ASSIGNMENT #1: Please read this entire syllabus CAREFULLY and THOROUGHLY!!!

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students will concentrate on the nature and bases of ethics and morality as informed by the Bible, Christian theology, and tradition. Special attention will be given to specific issues such as human sexuality, divorce, war and peace, personal and corporate responsibility, poverty and world hunger.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is an introduction to Christian faith and ethics. Given the breadth of the topic, the diversity of Christianity, and the brevity of our time, it can only be a very cursory introduction. Still, within these limitations, there are several specific objectives:

1. To increase awareness and appreciation of the traditional Christian faith, whether or not you are a person of faith.
2. To identify the influence and impact of your beliefs, and how those beliefs affect your world.
3. To become aware of sources of religious authority within Christianity such as the Bible and core traditions.
4. To become aware of similarities and differences between Christianity and popular American ethics.
5. To reflect more self-consciously on your spiritual life in the context of an increasingly pluralistic world.
6. To practice articulating your faith and values in writing and group discussion.

Don’t Fret - There is often concern expressed by some students that they “don’t know anything about Christianity” and are therefore at a disadvantage in the class. The course is designed so that everyone has an equal opportunity for succeeding. The only assumed knowledge at the beginning of the class is the bare bones learned in the Understandings of Religion course. If you work hard to think carefully about the material presented in readings and the classroom, a lack of religious knowledge at the outset will not be a disadvantage. In some cases, it can even be an advantage.

Fundamental (and Final) Questions for the Course

1. What is the Transcendent and what is its significance?
2. What are the sources for real happiness in human life?
3. What does it mean to be a good person?
4. What is the relationship of community to the individual’s search for meaning, purpose, and morality?
5. What does the Christian tradition have to offer to the individual’s search for meaning, purpose, and morality?
6. What are the various possibilities for thinking about, and responding to, suffering and death?
7. What does authentic leadership look like in a 21st century world?

These questions will guide our efforts in this course. Keep them in mind as you engage the texts and participate in class discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

CHosen TEXTS (for Social Critique Group Book Project):
Options:

Details for this assignment provided below and in assignment page on e-Learning.

GRADING/ASSESSMENT
A. **Class Participation (20%)**: Class attendance is required and contributes to the learning experience. Students are expected to be in class, having read carefully the assigned reading and considered thoughtfully the key concepts. Because the course is so discussion oriented, everyone is also expected to participate in discussions – both small groups and larger class discussions – and to contribute their insights and questions for the benefit of the whole class. Each student is expected to provide leadership in small group discussion settings at some point during the semester. An environment of openness and safety is expected. See Class Attendance policy and Classroom Etiquette below.
NOTE: If you tend to be shy, I suggest you write down 2-3 comments and/or questions rising from the reading material in preparation for class. The questions provided in the Reaction Paper assignment might be helpful in coming up with comments and questions. You will be evaluated on your contributions to the course, though those contributions may come in the form of thoughtful presence and engagement as much as comments and questions.

NOTE ALSO: Some assignments such as leadership in a small group and evaluations of; other Group Book Projects will be incorporated into your Class Participation grade. Additional in-class assignments, such as PSDs (see schedule below), may be incorporated into this grade as well.

B. Reaction Papers (30%): On select class days as noted on the schedule below (RP1), Reaction papers will be your response to the reading assignment for the week. The papers should be two to three paragraphs in length (no more than a page), engaging questions (see below) about the reading assigned for that class session directed toward quality class discussion. I am not expecting you to develop a thesis, but I am expecting you to demonstrate engagement with the reading material. All Reaction papers represent your own philosophical and intellectual work, your grappling with ideas, questions and concepts about which you have read. Your "conclusions" are not as important as your process of grappling with what you read. The depth and quality of your "grappling" with the readings (being open to the text while, at the same time, examining it critically) will form the basis of how your papers will be graded. Reaction papers will be evaluated on a scale of 1-10, with the lowest grade dropped.

Each of your Reaction papers should address one or two (NOT ALL!) of the following five questions:

1. What confused you in this reading? What are your questions about this reading? What did you find hard to understand or fit into your understanding of the world? Yourself? God? Explain.
2. Is there anything in this text that seems to contradict what you’ve come to accept as the “truth”?
3. What intrigued you about this reading? What had you never considered before?
4. What excited you (“turned you on”) from this reading? What would you like to further explore?
5. What offended you (“turned you off”) about this reading? Did something violate your understanding of logic? Or reality? Or yourself? Or the “divine”? Why?

AGAIN: do not try to respond to all 5 questions. Rather, pick out the one (or two) that “gets you started” in the conversation. YOUR reaction to the ideas in the reading (not some particular thing to be reported) will be what is evaluated. How well do you question 1) the reading and 2) yourself?

NOTE: The purpose of this assignment is to exercise and to develop your skills of reflection. These skills are hard-won and under-appreciated. Put forth effort, but be patient with yourself in developing these skills.

C. Film Response Papers (10%): We will be viewing several films during the course of the semester. You should look upon these films as alternative “texts.” After viewing the film and perhaps some in class conversation, you will write a response to the film. Papers should be approximately 2 pages in length. The paper should be slightly more developed in terms of argument/thesis than the Reaction Papers, but you are not expected to write a polished essay. You may generally use the same questions for the Reaction Papers above to guide your reflection, response, and writing process. One or two additional questions specific to the film will also be provided after we have viewed the film. Film Response Papers (FRP1) will generally be due 2 days after viewing the film.

D. Online Quizzes (10%): On select days as noted in the schedule below (OQ1), quizzes will be available through the eLearning platform on my.carthage. Students are required to COMPLETE the quiz PRIOR to the start of class for that particular class. The scope of the quizzes will include all texts and materials from class assigned since the last Online Quiz. The quizzes will evaluate your comprehension of what you have read and discussed through objective (multiple choice, fill-in-the-
blank, etc.) questions. One or two subjective questions (short answer) may complete the quiz to help direct thinking toward the overall goals of the course.

**E. Social Critique Book Project/Paper (15%)**: Students will be asked to select one of the six texts listed above under **Social Critique Group Book Project**. The texts will be the source material for two important assignments toward the end of the semester. However, you are expected to participate with your group and to prepare for those assignments throughout the semester – both in and out of class. Individually, each student will submit a 5-7 page paper, reviewing the text as directed by the assignment instructions posted on e-Learning. This is the Social Critique Book Paper. Students will also participate in a GROUP project presentation of the text at the end of the semester. Details are provided on the assignment instructions posted on e-Learning. You should plan on reading your book during the first several weeks of the semester. Detailed expectations and milestones will be provided for your Group Project.

**PLEASE NOTE**: There will be 5 slots allowed per book. If you have a book that you would really like to use, please email me your selection. First come, first served – AFTER OUR CLASS SESSION. Please do not email me during class. You must request your book personally. No classmate may make your request on your behalf. I recommend sending me your top 3 choices via email. Final lists provided in week 3, prior to our first in-class GROUP meetings.

**F. Final Exam (15%)**: The final exam will be a “take-home” exam consisting of 3-4 questions framed by the **Fundamental Questions for the Course** as listed above. The exam will be due no later than 10:00am on **May 15**. HOWEVER, attendance is required during the scheduled Final Exam session (**Monday, May 15, 10:30am**) for a short debriefing session and discussion. During week 13, I will provide a list of questions from which you will have some choice. I will also provide specific instructions to guide the construction of your response. The last several classes can be used to discuss the framework of these questions.

The grading for the course will be based upon the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Worth…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Class participation – attendance and involvement, etc.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Reaction Papers (RP)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Film Response Papers (FRP)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Online Quizzes (OQ)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Social Critique Book Project &amp; Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- **Class Attendance** is required. Students will be asked to settle into a regular seat, to aid in class discussion. More than two absences lower the student’s participation grade automatically. Each subsequent absence will be a deduction of 15 points from the final class participation grade. Simply put: be in class.
- **Be on time.** Everyone is expected to be on time for class (2:50 pm). Consistent tardiness is unacceptable and will affect your final grade in the same manner as absences.
- **Cell phones, pagers, iPods, Blackberries, laptops and other electronic devices** should be turned off during class. They’re very annoying to everyone. You will NOT be allowed to use a cell phone or listen to an iPod (or use any other electronic device) during in-class quizzes. TO BE CLEAR: laptops will not be allowed without explicit permission. This course is DISCUSSION intensive and laptops should be closed during discussions. “Texting” in class is disrespectful and will be viewed as an absence.
- **Email** is a great convenience, but is no substitute for personal interaction. Feel free to use email to ask questions about the class, but remember to bring questions for class time as well. Emails will typically be answered by the end of the next weekday.
- **Food and drink** are okay in class as long as you’re not bothering anyone else. Please be sure to check the building policy.
- **Rehabilitation Act 504** is in effect: Any person enrolling in this course who may require alternative instruction and/or evaluation procedures due to a handicapping condition should feel free to discuss these needs with this professor so that specific appropriate, reasonable accommodations can be made within the first week of class.
- **Students with Special Needs:** Students with special learning needs are encouraged to see me during the first two weeks of class to discuss appropriate accommodations and support with proper documentation. Documentation should be on file with Diane Schowalter in the Advising Center (x5802.) This information will be kept confidential.
- **Academic honesty** is expected of everyone in keeping with the values of Carthage College. Cheating or plagiarism on the homework, tests or papers will result in a student facing serious consequences. All work is to be your own. In the event that I suspect that any work you submit is not your own, I will first talk with you before determining appropriate action. Please do not dishonor yourself or the College in this manner. If you have questions about the proper use of materials, please see me as soon as possible.
- **Withdrawal.** The last day to withdraw from this class with a “W” is **Tuesday, November 1, 2016.**

MISSING CLASS: Please note that if you miss a class, you are still responsible for the material which was due for the class, and which was discussed that day. It is your job to get notes from another student, and to consult with the instructor about anything you don’t understand.

**Classroom Etiquette**

In the classroom, the student is expected to refrain from all disruptive conduct, such as talking when the instructor or another student is talking. Focus on class activities is expected; therefore, other activities (e.g., napping, studying for other classes, talking on a cell phone, playing a video game) may not be performed during class time. The use of electronic devices, such as cell phones, is strictly prohibited in class. Please turn off electronic devices before class begins. Finally, students are expected to listen attentively to each other and treat one another with courtesy and respect.

Some of our intentions:

- We will listen to one another—patiently, carefully—assuming that each one of us is always doing the best that she or he can. We will assume the best of those who disagree with us. And because we assume this about each other, each of us shall do the best that she or he can.
- We will speak thoughtfully. We will speak in the first person (i.e., I, me, my, etc.).
• We will strive to be open to examining and owning our own assumptions or our conclusions, and their implications. In other words, we will strive to be aware of not only what we hold, but also why we think as we do.
• We will be open to each other’s intellectual growth and challenge.
• We cannot be blamed for misinformation—or lack of information—we have been taught and have absorbed from the USA society and culture…but we can be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
• We have a moral obligation to actively combat stereotypes so that we can begin to eradicate biases, which prevent us from envisioning and realizing the well-being of us all.

The following schedule represents the agenda of activities the instructor intends to follow during the term. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify or change this schedule at any time based on the perceptions of the objectives to be realized, topics of current interest, and specific needs of students in the light of these factors.

NOTE: The course schedule includes readings which should be completed BEFORE the corresponding class. ALL passages listed should be read by ALL students.

**SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

2/3 Friday – Introductions and /class Expectations

2/6 Monday – Syllabus & Pop Song Discussions (PSD)
2/10 Friday – Genesis ch. 1-3 & Exodus ch. 1-14 (Bible) (Reaction paper #1 = RP1) PSD

2/13 Monday – Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, “Part One: Experiences in a Concentration Camp” (RP2)
2/17 Friday – Frankl, “Part Two: Logotherapy in a Nutshell” and “Postscript: The Case for a Tragic Optimism”

2/19 SUNDAY (Online Quiz #1 = OQ1)
2/20 Monday – Tillich, ch. 1-3 (RP3)
2/24 Friday - FILM – NETWORK

2/27 Monday – FILM – NETWORK– (Film Response Paper A = FRP-A due 3/1) & GROUP: tba

3/1 WEDNESDAY (FRP-A)
3/3 Friday – Tillich, ch. 4-6

3/6 Monday – Job ch. 1-42 (Bible) (RP4)
3/10 Friday –FILM – INVICTUS

3/12 SUNDAY (OQ2)
3/15 WEDNESDAY (FRP-B)
3/17 Friday – Hunter, cont.

SPRING BREAK 3/18-3/26

3/27 Monday – GROUP: tba
4/3 Monday – Weston, *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, ch. 4-6
4/5 WEDNESDAY (OQ3)
4/7 Friday – FILM – CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

4/10 Monday – FILM – CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS *(FRP-C due 4/12)* & GROUP: tba
   NOTE: Monday, 4/10 – Last day to drop a course with a “W”
4/12 WEDNESDAY (FRP-C)
4/14 Friday – NO CLASS – EASTER BREAK

4/17 Monday – *Holy Bible*, Matthew 5-7 *(RP7)*
4/21 Friday – Campbell, *The Glad River*, ch. 1-9; GROUP: tba

   WEDNESDAY 4/26 *(RP8&9 = *The Glad River*, details TBA)*
4/28 Friday – GROUP BOOK PROJECTS = *LI & RE*

4/30 SUNDAY (OQ4)
5/1 Monday – GROUP BOOK PROJECTS = *IDF & WS*
5/5 Friday – GROUP BOOK PROJECTS = *NJC & E*

5/8 Monday – Final Discussion and Review

      May 15 (MONDAY) – Final Exam (meet at 10:30am for 20-30 minute discussion)

      Monday, April 10 – Last day to drop a course with a “W”

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to revise the terms of the syllabus, including the above schedule, with full disclosure, in service of the best interests of the students and the college.

**HW ASSIGNMENT #1:** WHEN YOU HAVE *COMPLETELY AND THOROUGHLY* READ THE SYLLABUS, go to my.carthage eLearning – “Assignments” – “Online Quizzes” and take the brief Personal Information Survey. **NOTE:** In order to take the quiz, you must enter the password “I read it” before taking the quiz. Everyone completing any portion of the survey will receive full credit.
Appendix – Book Descriptions for Group Book Project


In *Life Inc,* award-winning writer Douglas Rushkoff traces how corporations went from being convenient legal fictions to being the dominant fact of contemporary life. The resulting ideology, corporatism, has infiltrated all aspects of civics, commerce, and culture—from the founding of the first chartered monopoly to the branding of the self, from the invention of central currency to the privatization of banking, from the Victorian Great Exhibition to the solipsism of Facebook. *Life Inc* explains why we see our homes as investments rather than places to live, our 401(k) plans as the ultimate measure of success, and the Internet as just another place to do business. Most important, Rushkoff illuminates both how we’ve become disconnected from our world and how we can reconnect to our towns, to the value we can create, and, mostly, to one another. As the speculative economy collapses under its own weight, *Life Inc* shows us how to build a real and human-scaled society to take its place. (from Publisher, through Amazon)


Nothing could be more important than the health of our children, and no one is better suited to examine the threats against it than Sandra Steingraber. Once called "a poet with a knife," she blends precise science with lyrical memoir. In *Living Downstream* she spoke as a biologist and cancer survivor; in *Having Faith* she spoke as an ecologist and expectant mother, viewing her own body as a habitat. Now she speaks as the scientist mother of two young children, enjoying and celebrating their lives while searching for ways to protect them—and all children—from the toxic, climate-threatened world they inhabit.

Each chapter of this engaging and unique book focuses on one inevitable ingredient of childhood—everything from pizza to laundry to homework to the "Big Talk"—and explores the underlying social, political, and ecological forces behind it. Through these everyday moments, Steingraber demonstrates how closely the private, intimate world of parenting connects to the public world of policy-making and how the ongoing environmental crisis is, fundamentally, a crisis of family life. (from Publisher, through Amazon)
C. Michael Pollan. *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto.*

Food. There's plenty of it around, and we all love to eat it. So why should anyone need to defend it?

Because in the so-called Western diet, food has been replaced by nutrients, and common sense by confusion--most of what we’re consuming today is longer the product of nature but of food science. The result is what Michael Pollan calls the American Paradox: The more we worry about nutrition, the less healthy we see to become. With *In Defense of Food,* Pollan proposes a new (and very old) answer to the question of what we should eat that comes down to seven simple but liberating words: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Pollan’s bracing and eloquent manifesto shows us how we can start making thoughtful food choices that will enrich our lives, enlarge our sense of what it means to be healthy, and bring pleasure back to eating. (from Publisher, through Amazon)


At a time when access to health care in the United States is being widely debated, Nortin Hadler argues that an even more important issue is being overlooked. Although necessary health care should be available to all who need it, he says, the current health-care debate assumes that everyone requires massive amounts of expensive care to stay healthy. Hadler urges that before we commit to paying for whatever pharmaceutical companies and the medical establishment tell us we need, American consumers need to adopt an attitude of skepticism and arm themselves with enough information to make some of their own decisions about what care is truly necessary. Each chapter of Worried Sick is an object lesson regarding the uses and abuses of a particular type of treatment, such as mammography, colorectal screening, statin drugs, or coronary stents. For consumers and medical professionals interested in understanding the scientific basis for Hadler's arguments, each topical chapter has an accompanying source chapter in which Hadler discusses the medical literature and studies that inform his critique. According to Hadler, a major stumbling block to rational health-care policy in the United States is contention over the very concept of what constitutes good health. By learning to distinguish good medical advice from persuasive medical marketing, consumers can make better decisions about their personal health and use that wisdom to inform their perspectives on health-policy issues. (from Amazon)

Contrary to the rosy picture of race embodied in Barack Obama's political success and Oprah Winfrey's financial success, legal scholar Alexander argues vigorously and persuasively that we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it. Jim Crow and legal racial segregation has been replaced by mass incarceration as a system of social control (More African Americans are under correctional control today... than were enslaved in 1850). Alexander reviews American racial history from the colonies to the Clinton administration, delineating its transformation into the war on drugs. She offers an acute analysis of the effect of this mass incarceration upon former inmates who will be discriminated against, legally, for the rest of their lives, denied employment, housing, education, and public benefits. Most provocatively, she reveals how both the move toward colorblindness and affirmative action may blur our vision of injustice: most Americans know and don't know the truth about mass incarceration—but her carefully researched, deeply engaging, and thoroughly readable book should change that. (from Amazon)


Since he first heralded our era of environmental collapse in 1989's *The End of Nature*, Bill McKibben has raised a series of eloquent alarms. In Eaarth, he leads readers to the devastatingly comprehensive conclusion that we no longer inhabit the world in which we've flourished for most of human history: we've passed the tipping point for dramatic climate change, and even if we could stop emissions yesterday, our world will keep warming, triggering more extreme storms, droughts, and other erratic catastrophes, for centuries to come. This is not just our grandchildren's problem, or our children's—we're living through the effects of climate change now, and it's time for us to get creative about our survival. McKibben pulls no punches, and swaths of this book can feel bleak, but his dry wit and pragmatic optimism refuse to yield to despair. Focusing our attention on inspiring communities of "functional independence" arising around the world, he offers galvanizing possibilities for keeping our humanity intact as the world we've known breaks down. (from Amazon)