27, 11

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Exams, paper, and class discussion on ethical matters test students' knowledge and abilities
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Not an exegesis class, but the proper use and understanding of scripture figures prominently in every aspect of the course
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Reformed theological ethics is emphasized and encouraged
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Knowing God as source and norm of the good life leads to loving praise
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Scripture is emphasized as norm for faithful ethics
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Demonstrating kindness from a Reformed worldview is emphasized
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Preaching not required, but students are encouraged to preach on the ethical life
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern	None	

	Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.		
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	Emphasis is placed on God's standards and grace for living the blessed life
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Ethics applied to the Christian life, the church, and the world is emphasized