

# New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

ETHC 9401 – Biblical Ethics

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**Professors:** Dr. Jeffrey Riley

**Room:**

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## **NOBTS Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries

### **Course Purpose, Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

The purpose of a Ph.D. seminar at NOBTS is to prepare students for teaching in colleges, universities, and seminaries; for holding administrative positions; for working in boards, agencies, and commissions of the Southern Baptist Convention; and for providing specialized ministry leadership.

The Biblical Ethics seminar seeks to produce in students *characteristic excellence* in academics, *doctrinal integrity*, and *spiritual vitality*. These core values will be attained through the development of competencies in biblical exposition regarding moral issues, Christian theological and ethical heritage, and spiritual and character formation. The core value emphasis for NOBTS this academic year is *mission focus*; consequently, appropriate attention will be given to the impact of biblical ethics on the mission of the church, and *visa versa*.

For those students who participated in the plan to read through the Bible during the academic year 2009-2010, I have included on the class schedule the Bible Reading Plan that closes out August.

### **Course Description**

A survey of the ethical teachings of the Scriptures in the context of their historical and cultural setting. The study will focus on theologians, ethicists, and biblical scholars who have made major contributions in the areas of biblical ethics, biblical interpretation, Old Testament ethics, New Testament ethics, the ethics of Jesus, and the ethics of Paul, as well as developing a methodology for the interpretation of ethical passages in the Scriptures.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. The student will demonstrate conversancy with hermeneutical issues critical to biblical ethics through seminar discussions and by writing reports on assigned readings in the field.
2. The student will demonstrate conversancy with the hermeneutical methods employed by contemporary ethicists through seminar discussions and by writing reports on assigned readings in the field.
3. The student will demonstrate conversancy with particular ethical issues which are common to biblical ethics through seminar discussions and by writing reports on assigned readings in the field.
4. The student will design, implement, and report research on a topic related to biblical ethics.
5. The student will demonstrate proficiency in imparting knowledge gained in research by reporting and leading discussion on assigned readings and on a research paper.
6. The student will formalize and express his or her view on biblical authority and hermeneutics as related to ethics and morality by writing a personal position paper.

## **Course Teaching Methodology**

The seminar will utilize reading assignments, written reading reports, a research paper, formal response to a research paper, a written personal perspective, and interaction with professors and members of the seminar. The professor will provide a critical response to each writing assignment as well as to each formal in-seminar response to writing assignments.

## **Required Textbooks**

- Gary T. Meadors. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Witherington, Ben, III. *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*. Vol. 2, *The Collective Witness*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.

## **Review Textbooks**

- Cosgrove, Charles H. *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Doriani, Daniel M. *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001.

- 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.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

### **Recommended Textbooks**

- Marshall, I. Howard. *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Stassen, Glen H. and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Swartley, Willard M. *Slavery, Sabbath, War, & Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*. Scottsdale: Herald, 1983.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

### **Course Requirements**

1. **Reading Reports and Discussions (15%)**
  - a. Daily reading assignments from texts and other documents should be read by all seminar participants, though individual students will have presentation and reporting responsibilities for each daily reading assignment.
  - b. Each student will choose reading assignments from the required textbooks and from other documents as published in the *Seminar Schedule* of this syllabus. Assignments will be apportioned equally and should be designated before or on the first meeting of the seminar.
  - c. The student responsible for a given reading assignment must prepare to lead discussion for one seminar hour. The following will help the student to prepare:
    - i. Know and outline the content of the reading
    - ii. Prepare good questions to promote dialogue
    - iii. Relate readings to previously learned material or to known issues in ethics or hermeneutics
  - d. The student responsible for a given reading assignment must prepare and provide for each seminar participant a written response based on the following criteria:
    - i. Three to five single-spaced pages
    - ii. The following should be addressed (use 2-6 as subheadings):
      - (1) Introductory description of reading assignment
      - (2) Nature, authority, and use of Scripture expressed or implicated by

- the reading
- (3) Ethical issues, implications, or positions expressed in the reading and how the issues are addressed in light of Scripture
- (4) Important concepts to carry from the reading
- (5) Ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic
- (6) Changes or challenges to thinking

2. **Book Review (15%); Errata (5%)**

- a. Each Student will review a textbook chosen from the above Review Text list. The date of the review is listed in the Seminar Schedule below. Refer to **Elements of a Book Review** for guidelines.
- b. Each student will choose a review written by another students and on the day that review due will provide an *errata* sheet listing problems with form and style. Part of the seminar time will be devoted to sharpening writing skills. The Turabian manual is the standard.

3. **Research Papers (35%)**

- a. Each student will write and present a research paper on an ethical or hermeneutical issue or a personality related to the field of biblical ethics. For example:
  - i. Issues arising directly from the biblical text or treated to some degree as an ethical issue in the biblical text that is in need of interpretation and application: homosexuality, relationship of men and women in the church, peacemaking and violence, punishment and the government, war, and so forth.
  - ii. 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” or “justice as moral terms, and so forth.
  - iii. Significance of biblical genre for ethics (narrow topic to specific genre)
  - iv. Biblical moral hermeneutic or ethic of a specific theologian, philosopher, or ethicist: Bonhoeffer on Abortion, Maston’s principlism, Hauerwas’s narrative ethic, and so forth. Again, must relate to biblical ethics.
- b. **Research Paper Guidelines**  
(Compliments of Dr. Stan Norman)
  - i. The official style and form guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, latest edition.
  - ii. Use footnotes, not endnotes.
  - iii. Use Times New Roman 12 point font for body of text.
  - iv. Staple the paper; do not put it in a folder/binder.
  - v. Include a title page
  - vi. Include a table of contents that shows at least at least two levels of

- subheadings (functioning as an outline).
- vii. The use of first person (I or we) and second person (you) is not allowed. Arguments should be presented in such a manner so as to eliminate the need for all but third person references.
- viii. Use correct grammar and spelling.
- ix. The uses of past tense and present tense must be consistent. Generally, past tense is used to refer to historical events and persons, including writers of published materials. Present tense is utilized to present arguments, interact with opinions and viewpoints, and cite extant texts.
- x. Do not use split infinitives.
- xi. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs.
- xii. Do not overuse indefinite pronouns (such as “it” or “there” without a clear antecedent).
- xiii. Avoid “widows” and “orphans.”

4. **Formal Response to Research Papers (15%)**

- a. Each seminar participant will choose a research paper to evaluate critically. Each student will evaluate the research paper for form and style, communication of important concepts, content, and critical engagement of materials.
- b. Evaluations will be prepared for and presented on the day the research paper is presented in class.
- c. Written evaluations should be no more than two single-spaced pages. A copy of the written evaluation will be provided for the professor and for the student whose paper is being evaluated.
- d. Each evaluation should include a log of form and style errors or concerns.
- e. Beyond the written evaluation, the formal response is graded on the quality of in-seminar participation, engagement, and interlocution.

5. **Methodological Position Paper (15%)**

- a. Each student will write a succinct description (3-5 single spaced pages) of his or her hermeneutical methodology or paradigm.
- b. The student should use categories and descriptions learned during the semester.
- c. Each paper should include sections on the following: authority and authorization of Scripture, relationship between OT and NT ethics, interpretive methods, and hermeneutical assumptions that provide for the application of Scripture to personal, ecclesial, and cultural-political morality.

6. **Assignment Summary**

- a. Reading Reports and Discussion: 15%
- b. Book review and Errata: 20%
- c. Research Paper: 35%
- d. Formal Response to Research Paper: 15%
- e. Methodological Position Paper: 15%

## Course Evaluation

Grades will be based on the professor's critique of written assignments and in-seminar responsibilities. The grade "C" fails the seminar.

## Seminar Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>	<b>Respondent(s)</b>
8-25	Introduction to the Seminar (give article packet)	None	None
9-1	<b>Reading Reports and Discussion:</b>  1. Meadors, Ch. 1 (Kaiser) 2. Meadors, Ch. 2 (Dorioni) 3. Meadors, Ch. 3 (Vanhoozer)	1.  2.  3.	None
9-8	<b>Reading Reports and Discussion:</b>  4. Meadors, Ch. 4 (Webb) 5. Meadors, Ch. 5 (3 Reflections)	4.  5.	None
9-15	<b>Reading Report and Discussion:</b>  <i>Witherington, The Indelible Image</i>	All	
9-22	<b>Dr. Riley Out of Town. Research Day</b>		
9-29	<b>Book Reviews</b> 1. Schreiner, <i>The Law and Its Fulfillment</i>  2. Dorioni, <i>Putting Truth to Work</i>	1,  2.	Provide <i>Errata</i> 1.  2.
10-6	<b>Book Reviews</b> 3. Wright, <i>Old Testament Ethics for the People of God</i>  4. Hays, <i>The Moral Vision of the N.T.</i>	3.  4.	Provide <i>Errata</i> 3.  4.
10-13	5. Cosgrove, <i>Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate</i>	5.	Provide <i>Errata</i> 5.
10-20	<b>Fall Break</b>	<b>Fall Break</b>	<b>Fall Break</b>
10-27	Open Date; submit 1 <sup>st</sup> paper		

11-3	Research Paper #1 (Submit 2)	1.	1.
11-10	Research Paper #2 (Submit 3)	2.	2.
11-17	<b>ETS, Atlanta</b>	<b>ETS, Atlanta</b>	<b>ETS, Atlanta</b>
11-24	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
11-17	Research Paper #3 (Submit 4)	3.	3.
12-1	Research Paper #4 (Submit 5)	4.	4.
12-8	Research Paper #5	5.	5.

### **Bible Reading Plan August 23-31, 2010**

#### AUGUST

23 Micah 5:1-7:20, Revelation 14:1-20, Psalm 145:14-21, Proverbs 31:10-12  
 24 Nahum 1:1-3:19, Revelation 15:1-16:11, Psalm 146:1-10, Proverbs 31:13-14  
 25 Habakkuk 1:1-3:19, Revelation 16:12-17:8, Psalm 147:1-6, Proverbs 31:15-17  
 26 Zeph 1:1-3:20, Revelation 17:9-18:8, Psalm 147:7-14, Proverbs 31:18-19  
 27 Haggai 1:1- Zechariah 1:21, Revelation 18:9-24, Psalm 147:15-20, Proverbs 31:20-22  
 28 Zech 2:1-6:15, Revelation 19:1-21, Psalm 148:1-6, Proverbs 31:23-25  
 29 Zech 7:1-10:12, Revelation 20:1-21:4, Psalm 148:7-14, Proverbs 31:26-27  
 30 Zech 11:1-14:21, Revelation 21:5-27, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 31:28-29  
 31 Malachi 1:1-4:6, Revelation 22:1-21, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 31:30-31

### **Select Bibliography for Biblical Ethics**

#### **General Biblical Ethics**

Birch, Bruce C., and Larry L. Rasmussen. *Bible & Ethics in the Christian Life*. Revised and Expanded. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989.

Clements, R.E. *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Daly, Robert J., et.al. *Christian Biblical Ethics: From Biblical Revelation to Contemporary Praxis, Method, and Content*. New York: Paulist, 1984.

Everding, H. Edward, and Dana W. Wilbanks. *Decision Making and the Bible*. Valley Forge: Judson, 1975.

- Maston, T. B. *Biblical Ethics: A Guide to the Ethical Message of the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1979.
- McQuilkin, Robertson. *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1995.
- Mott, Stephen Charles. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- O'Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Evangelical Ethics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Ogletree, Thomas W. *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics: A Constructive Essay*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Rogerson, John W., et.al. *The Bible in Ethics: The Second Sheffield Colloquium*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.
- Siker, Jeffrey. *Scripture and Ethics: Twentieth Century Portraits*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Stassen, Glen H. and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Verhey, Allen. *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- White, R.E.O. *Biblical Ethics*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christian Ethics*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994.

### **Old Testament Ethics**

- Barton, John. *Understanding Old Testament Ethics: Approaches and Explorations*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003.
- Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- Bruce, W.S. *The Ethics of the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960.
- Crenshaw, J.L., and J.T. Willis. *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*. New York: KTAV, 1974.
- Harrelson, Walter J. *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997.

- Hempel, J. *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments*. Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1964.
- Hubbard, Robert L., Jr., et.al. *Studies in Old Testament Theology*. Dallas: Word, 1992.
- Janzen, Waldemar. *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1983.
- Lehmann, Paul. "The Commandments and the Common Life." *Interpretation* 34 (October 1980): 341-355.
- Millar, J. Gary. *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today*. Westmont: InterVarsity, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Ethical Relevance of Israel as a Society." *Transformation* 1.4 (1984): 11-21.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Use of the Bible in Social Ethics I: Paradigms, Types, and Eschatology." *Transformation* 1.1 (Jan/Mar 1984): 11-20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Use of the Bible in Social Ethics III: The Ethical Relevance of Israel as a Society." *Transformation* 1.4 (1985): 11-21.

### **New Testament Ethics**

- Andrews, Elias. *The Meaning of Christ for Paul*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949.
- Bockmuehl, Markus. *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000.
- Cahill, Lisa Sowle. "The New Testament and Ethics: Communities of Social Change." *Interpretation* 44 (October 1990): 383-395.
- Chilton, Bruce and J.I.H. McDonald. *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom: Biblical Foundations in Theology*. London: SPCK, 1987.
- Corriveau, Raymond. *The Liturgy of Life: A Study of the Ethical Thought of St. Paul in His Letters to the Early Christian Communities*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1970.

- Dodd, C. H. "The Ethics of the New Testament," In *Moral Principles of Action*, ed. R.N. Anshen, New York: Harper & Row, 1952.
- Furnish, Victor. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1968.
- Harvey, A.E.. *Strenuous Commands: The Ethic of Jesus*. London: SCM-Canterbury, 1990.
- 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.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Scripture-Shaped Community: The Problem of Method in New Testament Ethics." *Interpretation* 44 (January 1990): 42-55.
- Houlden, J. L. *Ethics and the New Testament*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1973.
- Lohse, Eduard. *Theological Ethics of the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- Longnecker, Richard. *New Testament Social Ethics for Today*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1993.
- Matera, Frank J. *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996.
- Marshall, L. H. *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1964.
- Maxsen, Willi. *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Meeks, Wayne. *The Moral World of the First Christians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1986.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Use of the Bible in Social Ethics III: The Use of the New Testament: Part II - Objections to the Enterprise." *Transformation* 1.3 (1984): 19-25.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Use of the New Testament for Social Ethics." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 15 (1987): 225-260.
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Scroggs, Robin. "The New Testament and Ethics: How Do We Get From There to Here?" *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11 (Winter 1984): 77-84.

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

Verhey, Allen. *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984.

Wilder, Amos N. *Kerygma, Eschatology, and Social Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Basis of Christian Ethics in the New Testament." *Journal of Religious Thought* 15.2 (1958): 137-146.

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Wright, N.T. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

### **Ethics and Hermeneutics**

Brueggemann, Walter. *Power, Providence, and Personality: Biblical Insight into Life and Ministry*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

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- Cosgrove, Charles H. *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.
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- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making in the Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
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- Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.