



ETHC6301 BIBLICAL ETHICS
Spring 2023: Thursday 2:00-4:50am (FLEX)
Division of Theological and Historical Studies

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*New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants
to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His Mission.*

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

The ethics of the Old Testament, intertestamental period, and New Testament, in the light of their historical context, are the major areas of consideration. Their relevance to contemporary Christian living forms a necessary corollary. Attention will be given to tools for applying biblical ethics such as exegetical studies.

Student Learning Outcomes

The following objectives of this course are for the successful student:

- to achieve competency in spiritual and character development by standing under the judgment and guidance of Scripture.
- to have a stronger commitment to a moral life shaped by Scripture.
- to have a stronger commitment to voicing biblical values in ministry and in the community.
- to be able to identify and discuss key thinkers, models, and ideas in biblical ethics.
- to apply sound hermeneutics in interpreting key ethical passages in Scripture.
- to apply faithfully Scripture to current ethical issues confronting the church and world.
- to be able to discuss and argue ethical issues competently and convincingly.
- to have greater clarity on where Christians should stand and how that stance is determined on key ethical issues.

Textbooks

For general reading:

Gosnell, Peter W. *The Ethical Vision of the Bible: Learning Good from Knowing God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014.

For Ten Commandment Assignment:

DeYoung, Kevin. *The Ten Commandments: What They Mean, Why They Matter, and Why We Should Obey Them*. Foundational Tools for Our Faith Series. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018.

For Review Assignment:

Copan, Paul. *Is God a Vindictive Bully? Reconciling Portrayals of God in the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.

Recommended Books for your Library

Students are not expected to buy the recommended texts.

Gill, David W. *Doing Right: Practicing Ethical Principles*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Marshall, I. Howard. *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

McQuilken, Robertson, and Paul Copan. *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics: Walking in the Way of Wisdom*. 3rd Edition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Meadors, Gary T. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Pennington, Jonathan T. *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Rooker, Mark F. *The Ten Commandments: Ethics for the Twenty-First Century*. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H, 2010.

Thompson, James W. *Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2011.

Witherington, Ben, III. *New Testament Theology and Ethics*. Volumes 1 & 2. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

Course Teaching Methodology

In order to meet the objectives of the course and involve students in the learning process, the course will use the following methodologies: lecture, book reading and content outlining, and research and writing

- Create headings for the teaching outline from the following:
 - What does the commandment you chose mean (and how did you get to that meaning)?
 - Apply the Sermon on the Mount to your commandment, particularly Matthew 5, and more precisely Matthew 5: 17-19. In other words, how has Jesus fulfilled your commandment?
 - How does the New Testament as a whole treat the commandment?
 - How ought the commandment to be applied today? Think in terms of current ethical issues and how the commandment might lay claim on Christians living in our context?
 - How might the commandment lay claim on non-Christians? Don't forget to apply material previously learned in class.
 - Important general concepts: What would be your take-away when teaching this commandment? Did you find anything to be controversial, interesting, novel, problematic, or just difficult for Christians to apply?
 - During the study, did you change your mind on anything about the commandment. If your mind was not changed on anything, don't include this as a heading.
 - Questions to use in teaching: Prepare good questions to use when teaching on the commandment.
- Include a bibliography
- The grade is determined by the extensiveness and quality of the content notes within the outline, sources used, percentage of book read, and the quality of the discussion questions.
- Regarding form:
 - Don't use a title page. Put your name, commandment, and percentage of book read in the heading. For example:

Jeffrey Riley, Remember the Sabbath
I read 100% of the DeYoung text
 - If the information about percentage of book read is not included in the review, 10 points will be deducted from the final grade.
 - Use a standard outline setting
 - Length is not a primary issue. Address each of the above sections thoroughly. Make it useful to you as a teaching tool.

Position Paper (30% of final grade)

Responsibilities: Each student will **write** a position paper on an ethical or hermeneutical issue or a personality related to the field of biblical ethics. For example:

- Issues arising directly from the biblical text and in need of interpretation and application, such as the following: homosexuality, the relationship between men and women in the church, peacemaking and violence, punishment and the government, war, and so forth.
- Fundamental theological and moral positions that provide direction for understanding current ethical issues (choose carefully to keep topic in line with biblical ethics): personhood; understanding "love" as a moral term; What is biblical justice, and so forth.
- Significance of genre in ethics (narrow topic to specific genre), such as law, narrative, epistle, and so forth.
- The biblical moral hermeneutic or ethic of a specific theologian, philosopher, or ethicist, such as Kaiser's principlism, Hauerwas's narrative ethic, Webb's redemptive movement hermeneutic, Bonhoeffer's use of the Sermon on the Mount, and so forth. Again, the research must relate to biblical ethics.

Position Paper Guidelines

1. The official style and form guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, latest edition.
2. Length: 3000-3600 Words, with Times New Roman 12-point font for body of text.
3. Include a title page with word count included at the bottom
4. Use footnotes, not endnotes.
5. Staple the paper; do not put it in a folder/binder.
6. Do not include an outline
7. Limited use of first person (I or we) and second person (you) is allowed. When you make an argument, however, use third person.
8. Do not overuse indefinite pronouns (such as "it" or "there" without an obvious antecedent).

Personal Methodology Brief (15% of final grade)

Each student will write a brief description of his or her hermeneutical methodology—How to move from the Bible to ethics today. In a sense, this is a summary of what you learned during the semester. For that reason, you can write on it throughout the semester

1. The Methodological position paper should be 1000-1200 words, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12.
2. The student should use categories and descriptions learned during the semester.
3. Each paper should include sections on the following: authority of Scripture; relationship between OT ethics and NT ethics; interpretive methods; and hermeneutical assumptions that provide for an ethical application of Scripture to personal, ecclesial, and cultural-political morality.

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale:

A: 93-100 **B:** 85-92 **C:** 77-84 **D:** 70-76 **F:** 69 or below

Borderline grades will normally and strictly be determined by the numerical grade received (Dr. Riley rounds up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade. In special cases, extra credit can be arranged with Dr. Riley, usually through an additional book review.

Grade Distribution by Assignment and Due Dates

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| • Copan Outline | 20% | Due: February 23 |
| • Ten Commandments Assignment | 20% | Due: March 30 |
| • Position Paper | 30% | Due: April 27 |
| • Personal Methodology Brief | 15% | Due: May 4 |
| • Readings and Report | 15% | Due: May 4 |

2023 SPRING Biblical Ethics Schedule: Thursday 2:00-4:50pm

NOTE: COURSE SCHEDULE WILL NOT BE FINALIZED UNTIL THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

Date	Topics for Class	Assignments
1-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the class Laying a Foundation for Biblical Ethics 	PG = Gosnell text KD = DeYoung text PC = Copan text
1-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laying a Foundation for Biblical Ethics 	Gosnell, Chapter 1
2-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There and Back Again 	Gosnell, Chapters 2-4
2-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There and Back Again 	Gosnell, Chapters 5-6
2-16	Open Topic	
2-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical Genre and Ethics: Narrative, Poetry, and Wisdom 	Copan Outline Due
3-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical Genre and Ethics: Law and the Prophets 	
3-9	Open Topic	
3-16	SPRING BREAK	
3-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering the Ethic of Jesus A Case Study: Jesus and Marriage Submit possible position paper topic 	Gosnell, Chapters 7-8
3-30	Open Topic	DeYoung 10 Commandments Assignment
4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Morality and Ethic for the Church An example of putting it all together: The Church and the Practice of Homosexuality 	Gosnell, Chapters 9-10 and Concluding Thoughts
4-13	SERVE DAY: LUNCH AND AFTERNOON	
4-20	Open topic	
4-27	Bringing things to a close	Position Paper Due in Canvas
5-4	FINAL EXAMS BEGIN The slot for a final exam is Thursday, May 4, 2:00-4:00pm Personal Methodology Brief Due in Canvas May 4 Gosnell Reading Report Due in Canvas May 4	

Examples of Issues to Consider for Research Paper:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being Human: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dominion b. Ethical implications of Personhood/Imago Dei: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Taking human life ii. "Consistent life ethic," Race 2. Humans as sexual creatures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Being male and female b. Procreation c. Sexual sins 3. Marriage <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contract or Covenant? b. Divorce, and Remarriage c. Ethic of Being Single d. Polygamy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What is biblical justice? 5. Wealth, Poverty, Property 6. Truth Telling 7. Keeping the Sabbath 8. Church discipline 9. Church and Culture 10. Slavery, then to now 11. Relationship of the church to the state or governing authorities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pacifism b. Violence/war 12. Hermeneutics—bridging the OT and NT
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Helpful Information

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Canvas. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in this syllabus.
2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done through uploading notes or identifying a code word after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.
4. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

Attendance Policy

Traditional and NOLA2U Classes: Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Miscellaneous Course Policies

Participation when in class live with preparation and attentiveness are crucial not only to your own success in the class, but to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution to make to the class. Use of laptop computers for note taking is fine, but playing computer games or doing work not associated with the class is not appreciated and is strictly prohibited. We will be dealing with some complex issues, and we need your undivided attention.

Appropriate Conduct in Class is especially important so that all students can have a chance to hear and participate meaningfully in class discussions. Holding private conversations in class or other rude behavior is not appreciated. In an ethics class in which moral issues arise about which some of us will disagree, it is essential to treat each other with Christian charity and kindness. Rude behavior disrespectful of the instructor or other students will not be tolerated in class.

Late Work will be immediately penalized **7 points**, followed by an additional 7 points per week, unless **prior permission** is sought and a **legitimate reason** warrants lateness. **Late work should include the date due and the day delivered on the cover page.**

Cell Phone and Computer Usage: The official seminary policy as written in the Student Handbook is as follows: The student is to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This includes the usage of cell phones and computers during class time. The opportunity for students to use these items within the classroom is contingent upon their proper usage. Students are also reminded that phones are to be silenced during the class and other Seminary functions. Proper usage includes note taking and tasks specifically assigned by the professor. Improper utilization includes all other usages such as surfing the Internet, playing games, texting, and emailing. If a student is engaged in improper usage of a cell phone or computer during a class, the professor has the right to prohibit the student from bringing the item to subsequent class meetings.

Select Bibliography for Biblical Ethics

General Biblical/Christian Ethics

Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life. A Theology of Lordship*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008.

Grudem, Wayne. *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018.

Instone-Brewer, David. *Moral Questions in the Bible: Timeless Truth in a Changing World*. Scripture in Context Series. Billingham WA: Lexham, 2019.

McQuilkin, Robertson, and Paul Copan. *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics: Walking in the Way of Wisdom*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014.

Old Testament Ethics

Copan, Paul. *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

DeYoung, Kevin. *The Ten Commandments: What They Mean, Why They Matter, and Why We Should Obey Them*. Foundational Tools for Our Faith Series. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983.

Lamb, David T. *Prostitutes and Polygamists: A Look at Love, Old Testament Style*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Sloane, Andrew. *At Home in a Strange Land: Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

New Testament Ethics

Grudem, Wayne. "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47.2 (2004): 299-346.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

Longnecker, Richard. *New Testament Social Ethics for Today*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1993.

Stassen, Glen H. and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003 (Recommend 1st Edition Only).

Wright, N. T. *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

Hermeneutics and So Forth

Campbell, Ken M., ed. *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.

Cowles, C. S., et al. *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*. Counterpoints: Exploring Theology, ed. Stanley N. Gundry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

DeYoung, James B. *Homosexuality: Contemporary Claims Examined in Light of the Bible and Other Ancient Literature and Law*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000.

Gagnon, Robert A. J. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

Instone-Brewer, David. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. With David W. Jones. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.

Marshall, I. Howard. *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Strickland, Wayne G. *Five Views on Law and Gospel*. Counterpoints: Exploring Theology, ed. Stanley N. Gundry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

Swartley, Willard M. *Slavery, Sabbath, War, & Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*. Scottsdale: Herald, 1983.

Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

_____. *Corporal Punishment in the Bible: A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts*. Foreword by I. Howard Marshall. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011.