

**ET-670: Ethics in Muslim and Christian Perspective:   
A Dialogical Approach**

**Fall 2025**

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|  | **Synchronous Online Mode Tuesdays, 5:00–6:50 pm (Eastern) plus weekly asynchronous activities** | **A black scale with a white background  Description automatically generated** |

**PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS**

**Instructors:**Professor Hossein Kamaly, Ph. D.  
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**Office Hours**:   
To be determined in September

**Course Format:**This course is designed in synchronous online mode, thus requires three hours of online activity per week. All enrollees meet together via Zoom for two hours weekly. The third hour each week is spent watching video lectures individually, participating in online discussion forums, and occasionally, collaborating with a classmate. The Canvas website will provide the most accurate and up-to-date instructions for all aspects of the course. If you have difficulty accessing or navigating the site, call the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content, contact your professors.

**Course Description:**This collaboratively taught course facilitates dialogical exploration of ethics from Muslim and Christian points of view. Topics will include scriptural foundations of ethics discourse, the influence of Greek philosophy, modes of moral decision-making, and the relationship of ethics to aesthetics. Substantial time will be devoted to analysis of ethics discourse from the literary legacy of major Muslim and Christian thinkers over the centuries—among them, Augustine of Hippo, Ikhwan al-Safa, al-Ghazali, Said Nursi, Bernard Lonergan, Pope Francis, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Martin Luther, Søren Kierkegaard, Reinhold Niebuhr, Julian of Norwich—employing “close reading” strategies.

**Course Goals:**Completion of this course will enable the student to:

1. Explain scriptural foundations for ethics in the Islamic and Christian traditions.
2. Give an account of the three key approaches to thinking about moral decision making.
3. Assess and explain how foundational and methodological notions are addressed by major figures in each tradition.

This course addresses MAIRS, MAP, MAC, Ph.D., and D.Min program goals.

**Required Textbooks**

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. (W. D. Ross translation is available online)

Fakhry, Majid. *Ethical Theories in Islam,* second expanded edition (Brill, 1994). {Out-of-Print; available through the course’s Canvas site]

Izutsu, Toshihiko. *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2002). ISBN 0773524274

Lovin, Robin D., *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Abingdon, 2011). ISBN 0687467365

Rubenstein, Richard E., *Aristotle’s Children: How Christians, Muslims, and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Dark Ages* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2003). ISBN 0151007209

NOTES: Reading excerpts from various other sources may be required; an additional text may be required; “Recommended Reading” list will be available in August.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**The course consists of twelve modules. Here is the tentative plan:

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| **Module** | **Theme** |
| Module 1: | Preliminary matters: definitions, stance – introducing Lovin |
| Module 2: | Scriptural sources for ethics discourse – introducing Izutsu |
| Module 3: | Greek into Arabic: Reading Richard Rubenstein |
| Module 4: | Aristotle and Teleology – reading Nicomachean Ethics |
| Module 5: | Deontology: principles, casuistry, commandments |
| Module 6: | Areteology: virtue ethics, doing the beautiful |
| Module 7: | Narrative ethics |
| Module 8: | Rationalism versus voluntarism |
| Module 9: | Close reading |
| Module 10: | Aesthetics: reading D. B. Hart and K. Abou El Fadl |
| Module 11: | Recapitulation |
| Module 12: | Synthesis |

**Assessment  
Asynchronous lecture-watching**: Pre-recorded lectures are accessed via VoiceThread—a tool that invites commenting and question-raising. *20% of final grade*

**Weekly written summary responses**: Participation in an online discussion forum by posting brief, written responses to a module’s materials, then commenting on classmates’ posts.   
*50% of final grade*

**Oral responses:** Preparation for and participation in oral discussion during the course’s Zoom sessions. *15% of final grade*

**Culminating Essay:** A formal statement of one’s ethic of spiritual caregiving, as may be expected when applying for board certification as a chaplain. This assignment is archived for future assessment of learning by HIU students.*15% of final grade*

**Hartford International University Grading Scale**

A (95‐100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of subject matter and superior ability to articulate this; provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations.

A‐ (90‐94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+ (87‐89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets course expectations.

B (83‐86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B‐ (80‐82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+ (77‐79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70‐76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when:

* 1. the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work,
  2. parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement,
  3. the whole work is copied from another source [web-based or print],
  4. the work submitted contains significant portions of one’s own previous work used in another course.

Use of Artificial Intelligence, while not plagiarism exactly, can be a form of academic dishonesty. If you use Grammarly, a translation program, or any other form of AI, you must note that in you work you submit.

**HIU Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning**In our courses, we expect that instructors and students alike will strive to:

* Show mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
* Engage in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
* Pay attention to the whole personhood of another—history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
* Demonstrate how to disagree respectfully and well
* Embody mutuality—learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

**Inclusive Language**

HIU is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects gender equality, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another’s images of God.

**Accommodations, Policies, Procedures**

The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to qualified individuals with disabilities, and prevents discrimination on the basis of a disability. It is the policy of HIU to provide reasonable accommodations on a case‐by‐case basis, which may mean working with outside social and governmental agencies to provide the necessary range of services for student success. Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations must contact the Student Services Coordinator. Students with disabilities are eligible for disability support services when they are enrolled in courses and they have disclosed their disability and requested related accommodations during enrollment and/or before the start of each semester. All students seeking accommodation must fill out HIU’s *Request for Disability Accommodations* form. For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the HIU website for the student handbook and various official statements.

**About CANVAS**

This course’s Canvas website is your primary roadmap for this course. If you have difficulty navigating or operating any aspect of the site, do take advantage of the “Help” button (indicated by a question-mark). The “live chat” feature works very well; you can expect prompt and clear responses to your questions. You may also phone the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content (or you tried Canvas Help but are still mystified), please do email or text-message your professor right away.

**Attendance**   
Active attendance in Zoom class is required. If you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. In the case of an absence, the professor may ask the student for a brief essay (250–500 words) on the required reading for that session. Active use of the Canvas site is also required. Failure to log on for seven consecutive days is tantamount to absence from class and may incur a penalty.

**Communication and Technology**

Students will be expected to use their Hartford International email for communication regarding the course. Students must also create a free account with VoiceThread and have access via the VoiceThread app, in Canvas, or in a separate browser window. Within Canvas, the *Announcements* feature will be used to convey information “for the good of the order” and are automatically emailed to all enrollees.