

ET/NT 543 New Testament and Christian Ethics

Course Instructor: Dr. Rollin Grams
Week Intensive: 20-24 May
Daily: 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00

Prerequisites: Old Testament Survey, New Testament Survey

Course Description:

This course is primarily about the use of the New Testament for Christian ministry and discipleship. During the course, a methodology for approaching questions in Christian ethics will be explored through four tasks of theology (primarily the first two): the exegetical, Biblical theological, convictional, and pragmatic tasks. New Testament ethics will be presented primarily with reference to ethics in Jesus, Matthew, Luke, and Paul. Several ethical topics will be explored in the course, including wealth and poverty, homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, and pacifism/use of violence. These—and other--topics will serve as examples for how to engage the New Testament in Christian ethics today.

Course Goals:

- *Information and Orientation: To gain an orientation to New Testament ethics--what recent scholars are saying and a description of the ethics of several NT books.
- *To gain analytical and critical skills for Christian ethics: evaluation of methodologies in Christian ethics and uses of Scripture in ethics; analysis and critique of contemporary culture from a Biblical, Christian perspective.
- *To integrate the theological curriculum with reference to Christian ethics: Old Testament, New Testament, Christian thought (theology, history) and practice.
- *To engage (informatively, analytically, critically) a variety of ethical topics relevant to Christian life and ministry today and so hone skills in doing Christian ethics as part of Christian ministry.

Assigned Reading and Textbooks:

Blomberg, Craig. *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000. Pp. 300. 0830826076 or 978-0830826070

Gagnon, Robert. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002. Pp. 520 [to be read in part, see below]

Grams, Rollin G. *The Bible and Christian Ethics*. CAMS, 2013. [selections]

Kalantzis, George. *Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes on War and Military Service*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012. Pp. 246.

Strauss, Mark, ed. *Remarriage for Divorce in Today's Church: 3 Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. Pp. 176.

Stassen, Glen and Gushee, David. *Kingdom Ethics*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003.

Pp. 538.

Thompson, James W. *Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011. Pp. 272. ISBN: 0801039029 or 978-0801039027. Read the entire book.

A list of questions will help guide your reading of several of the required texts. These questions will be placed on Sakai. Note the course schedule, below, for when these texts need to be read in order to be prepared for class discussion. Also note that not all of Stassen and Gushee and of Gagnon is required reading for this course.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation.

The classroom experience is considered an important aspect of this course. Discussion and interaction are valued components of the course, and failure to participate appropriately will mean at least a reduced grade of one full letter. So, students are expected to be present during class times and to engage in the group discussions. No excuses will be given other than for sickness or bereavement, and students should consider dropping the course in such situations. Any excused but missed hours will need to be made up by extra work, usually fifty additional pages of reading per hour of class missed, plus written reflection on the reading (if this is not done, the grade will be reduced by a partial grade per hour missed). Not more than 3 1/2 hours of class may be missed to receive a pass or credit in this course. The class discussion of our textbooks at the end of days 2-5 should not be missed (if permitted, an additional book review will be required on the topic for the day).

Any student who has not read the material due on 21st of May for the intensive week should not take this course. The only exception will be if a small amount of reading is still to be completed and can be completed *before* the material will be discussed in class (see course schedule). This should be discussed with the instructor.

Students will be placed in groups for discussion of the reading. This course will have a Korean language discussion group.

2. Reading:

2a. Pre-Course Reading:

By the second day of the intensive, on May 21st, students are to have read a little over 800 pages of reading. (The 'little over' refers to each student choosing one chapter to read from Kalantzis's book, i.e., chs. 5-12). The reading schedule below lists the pages to read from various books for the intensive week. A reading report is due the first day of class for this part of the course's reading requirement (see 'Reading Log for Intensive,' below). The purpose of this required reading is so that students will be able to hold meaningful discussions in class during the intensives based on their reading.

2b. Reading for the Entire Course:

Students are expected to report their reading of at least 1,500 pages in total in this course (reading 2,000 pages is more likely, given the research paper). Be sure to keep a record of all your reading for this course (see 'Reading Log for Entire Course,' below). The reading log has space to record additional reading from other sources. This additional reading may be for any of the papers in the course.

The textbooks are all very good and contribute greatly to the learning expected in the course. Students may read the entire textbook for this course even though not all the material is on the New Testament.

In addition to the required pages from each textbook, students are requested to choose three articles of the professor's writings that are available on Sakai. Report which readings were chosen and the number of pages read.

The reading log will be due for the course by 16th July.

If a student completes the required reading and reads at least 1,500 pages for the course, his or her final grade will not be affected. If a student fails to meet this goal, his or her grade will be reduced, as follows:

- 90%: Reduction of 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from A to A-)
- 80%: reduction of 2/3 of a grade (e.g., from B+ to B-)
- 70%: reduction of a full grade (e.g., from B to C)
- 60%: reduction of 2 grades (e.g., from A- to C+)
- 50%: reduction of 3 grades (e.g., from A to D)
- Below 50%: failure of the course

3. Papers.

There will be three papers in this course. Students may write 10% above or below the page limits for the papers. Papers must be submitted electronically as attachments to an e-mail that is entitled: NT Ethics, Paper 1 [or 2, or 3]. Papers should include your name, the course name, and a paper title. A bibliography is unnecessary as relevant resources should appear in the footnotes. Papers should be in 11 or 12 point font, double spaced, spell-checked, and edited for English grammar and appropriate style for footnotes (Turabian, SBL, APA, Chicago). All three papers should have footnotes, especially the research paper.

Plagiarism: Unintentional plagiarism is considered sub-standard academic work and will result in failing the course, not just the paper. Intentional plagiarism is considered immoral. Both types of plagiarism will be referred to the Registrar for further action according to the Student Handbook.

a. Communal Moral Practice Essay

Write a 1,000 word essay on a Biblical ‘communal practice’ within a single New Testament book—i.e., a moral practice having to do with community. Footnotes giving references do not count in the 1,000 word limit, but discussion in footnotes does. Examples are: almsgiving, obeying one’s parents, not offending the weak brother/sister, being generous, taking care of widows, restoration of a sinner, banning a person from fellowship, etc. You may wish to check with the instructor about which communal practice you have chosen before you begin your study. Locate your study in *one* book of the Bible that addresses this practice. (If you locate your study in an Old Testament book, show connections to thought in the New Testament—the practice must be mentioned in the New Testament.) Use Stassen & Gushee (pp. 484-491) and my lecture on moral ‘practices’ for this essay.

In this paper, demonstrate:

- your own work
- your awareness of what the Biblical text says
- your use of resources for Bible study (about three commentaries, a word dictionaries, an electronic Bible search program or concordance, about two Bible and/or Ethics encyclopaedias or Bible and/or Ethics dictionaries, etc.—but this is not a full research paper)
- how an understanding of ‘moral practices’ helps the discussion
- how this discussion of your chosen communal practice might be applied to Christian community today.

Paper Due Date: 24 May
Percentage of Final Grade: 20%

b. Use of the New Testament Book Analysis and Critique

Choose either Blomberg or Strauss for this assignment.

Write a 1,000 word analysis and critique of one of the textbooks for this essay, as follows. You are to analyse how Scripture has been used in this book. Which key texts are used to guide the ethical discussion. Have they been used correctly? Should other texts have been considered as well? Do you agree with the application of these texts to the arguments of the author/s? In the case of the Strauss textbook, which has several authors, compare and contrast their understandings of the Scripture passages that guide their interpretations and show where their disagreements lie.

In this paper, you are to critique the use of Scripture on the basis of what you know: your reading of Biblical texts in their contexts, your careful reading of this textbook, your learning in this course, including what we have discussed on the use of Scripture for ethics in the reading in Stassen & Gushee, in Grams, and from the class lectures; your exegetical and Biblical theological knowledge (for more

advanced students); logical reasoning; etc. The review needs to be focused very specifically on *how the New Testament is used* in the discussion of the particular topic covered in the book. Do not write a book review.

Paper Due Date: 16th June
Percentage of Final Grade: 30%

c. **Research Paper**

The course introduces topics in Christian ethics and issues in doing Christian ethics from a Biblical basis. The research paper should demonstrate:

- graduate level, research abilities (use of secondary sources, description and analysis of the issues and scholarship, breadth and depth of research, critique of arguments and ability to present a strong argument, etc.)
- graduate level research abilities in this field (attention to methodology in Biblical and Christian ethics, careful attention to the meaning of Scripture, use of the Bible in Christian ethics, use of resources for research in Scripture, awareness of concepts in Christian ethics, etc.)
- learning from this course (lectures, reading, discussions)
- graduate level writing skills (clarity, correctness, completeness, critical research writing, structure of the writing, use of sub-headings, use of footnotes, footnote style, proper citations of sources, etc.)

The paper should address a specific ethical topic addressed in the New Testament (e.g., peacemaking, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, wealth, role and status of women, caring for the elderly, slavery, ethnicity, forgiveness) and look at it closely from the perspective of New Testament ethics. This needs to be a different topic from the other two papers you will write for this course (or other courses in your seminary curriculum). You may wish to discuss your chosen topic with the instructor before beginning research.

The narrower the particular research question, the more likely the paper will be able to demonstrate depth of research, awareness of methods, and working with New Testament passages. As this is a research paper, use commentaries, books on NT ethics, journal articles, dictionaries and encyclopaedias on the Bible and on Christian ethics, etc. If you know Greek and exegetical methods, use them as appropriate.

The research paper should be 3,000 words in length.

Paper Due Date: 16th of July
Percentage of Final Grade: 50% of final grade

Course Outline

Course modules correspond to days of the week for this intensive: module 1 is Monday, 20th May, etc. This outline will guide the course, but we need to be flexible in an intensive course.

Module 1: Introduction to Christian Ethics

Reading and Discussion:

Stassen & Gushee, pp. 19-124 (The Reign of God, Virtues of Kingdom People, Holistic Character Ethics, Authority and Scripture, The Form and Function of Moral Norms), pp. 484-491 (Practices)

Lectures:

[Lecture One: Living Against the Grain: Christian Ethics in the Early Church](#)

[Lecture Two: Versions of Moral Enquiry](#)

[Lecture Three: The Use of the Bible for Moral Enquiry \(Methodology\)](#)

[Lecture Four: Actions, Practices, and Performances](#)

Module 2: The Ethics of Jesus

Reading and Discussion:

Read Stassen & Gushee, pp. 125-148 (The Transforming Initiatives of the Sermon on the Mount), pp. 271-289 (Divorce and Remarriage)

Read Strauss, pp. 11-142

Lectures:

[Lecture One: Kingdom Ethics](#)

[Lecture Two: Ethics in Matthew's Gospel](#)

[Lecture Three: Moral Empowering in Matthew's Gospel](#)

[Lecture Four: Ethics in Luke's Gospel](#) and in Acts

Module 3: The Ethics of Paul

Reading and Discussion:

Thompson, pp. 1-18 (Introduction)

The book by Thompson is a thorough study of ethics in Paul's writings. You are asked to read the introduction for the week intensive and then complete the book after the intensive. The lectures on ethics in Paul are intended to prepare you for this reading and to address the issue of homosexuality.

Lectures:

[Lecture One: The Indicative and Imperative in Paul](#)

[Lecture Two: Paul and the Law](#)

[Lecture Three: Paul's Use of the Law in 1 Corinthians 5-7](#)

Lecture Four: Narrative Ethics in Paul

[Lecture Five: Paul and the Human Condition \(Rom. 1.18-3.31; Rom. 7.7-25 \[word doc\]\)](#)

[Lecture Six: The Bible and Homosexuality](#) (including Transcultural Normative Authority)

Module 4: Topics

Reading (see reading log for required pages): Gagnon, Stassen and Gushee, Strauss

The book by Gagnon on homosexuality demonstrates the Biblical scholar at work in ethics: looking at texts in their historical and cultural context, exploring the synthesis between the Biblical texts and between the Old and New Testament, and raising questions of hermeneutics (how we interpret texts). Gagnon's work on the New Testament texts should be read carefully, and the rest of the text may be read in order to complete the required reading for the course. For the intensive week (see schedule), read the following:

Chapter 3: The Witness of Jesus, pp. 185-228

Chapter 4: The Witness of Paul and Deutero-Paul, pp. 229-302

Chapter 5: The Vice Lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10, pp. 303-340

Chapter 6: The Hermeneutical Relevance of the Biblical Witness, pp. 341-391, 432-451

Stassen & Gushee have a few short chapters of relevance to sexual ethics that, while less academic than Gagnon, broadens the discussion of sexual ethics and gender for our class.

The text edited by Strauss examines three scholars' interpretation of Biblical texts on the issue of divorce and remarriage.

Lectures and Discussions:

Discussion: Homosexuality (Gagnon; Stassen & Gushee)

[Lecture One: The Role and Status of Women](#)

Discussion: Divorce and Remarriage (Strauss)

[Lecture Two: Israel and the People of God in the Early Church](#)

Discussion: Ethnicity and Racism

[Lecture Three: Economic Ethics](#)

Module 5:

Reading:

George Kalantzis, pp. 1-71; your chosen chapter from the early church; pp. 196-203

Read Blomberg, pp. 111-253

Stassen & Gushee, pp. 149-174 (Just War, Nonviolence and Just Peacemaking; Sowing the Seeds of Peace), pp. 409-426 (Economics), 467-483 (Politics)

Grams: 'Early Christian Views on Wealth, Possessions, and Giving.' Online at:
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/41882213/The-Cooly-Center-Articles-Early-Christian-Views-on-Wealth>

Lectures and Discussions:

Lecture One: Peace-Making (Kalantzis, Stassen & Gushee)

[Lecture Three: Church and State](#)

[Lecture Four: Israel and the People of God \(Ethnicity\)](#)

Lecture Five: Wealth and Poverty

Discussion: Wealth and Poverty (Blomberg, Stassen & Gushee, Grams)

Bibliography

Bibliographical resources will be provided on Sakai and/or in class.

Academic Rights

Any online PowerPoints, articles made available on Sakai, and recording of class lectures are only to be used by the student for this course. They are not to be shared with others outside this course. You are expected to request permission to use a recorder in the class.

Reading Log for Intensive Week of Class

Copy – Save – Submit by e-mail attachment by 21st May. Check off everything read in full; fill out other reading and last column.

Reading	Pages to Read By 21 May (Intensive)	Total Pages Read
Thompson, James W. <i>Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics.</i>	pp. 1-18	
Blomberg, Craig. <i>Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions.</i>	pp. 111-254	
Gagnon, Robert. <i>The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.</i> Chapter 3: The Witness of Jesus Chapter 4: The Witness of Paul and Deutero-Paul Chapter 5: The Vice Lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 Chapter 6: The Hermeneutical Relevance of the Biblical Witness	pp. 185-228 pp. 229-302 pp. 303-340 pp. 341-391 pp. 432-451	
Kalantzis, George. <i>Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes on War and Military Service.</i> [Note: quickly skim pp. 69-71]	pp. 1-71 pp. 196-204 Your chapter (from chs. 5-12)	
Strauss, Mark, ed. <i>Remarriage for Divorce in Today's Church: 3 Views.</i>	pp. 11-142	
Stassen, Glen and Gushee, David. <i>Kingdom Ethics.</i> The Reign of God, Virtues of Kingdom People, Holistic Character Ethics, Authority and Scripture, The Form and Function of Moral Norms Practices The Transforming Initiatives of the Sermon on the Mount) Divorce and Remarriage Just War, Nonviolence and Just Peacemaking; Sowing the Seeds of Peace Economics Politics	pp. 19-124 pp. 484-491 pp. 125-148 pp. 271-289 pp. 149-174 pp. 409-426 pp. 467-483	
Grams, Rollin. <i>The Bible and Christian Ethics.</i> Article: 'Early Christian Views on Wealth, Possessions, and Giving.'	pp. 1-6	

Reading Log for Entire Course

Copy – Save – Submit by e-mail attachment by 16 July. 2 pages. Check off everything read in full; fill out other reading and last column. Read a total of at least 1,500 pages for the course.

Reading	Total Pages to Read During Course	Total Pages Read
Thompson, James W. <i>Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics.</i>	272	
Blomberg, Craig. <i>Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions.</i>	143	
Gagnon, Robert. <i>The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.</i> Chapter 3: The Witness of Jesus Chapter 4: The Witness of Paul and Deutero-Paul Chapter 5: The Vice Lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 Chapter 6: The Hermeneutical Relevance of the Biblical Witness	43 73 37 50 19	
Kalantzis, George. <i>Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes on War and Military Service.</i> [Note: quickly skim pp. 69-71] Chapter Read: _____	71 8 ____pp.	
Strauss, Mark, ed. <i>Remarriage for Divorce in Today's Church: 3 Views.</i>	131	
Stassen, Glen and Gushee, David. <i>Kingdom Ethics.</i> The Reign of God, Virtues of Kingdom People, Holistic Character Ethics, Authority and Scripture, The Form and Function of Moral Norms Practices The Transforming Initiatives of the Sermon on the Mount) Divorce and Remarriage Just War, Nonviolence and Just Peacemaking; Sowing the Seeds of Peace Economics Politics	211	
Grams, Rollin. <i>The Bible and Christian Ethics.</i> Article: Article: 'Early Christian Views on Wealth, Possessions, and Giving.' Article: Article:	6	

<p>Total Pages Read: _____ x 100 = _____% of Required Reading Completed 2,000 Pages Required</p>

Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one's own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one's writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancellation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the "last day to submit written work," as noted on the seminary's *Academic Calendar*, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the "last day to submit written work." Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those

individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work

Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage- paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.