Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

12 632 A Seminar in Biblical Studies: Ethics and Moral Formation in Paul

Tuesdays 2:30–5:30
Fall Semester 2014

Prerequisites: Introduction to the New Testament.

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Course Description

This is an advanced course in Paul on the interconnected topics of ethics and moral formation in Paul. The course examines a wide range of material in Paul’s letters in the light of both Greco-Roman sources and critical scholarship.

Course Goals

1) that students gain a first-hand familiarity with the relevant material in Paul on the questions of ethics and moral formation through the examination of specific passages;

2) that students incorporate into their own interpretive frameworks a range of scholarly perspectives on the topics of ethics and moral formation in Paul;

3) that students acquire a basic knowledge of approaches to ethics and moral formation in the Greco-Roman world, including Judaism;

4) that students reflect on the hermeneutical aspects and questions that arise from an engagement with Paul in the light of current ethical concerns and questions.

Textbooks
Everyone will also read an additional book, but these will be library copies.

**Course Requirements**

1. Write a 15 page term paper on a self-selected question of ethics and moral formation in Paul. Paper topics must be approved by the instructor.

2. Write a summary and critique of a book, and make a class presentation on it.

More detailed descriptions of these requirements are given below.

**Course Outline**

**September 2**

A. Introduction to the course  
B. Introduction to Paul’s “Ethics”: Question  
C. Exegetical Focus: Gal 4:12–20 — “until Christ be formed in you”

**September 9**

A. The Ethical Teaching of 1 and 2 Thessalonians  
B. Discussion of Furnish, 25–67 and 242–79  
C. The Mosaic law in Galatians—general discussion of the purpose an occasion of the letter as context for Paul’s discussion of the Mosaic law and the letter’s paraenesis.

**September 16**

A. Discussion of Furnish, 68–111  
B. Exegetical Focus on Galatians  
   Gal. 2:1–21  
   Gal. 3:1–18  
   Gal. 3:19–4:7  
   Gal. 4:21–5:12 + 6:11–16
September 23

A. Discussion of Furnish, 112–206
B. The basis of exhortation in Philemon
C. The basis of exhortation in 1 Cor. 7:21–24 in context

September 30

A. Discussion of Furnish, 207–41
B. Exhortation in Galatians 5
C. Exhortation in Jewish Christian writings: The “Common Ethic”

October 7

A. Presentation on Wasserman, 51–116
B. Paul and the Law: Explorations in Romans
   Romans 4
   Romans 6
   Romans 7

October 14

A. Presentation on Castelli
B. The Example of Christ
   Phil. 2:1–12
   Rom. 15:1–6
   2 Cor. 8:8–11
C. Moral process and progress: Rom 5:1–5; 1 Cor 9:24–27; Phil 3

October 21

A. Presentation on Hays, 16–59
B. Ethics and eschatology in 1 Corinthians 7
C. Ethics and the Body of Christ — 1 Cor. 12–14

October 28

A. Presentation on Barram, 135–73
B. Judgment in Paul
   The Man Sleeping with His Father’s Wife — 1 Cor 5
Paul and Self-Judgment in 2 Cor 4:1–5
Justification and the doers of the Law in Romans 2

November 4

A. Presentation on Horrell, 166–203
B. Diet and Days
   The Weak and the Strong in Romans 14
   Eating Food Offered to Idols — 1 Corinthians 8
   Eating Food Offered to Idols — 1 Corinthians 10

November 11

A. Discussion of Wasserman, 117–28
B. The Spirit and the Passions
   Ethics and the Spirit in Paul: Gal 5 and Rom 8
   Paul and Hellenistic Moral Philosophy reprised
   Mind and the passions in Romans 1

November 18

A. Presentation on Yeo
B. Love and Duty
   The Roman imperium: love and duty in Romans 13
   The duty to the poor saints in Jerusalem: 2 Cor. 8–9; Rom. 15
   Bearing burdens and doing good to all. . . Gal. 6:1–10

November 25  No Class—Thanksgiving Break

December 2

concluding discussion and sharing of research for term papers

Guidelines for Term Paper

**Term paper.** Write a term paper on a text (passage in Paul’s letters) or on a topic in an area of Paul’s understanding of ethics and moral formation. The paper should include a hermeneutical conclusion in which you discuss ways of engaging the Pauline material for a present context. The paper must be no less than 15 pages (not more than 20) + bibliography. Use footnotes. If you choose to do a paper on a text, see the guidelines for an exegetical paper below.

*Caution:* The paper is subject to all the stated seminary rules and policies regarding academic integrity. See specifically the section on plagiarism (and how to avoid it) in the *G-ETS Academic Handbook*. Credit cannot be given for plagiarism, whether the plagiarism is intentional or unintentional. In particular, be aware that using exact language from a source (a phrase, sentence, paragraph, etc.) with a note attached but with no quotation marks (or, in the case of more than one sentence, without indenting the material in a block quotation) is plagiarism. Be aware also that a paper made up mainly of quotations from sources, even if these are properly cited, does not satisfy the requirements for an exegesis paper, which should be mostly in your own words. Use quotations sparingly. Present the information and opinions found in your sources by putting them in your own words, paraphrasing and attaching proper citations.

If you choose to write on a text (*exegesis paper*), follow these guidelines:

1. A short introduction in which you introduce the passage and the **focal question(s)** you will be treating, mentioning the state of scholarship on the question. In this part, do not present your interpretation or state a “thesis.” Simply identify the questions that you will seek to answer.

2. A body in which you present your discussion, with explanation, arguments, and evidence, interacting with the scholarship on the passage. In this section you should state and defend your own interpretations, interacting with scholarship (particularly in 2.3). See “Evidence and Arguments” below.

   2.1 A short discussion of differences between translations and any significant textual variants.

   2.2 A brief discussion of the form and genre of the passage. The genre in the case of Paul’s writings is “letter,” but within the letters are different forms, such as argument in diatribal style, thanksgiving, scripture proof, speech-in-character (*prosopopoiia*), etc.

   2.3 A lengthy discussion of the focal exegetical question identified in the introduction.

3. A concluding reflection on theological implications of the passage, including the significance of the passage for a contemporary audience and how the meaning of the passage might be affected by the social location and identity of that audience.
Evidence and Arguments. The paper should examine the detail of the passage in consultation with the scholarly resources (commentaries, etc.). In using the scholarly resources, look for evidence and arguments in support of the author’s interpretations. Do not treat scholarly sources as authorities for interpretations, only as authorities for evidence. In other words, if a commentator states that the ancient writer Josephus says such and such about synagogue customs, you can treat that as authoritative information. But you should not treat the commentator’s interpretation of a verse in Romans 3 as authoritative information, only as opinion, and you should examine the commentators’ arguments and evidence to see how well they support their opinions before you embrace those opinions in working out your interpretation. Hence, in your exegesis paper you should back up what you say with evidence and arguments in consultation with the commentaries.

Guidelines for Book Summary and Critique

to be provided

Selected Bibliography


