



Bible 257 - Course Syllabus

Course Title: Sermon on the Mount (*1 Credit*)

Course Description: This course will equip students with a basic introduction to understanding and interpreting Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7. The class will discuss various hermeneutical perspectives on the Sermon, along with its structure, key themes, and challenging interpretive issues. In addition to a method for interpreting the Sermon, students will see how the Sermon speaks into current ethical issues and provides a guide for Christian discipleship and growth. Student learning will be evaluated based on quizzes from the assigned reading and class discussion, a Scripture memory project, and a final exam or paper.

Prerequisites: None

Instructors:

- Professor: Dr. Nathan Williams
 - Email: nathan@woodhavenbible.com
 - Phone: 734-945-2569

Course Materials:

- Bible (unless otherwise specified, you may use the translation of your choice)
 - Lecture notes and quiz blanks will use the ESV translation.
- *Sermon on the Mount: The Story of God Bible Commentary*, Scot Mcknight ISBN: 978-0310327134

Class Time: Class will meet once weekly on Wednesdays from 6pm-7:30pm from 09/17/2025 – 12/10/2025. Class will take place at Community Bible Church located at 3700 Benson St, Trenton, MI 48183. Class time will be broken down into the following general schedule:

- Quiz (6:00 - 6:10)
- Review of Homework (6:10 - 6:20)
- Lecture (6:20 – 7:15)
- Discussion (7:15 - 7:30)

Assignments:

- **Quizzes** - There will be 10 quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will generally take place at the beginning of class time each week and will cover the previous week's study materials. The quiz format will include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer-style questions. The purpose of these quizzes is to provide the students with regular graded feedback on their understanding of the course material and to prepare them for the exams. The quizzes also ensure a student's regular and on-time

attendance for the weekly class time. The lowest quiz score for each student will be dropped.

- **Homework** – Homework will include weekly reading, writing, and preparation for quizzes. The reading will include text from Matthew 5-7 and sections from Scot McKnight's book. Students will write a paragraph at the conclusion of each section of the Sermon summarizing ways in which the text applies to life today. In addition, students will choose a portion of the Sermon on the Mount to memorize and recite.
- **Scripture Memorization Project** – Students will choose one of the following sections of the Sermon on the Mount to memorize throughout the course of the class. They will be responsible for writing it in class on 12/3/25. Students will write 3-4 verses a week on their quiz.
 - Matthew 5:1-20
 - Matthew 5:21-48
 - Matthew 6:1-21
 - Matthew 6:19-34
 - Matthew 7:1-27
- **Final Exam or Final Paper** – Students can choose either to take the final exam **OR** (please notice this important word **OR**. *It's doing a lot of work in this sentence!*) write a final paper 5-7 pages in length.
 - The final exam will take place on 12/10/25. The exam will be cumulative but will give greater attention to the lecture material. The purpose of the exam is to encourage each student to review the entire course material and to ensure that each student retains the information learned throughout the course of the semester. The exam will be structured in the same format as the quizzes.
 - The final paper will be due by midnight on 12/10/25 through Canvas. The paper should be 5-7 pages in length and be in Turabian format. It should include a thesis statement that is explained and defended. Possible Topics for the paper include the following and should be based on the text of the Sermon on the Mount. Please choose ONE topic.
 - How does Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount shape a Christian's perspective of war?
 - What is the proper understanding of righteousness within the Sermon on the Mount and how is this similar and different from Paul's teaching on righteousness?
 - What do the images of salt and light indicate for a Christian's relationship to the culture today?
 - How is the Lord's Prayer to be used in the life of a Christian today?
 - What is a Christian approach to anxiety based on the Sermon on the Mount?
 - Explain how Matthew 7:1 is wrongly used in the culture today and then explain the proper interpretation of it with attention its context.
 - Topic requested by the student and approved by the professor.

Canvas: Canvas is an online course management system for college courses. It will be used in this course for online submission of assignments and for posting grades, announcements, and

access to relevant course documents. Further details on how to set up a Canvas account and access this course can be found in the appendix to this document.

Assessment: Assignments will have the following grade weights:

Assignment	Grade Weight	Notes
Quizzes	30%	Almost weekly, according to the course schedule. Lowest quiz score dropped
Homework	10%	Weekly application paragraphs according to the course schedule.
Final Exam or Final Paper	30%	On 12/10/25
Scripture Memory Project	30%	Due by 12/3/25

We will use the following thresholds to convert raw scores in the course into letter grades:

- A+: $\geq 98\%$
- A: $\geq 92\%$
- A-: $\geq 90\%$
- B+: $\geq 88\%$
- B: $\geq 82\%$
- B-: $\geq 80\%$
- C+: $\geq 78\%$
- C: $\geq 72\%$
- C-: $\geq 70\%$
- D+: $\geq 68\%$
- D: $\geq 62\%$
- D-: $\geq 60\%$
- F: $< 60\%$

Depending on the distribution of raw scores at the end of the semester, these thresholds may change; however the final thresholds will be no stricter than the current thresholds. For example, if you receive a raw score of 85% in the course, you will be guaranteed a letter grade of at least B; however, it may happen that you receive a higher letter grade depending on the overall distribution of raw scores.

Class Schedule:

Date	Topic	Study Material	Assignments Due
9/17/25	- Topic: Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount	- Matthew 5-7 - McKnight (pp. 1-28) - Lecture Notes	Nothing Due First Day of Class
9/24/25	- Topic: The Beatitudes: Habits of God's Kingdom Disciples (5:3-12) – Part 1	- Matthew 5:3-12 - McKnight (pp. 29-38) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #1</i> – Covering the Introduction to the Sermon & McKnight pp. 1-28 - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
10/1/25	- Topic: The Beatitudes: Habits of God's Kingdom Disciples (5:3-12) – Part 2	- Matthew 5:3-12 - McKnight (pp. 38-54) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #2</i> – Covering the Beatitudes (Part 1) & McKnight pp. 29-38 -2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
10/8/25	- Topic: Salt & Light (5:13-16)	- Matthew 5:13-16 - McKnight (pp. 55-64) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #3</i> – Covering the Beatitudes (Part 2) & McKnight pp. 38-54 - <i>HW</i> – Paragraph of Application on Beatitudes - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
10/15/25	- Topic: Transformative Righteousness (5:17-48) – Part 1	- Matthew 5:17-48 - McKnight (pp. 65-109) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #4</i> – Covering Salt & Light & McKnight pp. 55-64 - <i>HW</i> – Paragraph of Application on Salt & Light - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
10/22/25	- Topic: Transformative Righteousness (5:17-48) – Part 2	- Matthew 5:17-48 - McKnight (pp. 110-150) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #5</i> – Covering Transformative Righteousness (Part 1) & McKnight pp. 65-109 - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
10/29/25	- Topic: Genuine Righteousness (6:1-21) – Part 1	- Matthew 6:1-21 - McKnight (pp. 151-168) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #6</i> - Covering Transformative Righteousness (Part 2) & McKnight pp. 110-150 - <i>HW</i> – Paragraph of Application on Transformative Righteousness - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
11/5/25	Topic: Genuine Righteousness (6:1-21) – Part 2	- Matthew 6:1-21 - McKnight (pp. 169-202) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #7</i> – Covering Genuine Righteousness (Part 1) & McKnight pp. 151-168 - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
11/12/25	Topic: Social Righteousness (6:19-7:12) – Part 1	- Matthew 6:19-7:12 - McKnight (pp. 203-225) - Lecture Notes	- <i>Quiz #8</i> – Covering Genuine Righteousness (Part 2) & McKnight pp. 169-202 - <i>HW</i> – Paragraph of Application on Genuine Righteousness - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses

11/19/25	Topic: Social Righteousness (6:19-7:12) – Part 2	- Matthew 6:19-7:12 - McKnight (pp. 226-255) - Lecture Notes	- Quiz #9 – Covering Social Righteousness (Part 1) & McKnight pp. 203-225 - 2-3 Scripture Memory Verses
11/26/25	Thanksgiving Break		
12/3/25	Topic: Conclusion of the Sermon (7:13-28)	- Matthew 7:13-28 - McKnight (pp. 256-277) - Lecture Notes	- Quiz #10 – Covering Social Righteousness (Part 2) & McKnight pp. 226-255 - HW – Paragraph of Application on Social Righteousness - Scripture Memory Project Due
12/10/25	Final Review & Final Exam/ Final Paper		- Final Exam – Cumulative - HW – Paragraph of Application on the Conclusion to the Sermon

Late Policy:

Assignments are expected to be submitted prior to the due date. If there are extraordinary circumstances outside of the student’s control, they may request an extension from the teaching staff.

Additionally, it is often the case that due to any number of other circumstances, a student finds that they are unable to adequately complete a given assignment. In such cases, the student is welcome to submit the assignment after the due date, up to the end of the semester; however, a late penalty will be given for such a late assignment. The standard late penalty is a 20% flat reduction in grade for the given assignment. This late penalty is meant to penalize late submissions and encourage timeliness, while still allowing the student to still finish the given assignment to the best of their ability even if they are unable to complete the assignment for some time due to any extended circumstances.

This late policy is subject to instructor discretion. The 20% late penalty policy is intended to allow for unique or difficult but not extraordinary circumstances. Any student who abuses this policy, per the instructor's discretion, is liable to have this policy revoked and the grade revert to either a zero or that based on any submission prior to the due date.

Appendix: How to set up your Canvas Account

This course will use the free version of Canvas. This means that you will be able to set up a Canvas account with your regular email and will be able to access the course on Canvas with a simple course invitation sent to your email. Please perform the following steps to set up your Canvas account:

- Check your email for a course invitation to Canvas.
- Click the “Get Started” button, which should redirect you to a Canvas page.
- Accept the course invitation. Upon accepting, it should redirect you to a page that will allow you to either set up a new Canvas account or link a current Canvas account.
- If you do not already have a free Canvas account, proceed to create a new account. To create a new account, it will set your login to be your email, you simply need to set your password and accurate time zone.

Your new account should be all set. To log in to Canvas in the future, go to the following URL:

<https://canvas.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Use your email and password to log in. Then click on your Bible 207 course.

To use the mobile Canvas app, you’ll want to download the Canvas app. Upon downloading and opening the app for the first time, it will prompt you to “Find my School.” Select this option and put in “Free Canvas Accounts.” Select this option and proceed to log in with your email and password associated with your free Canvas account.

Appendix: How to submit assignments on Canvas

From the course’s Canvas home page, navigate to the assignments tab. Select the specific assignment from the list of assignments. Follow the instructions for the different cases of typed and handwritten submissions.

For typed documents:

- Click “Start Assignment” (“Submit Assignment” in the mobile app)
- Click “Upload File” (“Files” in the mobile app)
- Click “Choose File” (simply select the file in the mobile app)
- Navigate to the proper file and select it
- You may add any number of files by selecting “Add Another File”

For handwritten documents:

You may use a scanner, scanner app, or simply take photos of your work and submit the files by following the same steps outlined for typed documents. The best option may be to use the Canvas mobile app to submit the assignment and use the scanner feature as an option after selecting “Submit Assignment.”

Please note, you may submit as many times as you would like prior to the assignment deadline. The most recent submission will count as your graded submission.

Appendix: Academic Integrity

Students are expected to hold themselves to a Christian standard of ethics in all matters. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from any forms of plagiarism, cheating, sharing or acquiring any materials that would give a student an unfair advantage, or any dishonest representation of one's work. Below are outlined the consequences for an infringement of academic integrity for a given assignment:

- First offense – A grade of zero is given for the assignment; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file.
- Second offense – A grade of F is assigned for the course; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file. The Dean of Students and/or Registrar will notify faculty of students who incur a second offense in this area.
- Third offense – The professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file and the student may be suspended or dismissed from this institution.

Appendix: Policy on Use of Generative Language Models For Written Assignments

The use of generative language models, such as ChatGPT, is not strictly prohibited and in some cases is very much encouraged as a research and brainstorming tool. However, all written assignments submitted as your own work should reflect your own personal writing. This prohibits copy and paste use of such tools, however, you may feel free to quote such tools provided that you make clear it is a quotation.

In general, you should treat generative language models as equivalent to speaking to another person. You may gain insight from them and be able to improve your value and productivity, but you should not misrepresent someone else's work as your own. These tools may also be treated somewhat like calculators in a math class. You may use them when appropriate and assignments may even assume their use in some ways, but all submitted work must be your own unless specified otherwise.