OT595: Old Testament Ethics with Dr. Walter Kaiser

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Snapshot of Course Requirements
OT595 requires timely completion of the following five course requirements:

1. Required Reading and Reading Report Paper
2. Supplementary Reading
3. Final Project
4. Interactivity
5. Online Course Checkout/Reading Report (after you have finished all course requirements above)

Purpose and Objectives of Course
This course will treat both the theory and the practice of ethical and moral decision-making. It will also examine the key teaching passages in the Old Testament on ethical and moral guidance. Special application will be made of the ethical and moral issues raised in modern (and post-modern) life and practice.

Course Requirements
Required Reading

  Supplementary Reading - 100 points

Supplemental Reading
An additional 300 pages of reading is required and should be reported with full bibliographical data and the amount of pages you have read in each item. Click here for a suggested list of supplemental readings (also available under Resources).

Guide for Completing Coursework
All course work must be turned in by the Semlink due date for the course.

1. **Complete the reading** of all three textbooks in their entirety and report such reading in the following manner:
   ○ First, state that you have read all three textbooks in their entirety.

Please use double-space typed or computer-generated formats (at least 10 point font) with content footnotes that carry your conversation beyond what you have in the text. The space given to these footnotes will not count against your five-page limit. This project is worth 200 out of 500 points.

2. An additional 300 pages of supplementary reading will be required on one or more of the issues that intersect with the Old Testament. Be sure to include recent journal articles as well as chapters of books. Report this reading with full bibliographical data and the number of pages you have read in each item. This project is worth 100 points.

3. In lieu of a final exam, you may choose one of the two following projects. This project is worth 200 points.

1. A ten-page paper on one of the issues in Old Testament ethics. If you have any questions about your choice of topic, please contact the professor. The paper should include the following:
   - A statement of the issue or problem faced in Old Testament Ethics.
   - Identification and exegesis of the key teaching passages in the Bible on this issue so as to show how your solution comes from the teaching of the Bible.
   - Demonstration that you have read some of the key contributors on this topic by your interaction with them in the footnotes, body of the text, and bibliography.
   - Criteria for assessing the paper will be:
     - Promptness of turning in the project.
     - Accuracy in describing the issues.
     - Applicability and breadth of the use of scripture to answer the issues discussed.
     - Breadth of reading on the topic (which may also be from the 300 supplementary pages read).
     - The quality of the writing and the argumentation in the paper.

2. The development of a short course of studies for your church high school or young adult group as an elective class in the educational program of the church. This course should include:
   - A title page with your name, course number, address, box number (if applicable), and date.
   - A table of contents page outlining in detail each of the six class sessions.
   - Two of the six sessions should deal with the problems of method in Old Testament ethics and the use of the Bible for ethics. Put all of this in outline form.
   - The other four sessions should deal with four issues in Old Testament ethics. These chapters should also be in outline form with short statements that tell what your position on each of these matters is and how you are supporting them from scripture and ethical theory. It is expected that you will include diagrams, outlines, and definitions on overhead transparencies or in a PowerPoint presentation (if the latter, include a hardcopy color printout of the same).
   - The criteria for grading will be:
     - Inclusiveness of detail.
     - Faithfulness to scripture.
     - Depth of the discussion.
     - Relevancy of the issues to our day.
     - Creativity in the use of visuals for teaching.
     - Selectivity of the materials that are included.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments can be submitted electronically through the Drop Box tool in Sakai. On the left menu, under "Project Tools," select "Drop Box." To add a file, click "Add" and upload from there.

Some guidelines for this process:

- Paper submissions should be in either .doc, .docx or .pdf format.
- Submitting your work through drop box is considered a formal (and final) submission. Nothing further will be needed on your part.
- All submissions are time/date stamped and will be retrieved by the Semlink office and routed to your professor for grading.
- Assignments may be returned to you electronically, in most cases through your Sakai drop box or via email. If your assignment was graded by hand, it will be scanned and delivered to you as a PDF file.
- Remember to use a full heading, including your name, professor, course, and date.

Please let the Semlink office know if you have any further questions about electronic submission. semlink@gordonconwell.edu or 978-646-4144.
Interactivity

As a member of the Association of Theological Schools, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary recognizes the value of interactivity in distance learning and complies with the standards for accreditation set by ATS which include interactivity as a compulsory component of any distance learning program that wishes to continue granting credit for its courses. The purpose of Semlink interactivity is to enhance learning by providing an online environment for students to engage meaningfully and substantively with professors, teaching fellows, and other students in order to achieve an enriching and academically challenging distance learning experience.

There are two interactivity requirements for this course:

1. **An online discussion forum**: converse with other students and with instructors on the Semlink forum. You are required to participate four (4) times in the discussions relating to your area of study. To ensure successful completion of this requirement, please complete your participation in the discussion forums at least one week prior to your course due date. This will allow sufficient time for you to resubmit any responses if necessary.

2. **Email-based conversation** with your Semlink teaching fellow. You are required to email a total of three (3) times, including your original response to the conversation starter. Please allow a minimum of one month to complete this conversation to allow time for the teaching fellow to respond. Allow five business days for a response to each of your submissions.

To begin your interactivity (and for more details about this requirement), see the Interactivity section under Modules. This section will explain in more detail what is expected for this requirement.

If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements, you will fail your course.

Grading

1. The course has a total of 500 points.
2. Grades will be given to each of the first three requirements in Arabic numerals instead of letter grades. Completion of the interaction component is required.
3. The cutoff points for the final letter grades will be 93%, 86%, 76%, and 70% for A, B, C, and D respectively (or slightly adjusted by one or two percentage points across the scale if one or more of the projects turns out to be too difficult).

Course Outline

**Lecture 1: Getting Started: Defining the Issues**

1. Key definitions and issues
2. Ten ways to define right and wrong
3. The role of the Bible in ethical decision-making

**Lecture 2: The Centrality of the Ten Commandments for Old Testament Ethics**

1. The ethics of worshipping God alone
2. The ethics of time
3. The ethics of respect for authority
4. The ethics of society

**Lecture 3: The Case for Biblical Absolutes**

1. The nature and character of God
2. Old Testament summaries of the law of God
3. Obedience to God's law versus legalism

**Lecture 4: The Christian and the Law of God**

1. Is obeying the law the same thing as legalism?
2. Is teaching the law unworthy of the freedom of the gospel?
3. Have the promises of God antiquated the law of God?

**Lecture 5: Old Testament Wisdom and Ethics**

1. The fear of the Lord as a principle of morality
2. Ecclesiastes and the meaning of life
3. The prophetic call to a moral life

**Lecture 6: The Ethics of Life and Death**

1. Is abortion a choice or a life?
2. Is suicide a choice or a life?
3. Is euthanasia a choice or a life?
4. Is capital punishment a choice or a must?

**The Ethics of Human Sexuality**

1. Is pre-marital sex wrong?
2. Is homosexuality a sin?

**Lecture 7: The Ethics of the Family**

1. The sanctity of marriage
2. The authority and biblical mandate for the family
3. The rupture of the family in divorce

**Lecture 8: The Ethics of Truth, Wealth, Property, and Motive**

1. On what basis do we affirm something as true or false?
2. What should be our attitude to possessions and wealth?
3. Did the Old Testament include motives in its obedience to the law?

**The Christian and Old Testament Ethics**

1. What is the role of conscience in making ethical decisions?
2. Are there levels of priority in scriptural ethics?
3. What shall we do when absolutes of scripture are in conflict with each other?