University of Notre Dame, Department of Theology. Scripture and Ethics. Course meets Monday through Friday, July 7-25, 2014.

Instructor: Anselma Dolcich-Ashley, Ph.D.

Course Description: The Second Vatican Council altered the direction of nearly four centuries of manualist-era moral theology by retrieving the central place of Scripture both in the life of the Church in general, and particularly for moral theology. “Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world.” (Optatam totius, no. 16) At the same time, the academic specialization of both Scripture studies and theological ethics, in the 20th century and continuing through the present time, has created an additional challenge of uniting two disciplines each with respective purposes, methods and goals. In this course we will determine a proper relationship of Scripture and ethics by seeking methods to derive moral-theological claims, ethical norms and trajectories of virtue from Scripture. Of additional importance in this quest is an understanding of the relationship of Scripture to other, extra-Scriptural sources for ethics (e.g., patristic sources, medieval natural-law traditions and philosophical ethics), and the role of the local and universal Church, and the Catholic magisterium, both in interpreting Scripture and in developing moral theology.

All Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the person who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Catholic exegetes then and other students of sacred theology, working diligently together and using appropriate means, should devote their energies, under the watchful care of the sacred teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings. This should be so done that as many ministers of the divine word as possible will be able effectively to provide the nourishment of the Scriptures for the people of God, to enlighten their minds, strengthen their wills, and set persons’ hearts on fire with the love of God. (Dei Verbum, no. 23.)

Course readings:

1. Required books.
   c. William C. Spohn, Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics. (Continuum, 1999).
2. Be sure that you can access the course reserves on the Hesburgh Library website for additional chapters and articles.
3. All readings are to be completed PRIOR to the class session for which they are assigned. A double asterisk (**) next to a reading indicates that it is on the Hesburgh Library course reserves (http://library.nd.edu/).

Course requirements:

1. Attendance and participation in every class session. 25% of the final grade.
2. In-class oral presentation of readings (to be assigned), and leading a discussion of that selection. Each student will have two opportunities for a presentation. 25% of the final grade.
3. Mid-term exam. Answer 3 questions out of 5 (given out earlier in the week). Two (double-spaced) pages each. 25% of the final grade.
4. Final exam. Modeled on the departmental comprehensive exam, the final exam for the course will consist only of an oral exam of 15 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of instructor feedback. 25% of the final grade.

Course syllabus: The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.


Monday, July 7.

- **Dei Verbum**, nos. 1-26.
- **James Corkery, SJ. “Dei Verbum: On the Face of God ‘Unveiled’.”**
- **Benedict Ashley, O.P. “Dei Verbum and Christian Morals.”**
- Emily Arndt, Demanding Our Attention, chapter 1, “The Hebrew Bible as a (Re)source for Christian Ethics.”

Tuesday, July 8.

- Arndt, chapters 2-3.

Wednesday, July 9).

- Arndt, chp 4.

Thursday, July 10.

- Arndt, chapter 5.

Friday, July 11.

- **Bruce Birch, “Divine Character and the Formation of Moral Community in the Book of Exodus.”**
• ** Selections from Origins, 2002-07: the US Catholic bishops and the sixth commandment.

**Part II: Ethics and the Gospels**

Monday, July 14.


Tuesday, July 15.

- Spohn, chapters 3-4.

Wednesday, July 16.

- Spohn, chapters 5-6.

Thurs., July 17).

- Spohn, chapters 7-8.

Friday, July 18.

- **Chan, “The Beatitudes in History,” and “Some Preliminary Questions,” from The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.

**Due Friday, July 18, by 8:00 pm. Mid-course exam.**

Monday, July 21. Feature film TBA, and discussion based upon Parts I and II of the course.

**Part III: Ethics and the Letters of Paul**

Tuesday, July 22.

Wednesday, July 23.


Thursday, July 24.


Friday, July 25.

- **Oral final exams.** Individual final exams, held with the instructor. 15 minutes per exam + 5 min feedback.