Some of the goals of our Religious Studies department, which specifically are germane for this course are as follows:

I. They should be able to read and interpret religious texts; and they should be able to read and understand the writings of major thinkers in the various religious traditions.
   A. They should recognize important literary genres, literary styles, and religious motifs.
   B. They should understand the principles of readings texts critically.

II. They should be able to trace the historical development of beliefs and practices.

III. They should have an understanding of ethics, moral theology, and concepts of justice. They should be able to apply ethical principles to contemporary situations.

Since this course is also an upper level common curriculum course, it offers the opportunity for deeper reflection on, and analysis of, values, presuppositions, and the varied disciplinary perspectives involved in understanding the world. This reflective emphasis, along with the centrality of philosophy and religious studies, gives a distinctively Jesuit stamp to the core educational experience at Loyola University New Orleans. This course especially will lead students to read biblical texts in a more critical fashion in order to realize that the popular and literal interpretation of biblical texts often leads people to a patently wrong interpretation and application of the meaning of those texts to modern social and ethical issues. This course will lead students to critically understand biblical texts and their message. In a general way the course will help students develop the skills of critical thinking and reflection, as well as skills of communication, by taking tests and writing essay response on those tests.

LAW IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Laws serve as the basis for society. Individuals are regulated by civil law and directed by religious or moral norms. This course shall investigate the origin of laws and moral norms in the ancient Near East and the Bible. The basis of religious norms will be observed in the biblical transformation of civil laws into moral norms. Students will: 1) appreciate the historical roots of legal and moral traditions, 2) sense the development of legal and moral norms, 3) be sensitive to deeper aspects of biblical mores, 4) gain insight into the application of such norms upon today’s society, 5) have insight into the difference between laws and morality, 6) be a little more educated, and 7) be 3 hours closer to graduation. The outline of the course is: 1) ancient Near Eastern laws, 2) laws in the Old Testament, 3) the Ten Commandments, and 4) ethics in the three monotheistic faiths.
The scope of this course shall be to accomplish the following goals or course objectives: 1) an evaluation of Israel’s religious values and laws and their development, 2) analysis of the literature in the Hebrew Scriptures in their social and historical context; and 3) a study of the impact of this material upon modern religious and social values, especially in regard to moral and legal issues.

Expected student learning outcomes shall be: 1) an understanding of how biblical literature is situated in a cultural and historical context, 2) the ability to understand the message of biblical texts more deeply, and 3) the ability to apply biblical texts to modern ethical and social issues in a more nuanced fashion.

Tests will combine multiple-choice questions with short answer essays. These assignments will meet the requirements of a common curriculum course by enabling the student to engage in both writing, which will encourage critical thinking, and by learning factual information, which will enable a student to intelligently reflect upon the more abstract concepts of the course.

The textbook is Walter Harrelson, *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights*, and copy of the Bible (preferably Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, New International Version, all fairly literal translations). You are permitted to miss three classes for whatever reasons, more than that will require make-up work or result in grade reduction of 1% of the total grade for each class missed. Cheating will result in a zero on that particular assignment, which will severely hurt the overall point total for the course.

A student wishing to receive test accommodation should contact Sarah Smith (865-2990) and provide an official Accommodation Form for testing. A student with a disability should also contact Sarah Smith and provide an official Accommodation form from Disability Services.

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

Class Introduction
Ancient Near Eastern Culture
Hebrew Religious and Social Values
Mesopotamian Law Codes
Hebrew values in comparison
TEST
Biblical Law and legal Administration, Harrelson 3-17
Law Codes in the Bible
Covenant Code, Exodus 21-23
Deuteronomic Laws, Deuteronomy 12-26
Levitical Laws
Prophetic Critique, Amos 1-9, Micah 1-6
TEST
Decalogue Scholarship, Harrelson 19-40
Original Form of Decalogue, Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5
Decalogue—Divine Relations, Harrelson 51-77
Decalogue—Social Structures, Harrelson 78-105
Decalogue—Life: Harrelson, 107-122
Decalogue—Sexuality, Harrelson 122-133
Decalogue—Property, Harrelson 135-154
Christian reinterpretation, Harrelson 157-193
TEST
Rabbinic views of Law
Jesus' views, Matthew 5-7
Paul's view of Law
Islamic Law
TEST