



**UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHWESTERN**  
— ST. PAUL —

OFFICE OF ADULT  
& GRADUATE STUDIES

# **ETH4021**

## **Foundations for Ethics**

**FALL 2021**

**SYLLABUS**

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# ETH4021 Foundations for Ethics

University of Northwestern – St. Paul

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students construct a value system for making ethical decisions based upon biblical principles. Attention is given to methods of interpretation and the application of biblical concepts.

**Credits: 2**

**Prerequisites:** None

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Please see “Contacting the Instructor” on the course site.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, a successful student will be able to

- CO-1. Explain the major developments of redemptive history throughout the Old Testament.
- CO-2. Explain the role of the New Testament in fulfilling redemptive history.
- CO-3. Apply basic principles of interpretation to biblical texts.
- CO-4. Critique appropriate and inappropriate use of biblical content with respect to modern ethical issues.

## MATERIALS

### Required Textbooks and Materials

The following materials are available to students through the university library collection with no purchase necessary. Links are posted on the course site within the weeks for which they are assigned.

- *Old Testament Essentials* (Tremper Longman III, IVP)
- *New Testament Essentials* (Robbie Castleman, IVP)
- *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (Edited by Steven L. McKenzie)
  - “Evangelical Interpretation”
  - “Theological Interpretation”
- *The Matrix of Christian Ethics: Integrating Philosophy and Moral Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Nullens, Patrick; Michener, Ronald T.)
  - Ch. 9 – “The use of the Bible in Christian ethics”
  - Ch. 10 – “A variegated biblical ethics”
  - Ch. 11 – “Facing moral problems”

### Required Tools

For this course, students will need access to Microsoft Office (available at no cost to students through the University of Northwestern-St. Paul), a PDF reader, and a standard internet browser. Please refer to the Tech Requirements found in the Technology Help section at the top of the course site for the full requirements.

## GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Course Grade Explanation

Assignments	Grade Weight
Discussion Forums (7x4) (CO-1, 2, 3, 4)	28
Essays Quizzes (4x6) (CO-1, 2)	24
Key Concepts Chart (CO-1, 2)	15
Annotated Bibliography (CO-3)	5
Passage Analysis (CO-3, 4)	<u>28</u>
<b>Total:</b>	100

### Grading Scale Percentages

A	≥ 93	B	≥ 83	C	≥ 73	D	≥ 63
A-	≥ 90	B-	≥ 80	C-	≥ 70	D-	≥ 60
B+	≥ 87	C+	≥ 77	D+	≥ 67	F	< 60

### Late Work

All assignments are due as described in the course syllabus. Students are responsible for meeting assignment deadlines. Late assignments will be deducted one full letter grade (e.g., A to B) per day; late assignments will not be accepted for a grade beyond 3 calendar days past the original deadline. Forum discussion activities must be completed on time; late forum posts will not receive any credit. Students should contact the instructor via e-mail if an extenuating circumstance exists.

### Feedback Expectations

Students should expect feedback for their submitted assignments within 5 days of the assignment due date or the time of their submission, whichever is later.

## INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SERVICES

### Guidelines and Information

Students are responsible for policies and procedures found in the Office of Adult & Graduate Studies Catalog located on theROCK. These policies include the following:

- Deadlines for dropping or withdrawing
- Attendance
- Class cancellations
- Plagiarism and cheating
- Grading System
- Complaints, exceptions, and appeals

Instructors may have course-related expectations that further detail the policies and procedures outlined in the catalog. Any such expectations must be provided to students in writing (e.g., handout, course site posting) prior to or at the beginning of the class.

Traditional undergraduate students enrolled in A&GS courses are subject to the traditional undergraduate student handbook for all non-course-specific policies and procedures.

## **Academic Integrity**

Members of the Northwestern community mutually commit to personal integrity and honesty. Students submitting work are expected to convey their own thoughts unless the source is cited appropriately. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty violate ethical and intellectual principles.

In every course, students are required to view the Understanding Plagiarism video and complete the Understanding Plagiarism Quiz prior to completing any of the course content. These items are part of the course orientation.

## **Academic Achievement**

UNW students requesting academic accommodations in association with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are directed to notify [Disability Services](#) to begin the application process. Academic Achievement also provides the following: [Writing and Subject Tutoring](#), advocating, transitional skill building, [Academic Coaching](#) (organization, time management, test taking, etc.).

Contact Academic Achievement for more information: [AcademicAchievement@unwsp.edu](mailto:AcademicAchievement@unwsp.edu) • 651-628-3316  
• N4012 (Revised 06/20)

## **Support Services**

Links to support services are available found in the Student Services section at the top of the course site.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

### **Email and Announcements**

Students are responsible to regularly check their Northwestern student email and the announcements in the course site in order to receive updates and information.

### **Attendance**

Due to the accelerated nature of the online curricula, students are expected to participate in all course activities. Students must contact the faculty member in advance or as soon as possible if unable to participate in all or part of the course activities for a given week because of a medical (which includes having to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 exposure or confirmed illness), family, or work-related emergency. Students should refer to their course syllabus and/or faculty member for specific requirements. Students who do not participate in course activities and fail to withdraw from the course will receive a failing "F" grade.

### **Submission Standards**

All assignments, unless otherwise stated, must be submitted on the course site in Microsoft Word document format (.doc or .docx). For all assignments, use a standard readable font, double-spaced, etc.

### **Critical Response to Alternate Viewpoints**

When students are reading or viewing course materials, they may encounter viewpoints, words, or images that their instructors would not use or endorse. Students should know that materials are chosen for their value in learning to read, write, and view critically, not because the materials are necessarily Christian.

## Scholarly Research

Quality participation in this course requires contribution of scholarly research to class interactions. Students can engage in external research via the Berntsen Library website by performing a search of the 60+ databases available to students. Also available on the library site are multiple tutorials to educate learners in effective search techniques. Other credible journals/articles are options as well.

## ASSIGNMENTS

See the course site for complete details on the assignments.

### Discussion Forums (CO-1, 2, 3, 4)

Online discussions represent tremendous learning opportunities because classmates can share viewpoints and other ways of expressing complicated concepts that enable others with diverse learning and cognitive styles to better grasp and master ideas. Approach discussions as learning opportunities where you learn from others and they learn from you. You are not just writing for the instructor to read and grade; you are also writing to converse and help others and yourself better learn and understand at a deeper level.

Each substantive post can only earn a maximum of 4 points and accumulates across the week toward a maximum of 10 points by the end of each week. Earn rating points for the presence of the following in your posts:

- 1 point for **Evidence of Study**—Proficient reference of course learning resources and concepts
- 1 point for **Contribution**—Leads conversation by contributing relevant value beyond existing course resources such as new examples, illustrations, critical thinking questions, cited references, links, or related current events
- 1 point for **Professional Style**—Correct grammar, clarity, organization, respectfulness, openness to healthy debate
- 1 point for **Early Participation**—Post is created prior to 11:59 p.m. on Day 4 and earns at least 1 point for either Evidence of Study or Contribution

A reply that includes only statements of "I agree", "I liked what you said about...", and/or "I appreciated..." will not be graded. A good reply requires critical thinking skills, affirmations, challenges, questions, scriptural support, creative application, further examples, relevant stories, and other evidence that you understand the initial post, that the post inspired you to think further about the topic, and that you have more than one original thought in your head.

Total points earned in a week equate to letter grades as follows:

- 10 or more total points = A (100%)
- 9 points = A- (90%)
- 8 points = B- (80%)
- 7 point = C- (70%)
- 6 points = D- (60%)
- 0–5 points = F (0–50%)

### Essay Quizzes (CO-1, 2)

Each week you will complete an essay quiz with two questions each. The purpose of the quizzes is to help you monitor your progress in understanding the core ideas of interpreting the Old and New

Testaments for ethical decision-making. The questions are meant to help you integrate and process what you are learning, and to unify the broad range of topics covered in these weeks. These quizzes are open book, with no time limit and only one attempt. Each essay answer should be 2-4 quality paragraphs.

Each essay is worth 30 points, earning 10 points for each of the following:

- Critical Thinking: Accuracy, content, and logic
- Evidence of Study: Connections, support, and application of course materials
- Writing Style: Clarity, organization, and grammar

## **Key Concepts Chart (CLO-1, 2)**

Select 20 items from the list below. Using the Key Concepts Chart Template from Week 1 of the course site, sequence your selected items chronologically with the most recent items on the top and the earliest items on the bottom. Then for each item, detail the key facts (dates, places, people, etc.) and significance in the respective columns.

1. Period of Judges
2. The monarchy begins
3. Founding Jerusalem
4. Building of first temple
5. Draught and movement to Egypt
6. Exodus from Egypt
7. Conquest of Canaan
8. Covenant with Abraham
9. Covenant with Moses
10. Reign of David
11. Divided Kingdom
12. Exile to Babylon
13. Restoration to Israel
14. Period of Silence
15. Ministry of Isaiah
16. Ministry of Jeremiah
17. Life of Daniel
18. Building of the Second Temple
19. Persian Empire
20. Assyrian Empire
21. Babylonian Empire
22. Birth of Christ
23. Death & Resurrection
24. Pentecost
25. Paul's first missionary journey
26. Fall of Jerusalem
27. Bar Kokhba revolt

See the Completion Rubric on the course site for specific grading criteria.

## **Annotated Bibliography (CLO-3)**

Imagine you are given the chance to teach on a passage of Scripture for your adult Sunday school class at church. Identify the title, author(s), and type (Bible dictionary, commentary, lexicon, etc.) of five or more tools that would be useful to your task. Beyond simply identifying the tool, use about one paragraph per tool to explain why it supports this particular task.

See the Completion Rubric on the course site for specific grading criteria.

## Passage Analysis (CLO-3, 4)

Write a 5-page exegetical paper on a passage from one of Paul's letters or a passage from Isaiah. It is up to you to choose the text, but the section should be between 6 and 10 verses. As you write your commentary on each passage follow this general format:

1. **Introduction** (1/2–1 page): Give a brief introduction to the passage, which includes important historical background information concerning the author, date of the book, recipients, situation of the recipients, relationship of the author to the recipients, why the author wrote the book, etc.
2. **Context** (1/2–1 page): Explain where the passage fits in the book. Give a brief overview of the structure or flow of thought in the book showing where the passage you are studying fits in and why your passage is important for the flow of the book.
3. **Outline** (1/2 page): Include an outline of the passage being studied, showing the development of thought.
4. **Commentary** (2–3 pages): Apply the principles learned so far to the passage you choose, and record the results of your study in a verse-by-verse commentary on the passage, making use of the principles from the readings and any additional study. You should make use of commentaries, dictionaries, and other research resources in this section. The commentary section should be 2–3 pages.
5. **Conclusion** (1/4–1/3 page): For your conclusion summarize the meaning or message of the passage studied in just a few sentences, by completing the following: "In this passage the author meant to teach that...."
6. **Bibliography**: Give a bibliography listing all the sources used in the paper (not included in total page count).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Format

This course is delivered in an online format that provides all learning activities online. The day the course starts is considered Day 1 of Week 1 for the course. For example, if a course begins on a Monday, then Day 1 is Monday, Day 4 is Thursday, and Day 7 is the following Sunday.

This course is an accelerated course. As a rule of thumb, students should expect to spend on average 17.5 hours on course work each week.

### Due Dates

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be submitted on the course site by 11:59 p.m. CT on Day 7 of each week. Please see the following schedule for details on when an assignment is due.

For any questions regarding these assignments, contact the instructor.

### Orientation

- Read the Getting Started Page
- Participate in the Introductions Forum
- View and Complete Understanding Plagiarism Presentation and Quiz
- Complete Student Responsibilities Exercise

## Week 1: Old Testament Overview

### Objectives

1. CLO-1: Explain the major developments of redemptive history throughout the Old Testament
  - a. List/Identify the major historical elements (people, events, eras, themes) of the Old Testament (CLO-1)
  - b. Discuss how God's covenants shaped redemptive history (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic) (CLO-1)
  - c. Differentiate/Contrast major genres of the Old Testament (law, poetry, prophecy, history) (CLO-1)

### Assignments

1. Complete Orientation Activities
  - a. Read the Getting Started page on the course site
  - b. Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and course site
  - c. Post in the Class Introductions Forum and make connection replies to a few others
  - d. View Understanding Plagiarism presentation
  - e. Complete Understanding Plagiarism Quiz
2. Read Old Testament Essentials (Tremper Longman III)
  - a. Chapters 1–17

### Due Day 4

1. Last chance to earn bonus points for early posting in Wk1 Discussion Forum

### Due Day 7

1. Complete participation in Wk1 Discussion: Seeing the Old Testament in Context
2. Complete Wk1 Essay Quiz
3. Begin working on Core Concepts Chart (due Week 3)

## Week 2: New Testament Overview

### Objectives

1. CLO-2: Explain the role of the New Testament in fulfilling redemptive history.
  - a. List/Identify the major historical elements (people, events, eras, themes) of the New Testament (CLO-2)
  - b. Explain how Jesus fulfills the various OT covenants and promises (CLO-2)
  - c. Sequence the major historical milestones of the growth of the church (CLO-2)

### Assignments

1. Read *New Testament Essentials* (Castleman)
  - a. Read Chapters 1–12

### Due Day 4

1. Last chance to earn bonus points for early posting in Wk2 Discussion Forum

### Due Day 7

1. Complete participation in Wk2 Discussion: Pitfalls and Opportunities in Approaching the New Testament
2. Complete Wk2 Essay Quiz
3. Continue working on Core Concepts Chart (due Week 3)



## Week 3: Biblical Interpretation

### Objectives

1. CLO-3: Apply principles of interpretation to biblical texts
  - a. Recognize historical contextual factors that influence original texts (audience, intention, dates, etc.) (CLO-3)
  - b. Identify tools that support Biblical interpretation (Bible dictionaries, commentaries, lexicons, etc.) (CLO-3)
  - c. Conduct passage analysis using appropriate principles and tools (CLO-3)

### Assignments

1. Read the following entries from *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (Edited by Steven L. McKenzie)
  - a. Entry on Evangelical Interpretation
  - b. Entry on Theological Interpretation

### Due Day 4

1. Last chance to earn bonus points for early posting in both Wk3 Discussion Forums
  - a. Wk3 Discussion: Hands-on Interpretation of Jesus' Advice
  - b. Wk3 Discussion: Biblical Morality Disagreements

### Due Day 7

1. Complete participation in both Wk3 Forums
  - a. Wk3 Discussion: Hands-on Interpretation of Jesus' Advice
  - b. Wk3 Discussion: Biblical Morality Disagreements
2. Complete Wk3 Essay Quiz
3. Submit Annotated Bibliography
4. Begin working on Passage Analysis (due Week 4)

## Week 4: The use of the Bible in making ethical decisions

### Objectives

1. CLO-4: Critique appropriate and inappropriate use of biblical content with respect to modern ethical issues
  - a. Apply interpretive principles to practical ethical decision-making (CLO-4)
  - b. Identify common pitfalls in ethical application of biblical interpretations (CLO-4)

### Assignments

1. Read the following chapters of *The Matrix of Christian Ethics: Integrating Philosophy and Moral Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Nullens, Patrick; Michener, Ronald T.)
  - a. Ch. 9: "The use of the Bible in Christian ethics"
  - b. Ch. 10: "A variegated biblical ethics"
  - c. Ch. 11: "Facing moral problems"

### Due Day 4

1. Last chance to earn bonus points for early posting in all Wk4 Discussion Forums
  - a. Wk4 Discussion: Critiquing Prior Application of Scripture Forum
  - b. Wk4 Discussion: Using the Iceberg Model
  - c. Wk4 Takeaways, Surprises, or Final Thoughts Forum

**Due Day 7**

1. Complete participation in all Wk4 Forums
  - a. Wk4 Discussion: Critiquing Prior Application of Scripture Forum
  - b. Wk4 Discussion: Using the Iceberg Model
  - c. Wk4 Takeaways, Surprises, or Final Thoughts Forum
2. Complete Wk4 Essay Quiz
3. Submit Passage Analysis