

Asbury Theological Seminary Syllabus



Christian Philosophy and Ethics of Work

PH650

July 21-25 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

3 Credit Hours

Kevin Kinghorn, Professor of Philosophy and Religion

Course Description

A philosophical and theological reflection on the role that God intends for work to play, both in our own growth in Christ and in helping realize God's intention for how we should live together. We will then explore the ethical implications of the economic structures of modern commercial interactions, as well as the potential of decision-making procedures to help us navigate moral complexities within business.

I. WELCOME FROM KEVIN KINGHORN

Welcome to PH650! Ahead of our interaction in class, let me offer a few words about myself. I'm Professor of Philosophy and Religion here at Asbury Theological Seminary, and I teach a range of classes in philosophy and theology. I've been part of the Asbury Theological Seminary community for quite some time, having received my M.Div in the early 1990s and having taught classes at Asbury since the year 2000. I'm married to Barbara, and we have two children, Anna Keren and Joseph. God can use the relationships within our families to teach us so much about our relationship with Him, yes? What a wonderful adventure family life is! ☺

It's a common refrain among Christians that God can find a way to use our pasts in His unfolding plans for our lives. After majoring in economics and political science in college, I later pursued what I felt (and still feel) is God's calling to teach in the areas of philosophy of religion and Christian moral philosophy. This course serves as a kind of intersect between these areas of philosophy and my 'old' interests of economics and political science. So I'm truly excited about this course bringing together some of the issues I've cared deeply about for most of

my adult life. I'm even more excited about what I might learn from this class, as each person brings his or her own experiences to our time together!

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the key outcomes that scripture and Christian tradition affirm should govern our commercial interactions.
2. Integrate abstract ethical principles with concrete instances of decision-making in business.
3. Articulate proposals that advance a Christian ethic within secular workplaces.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

- (1) ******(1) S.B. Rae and K.L. Wong (ed.) *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics*, **2nd edition**. (Zondervan, **2004**) ISBN: 978-0310240020
- (2) Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *The Economy of Desire*. (Baker, 2012) ISBN: 9780801035739
- (3) Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (Wipf and Stock, 1991) ISBN: 9781579106416
- (4) *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*. T.V. Morris (Holt & Co., 1998) ISBN: 9780805052534

******Please note: there is a newer, 3rd edition (2009) of this book; but we are actually using the previous, 2nd edition from 2004.

Textbooks are available through Asbury Theological Seminary's Tree of Life Bookstore: (859)-858-4242. <http://www.treeoflifebooks.com/> Students can consult book lists and prices at <http://asburyseminary.textbookstop.com>.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Perhaps the first question to ask is: How are we going to complete a 3 credit hour course in only one week? The quick answer is that, *before* the start of class, we'll need to complete all the required readings and have completed one of three class assignments. The second assignment will be completed during our week together. The final assignment will be completed within two weeks following our last day of class. Here is a summary of the three assignments:

- (1) An “Engagement With The Readings” assignment, answering 13 questions arising from the assigned literature. (SLO 1,2) [25% of final grade]
- (2) A 10 minute oral presentation in class on one of the module questions, followed by 10-15 minutes of fielding questions and facilitating class discussions on that module topic. (SLO 1,2) [25% of final grade]
- (3) The written text of a 20 minute talk on cultivating a culture of ethics within the workplace. (SLO 1,2,3) [50% of final grade]

Here are the three assignments in more detail:

- (1) Thirteen modules are listed below. Each module contains a reading list, followed by one question. The readings are drawn from three sources: (a) the required class textbooks; (b) accessible website, which are linked below; and (c) articles provided within the online class folder, which becomes available June 2, 2014. The assignment is to complete the readings for each module and to write a thoughtful **one-paragraph response** to each module question. Thus, this first assignment should be 13 full paragraphs. Answers should show an awareness of the reading material from each module, but also offer your own assessment of the claims within the readings, as you respond to each module question. This first assignment is to handed in—in hard copy form—**the first day of class, July 21**.
- (2) The second assignment is to **choose one of the module topics** and explore it in much more detail. Instead of offering a one-paragraph response to the module question, the second assignment is to prepare a **10 minute oral presentation** in class on your chosen module question, preparing also to field 10-15 minutes of questions and to facilitate class discussions on that module topic. (A 10 minute talk will probably equate to about 4 double-space pages of text.) The oral presentation should either be read from a text or offered while consulting a detailed outline. The written text or outline will be submitted at the time of the oral presentation.
A few of the module topics will accommodate more than one student offering a presentation on it. However, the normal practice will be to choose a module question that no one else from the class has yet chosen. Choice of a module topic will be on a **first come, first served** basis. **Beginning June 2**, the first day of the summer semester, **students can email me with requests about a preferred module to tackle**.
- (3) The third and final assignment involves an imagined scenario (which I hope might be actualized for each of you at some point!) in which you've been asked to offer a **20**

minute talk on the topic of “Bringing Ethics to the Workplace”. The assignment is to submit the written text for this talk. (A 20 minute talk probably equates to about 8 double-space pages of text.) For this assignment, you can choose either of the following two scenarios:

- (a) A lunch meeting for fellow church members, in which your talk is expected to appeal to specifically Christian themes and resources.
- (b) A lunch meeting for community business leaders, in which the person inviting you to talk has advised that your audience will be motivated more by pragmatic concerns than by religious interests.

We will talk a good deal more about this assignment in class. It is due by the end of **Friday, August 8**, which is two weeks after the end of class.

Here now are the thirteen modules:

Module 01 – Biblical Guidelines for Our Commercial Interactions

*Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:22 – 23:19; Leviticus 19: 1-18; Leviticus 25; Numbers 26; Deuteronomy 8; 14:22 – 15:18; 17:14-20; 24:14-22; 26; Joshua 18-19; 1 Samuel 8; 1 Kings 21; Psalms 12:5; 41:4; 72:12; 112: 9; 140:12; Isaiah 1:10-17; 5:8-10; 58:1-9; Ezekiel 45: 1-9; Matthew 25: 31-46; Luke 4: 16-21; 12:16-21; 16:13-31; Acts 4: 32-27; 2 Corinthians 8:12-15

* Blomberg, *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*, chpt. 5 (course folder)

*Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, chpt. 4 (course folder)

* Brian Fitzgerald, “St. John Chrysostom on Wealth and Virtue”: http://www.st-philip.net/files/Fitzgerald%20Patristic%20series/John-Chrysostom_wealth_and_virtue.pdf

1. What do God’s commands and teachings—as seen in scripture—reveal about the outcome(s) God intends for our commercial interactions with one another? That is, what do these commands and teachings reveal about how God wants us to live together?

Module 02 – Justice and Economic Structures

*Gutenson, *Christians and the Common Good*, chpt. 3 (course folder)

**Beyond Integrity (BI)*, pp. 180-201

*Nina Rosenberg, “The Free-Trade Fix”:

http://www.colorado.edu/geography/class_homepages/geog_3662_s06/FreeTradeFix.pdf

*Bryant Myers, “Poverty and Human Flourishing”:

http://documents.fuller.edu/news/pubs/tmn/2010_Spring/4_poverty.php

*Bruce Wydick, “Globalization and the Poor” (course folder)

* James Halteman, “The Market System, the Poor, and Economic Theory” (course folder)

2. What does a ‘just’ economic system look like, building on the narratives of scripture? How does this differ from modern-day American understandings of ‘justice’?

Module 03 – Church Tradition and Economic policies

*Martin Luther, “On Trading and Usury”: http://www.lutherdansk.dk/Martin%20Luther%20-%20On%20trading%20and%20usury%201524/ON%20TRADING%20AND%20USURY%20-%20backup%20020306.htm#_Toc129069586

**Rerum Novarum*: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html

**Centecimus Annus*: http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_jp02ca.htm

*John Ryan, “Living Wage” (course folder)

*UMC statements on the Living Wage:

<http://www.kintera.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=3784553&ct=3961243¬oc=1>

<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lwL4KnN1LtH&b=4951419&ct=7473227>

*Living Wage Calculator from MIT: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

3. What central concerns lie behind the Church’s historic stances on structural economic topics such as usury and the living wage?

Module 04 – The Potential (or Limits) of Corporate Social Responsibility

**BI*, pp. 32-45; 146-151

*“Cheryl Boetje: An Orchard with Fruit that Lasts”: <http://ethix.org/2005/12/01/an-orchard-with-fruit-that-lasts>

*Deborah Doane, “The Myth of CSR”

4. Does a series of more robust commitments to Corporate Social Responsibility have the potential to approximate the picture from scripture of how God wants us to live together?

Module 05 – John Wesley’s Work in Lifting Others Up

*Wesley, “The Means of Grace”: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-16-The-Means-of-Grace>

*Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, III”: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-23-Upon-Our-Lords-Sermon-on-the-Mount-3>

*Wesley, “The Use of Money”: <http://new.gbmg-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/50/>

*Wesley, “The More Excellent Way”: <http://new.gbmg-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/89/>

*David Wright, *How God Makes the World a Better Place*, chpt. 5 (course folder)

5. What is distinctive about John Wesley’s approach to lifting the poor and marginalized into fuller, dignified participation in society?

Module 06 – Capitalism and Our Vision of God

**BI*, chpt. 9

*Bell, *The Economy of Desire*

*Schneider, *The Good of Affluence*, chpt. 1 (course folder)

*Terrill, “The Moral Imperative of Investment Banking”:

<http://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/1523/the-moral-imperative-of-investment-banking/>

*Jean Kilbourne, “Jesus is a Brand of Jeans”: <http://newint.org/features/2006/09/01/culture/>

*David Hagenbuch, “Truth About Advertising: A Response to the Kilbourne Lecture”

*David Hagenbuch, “Marketing as a Christian Vocation: Called to Reconciliation” (course folder)

6. Are some aspects of the capitalist system indispensable as our best way of today seeking to realize God’s intention for how we should live together? Are some aspects of the capitalist system unambiguously antithetical to this vision?

Module 07 – The Role of Work Within the Kingdom of God

**BI*, pp. 60-66

*Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, chpt. 5 (course folder)

*Volf, *Work in the Spirit*

7. From a Christian perspective, how closely should my identity as a person be tied to my work?

Module 08 – An Employer’s Expectation of a Worker

**BI*, 129-145; 258-274

8. Does Milton Friedman make a fair point that, when an employee agrees to work for a company, "He has direct responsibility to his employers. That responsibility is to conduct the business in accordance with their desires, which generally will be to make as much money as possible..." (p. 131)? Does a Christian therefore, when s/he signs an employment contract with a company whose stated goal is to (legally) maximize profits, take on an obligation to seek to maximize profits above all else?

Module 09 – Personal and Corporate Responsibility

**BI*, pp. 441-453

*Gellerman, “Why ‘Good’ Managers Make Bad Ethical Decisions” (course folder)

*Sherron Watkins, “Did We Learn the Lessons From Enron”: <http://ethix.org/2007/06/01/did-we-learn-the-lessons-from-enron>

*Bowen McCoy, “Parable of the Sadhu” (course folder)

9. When a company/group engages in a negligent or otherwise morally wrong practice, is there such a thing as ‘group responsibility’ over and above the individual responsibilities of those persons in that group? If so, describe what you think this responsibility involves and doesn’t involve.

Module 10 – Navigating Moral Ambiguities

**BI*, chpt. 6; pp. 23-31

*Foutz, “A Response to Augustine’s *De Mendacio*”: <http://www.quodlibet.net/mendacio.shtml>

*Badaracco, “We Don’t Need Another Hero”: <http://hbr.org/2001/09/we-dont-need-another-hero/ar/1>

10. In distinguishing between a 'bribe' and a 'gift', Bernard Adeney states that "a gift helps create or maintain a moral relationship, while a bribe undermines it" (*BI*, p. 231). Is this the best way to distinguish the two? More generally, are moral ‘compromises’ inevitable for a person seeking to bring about flourishing for all of a company’s stakeholders?

Module 11 – Decision-Making Procedures

- *EESE’s “Steps of the Ethical Decision-Making Process”
- *SME Financial System’s “Decision Making Frameworks”
- *Giva, “Moral Decision Making in Business: A Phase-Model” (course folder)
- *Gill, “Upgrading the Ethical Decision-Making Model for Business” (course folder)
- **BI*, chpt. 3

11. What sequential set of questions would best help us navigate ethical difficulties and ambiguities? How optimistic are you that the right set of principles and procedures will help us navigate most ethical dilemmas?

Module 12 – The Ideals of a Positive Workplace

- *Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*
- *Willard, “The Business of Business”: <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=161>

12. Does Tom Morris's synopsis of "creative love" (*If Arist.*, p. 94) get to the heart of the Christian understanding of what human flourishing consists in, such that it merits the title 'the meaning of life'? Is there a better synopsis?

Module 13 – Cultivating an Ethical Environment

- **BI*, pp. 423-439; 53-60, 67-70
- *Paine, “Managing for Organizational Integrity” (course folder)

13. What kind of ethical environment should a Christian insist upon, and be able to cooperatively work to realize, within any secular business?

V. GRADING

The grading rubrics for the three assignments are as follows:

“Engagement With The Readings” Assignment [25% of final grade]:

Followed the assigned guidelines for length of responses within each module, demonstrated an awareness of the viewpoints within the readings, and provided one’s own cogent response to each module question.

(F)-----(D-)-----(D)-----(D+)-----(C-)----- (C)----- (C+)----- (B-)----- (B)----- (B+)----- (A-)----- (A)

Oral Presentation [25% of final grade]:

Followed the assigned guidelines for length of presentation, demonstrated a thorough awareness of the viewpoints within one’s chosen module—as evidenced both in one’s oral presentation and in one’s responses to questions from others—, and provided a cogent and credible response to the module question

(F)-----(D-)-----(D)-----(D+)-----(C-)----- (C)----- (C+)----- (B-)----- (B)----- (B+)----- (A-)----- (A)

Final Paper [50% of final grade]

The more detailed grading rubric for this assignment is as follows.

A. Demonstrated awareness of a distinctively Christian end result for business exchanges: the contributing and dignified role that God intends every worker to play (SLO 1).

4 Exemplary.....3 Accomplished.....2 Developing.....1 Beginning

B. Demonstrated awareness of a distinctively Christian end result for business exchanges: the Trinitarian-mirroring unity and interdependence that God intends for a community, including a business company of workers (SLO 1).

4 Exemplary.....3 Accomplished.....2 Developing.....1 Beginning

C. Demonstration of the connection between attractive ethical goals and economically realistic practices. (SLO 2).

4 Exemplary.....3 Accomplished.....2 Developing.....1 Beginning

D. Demonstrated awareness of how economically realistic practices achieve specifically Christian outcomes (SLO 3).

4 Exemplary.....3 Accomplished.....2 Developing.....1 Beginning

As far as the different expectations students may bring to Asbury as to grading systems, I do note that Asbury's academic catalog defines "B level" work as that which "significantly accomplishes course objectives", while "A level" work is defined as that which "surpasses course objectives".

Grade Letters

Highest	Lowest	Letter
100.00 %	93.00 %	A
92.99 %	90.00 %	A-
89.99 %	87.00 %	B+
86.99 %	83.00 %	B
82.99 %	80.00 %	B-
79.99 %	77.00 %	C+
76.99 %	73.00 %	C
72.99 %	70.00 %	C-

69.99 %	67.00 %	D+
66.99 %	63.00 %	D
62.99 %	60.00 %	D-
59.99 %	0.00 %	F

VI. COURSE EVALUATIONS

At the end of the semester, you will receive an email with information and directions for completing course evaluations. Your responses on the evaluations will be completely anonymous. If you encounter problems or have questions regarding accessing the evaluations, there will be technical support provided through Information Commons.

Course evaluations are a critical part of Asbury Seminary's efforts to achieve excellence in the classroom. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

VII. EXPECTATIONS/EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Course Work/Hours

- In accordance with policies at Asbury Seminary, students in masters level courses at the seminary should normally expect to invest two and one-half to three (2.5 - 3.0) hours of work per week outside of class in preparation for every hour of credit to be earned (Academic Catalog p. 34, Student Handbook p. 64). [The final exam period does count as class time and students should expect to attend their final class time during finals week unless otherwise instructed by the professor.]
- The expectation for most courses is 400-500 pages of assigned reading per credit hour or the equivalent of out of course work (Faculty Handbook, p. 78).]

Attendance Policy

For our week of class together, students are expected to attend all class sessions. Any anticipated absence needs to be discussed with me prior to class. In such cases, I will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that class participation expectations can still be met.

From Asbury Theological Seminary's common attendance policy:

In certain cases, absences from class will be excused. These includes absences for imposed legal responsibilities (e.g., jury duty, court appearance), absences resulting from participation in

extracurricular activities in which students are official representatives of the Seminary, absences for serious illness, death or serious illness within the student's immediate family, military obligations, or other sound reasons offered by the student may be accepted as excused absences at the discretion of the professor and consistent with applicable law.

Excused absences or tardiness do not excuse the student from class responsibilities. Faculty will make reasonable efforts to warn a student whose absences either place the student in danger of exceeding the maximum absences allowed for a course or seem to otherwise adversely affect the student's standing in the course. Students are accountable for all assignments in each course, whether or not the assignments were announced during an absence.

How to Submit Your Work

The initial "Engagement with the Readings" will be submitted in hard copy the first day of class. The Oral Presentation assignment will be completed on one of the days of our week-long intensive class on the Kentucky campus. The Final Paper will be submitted electronically by uploading it in the online course folder.

VIII. POLICIES AND SUPPORT INFORMATION

Accessing Library Resources

1. General Questions:

- The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons can be reached at our website: asbury.to/library, via phone at 800.2ASBURY or 859.858.2100, and via email at information.common@asburyseminary.edu.

2. Materials Requests:

- To search the library catalog for available materials, use the links on the library website. Students on the Kentucky or Florida campuses can use their student ID cards to check out materials in person. Books can be mailed back or returned to the library at either campus.
- Online students may request books, photocopies, or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from the library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

3. Research Assistance:

- Students should contact the Information Commons for research assistance. Help is available for general research questions including how to find course materials online or navigate online library resources. Advanced research appointments are available for students needing assistance in the research process.

4. Online Databases and Resources:

- **Asbury Scholar** - Users can perform a search for books, journal articles, eBooks, and more by using Asbury Scholar. Search results of all material types can be aggregated conveniently in a single results list, or narrowed down as specifically as a user requires. A search box and direct links to Asbury Scholar can be found on the library's website at asbury.to/library.
- **Complete Resource List** - Alternatively, direct links to resources have been arranged alphabetically on the Complete Resource List. In some cases this may allow the user to access site-specific features not otherwise available. To access the library's online resources including the library catalog, online journal databases, encyclopedias, and more, go to the Complete Resource List at <http://guides.asburyseminary.edu/resources>.

5. Technology Questions:

- Students can receive support for accessing their online classroom, using electronic resources, or other technological problems related to Asbury Seminary coursework by contacting the Information Commons. Longer appointments for training in supported Bible software or supported bibliographic management software are also available.

Plagiarism

Academic integrity is expected from every student. Plagiarism, that is, "presenting...another's ideas or writings as one's own," is considered a serious violation of trust and not acceptable. Detailed information including penalty for plagiarizing is to be found in the Student Handbook.

Copyright Policies

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

Online Media Copyright Information

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

Americans With Disabilities Act Information

Asbury Theological Seminary provides reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a disability, and believe you are in need of reasonable accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with an Accommodations Officer, located in the Office of the Registrar on the Kentucky campus or in the Enrollment Management Office on the Florida campus. Students are required to provide documentation of a disability prior to receiving classroom accommodations. Since

accommodations may require early planning at or before the start of the term and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact an Accommodations Officer as soon as possible.

Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Online Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://one.asburyseminary.edu> and clicking on the Online Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course.

The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
 - a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
 - b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
 - c) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum; **note:** If there are questions that are more private in nature or that are not relevant to others—such as problems getting an assignment in on time, concerns that the class isn't working well for you, worries about the spiritual ethos of the course material, etc.—then these can be addressed to me through **direct email**.
 - d) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
 - e) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

Online Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans and Online media contact Information Commons:

email: information.common@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: 859.858.2100; Toll-free: 800.2ASBURY

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Online program, contact Dale Hale: <mailto:ExL.Office@asburyseminary.edu> Phone: 859.858.2393