

ETHIC 4323 A—The Bible & Moral Issues
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fall 2014 (W-F 8:30–9:45)
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I. Course Description

A study of how the Bible addresses significant moral concerns. Students will have the opportunity to learn moral teachings of both the Old and New Testaments, evaluate significant hermeneutical models for addressing contemporary moral issues from a biblical perspective, and investigate biblical materials that pertain to several key contemporary moral issues including marriage and divorce, abortion, and homosexuality.

II. Course Objectives

- A. A student who completes this course should be able to articulate the role of Scripture in the development and application of Christian ethics.
- B. A student who completes this course should be able to use Scripture effectively in building moral arguments.
- C. A student who completes this course should be able to engage contemporary culture on ethical issues with the goal of transforming culture from an informed biblical perspective.

III. Required Texts

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

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *What Does the Lord Require?: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching Biblical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

Jones, David W. *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*. Nashville: B&H, 2013.

Selected articles posted on Blackboard.

IV. Electronic Equipment

- A. Computers, iPads, Tablets—Computers, iPads, and tablets are allowed in class for academic purposes only. Surfing the internet, playing games, checking email, and other non-class-related activities on a computer are not allowed. Anyone caught using a computer during class time for a non-class-related activity may forfeit the privilege to bring a computer to class for the rest of the semester.
- B. iPods, MP3 Players, and Other Handheld Devices—iPods, MP3 players, and other handheld electronic devices are not permitted during class. Please turn them off prior to the beginning of class.

- C. Cell Phones—All cell phones must be turned off or turned to silent mode prior to the beginning of class. If you are expecting an emergency phone call that requires you to have a cell phone on, please place that phone in vibrate-only mode and sit close to an exit door. If you must answer an emergency call during class, please do not begin talking until after you have exited the classroom. Cell phone calls are a distraction to your fellow students and the professor.
- D. Text-Messaging—Text-messaging will not be allowed during class.
- E. Recording Equipment—Recording devices may be permitted at the professor's discretion. Please request permission from the professor prior to using recording equipment in class.

V. Course Requirements

- A. Attendance—Responsible Christian conduct should encourage students to be faithful in class attendance. Negligence in class attendance inevitably will have a negative effect upon a student's grade and it will discourage the professor from showing grace in a time of need. The seminary catalog states, "Students are expected to attend all meetings of all classes in which they are enrolled. A student's grade may be penalized for absences. Students absent from more than 20% of the class sessions will not receive credit for the course. During the fall and spring semesters this means that students missing more than . . . six (75-minute) class meetings of a three-hour class will not receive credit for the course." While the professor may not "take attendance" or "call the roll," the seminary's attendance policy is in effect; therefore, students are strongly encouraged to attend all class sessions.
- B. Cultural Awareness Articles—Each student should locate three current news articles online that describe an event, controversy, legal case, or issue that relates to the course content. The articles should be published during the semester and not older than the beginning of the semester. In the discussion board Cultural Awareness Articles, create a thread with your name as the title. Post the title of the article and a link to the article on the internet in your post. You may add all three articles at one time or edit your post to add articles throughout the semester. Make sure that all articles are from reputable news sources. All articles are due by 11:59 p.m. on Dec 3.
- C. Exams—This course includes a mid-term and a final exam. The exams will include objective questions (e.g., multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, listing) and subjective essay questions. Unless otherwise indicated, the exams will cover material from the class lectures, discussions, handouts, and reading. In your exam preparation, please do not make the mistake of focusing solely on materials presented in class lectures. Reading the required texts will also be pertinent to exam preparation.

The mid-term exam will be offered on Blackboard to be taken between 10.00 a.m. on Oct 10 and 11:59 p.m. on Oct 18. The exam is closed-book/closed-notes and has a 2 hour time limit.

The final exam will also be offered on Blackboard to be taken between 10:00 a.m. on Dec 3 and 11:59 p.m. on Dec 10. The exam is closed-book/closed-notes and has a 2 hour time limit.

- D. Discussion Boards— Each student will complete two discussion board assignments related to ethical theory and moral issues. Each discussion board assignment will consist of an original post and three replies completed over a two-week period. During the first week of the assignment, each student will compose an original post of 350–500 words answering the question posted on the discussion board instructions. The original post will be due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday. During the second week, each student will then compose a reply to at least three other students’ original posts for a total of three replies. Each reply should be at least 100 words and will be due by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday. The process will be repeated later in the semester for a different book.

Each discussion board assignment (original post and 3 replies combined) will be worth 100 points. There will be two sets of these assignments during the semester, resulting in two original posts and six replies. Please see the Discussion Board Assignment Instructions and Grading Rubric (available on Blackboard) for more details.

The discussion board assignment due dates are listed in the Course Schedule section of the syllabus.

- E. Research Paper—An academic research paper will be required for completion of this course. All papers should address a topic pertinent Christian ethics. See “Guidelines for Research Paper” for further instructions. The paper is due no later than 11:59 p.m. on Nov 22.

VI. Grading

A. Assignment Weight		B. Seminary Grading Scale			
Cultural Awareness Articles	5%	A+	98–100	C	73–77
Discussion Boards	20%	A	93–97	C-	70–72
Mid-Term Exam	25%	A-	90–92	D+	68–69
Final Exam	25%	B+	88–89	D	63–67
Research Paper	25%	B	83–87	D-	60–62
		B-	80–82	F	Below 60
		C+	78–79		

VII. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. When the professor concludes that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the student will receive the grade of zero for the assignment, and the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will be notified about the incident. The same actions apply to other acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating on examinations (see the Ethical Conduct section in the seminary's catalog).

VIII. Special Needs

Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order for special arrangements to be considered.

IX. Syllabus

The professor has provided this syllabus as a written outline and summary for the convenience of the student. The professor may change the syllabus in writing or verbally for any reason at any time at his sole discretion. By remaining enrolled in the course, the student agrees to be bound by the syllabus and by any changes made by the professor.

X. Guidelines for Research Papers

- A. Students must write an academic research paper following the Southwestern Style Guide. Students should remember they are writing a term paper, not a thesis or dissertation. Papers must address an important moral or theological matter relating to the content of the class.
- B. Analyze, criticize, and evaluate. Students should make their own judgments. Do not only report what others say. As a suggestion, parts of a well composed paper might include: (1) discussing the background and importance of a moral issue, (2) criticizing responses with which you disagree, and (3) arguing and defending what you think is the right position based on Scripture.
- C. Papers must have at least 10 pages of text (they should at least get to the 10th page of text) and a maximum of 12 pages. A 5 point penalty will apply for every page short or long. Students should include a bibliography of works cited, but pages of bibliography will not count toward meeting the paper length requirement.
- D. Page numbering should start with the first page of text (i.e., the first page of text is page #1).
- E. Quotes and unique facts must be documented using footnotes.

- F. Papers should have at least 10 unique sources. There should be at least 4 books and 4 articles among those sources.
- G. Internet research is allowed, but first try tracking information to more reliable printed publications.
- H. Papers must be composed in Times New Roman using #12 font size. Pages of text must be double spaced.
- I. Students should be sure to make a backup for their files.
- J. Papers will be graded on the following criteria: clarity & style; grammar & format; scholarship & research; content & originality; organization & cohesion.
- K. Papers are due on or before 11:59 p.m., Saturday, Nov 22. Submit papers on Blackboard through the TurnItIn module. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for each day late.
- L. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is any use of 4 or more words in a row from another author without quotation marks. Students who plagiarize will fail the assignment and potentially the course. However, this only applies to intentional deception. It will not apply to honest errors or to matters of relative judgment.

XI. Common Courtesy

- A. Discussion is welcomed during the course of the semester. At times the professor may discontinue or forego discussion for the sake of staying on schedule or to move to another topic. Please show proper respect to your fellow students and professor by raising your hand or gaining the professor's attention prior to speaking in class.
- B. Please consider the content of what you want to say before expressing it in class. Some of the topics we cover in this course are sensitive. Therefore, please take extra care when asking questions or making comments about sensitive topics.
- C. When formulating a question or comment in your mind, carefully consider the wording. Considering the nature of some topics covered in this class, certain statements could be perceived as crude or inappropriate if worded poorly.

XII. Tentative Course Schedule

Week Number	Class Dates	Lecture Topic	Assignments
1	Aug 22	Syllabus, Course Introduction	None

2	Aug 27, 29	What Is Ethics?, The Bible and Moral Issues	Lenow Article, Frame ch. 1–3, Jones ch. 1
3	Sep 3, 5	The Bible and Moral Issues	Jones ch. 2–5
4	Sep 10, 12	First Commandment: No Other Gods	Jones ch. 6, Frame ch. 23–24 Bible & Moral Issues Discussion Board Original Post due Sep 13
5	Sep 17, 19	First Commandment: No Other Gods Second Commandment: No Graven Images	Frame ch. 25–26 Bible & Moral Issues Discussion Board Replies due Sep 20
6	Sep 24, 26	Third Commandment: God’s Name	Frame ch. 27
7	Oct 1, 3	No Class—Fall Break	
8	Oct 8, 10	Fourth Commandment: Sabbath	Frame ch. 28–30 Mid-Term Exam available 10:00 a.m. on Oct 10
9	Oct 15, 17	Fifth Commandment: Honoring Authorities	Frame ch. 31–34 Mid-Term Exam due by 11:59 p.m. on Oct 18
10	Oct 22, 24	Sixth Commandment: Life	Frame ch. 35–37
11	Oct 29, 31	Sixth Commandment: Life No Class Oct 29 (ERLC)	Kaiser ch. 8, 11 Moral Dilemma Discussion Board Original Post due Nov 1
12	Nov 5, 7	Seventh Commandment: Sexual Purity	Frame ch. 38–40 Moral Dilemma Discussion Board Replies due Nov 8
13	Nov 12, 14	Seventh Commandment: Sexual Purity Eighth Commandment: No Stealing	Frame ch. 41–42; Kaiser ch. 5–6, 9, 16
14	Nov 19, 21	No Class (ETS)	Research Paper due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov 22
15	Nov 26, 28	No Class—Thanksgiving Break	
16	Dec 3	Ninth Commandment: Truth Tenth Commandment: No Coveting	Frame ch. 43–44; Kaiser ch. 3 Cultural Awareness Articles due by 11:59 p.m. on Dec 3
17	Dec 3–10	Final Exam available 10:00 a.m. on Dec 3 and due by 11:59 p.m. on Dec 10	