

CHET 70970/80970/90970 Special Topics in Christian Ethics: Theology and Human Rights (syllabus)

3 semester hours, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas  
Summer 2013; Tuesday/Thursday July 9-Aug. 1, 2-4pm, Room: Moore 201

**Instructor:** Charles Bellinger [c.bellinger@tcu.edu](mailto:c.bellinger@tcu.edu) 817-257-7668

**Prerequisites:** one course in theology or ethics

**Course Description:** The history and philosophy of rights language is examined from a theological point of view.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To introduce students to the history of rights language in the West.
2. To introduce students to some of the philosophical arguments that relate to rights.
3. To allow students to articulate their own approach to the use of rights language in public theology.

**Requirements and grading:**

1. attendance and class participation (25%)
2. three 7-8 page essays for MDiv/MTS, three 9-10 pagers for advanced students (75%)

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance at all class meetings is expected. If you are unable to attend on a particular day, contact me.

**Required Texts:**

Marshall, Christopher D. *Crowned with Glory and Honor: Human Rights in the Biblical Tradition*. Telford, Penn.: Pandora Press, 2001. ISBN: 978-1931038041 \$14

Witte, John, and Frank S. Alexander, eds. *Christianity and Human Rights: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0521143745 \$30

There will be other assigned readings provided by the instructor.

**Schedule:**

	text reading assignment	additional essays
Week 1 July 9		Alasdair MacIntyre, "Rights are like unicorns and witches" [handout]
July 11	Witte, <i>Christianity and Human Rights</i> ,	Lynn Hunt, excerpts from <i>Inventing Human Rights</i> . <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Hunt-on-Inventing-">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Hunt-on-Inventing-</a>

	1-63 [Intro., Novak], 81-134 [Aune, Helmholz, Hehir]	<a href="#">Rights.pdf</a> Brad Gregory, excerpt from <i>The Unintended Reformation</i> . [handout]
essay due Saturday, July 13, 5pm, theme: history of rights language		
Week 2 July 16		Andrew Fagan, "Human Rights." <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/hum-rts/print">http://www.iep.utm.edu/hum-rts/print</a>  Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality." <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Rorty-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Rorty-on-rights.pdf</a>  Brian Schaefer, "Human Rights: Problems with the Foundationless Approach." <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Schaefer-vs-Rorty.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Schaefer-vs-Rorty.pdf</a>
July 18	Witte, <i>Christianity and Human Rights</i> , 193-235 [Gunn, Waldron]	Christian Smith, "Does Naturalism Warrant a Moral Belief in Universal Benevolence and Human Rights?" <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Xian-Smith-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Xian-Smith-on-rights.pdf</a>  Margaret Macdonald, "Natural Rights." <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Macdonald-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Macdonald-on-rights.pdf</a>  Richard Primus, "Rights Theory and Rights Practice" <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Primus-ch1.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Primus-ch1.pdf</a>
essay due Saturday, July 20, 5pm, theme: philosophy of rights language		
Week 3 July 23	Witte, <i>Christianity and Human Rights</i> , 283-334 [Browning, Green, Seiple]	Mary Poovey, "The Abortion Question and the Death of Man." <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Poovey-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Poovey-on-rights.pdf</a>  Pope Benedict XVI, excerpts from <i>Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures</i> . <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/B16-on-abortion.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/B16-on-abortion.pdf</a>
July 25	Witte, <i>Christianity and Human Rights</i> , 155-72 [Wolterstorff], 173-90 [McGuckin]	Nicholas Wolterstorff, <i>Justice: Rights and Wrongs</i> . 385-393. <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Wolterstorff-conclusion.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Wolterstorff-conclusion.pdf</a>  Vigen Guroian, "Human Rights and Modern Western Faith." <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Guroian-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Guroian-on-rights.pdf</a>
Week 4 July 30	Marshall, <i>Crowned with Glory and Honor</i> , 25-119	Rowan Williams, "Do Human Rights Exist?" <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Rowan-Wms-on-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Rowan-Wms-on-rights.pdf</a>  Peter Stork, thesis excerpts, read pages 112-140.

	<a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Stork-human-rights.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rights/Stork-human-rights.pdf</a>
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essay due Wednesday, July 31, 5pm, theme: theology and human rights	
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Aug. 1	wrap-up discussion
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**Inclusion Statement:** Brite Divinity School values people of all cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions, with regard to characteristics such as sex, gender, sexual identities, social class, age, and differing abilities. We are committed to promoting a diverse and just environment, in which language and practices support the achievement of inclusion. Brite seeks to remove all barriers to the maintenance and aspirations of its Mission Statement and Non-Discrimination Statement.

**Inclusive Language Statement:** Brite Divinity School promotes inclusive language. This includes such matters as language about God, humanity, cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions, with regard to characteristics such as sex, gender, sexual identities, social class, age, and differing abilities. We are committed to promoting a diverse and just environment for all, in which language and practices encourage inclusion. To this end, Brite will maintain and update as necessary a webpage of resources for current best practices of inclusive language.

**Statement on Disability Services:** Brite Divinity School complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact TCU's Coordinator, Student Disabilities Services, located in Sadler Hall 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from Student Disabilities Services, Sadler Hall 1010, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at 817-257-6567.

**Academic Misconduct (Sec. 5.14 of the Student Handbook):** Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the Student Handbook and the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

**Brite Divinity School Mission Statement:** Brite Divinity School educates women and men to lead in the ministry of Christ's church, the academy, and public life as witnesses to God's reconciling and transforming love and justice.