Duke Divinity School: Summer Course of Study 2015
COS 424: Christian Ethics
Session One: Sunday, July 5 - Thursday, July 16, 2015  7:45am – 10:00am

Instructor: Elizabeth DeGaynor
Email: elizabeth.degaynor@duke.edu

Course Description
This course will 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.

Required Texts
Dietrich Bonhoeffer Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community

Robin Lovin An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties and Virtues
Publisher: Abingdon Press (November 1, 2011)  ISBN-10: 0687467365

Toni Morrison The Bluest Eye

Pre-Course Work:
1. Reading & Writing Assignment for An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties and Virtues (Lovin):
Although the Lovin book is a useful resource in its entirety, given the limitations of this course, I've narrowed down the required reading (due Monday, July 6) to the following portions - Chapter 1: pages 3-14, 22-23; Chapter 2: 25-36; Chapter 3 & 4: all; Chapter 6: 132-135 (Martin Luther, useful for understanding Bonhoeffer); Chapter 7: 152-153 (Bonhoeffer), 166-167 (Martin Luther King, Jr), 172-179 (Karl Barth); Chapter 9: all; Chapters 5 and 8 are optional. For your first essay, please read pgs 22-23 (explanation of “stance”) and pgs 45-66 (chapter three “Variations on Christian Stance”) of Introduction to Christian Ethics. In 3-4 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1 inch margins, parenthetical citations): First, summarize each of the four stances the author describes, including comparing them to (and contrasting them with) one another. Second, explain which of the four stances (or combination of stances) you find most helpful in your ministry context. Please email your essay to me (ead15@duke.edu) at least one week before the start of our course (Monday, June 29 – at the latest. You may to send it to me earlier.)

2. Media Analysis: Please select one example of an ethical argument (an article from newspaper, magazine or journal, a blog post, a clip from a movie or tv show, an advertisement) and BRING it with you to the first day of class (Monday, July 6), along with a description of the source and its context, a description of the social
location of the author (if given), and brief answers to the following questions: What ethical issue is being addressed? What is the argument? What proof is offered? What is at stake?

3. **Reading Assignment**: Please read Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye*, prayerfully and carefully. I suggest you read the foreword first, including the author’s contention that “many readers remain touched but not moved,” and consider factors that might cause readers to resort to numbness rather than facing human suffering. Mark passages that you find striking, troubling or confusing. **We will begin discussing this book toward the end of our first week together (Thursday, July 9), but you’ll want to read slowly, and you may need to read it twice.**