All precourse assignments should be emailed to the Course of Study office by May 1, 2013.

Course Description
The goal and purpose of this course is to enable the pastor to analyze the biblical and theological bases for Christian behavior: personal, professional, and social. Emphasis is given to the acquisition of pastoral skills in moral discernment and ethically responsible decision-making and action.

Course Objectives
• Exploration of biblical and theological bases for ethical thinking and action
• Survey of major approaches to ethical reasoning
• Examination of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church as a frame of reference for ethical decision-making
• Exploration of ways to deal with various ethical dilemmas in the realm of social justice
• Reflection on case studies that challenge pastors to examine carefully their ethical responsibilities
• Focus on pertinent issues for personal and professional life with indication of guidelines for ministerial ethics
• Delineation of and reflection upon essential guidelines for Christian moral identity and moral behavior

Required Textbooks
*** This book may be out of print. But, there may be copies still at Amazon and Cokesbury. If you do not want to purchase this text (it’s a very good one, though), the reading assignments from this text are posted on the Blackboard site for our course, but you will have to register and get a userID from Michelle Levan in order to access these readings.
OR
• Bible: a new translation, such as NRSV, RSV, or NIV.
• Readings will be posted on Blackboard for sections III and IV of the precourse work listed below referring to the church trial of the Rev. Jimmy Creech and President Obama’s speech when he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Course Assignments and Grading
1. Precourse Work [45%]
2. Class Assignments [35%]
3. Class Participation [20%]
Precourse Assignments

Answer the questions below, confining your answers to 18 – 22 pages, double-spaced, 12-font type, and one inch margins. Write out each question in single space, in full in your document before you answer it. Do NOT write out one long essay for the entire set of precourse work assignments. If you wonder about your grammar, see my list of grammatical pet peeves on the Blackboard site. To answer all of these questions within the page limit, you will need to write in a focused, precise way.

The purpose of the following assignments is to guide your critical reading of the texts and to encourage you to analyze the authors’ points of view. Do NOT add your personal views; you will have plenty of time to voice your own views in class discussion and in writing assignments during the summer course.

Citations

When referring to the author’s ideas or quoting the author’s words, cite the author by page number in a parenthetical reference; for example, (Thurman, 89). Be sure to use quote mark when using the exact words of an author, for example, Thurman said, “...”. Do NOT however, just quote the author for an entire answer. Intersperse your quotes and use of their ideas with your own words. Please review the Citations Workshop that will be posted on the COS Blackboard website before turning in your precourse work.

Format

Use 12-point Times New Roman font, one inch margins. Don’t forget to establish paragraphs.

NOTE: These precourse work questions are 45% – almost half of your grade value – for this course. In past years I returned a number of precourse work assignments back to others for rewriting due primarily to 1) poor citations (indicating the author and page number of the text you are quoting or using as a reference, 2) poor grammar, and/or 3) not actually answering the questions.

I am NOT going to do this in 2013. If your work is unacceptable, you will receive the grade of D or F on the assignment. Please complete your work in plenty of time to get help with editing by someone in your church or community, if you are insecure about your writing.

Questions

I. Read all of Jesus and the Disinherited by Howard Thurman; then complete the following questions. 12.5 points for this section

1. How does Thurman describe the social context of Jesus and his audience? How was his message different from other Jewish social and political groups of his day, such as Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Herodians? (Preface and Chap. 1)

2. Thurman writes that the lives of the oppressed are marked by fear (Chap. 2), and they often have relied on the strategies of deception (Chap. 3) and hate (Chap. 4) in order to survive. Explain Thurman’s meaning of each term. Explain why he believes that each one of these strategies is finally self-defeating.

3. Thurman believes that Jesus tried to direct the oppressed toward love (Chap. 5). This strategy was controversial, both for Jesus’ audience and for Thurman’s. Explain Thurman’s meaning of the term. How is it connected to reconciliation and forgiveness?
II. Read both the Introduction and Chapter 1 of Ahearn and Gathke’s *Getting Grounded in Christian Ethics*. Then complete the following questions. 12.5 points for this section.

1. Martin Luther (Ahearn, Reading 1.3) pictures the Christian moral life as radical freedom rooted in the experience of grace. Stanley Hauerwas (Ahearn, Reading 1.5) represents the tradition that emphasizes shared virtues practiced in the community of the church. Analyze and explain how Luther and Hauerwas are alike and differ in their two pictures of the moral life. Use the categories of “doing right” and “being good” schools of thought discussed in the introduction of Chapter 1 as a tool in your analysis and explanation.

2. Love is central to the Christian moral life. Describe how Jesus describes the life of love in the 5th chapter of Matthew. Then explain how the interpretations of Christian love of Augustine (Ahearn, Reading 3.2) and Christine Gudorf (Ahearn, Reading 3.3) are alike and how they are different. *Then examine the place that love of self has in your own understanding of Christian love.*

3. Does Christian love also demand that we work for justice? Yes or no? Explain your answer. If so, what does Christian justice look like? Then summarize the relationship of love and justice set forth in the Introduction to Chap. 3 as described by Gathje and Smedes (Reading 3.4).

III. Christian Ethics, Marriage, and Sexuality. 10 points for this section

*Before you begin writing answers for this section*, be sure to read the introduction to Christian ethics and family life at the beginning of Ahearn, Chap. 4. Also review the key scriptures outlined at the beginning of the chapter. This introduction should help you get your thoughts in order.

A. *Read the Case of Rev. Jimmy Creech* (Posted on Blackboard). Rev. Creech is a UMC elder who was tried for performing same-sex unions in his church a couple of decades ago.

B. Then go to [http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2080401,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2080401,00.html) and read the article about the Rev. Amy Delong, a United Methodist pastor in the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

While the cases raise some thorny questions about the place of authority and legitimate dissent in our denomination, *focus your reflections on the issue of homosexual unions*. Some may argue that such unions are a fundamental violation of historic Christian affirmations about marriage and family. Others argue that such unions, insofar as they express love and commitment between partners, may be appropriate Christian expressions of family life and should not be categorically rejected by the Church. So, in each essay be sure to include: a) views on the fundamental meaning of marriage and sexuality in our religious tradition; and b) identify what can change according to culture, and what must remain constant despite changes in our culture.

*Remember: these are two separate essays, and you are NOT supposed to give your personal viewpoint.*

1. Using the following readings, write an essay that supports the argument that homosexual unions are inappropriate expressions of Christian family life. Refer to these readings: Miles, Chapter 4; Augustine (Ahearn 4.2); John Paul II (Ahearn 4.3).

2. Using the following readings, write an essay that supports the argument that homosexual unions may be appropriate expressions of Christian family life. Refer to these readings: Lebacqz (Ahearn 4.6), Purvis (Ahearn 4.4), Johnson (Ahearn 4.5).
IV. Christian Ethics and the World of Politics and War. 10 points for this section
Before you begin writing answers for this section, be sure to read the introduction to Christian ethics and politics and violence at the beginning of Ahearn, Chap. 5. Also review the key scriptures outlined at the beginning of the chapter; also read Reading 2 in this chapter, which outlines the historic Christian positions on politics and war. Examine also the Discipline, ¶164.F-I, ¶165.B-C. These readings should help you get your thoughts in order. Do not express your own views in these two essays. You’ll have plenty of time to do that during our class time.

Read President Obama’s Nobel Prize address (Posted on Blackboard). President Obama sets forth in this speech his ideas about the place of the United States political and military power in the 21st century. He believes that the US should respect international law and work within the framework of international agreements, and should avoid war wherever possible. However, he also believes that the US must fight some limited wars in order to maintain a just world order. As such, President Obama stands within the mainstream of US foreign policy. Your task is to critique this speech not as a politician but as a Christian. Is this policy consistent with Christian commitments to love and justice?

1. Using the following readings, write an essay that supports the argument that Christians can affirm President Obama’s role for American political and military power in our world. In other words, a Christian could serve as a political leader or soldier without violating Christian commitments to love, justice, and peace. Refer especially to the readings by Augustine (Reading 5.4) and Ramsey (Reading 5.6).

2. Using the following readings, write an essay that supports the argument that Christians should reject all war and violence as incompatible with the Christian calling to a life of love, justice, and peace. Refer especially to the readings of Tertullian (Reading 5.3) and Martin Luther King (Reading 5.7).
DIRECTIONS FOR EMAILING PRECOURSE WORK

Please read all the directions below before emailing your assignments to the COS Office, any emails received that do not follow the directions below will not be accepted. You will receive an email confirmation of receipt and if your email is not submitted correctly an email indicating you will need to resend your assignments.

1. Email only michelle.levan@emory.edu, do not email the instructor your assignment.
2. Emails must be received no later than 11:59pm on the May 1, 2013 deadline.
   a. Please note that the cut off time is EASTERN STANDARD TIME zone, so email your assignments accordingly.
   b. Any precourse work received after May 1st at 11:59pm will be subject to a late penalty.
      1. Precourse work received between May 2 – June 1 is 1 letter grade deduction.
      2. Precourse work received between June 2 – June 20 is 2 letter grade deductions.
      3. You will be drop from any course for which precourse work has not been received after June 20, 2013. No precourse work will be accepted after the June 20th deadline.

3. The course number and the phrase “precourse work” should be the subject of your email: Example - Precourse Work 113
   a. You will need to send a separate email for each course you are registered to attend.

4. Precourse work must be sent as an attached document and not in the body of the email.
   a. Any version of Microsoft Word or WordPerfect documents will be accepted; PDF and Mac-Pages documents will be accepted.
   b. All of your assignments for each course must be in one document, multiple documents are not acceptable. You should send only one attachment with course all assignments.

5. Your FULL name, phone number and email, should all be clearly included at the beginning of your email:
   Example: Michelle Levan
   404.727.4587
   michelle.levan@emory.edu

6. Plagiarism Policy and Plagiarism Defined paragraphs must be included in the body of your email (both are below), not within your precourse work. The inclusion of the policy and definition in the body of the email, verifies that you agree to it and your email will represent your signature. If the email does not include the plagiarism policy and definition it will not be accepted. Your email, with the plagiarism policy and definition will be printed and used as cover sheet for your precourse work, because it has the verification of date and time received, and your agreement to the plagiarism policy and definition, and your contact information.

Plagiarism Policy
I have read the plagiarism definition below and verify that this assignment represents my own work, except where credit is given. I have also made copies of this assignment and I will bring them with me to class in the event that any of my work is misplaced.
Plagiarism Defined
“You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person. You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow. When accused of plagiarism, some writers claim I must have somehow memorized the passage. When I wrote it, I certainly thought it was my own. That excuse convinces very few.” From page 167 of The Craft of Research by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, published in 1995 by The University of Chicago Press in Chicago.

7. If you do not follow the procedure your precourse work WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!!!!!!!