

Saint Paul School of Theology	Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences
THL423 Science, Theology, and Ministry	B-ETH504 Diversity, Culture, and Bioethics
Fall 2007	

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Office Hours at Saint Paul School of Theology	By appointment anytime or during posted office hours, including Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. and 4:00-5:00 p.m. Office hours and appointments are also available by telephone and email.
Office Hour at Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences	TBA

Class Meeting: Kansas-Winger 309
4:30-9:20 p.m.

Mondays at Saint Paul	Mondays Online
September 10	September 17
October 15	September 24
November 12	October 29
December 3	November 26

Course Descriptions

Catalog Description:

Saint Paul School of Theology	Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences
<p>This course provides a special opportunity to equip ministers with the information needed to be religious in a scientific age and to minister to persons struggling with science issues. Such issues are increasingly at the heart of what it means to be human and to conduct one's life with integrity. The course addresses the mutual relevance of pastoral concerns, science, and Christianity. Part of the course explores how Christianity has influenced the development of science, how science has impacted the content of theology, how Christianity and science are set in cultural context, and how Christianity can engage in interreligious dialogue about science.</p> <p>Prerequisite: THL301. Semester credit hours: 3</p>	<p>This course examines the challenge of diverse cultural perspectives and their influence on bioethics. The course focuses on social differences—such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class—and considers the role of social contexts in the formation of identity, embodiment, and community in relation to bioethics and issues related to reproduction, disease, and normalcy.</p>

Course Concept: The current course offers a unique opportunity to engage topics in science, theology, and bioethics because the approach involves both pastoral and medical concerns. Seminarians from Saint Paul School of Theology and medical students from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences, who share the course, are similarly involved in graduate education for professions that serve persons, families, and communities. Each group of students brings a concept of care, a body of knowledge, and a sense of professional ethics to the course, which should enhance the depth and breadth of course content.

The course is designed to investigate how the persons we serve as clergy and medical professionals form values in relation to science, medicine, and ethics. What the course demonstrates is that social location shapes the formation of values, which in turn inform ethics. By engaging very diverse approaches to a limited number of biomedical issues, the course unmask the logic, sources, and contexts that shape values.

The importance of engaging the logic, contexts, and values of the persons, families, and communities whom we serve is critical for three reasons. First, we cannot truly understand and effectively meet the needs of others without the ability to understand their values and contexts. Second, we need to know how we form our own values and ethics. Third, we need to be clear that our professionally formed ethics—no matter how well educated we are and no matter how solidly reasoned our ethics are—may differ drastically from those of persons in our care. As professionals then, we must develop the abilities to respect the authentically held values and ethics of diverse persons and to speak fluently in the language of diverse values.

The structure of the course includes three units. The first unit is *inductive* in approach and covers the highly controversial topic of abortion. Avoiding all “bumper sticker” positions, we will engage in depth many approaches to the issue and develop a set of analytical tools for identifying values, contexts, and ethics. The second unit is *deductive* in approach and reviews literature on biotechnology issues from cross-cultural perspectives. In the second unit, we will examine how scholars define social location and values, which may create an interesting comparison with the inductively created analysis from the first unit of the course. The third unit is *analytical* in approach and considers stem cell research and cloning. Using the analytical tools developed and catalogued in the first two units, we will discuss diverse readings by scholars on the topics.

As a postscript to the description of the course concept, I should note what I mean by *social location*. Social location describes the literal, national, racial/ethnic, cultural, intellectual, religious, geographical, familial/tribal identity of persons and groups. Without question, social locations strongly influence how persons and groups interpret the world, shape their behaviors, and form their values.

Course Teaching-Learning Objectives

1. The priorities for teaching and learning in this course are (a) learning how values and ethics are embedded in and accountable to the social location of persons, families, and groups and (b) practicing analysis of worldviews and values with appreciation for the internal logic, sources, and commitments that define ethical systems in relation to science and medicine.
2. Teaching and learning begin with understanding method (how scholars investigate topics and draw conclusions), sources (what information scholars consult to form new ideas), and language (how scholars express ideas). Students should familiarize themselves with scholarly methods in science, religion, and interdisciplinary reflection.
3. Teaching and learning depend on sophisticated reading of texts. Students should develop the skills of empathetic and critical reading. The diverse contexts that form postmodern thought create worldviews that may not be your own. Diverse worldviews demand charitable readings of texts for the sake of understanding the authors' points of view and with awareness that religion and ethics are neither abstracted from culture nor limited to singular "correct" forms of expression.
4. Teaching and learning involve critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. One pedagogical strategy for appropriating these skills is reading texts and writing assignments with awareness of perspectives marginalized by class, gender, race, theology, and sexual orientation.
5. Teaching and learning in the course are directed toward students learning the origins of culturally diverse values. Students will know the importance of empathetic and sensitive response to different ethical perspectives in relationships dedicated to healing and medicine, science and research, and public policy debates.
6. Teaching and learning lead students to awareness of power dynamics related to social location and social differences, which relate to authority, control, and agency in decision-making.
7. Teaching and learning lead to praxis. The goal of the course is to consider applications to ministry and medical contexts. The course assumes that the professions demand mature integration of thought and action as prerequisite to care for persons, families, and communities.
8. Teaching and learning concentrate on central questions to focus course processes and outcomes. Identification of cultural and social locations is critical, and the following questions serve as a template for interpretation of diverse perspectives and their presuppositions.

Required and Recommended Texts

All required texts are on reserve at the Saint Paul School of Theology library.

Texts for the Inductive Unit

Steffen, Lloyd, ed. *Abortion: A Reader*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1996.

Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science 42:1 (March 2007): 123-32.

Texts for the Deductive Unit

Brannigan, Michael C., ed. *Cross-Cultural Biotechnology*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.

Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science 42:1 (March 2007): 132-91.

Texts for the Analytical Unit

Holland, Suzanne, Karen Lebacqz, and Laurie Zoloth., ed. *The Human Embryonic Stem Cell Debate: Science, Ethics, and Public Policy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001.

Waters, Brent, and Ronald Cole-Turner, ed. *God and the Embryo: Religious Voices on Stem Cells and Cloning*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003.

[N.B.: The seminary expectation for the course is that each class session requires 100-200 pages of reading in preparation for class discussions. Typically, 130-150 pages of reading are required for each class meeting after the first day of class. Specific reading assignments appear in the Course Schedule below.]

Course Schedule: September 4-December 14, 2007

September 10: SAINT PAUL CAMPUS

Required Reading: Course syllabus

Inductive Unit

September 17: ON LINE (MOODLE)

Topic: Abortion

Required Reading: *Abortion*, 3-155

September 24: ON LINE (MOODLE)

Topic: Abortion

Required Reading: *Abortion*, 156-318

October 15: SAINT PAUL CAMPUS

Topic: Abortion

Required Reading: *Abortion*, 319-450
Zygon, 123-32

Deductive Unit

October 29: ON LINE (MOODLE)

Topic: Biotechnology

Required Reading: *Cross-Cultural Biotechnology*, xiii-126

November 12: SAINT PAUL CAMPUS

Topic: Biotechnology

Required Reading: *Cross-Cultural Biotechnology*, 127-91
Zygon, 133-91

Analytical Unit

November 26: ON LINE (MOODLE)

Topic: Stem Cell Research and Cloning

Required Reading: *The Human Embryonic Stem Cell Debate*, 35-174

December 3: SAINT PAUL CAMPUS

Topic: Stem Cell Research and Cloning

Required Reading: *God and the Embryo*, 7-28, 67-87, 111-30, 141-221

Course Requirements

1. Class participation is expected of each student. By class participation, I mean that each student must attend class regularly and engage in discussions. Students must attempt seriously all required assignments, and the instructor expects that advanced students are capable of completing all reading and written assignments. This does not mean that students fully understand material, but that they are familiar with the texts and know which passages are puzzling. Class participation allows students to raise questions and to achieve some understanding of course content. Good class participation in a seminar course includes active listening to and support for other students. At the end of the semester, students assess the quality of their class participation and assign themselves a letter grade using a self-evaluation work sheet, which makes explicit the criteria for good class participation. The instructor also assigns a class participation grade. The Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet (attached to the syllabus) is due no later than Monday, December 3.
2. Students are expected to participate fully in all educational projects, discussions, and forums designed for Monday night online sessions. Class participation and writing grades are determined partially by student contributions to forums, chats, and other activities. Generally forums and chats are based on reading assignments and/or the instructor's online presentations. Because all students are expected to contribute to every discussion and forum, comments will be limited in file size (using capabilities with Moodle software). Consequently all written contributions should be well considered and focused on the topic. Comments must focus on course material and stay focused on the topic of discussion. During each online session, students will have opportunity to raise original questions for the professor or to introduce new topics for discussion—therefore, prepare well when reading in order to offer points with some depth and interest. Students receive evaluations of online contributions twice during the semester: October 29 and December 7.
3. Students are required to write one paper: 10-15 double-spaced pages. The paper should model the process of the course by using tools to analyze a single author's approach to a biomedical issue in terms of social location, power dynamics, and cultural context. One section of the paper must summarize the content of the author's approach as objectively as possible (perhaps one-third of the total paper). The majority of the paper must engage in analysis of the paper. Saint Paul students are required to engage Christian or interreligious dimensions of the analysis, while KCUMB students have more flexibility—which means that selection of the author and the research must fit degree expectations. Library research is required. The form of the paper must follow Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual of Style for Writers' of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (sixth edition). Please submit papers to howellnr@spst.edu and confirm that the attachment is included by sending a copy of the email to yourself, rather than emailing the instructor to ask whether the paper has been received. Students may also use delivery and read notifications. Papers are due anytime between November 12 and 29.
4. Extra credit is possible in the course when important lectures or events are relevant to the course. To receive extra credit, submit a one- or two-page, double-spaced paper with one paragraph summarizing the main thesis and supporting points in the lecture and with a second paragraph discussing the relevance of the lecture to a theme or issue in the course. Extra credit papers never penalize student grades, but an accepted extra credit paper may tip a borderline final grade to the higher grade. For example, if a student's grade is on the borderline between an A- and a B+, an accepted extra credit paper pushes the grade to A-.

Inclusive Language

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language. Inclusive language respects all human diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts ethics and religious thought. Both gender and race, for example, are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

Grading

Students in consultation with the instructors determine how grading will be assessed. At the end of the term, students receive letter grades in accordance with policies and descriptions outlined in the current catalog.

Class Participation		_____%
Self-evaluation	_____%	
Professor evaluations	_____%	
Moodle Postings		_____%
First Evaluation	_____%	
Second Evaluation	_____%	
Paper		_____%

[N.B.: Submission of late papers and late postings on Moodle result in grade penalties of at least one letter grade.]

Criteria for Evaluating Course Work

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work:

1. ***Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources.*** Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. ***Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions.*** Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant and accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.
3. ***Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas.*** Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. ***Flawless grammar, spelling, and form.*** Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

Student Responsibilities

Students must abide by policies established in the Saint Paul handbook and catalog. Pay special attention to the policies on Integrity of Work Submitted and Class Attendance found in the catalog. The instructors reserve the option to fail a student for a single instance of plagiarism. The professors reserve the option to fail a student strictly for habitual failure to attend class or for habitual tardiness.

Students are invited to communicate with the instructors. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of illness, if you have emergency information to share with the instructors, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with us as soon as possible. Please see the instructors for any assistance with your learning and class attendance.

Professors' Responsibilities

Our job is to teach with integrity the scholarship representative of our field, to see that students learn as much as possible, and to create a comfortable environment for learning. These goals cannot be accomplished without genuine attention to the unique strengths, experiences, and expectations that both the professors and students bring to the classroom. Our goal is to provide encouragement and support for your learning. Sometimes flexible procedures and learning options are necessary to facilitate the kind of teaching and learning that should occur here. We are anxious to hear what energizes you, what disappoints you, where you disagree, and what helps you learn. PLEASE SEE US IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

Learning-Disabling Conditions

Saint Paul faculty are committed to facilitating the learning of students capable of graduate-level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities) should contact the office of the Dean of Students immediately to discuss evaluation and documentation of learning needs, alternative learning strategies that have worked for the student in the past, and mutually accountable accommodations to ensure the student's full participation and evaluation in the course. Students with documented learning disabilities should consult the Saint Paul School of Theology Handbook and comply with institutional guidelines and policies. Similarly, mental or physical conditions should be documented and discussed with the Dean of Students, who is authorized to arrange accommodations, and all handbook guidelines and policies apply.

Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet **Nancy R. Howell**
Saint Paul School of Theology/Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences
Fall 2007

Name: _____
Course: THL423 Science, Theology and Ministry and B-ETH504 Diversity, Culture, and Bioethics

Circle the number that best describes your class participation in each category if 1 is excellent, 2 is very good, 3 is average, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is poor.

Preparation

- I conscientiously attempted reading assignments. 1 2 3 4 5
- I reflected seriously on reading assignments. 1 2 3 4 5
- I worked to bring depth to comments and questions by preparing more than superficially for class. 1 2 3 4 5
- I prepared written assignments on time and when the syllabus or my self-assigned deadlines required them. 1 2 3 4 5
- I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes before submitting papers. 1 2 3 4 5
- I posted contributions on Moodle by the deadlines for discussion. 1 2 3 4 5

Class and Moodle

- I attended class weekly. 1 2 3 4 5
- I always attended class on time. 1 2 3 4 5
- I contributed to class discussions. 1 2 3 4 5
- I remained focused on the topic of class discussion. 1 2 3 4 5
- I listened respectfully to comments and questions raised by other students. 1 2 3 4 5
- I brought my questions to class or to the professor. 1 2 3 4 5
- I expressed disagreement constructively. 1 2 3 4 5
- I shared my responsibilities for successful class sessions. 1 2 3 4 5
- I supported other students' efforts in class discussions or assignments. 1 2 3 4 5
- I contributed to Moodle discussions and commented constructively on other students' work. 1 2 3 4 5

Attitude

- I remained involved and engaged in the course. 1 2 3 4 5
- I was constructive in relationships with others. 1 2 3 4 5
- I put extra effort into the course—such as study groups/partners, library research, recommended or supplemental reading. 1 2 3 4 5
- I contributed my share of the work in collaborative writing or projects. 1 2 3 4 5
- I made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course. 1 2 3 4 5
- I took responsibility for my learning. 1 2 3 4 5
- My understanding of course content has grown. 1 2 3 4 5

I assign myself the following letter grade: _____
 (Enter A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F in the blank.)

Please submit any additional reflection on class participation that should affect your grade in writing on the back of this page. This work sheet is intended to assist you in thinking about the quality of your participation in class. Any interpretations, additions, or connections of criteria should be included in your additional reflections.