AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Course Instruction Plan

Prepared by:	Timothy D. Finlay, Ph.D.	Spring 2012
Course:	GBBL 611 Old Testament Seminar: Issues in Social Justice	4 Units

Description: Topics with current and/or continuing significance for Old Testament studies, critical methods, and advanced research techniques are emphasized. In this particular seminar, the topics discussed concern how a Christian theology of contemporary issues in social justice—treatment of the poor, euthanasia, abortion, work and the economy, stewardship, treatment of immigrants etc.—can be informed by a study of Old Testament ethics.

Mission Statement of the University:
Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Mission Statement of the Graduate School of Theology:
The Graduate School of Theology, in keeping with its commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, prepares men and women for effective, practical ministry in the Church throughout the world by promoting the spiritual, personal, and vocational development of students and by extending theological knowledge through academic inquiry, research, writing, and publication.

Required Books:
Baker, David L. *Tight Fists or Open Hands: Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.

Supplemental Books (supplied courtesy of the Kern Foundation):
David van Drunen. *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Acton, 2006.
John R. Schneider. *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
Claar, Victor V. and Robin J. Klay. *Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choices*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2007.
The NIV Stewardship Study Bible: Discover God's Design for Life, the Environment, Finances, Generosity, and Eternity. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
Richards, Jay W. *Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution not the Problem*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.
Budziszewski, J. *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*. Revised Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011.
Beckwith, Francis. *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice*. Cambridge: University Press, 2007.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Analyzing the wisdom literature for its teachings on virtues and vices
2. Synthesizing the Bible and reason to produce a coherent account of natural law
3. Understanding the connections between theological anthropology and biblical ethics
4. Diagnosing one's own stewardship in various aspects of daily life
5. Evaluating how biblical ethics coheres with different modern theories of social justice

Requirements:

1. Regular attendance and participation in class, including occasional reading reports
2. A critical study on an Old Testament pericope relating to an ethical issue
3. A topical essay on how an issue in social justice is treated throughout the Old Testament
4. A personal study of how one's stewardship in various areas of life—individual, family, work etc.—benefits the community in general

Grading:

1. Attendance, participation and reading reports 20%
2. Critical study 30%
3. Topical essay 30%
4. Personal study 20%

More precise information on the inductive study, the topical essay, the personal study and the final exam will be given during the first two weeks of class.

Plagiarism: Anyone who plagiarizes (i.e., presents as one's own work something which has been taken from someone else) will receive an automatic zero on that piece of work and a warning. A second like offense **will result in an "F" for the final course grade**. While collaboration is good, the passing off somebody else's work as your own (because you copied it out of a book, paraphrased it out of a book, copied another student's paper or any portion of that student's paper, whether student is currently in the class or not, bought a paper from a research paper service, downloaded it from the internet, wrote down ideas that someone else was dictating to you, recycled an essay written by someone else, or had someone else rewrite your paper for you) is plagiarism. Following are some definitions:

Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

- Students completing any examination should assume that external assistance (e.g., books, notes, calculators, and conversations with others) is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Students may not allow others to conduct research or prepare work for them without advance authorization from the instructor.
- Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit in more than one course without authorization.

2. **Fabrication -** Intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
3. **Facilitating academic dishonesty -** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.
4. **Plagiarism -** Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Tuition: The student is responsible to check the official university calendar as to the last day to drop this class and as the last day to withdraw. The student must be aware of the financial responsibilities that attend making any of these changes.

Disabilities: Any student in this course who has a disability that might prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center (LEC) as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure your full participation in the successful completion of course requirements. (The LEC does not provide assessment for students who have a suspected learning disability. Students are required to obtain this information from an outside source such as a licensed psychologist or qualified educational therapist.)

Students may not delay in initiating disability verification at the entry into enrollment in the course.

Contact Information:

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Bookstore: order books 1-800-933-1950; FAX 626-969-8806

Course Schedule (Preliminary)

Jan 12 Introduction to the course. Basic introductions to the topics of justice and injustice, social justice, theological anthropology and natural law. Reading for next week: *Baker* 1-74, 223-251

Jan 19 Discussion of property rights and responsibilities. Reading for next week: *van Drunen*, tba; *Baker* 286-304.

Jan 26 Guest speaker: David van Drunen, speaking about natural law. Reading for next week: *Wright*, 23-75; *Baker*, 75-107.

Feb 2 Discussion of the connection between theological anthropology and social justice. Reading for next week: *Baker*, 111-195.

Feb 9 Discussion of how to treat the marginalized. Reading for next week: *Schneider*, tba; *Kern Foundation*, various documents.

Feb 16 Discussion of wealth. Reading for next week: *Beckwith*, tba.

Feb 23 Discussion of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. Reading for next week: *Wright* 103-145, 182-211.

Mar 1 Discussion of ecology and social justice. Reading for next week: *Clar and Klay*, tba.

Mar 8 Guest speaker: Ed Feser, speaking about the free market and the Catholic moral tradition. **No Reading: Work on topic papers**.

Mar 15 Reading and discussion of topic papers. Reading for next week: *Wright*, 327-383.

Mar 22 Discussion of the individual, the family, the culture and the state. Reading for next week: *Budzischewski*, tba.

Mar 29 The natural law and social justice. **No reading: Work on Critical Study papers**. (Wright, 387-440, has some bibliographic information that may be helpful.)

Apr 5 NO CLASS—HOLY WEEK!

Apr 12 Discussion of Critical Study papers. Reading for next week: *Richards*, tba; *Baker*, 252-285.

Apr 19 Interest and Loans. Reading: Wright, 253-326

Apr 26 To what extent does the Israelite legal system promote social justice? **No reading.**

May 3 PERSONAL STEWARDSHIP PAPERS DUE

Bibliography

Old Testament Resources

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Bahnsen, Greg. *By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today*. Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985.
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Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991.
Blomberg, Craig L. *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.
Boecker, Hans-Jochen. *Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980.
Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.
Clements, R. E. *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*. Cambridge: University Press, 1989.
Cowles, C. S. Merril, E. H., Gard, D. L, Longman III, T. and Gundry, S. *Show Them No Mercy: Four Views of God and Canaanite Genocide*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
Craigie, Peter C. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
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