



BIBLICAL ETHICS (BI 4212-04)

SYLLABUS & COURSE SCHEDULE
Fall 2000, M-W-F, 10-10:50 a.m., BB 133

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Part I, Syllabus

Course Description

"The ethical teachings of the Bible, including the basis and content of Christian ethics and an evaluation of modern challenges."

General Course Goals

This course has been designed so that you will

1. Gain an appreciation for biblical ethics as a unique Christian discipline;
2. Become familiar with approaches to biblical ethics;
3. Acquire an introductory knowledge of major ethical themes in the Bible;
4. Grow in your familiarity with and confidence in the divinity of a truly Christian ethic;
5. Deepen your understanding of contemporary ethical problems and proposed solutions.

Specific Course Objectives

In that this course proposes to introduce you to the discipline of biblical ethics, you should be able to

1. Identify key events in the Christian Bible and discuss their ethical significance;
2. Explain various methods of drawing ethical conclusions;
3. Describe the interaction of various sources in various ethical methods;
4. Address the function of the Bible in Christian ethics;
5. Reflect biblical ethics in two experience learning projects;

6. Memorize and determine relevant contemporary applications of biblical texts;
7. Discuss a specific method of distinguishing between time-/culture bound biblical teachings and those which are atemporal/acultural or universally applicable.

Course Requirements

1. Attend Class Lectures. To prepare students for the fulfillment of the objectives of this course, lectures are given Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, August 23 - December 6, 2000. The topics of the lectures are listed on the Course Schedule provided with this syllabus. Attendance at each of the lectures is required. Up to four absences for illness or other conflicts may be excused without notification. In cases of prolonged illness or injury that will cause you to miss several class sessions, you should consult with the professor for options regarding your status in the course. Otherwise, absences in excess of four class sessions will be reflected in the course grade.

a. "Handouts"-- Photocopied or electronic media will be made available to the class from time to time. Lecture Outlines must be brought to class on the days they will be discussed and may be found under the "Lectures" button on the professor's home page <http://homestead.juno.com/kevin.gilbert>. If you do not receive a copy, electronic address, or password of a document, please see the professor. Note: These materials are for your personal use only. Do not copy or distribute them to individuals not registered for this course. Any requests for these materials by persons not registered for this course should be directed to the professor.

b. Taping--You may tape class lectures for your personal study only. Such tapes are not to be distributed to individuals not registered for the course.

2. Read the following in the manner described below:

a. Required:

Bible. Choose a contemporary language translation, i.e., NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV.
Gilbert, Kevin James. "Lecture Outlines for Biblical Ethics." (Handouts)
Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. (Course Textbook)

b. Disclaimer: Course materials may or may not reflect the views of the instructor, faculty, staff, or administration. Course materials are chosen for their potential instructive value, which includes the analysis and critique of alternative interpretations.

c. Readings are to be completed and recorded by units. Units are whole articles, groups of articles, whole chapters, or groups of pages within a chapter. The units which you are to read are listed on the Course Schedule and on the "Reading Assignment Grade Sheets" (RAGS). These units must be read prior to the class hour on which they are due. Late readings are not accepted for credit except in extreme circumstances of lengthy incapacitation which requires extension of all course requirements beyond the end of the semester.

i. In order to report a unit of reading for credit, you must have read its contents in their entirety, intelligently, and critically. "Entirety" means that all of the unit must be read before credit will be assigned. Partial completion of a reading unit will not be credited. "Intelligently" means understanding what you are reading when you are "reading" it. (This may involve looking up words in a dictionary!) It means being able to follow the author's train of thought including any arguments that are presented. "Critically" means judging the strength or soundness of the author's presentation. Note: To receive credit for reading from assigned lecture outlines you must look up and read major Scripture texts cited in that reading.

ii. How to report reading assignments for credit. On the Reading Assignment Grade Sheet, keep a record of reading units which you have completed in the manner described above (see "i" above). Be sure to write your name and date submitted on the form. Write the total number of units completed in the space provided and sign your name on the signature line confirming your completion of the assigned units. Turn in the forms at each exam (i.e., RAGS I at exam 1; RAGS II at exam 2; RAGS III at the final exam).

3. Take Three Exams.

a. These exams will cover all assigned readings except the optional reading for Experience Learning Components (ELCs) discussed in requirement 4 below, as well all class lectures. All exams will be multiple choice. The final will be comprehensive and 10% of it will cover material from your University Bible classes.

b. Study questions will be provided to guide your preparation. Do not use or consult exams given in this course in previous years. You should think carefully about how the class reading or lecture presentation answers the study questions. Compare and contrast issues, ideas, and names with one another to make sure you have a grasp on the material. Note the specific terms, vocabulary, and grammar of the author as you study any particular issue. Note especially biblical texts and the language of those texts which are taken up by the author in developing a theological position, idea or issue. The study questions guide you to specific areas in the class readings and lectures which you are to study and master. The multiple choice questions on the exam are designed to test how well you understand them.

c. The exams must be taken in class on the dates for which they are scheduled unless an alternate time has been approved by the professor. Rescheduling due to out of town travel must be made during the first two weeks of class (emergency travel for critical illness or funeral services exempted). In such cases, the exam must be taken by the fifth class day following the exam. Exams may not be taken prior to their dates listed on the Course Schedule or the Final Exam Schedule. Other alternate arrangements for taking an exam late are allowed only in the case of physical incapacitation at the time of the exams and must be made by the class period following the scheduled exam. As a rule

of thumb, an acceptable last minute excuse from an exam will be equivalent to an acceptable last minute excuse from a preaching assignment or from your own wedding.

d. You will have an opportunity to be reexamined over the combined material of your first two exams if the average of those exams is below 80. A score of 80 or higher on this retake exam will raise the average of your first two exams to an 80. This reexamination is optional and will be given during the second hour of the final exam period. The exam format will be the same as in "3a" above. Use the same study questions that were distributed for exams 1 and 2 to guide your preparation.

e. Usually, the grades for the first two exams will be posted outside the classroom the first class day following the exam next to a confidential "password" provided to the professor by the student (Not acceptable are Social Security Numbers, ID numbers, Dorm Room numbers, and other easily identifiable "codes.") Students may refrain from participating in this exam grade listing and wait to receive their exam grades on the review days (times for reviewing questions missed on the first two exams will be announced during a regular class). Do not contact the professor about exam grades prior to these review days.

f. All exams are the property of the professor. You are not to take your exam from the examination or reviewing session. You are not to make any copy of the exam or exam questions.

4. Complete Two Experience Learning Components.

Journaling

Group Project

a. Report on Each Project.

i. Journaling. Keep a hand-written spiritual journal in a loose-leaf binder in which you include the fruits of your active and contemplative study of biblical ethics (BE) this semester. It must include the following: (a) A position essay on BE, i.e., what you think about the discipline at the beginning of the semester (more below); (b) why you have planned to study BE; (c) how you proceeded; (d) struggles, victories, insights, and/or newfound aspect(s) of BE's place in your life, the church and the world; and particularly, (e) notes related to reading assignments compiled in preparation for the class at which they are due—I recommend taking notes, composing your musings on your Lecture Outlines and including them in your journal. Bring the journal to all classes and to one review meeting with the professor (to be scheduled).

(a) Position Essay on BE. Write this section of your journal in the first person and include the following: Your current view of BE, including its significance, place, and applicability in the church; your background in

the study of BE; circumstances leading to your formal study of the BE in this class; significant persons, experiences, and developments which influenced your views of BE; and finally, define to the best of your ability your view of the direction the church needs to take contemporary ethical challenges. Support this last element by personal confirming experiences and the comments of others regarding the OT. The version in your journal should be viewed as a draft which you will develop into an 6-8 page double-spaced paper to be viewed by the professor only.

(b) Confidentiality. Your journal is for you and God alone, though you are free to share with the class or professor at your discretion. It will be graded generally by volume, i.e., at a private journal appointment with the professor, *or by completing a Journaling Confirmation form on which you briefly respond in writing to four questions, including one which relates the number of hours you spent journaling for class. This form is certified by your signature in affirmation of the Honor Code.* If you choose to review your journal privately with the professor, pages on which information exists that you do not wish him to see inadvertently should be folded over prior to the appointment. Consider that your ability to be vulnerable and transparent about the process of ethical development occurring in your personal life can serve to encourage others on their own pilgrimage. The journal must be brought to class daily and may be collected at the professor's discretion at any time during the semester to check progress.

ii. Group Projects.

(a) Choose one of the following sample projects or create a similar one and have it approved by the professor:

(1) Volunteer Services. Each student will participate in group which will volunteer *2 hours of service* during the semester. Up to 1 hour may be group meetings *outside of class time* to discuss experiences and form a consensus opinion. Acceptable ministries include Crisis Counseling Centers (pregnancy, battered women, suicide, etc.), Shelters, Mentoring Programs, Recovery & Rehabilitation Centers, Inner-City Ministry, Disaster Relief, Hospice, etc. Ministries not mentioned here should be confirmed with the professor.

(2) Group Discussion. Each student will participate in a group which will meet at least *2 hours outside of class time* during the semester and whose focus is the discovery, exploration, and development of a consensus position regarding/response to a contemporary challenge to biblical ethics. Examples: partial-birth abortion and/or concomitant harvesting of the infants' body parts

for sale/profit; active/passive euthanasia; social justice issues/liberation theologies; use of violence as a means to improve socioeconomic conditions; marital, premarital, extramarital sexual ethics; intra-church abuse of power, war, etc.

(3) **Group Leadership.** Each student will participate in a group whose members will volunteer **2 hours** toward becoming a trained/certified crisis volunteer of some sort. Examples: Red Cross Life Support Course (BLS/CPR); Suicide Prevention Counselor; etc.

(b) **Type or Word Process/Machine Print a Report.** Record your experiences in your journal. Then from your notes, compose a personal report of your experience consisting of not more than 3 typed, double-spaced pages. These must address the "5 W's and H:" who, what, when, where, why, and how. These elements do not possess equal importance, so don't spend equal time and space on them (i.e., don't devote 1/3 of your paper to "who" or to "when"). Furthermore, each Group must, as a group, compose a consensus position regarding the most important aspects of the experience. This should be a summary statement of about ½ a page (this may be typed or hand written; see "The reporter's responsibility" below).

(1) **Whom** you worked with: names of institutions, people, etc.

(2) **What** details of your project were significant.

(3) **When** your group met and/or took part in the experiences.

(4) **Where** your experiences took place or your group met.

(5) **Why** you chose your specific project

(6) **How** you would proceed differently in the future.

(c) **Organize your group as quickly as possible.** Select one person to function as director and one to serve as reporter. These positions are purely functional and neither positions of honor nor producers of extra credit. Anyone who feels that he or she has talents suited to function as either director or recorder should volunteer to do so. Here and throughout the project or discussion, practice Christian grace & humility, deference to one another, sacrificial service. Before the end of the discussion, the group must summarize its conclusions and attempt to form a consensus. These summary group responses will contribute to the final grade of the project (see below).

(d) **The director is not the spokesperson of the group.** His or her only responsibility is to pace the discussion so that it does not bog down and waste time. The director should make sure the discussion covers all the questions/problems raised or otherwise ensures the topic is covered

thoroughly. Keep things moving by majority consensus, being sensitive to the need of the group to spend more on significant issues or less time on any tangential ones.

(e) **The reporter's responsibilities** are to record the names of those present at each discussion, to accurately write down the group's official conclusions to its discussions, and to collect individual written work from each member at the end of the semester.

iii. **The grade** for each Experience Learning Component will be as follows:

Hours Completed	Missing both thoughtful written responses and participation in ELC	Missing either thoughtful written responses or participation in ELC	Completed both thoughtful written responses and participation in ELC
0:00-0:59	F	F	D
1:00-1:29	F	D	C
1:30-1:59	D	C	B
2:00	C	B	A

Outstanding or poor journaling or group conclusions will affect individual grades in the following manner: high quantity journaling, insightful conclusions/reflections clearly articulated on the group projects will raise the grade to a plus (+); low quantity journaling and missing or superficial conclusions/reflections on the group projects will reduce individual grades to a minus (-).

b. **Participation in the group projects may be excused** only in cases of travel arrangements made prior to the end of the second week of class, infectious disease or paralysis. In such cases, a 2 to 8 page typed essay related to the group project will be accepted as a substitute for participation in the volunteer hour or group meeting (length depends on the number of group hours missed, i.e., 1 hour missed = 2 pages; 2 hours = 4 pages, etc.).

5. **The above requirements may be altered, deleted, or other requirements added at the discretion of the professor.**

6. **Adhere to the Honor Code.** You are expected to abide by the University Honor Code on all reporting, assignments, exams, *et cetera*. Study the portion of your Student Handbook devoted to

the Honor Code to be sure that you understand the code and its implications.

Course Grading

1. Factors determining the Course Grade:

The overall grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth or necessarily of the amount of information that a student feels he or she has learned. Rather it is a cumulative figure that bears a relationship to the student's successful completion of the course requirements.

- a. The three exams** will be averaged together and count as 50% of the course grade.
- b. Two ELC's** will comprise 30% of the course grade (15% each).
- c. The reading grade** = units completed/units assigned; 20% of the course grade.
- d. Class attendance.** Subtract 4% of course grade for each absence over 4.
(Contact the professor regarding any prolonged absence.)

2. Explanation of Letter Symbols:

A = work of exceptional quality.

B = work of commendable quality. Commendable means praiseworthy. A majority of students usually achieve this quality in their overall course grade.

C = work of an acceptable but not distinguished quality. Such work is deemed a satisfactory and adequate completion of the course objectives.

D = work of a minimal but passing quality.

F = Failure to do minimal work with no credit given.

3. Numerical and Letter Distribution

100-98 A+	89-87 B	80-78 C	71-69 D
97-95 A	86-84 B-	77-75 C-	68-65 D-
94-93 A-	83-81 C+	74-72 D+	64-0 F
92-90 B+			

Office Hours

Wednesdays, 1-1:50 p.m. by appointment. Other times for non-confidential issues via unsecured course chat room by appointment. E-mail communication is encouraged.

Part II, Course Schedule

Reading Assignments

Aug 23 (W)	Introduction	Syllabus
Aug 25 (F)	LO 1: A Starting Point for Biblical Ethics (BE)	H: P, I
Aug 28 (M)	LO 2: Doing Ethics: Method and Sources	H:11
Aug 30 (W)	LO 3: Doing Ethics: Hermeneutics, Theology, and Interpretation	
Sep 1 (F)	Individual and Group Responses; Group Planning and Organization	LO:1,2,3
Sep 4 (M)	LO 4: Christian Options	H:12
Sep 6(W)	LO 5: The Will of God and Human Needs	H:13
Sep 8 (F)	LO 6: Pauline Ethics I	H:1
Sep 11 (M)	LO 7: Pauline Ethics II	LO:4,5,6
Sep 13 (W)	LO 8: Paul and the Ethics of the Gospels	H:2,3
Sep 15 (F)	LO 9: Mark	
Sep 18 (M)	LO 10: Matthew	H:4,5
Sep 20 (W)	LO 11: Luke	LO:7,8,9,10
Sep 22 (F)	Review (Position Paper on Ethics Due)	
Sep 25 (M)	Exam (LO 1–LO 10 inclusive); RAGS I due	
Sep 27 (W)	LO 12: The Johanne Literature	H:,7,8
Sep 29 (F)	LO 13: Revelation	
Oct 2 (M)	LO 14: Apocalyptic Ethics (AE) I: A Ground for Ethics?	LO:11,12,13
Oct 4 (W)	LO 15: AE II: OT Apocalyptic and the New Covenant	
Oct 6 (F)	LO 16: AE III: Appropriation of Divine Speech	H:9,10

Oct 9 (M)	Group Meetings and/or Activities	
Oct 11 (W)	LO 17: Canon, Church, and World	LO:14,15,16
Oct 13 (F)	LO 18: Justifiable Violence?	H:14
Oct 16 (M)	LO 19: Christian Nationalism or Patriotism?	
Oct 18 (W)	LO 20: Christian Pacifism?	LO:17,18
Oct 20 (F)	Fall Break-No Class	
Oct 23 (M)	LO 21: Marital Ethics	H:15
Oct 25 (W)	LO 22: Heterosexual Ethics	LO:19,20,21
Oct 27 (F)	Review of Material from LO 11-20	
Oct 30 (M)	Exam 2 (LO 11-LO 21 inclusive); RAGS II due	
Nov 1 (W)	Review of Exam 2	
Nov 3 (F)	Professor Out Sick	
Nov 6 (M)	LO 22 Continued	
Nov 8 (W)	LO 22 Concluded.	
Nov 10 (F)	LO 23: Homosexuality and Transgenderism; Sociopolitical Sexuality; Responses to Contemporary Sexual Issues	H:16
Nov 13 (M)	LO 24: Ethnicity and Christianity; Historical Survey of "Christian" Ethnic Oppression; Biblical Responses	H: 17; LO:22, 23
Nov 15 (W)	Group Meetings	
Nov 17 (F)	LO 25: Reproductive Ethics, Family Planning, Abortion	H:18
Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break	
Nov 27 (M)	LO 26: Euthanasia	LO:24, 25
Nov 29 (W)	LO 27: Bioethics; the Mapping of the Human Genome	

Dec 1 (F)	<i>Special Presentation</i>	
Dec 4 (M)	LO 28: Synthesis: Toward a Christian Ethical Foundation	
Dec 6 (W)	Review (ELC Project Reports Due; Journal Appointments or Confirmations Completed and Due)	LO:26, 27, 28
Dec 8 (F)	Study Day-No Class	
Finals Wk.	Exam 3 (comprehensive; see finals schedule); RAGS III due	

Reading Key

H:# = Hays, The Moral Vision of the New Testament and chapter #

LO:# = Lecture Outline and #

Lipscomb BI421V-04
Mr. Gilbert

SAMPLE READING ASSIGNMENT GRADE SHEET

*(Create and submit a document like this by the last calendar day of September, October,
and November*

List of Units Completed

Hays, Ch. 16

Hays, Ch. 17

Lecture Outlines 22-23

Hays, Ch. 18

Lecture Outlines 24-25

Lecture Outlines 26-28

TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS COMPLETED: _____

Fully understanding the University's Honor Code, I certify that the units listed and totaled above I have read intelligently, critically, in their entirety, along with biblical texts cited in the Lecture Outlines, prior to the class hour at which they were due.

Signature