



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number : WYB2403HF
Course Name: Old testament Ethics
Class Location: Wycliffe College
Class Day & Time: Monday – Friday, 9–12, 1–3, April 17–21

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Marion Taylor	Teaching Assistant:
E-mail:	m.taylor@utoronto.ca	E-mail:
Office Hours:	By appointment	

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

None.

Course Description

We will study the theological, social, and economic components of Old Testament ethics and will explore a variety of themes related to contemporary issues, including the problem of violence and war; economics and the poor; law and the legal system; culture and family; justice and righteousness; and ecology and the earth.

Course Methodology

Lectures, readings,

Course Outcomes

Like all Wycliffe College courses, “Old Testament Ethics” is shaped by a set of course outcomes/learning goals, describing the knowledge and abilities a student will have attained by the end of the course. In the chart below, these course outcomes are correlated with the outcomes for the M.Div and MTS programs as a whole. For a full list of the latter consult the Wycliffe College web site.

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
• will be able to describe, compare and contrast various approaches Old Testament ethics;	Participation in discussion following the Introductory class and first assignment	MTS: 1.2; 1.3 MDiv: 1.2; 2.2
• will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the various ways the Old Testament is used in discussions of the problem of violence and war; economics and the poor; law and the legal system; culture and family; justice and righteousness; and ecology and the earth;	Participation in small group and class discussions of daily readings focusing on these topics	MTS: 1.2; 1.3 MDiv: 1.2; 1.3; 2.2
• will be able to apply Old Testament texts in discussions of a contemporary ethical issue.	Participation in class debate over corporal punishment day 1; final paper	MTS: 1.2; 1.3; 2.3 MDiv: 1.2; 1.3; 2.2

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Andrew Sloan, *At Home in a Strange Land: using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics*. Hendrickson, 2009.
- Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Baker, 2011

Recommended Text

- Christopher Wright, *Old Testament Ethics For the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Some additional course material will be distributed through the course web site. At least one modern Translation of the Bible (e.g. ESV, NRSV, RSV, NET, or NASB). The Net Bible offers extensive textual notes and is available for use online or as a free download from www.bible.org.

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>. This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

Day 1 (April 17) Introduction: Marcionism, New Atheism, and the OT God: How Christians have used the Old Testament for ethics: Hermeneutics and Authority: Test Case Corporal Punishment

Read: Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, chapter 1, 2, 6: pp 15–23; 57–69.

Day 2 (April 18) The Problem of War: What about those Canaanites and the extra day of killing Esther asked for? Joshua, Judges, Esther 9

Read: Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, chapters 15–18: pp 158–206

Matthew Richard Schlimm, “Killing all that Breathes: Violence in the Old Testament,” in *This Strange and Sacred Scripture: Wrestling with the Old Testament and its Oddities* (Baker, 2015): 62–83.

For a thorough overview of the subject of recent OT scholarship on war read Richard Hess, “War in the Old Testament” http://www.godawa.com/chronicles_of_the_nephilim/Articles_By_Others/Hess%20-%20War%20in%20the%20Hebrew%20Bible.pdf .

Day 3 (April 19) . Ecology and the Earth: The Land and Ethics and Creation Care

Read: Christopher Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, chapters 4, 6

Michael Northcott, “Introduction” and “Message for the Planet” 9 – articles on the portal

Check out the following lecture on You Tube: Chris Wright, “Creation Care” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4h9DXaqJs8>

Free resources to on creation care and climate change:

<http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-life/social-justice-and-advocacy/environmental-issues/>
<http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/resource.htm>

Day 4 (April 20) Old Testament Law(s); Economics and the Poor, Women, Polygamy Righteousness and Culture and Family; Esther 1-2; the book of Ruth.

Read Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, chapters 7–11: pp 70–123

Matthew Richard Schlimm, “Male and Female He Created them: Gender and the Old Testament,” in *This Strange and Sacred Scripture: Wrestling with the Old Testament and its Oddities*: 84–103

Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, chapters 8, especially pp 314–26, skim pp 281–314

Carole Meyers, “Every Day Life; Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible.

Day 5 (April 21) Politics and the Nations: Did God Sanction Slavery?

Read Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, chapters 12–14: pp 124–57.

Listen to Peter Williams, Warden of Tyndale House on Moral Objections to the Old Testament on You tube. If pressed for time start at 31 minutes in.

Evaluation

Requirements

1) **Class Participation** (20%) Students are expected to attend every class and to involve themselves fully through preparatory reading and active participation in discussion.

2) **Book Report** (30%). In preparation for the class, each student will read and do a book report on Andrew Sloan, *At Home in a Strange Land: using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics*. The paper should demonstrate that you have read and understood the book. It should also answer the following question: what does book teach about Old Testament ethics that I can apply to my own reading and/or teaching about Old Testament ethics? It should be 2-4 pages, double-spaced and use size 12 font. This assignment is due the first class, April 16. If you need an extension to finish the report, you may have until May 1st.

If you have already read Sloan and want to read a more comprehensive treatment of the subject, please consult with the Professor.

Andrew Sloan, *At Home in a Strange Land: using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics*. Hendrickson, 2009.

3) **Term Paper or Project** (50%). Due August 14. Please check out your topic with the professor.

You may choose to write an exegesis paper (10-15 pages) on a passage of your choice that raises one or more ethical issues.

You may explore at a deeper level one of the ethical issues raised during the course.

You may design a four week course for your church or small group on the ethics of the Old Testament or such a timely question as, Is God a moral monster?

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value

NCR Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation

SDF Standing deferred (a temporary extension)

INC Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value

WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEg	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

Course Evaluations. At the end of the course students are expected to complete a course evaluation. The evaluation is done online and instructions will be contained in an e-mail message that will be sent out by the Wycliffe College registrar.

Bibliography

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