RELIGION, CONFLICT, AND PEACE PROCESSES

NB: This syllabus assumes a 10-unit course (quarter length) with each unit divided into two 75-minute classes

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Course Overview

Course Description

The "war on terrorism," the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the seemingly interminable and intractable religious-ethnic-nationalist conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere have contributed to a dramatic reexamination of the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding, as well as the moral norms governing the role of military force.

This course explores the role of religion, ethics, and culture in conflict and peacebuilding. In doing so, it brings together two topics that are often addressed separately in the literature and in curricula: religious and philosophical perspectives on the ethics of the use of force, and the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding. In showing how the two topics are intimately related, this course also shows how theological and ethical perspectives interact with those of sociology of religion, political science and religious studies. This course takes theory seriously, yet also emphasizes the importance of applied ethics and lived religion.

The first part of the course provides a general framework for assessing the nature and causes of contemporary conflicts; the role of religion in world affairs; the major normative approaches to the use of force; and the role of religion and religious norms in promoting and preventing conflict. The second part then addresses particular jus ad bellum, jus in bello, and jus post bellum issues, including terrorism, preventive war, humanitarian intervention, the conduct of war, and post-war reconciliation. The course then moves to an examination of theories of the role of religion in peacebuilding, including the role of women, before considering specific types of religious peacebuilding. In exploring these topics, the course considers a range of recent or current cases, from the interventions in Iraq to the role of religion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Course Objectives

1. To acquire theoretical knowledge about questions of religion, ethics and war, as well as the role of religion in religio-ethnic national conflicts and in peacebuilding more broadly;
2. To learn to link specific issues and cases to broader theoretical questions;
3. To effectively communicate ideas in a variety of oral and written forms.

Course Readings

The course draws on a wide range of authors, relying principally on journal articles that preferably will be placed on-line, but could also be distributed in a course pack. They are divided between Required and Supplemental Readings, so that the amount of reading can easily be adjusted as needed or readings can easily be substituted for each other.
Course Schedule

UNIT 1. What is War and Conflict

Note: Professors could choose two of the following four units

Class 1. The "realities" of war and its moral ambiguity

Required Reading:


Supplemental Reading:


Class 2. The varieties of contemporary conflicts and their causes

Required Reading:


Supplemental Reading:

David P. Barash, ed., Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2010): 9-46 (Freud (psychiatry), Lorenz (biology), Mead (anthropology), Hedges (journalism), Sumner (sociology), Janis (social psychology), Howard (history), Galtung (economics) on causes of war)


Class 3. Varieties and causes of violence

Required Reading:


Supplemental Reading:


Michael Ignatieff, "The Narcissism of Minor Differences"

Mary Kaldor, New and Old Wars, "Introduction".

Media Suggestion:

Films:

The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo

The Battle of Algiers

Class 4. What is peacebuilding?

Required Reading:


Jackie Smith, "Economic Globalization and Strategic Peacebuilding", pp.247-269


Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller, "Introduction: Rethinking Peace and Justice Conceptually", pp.1-11

Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller, "The Concept of a Just Peace, or Achieving Peace Through Recognition, Renouncement, and Rule", pp. 195-215

Supplemental Reading:


Lisa Schirch, The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding

UNIT 2. Defining Religion
Class 1. What is Religion? What is secularism?

Required Reading [1]:


Jose Casanova, Public Religion in the Modern World, pp. 3-66

Supplemental Reading:

Talal Asad, Formations of the Secular, pp. 181-201

Casanova, "Secularization Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad" in David Scott & Charles Hirschkind, eds. Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors

Casanova, "Public Religion Revisited"

Alternate Readings:

David Little, "Belief, Ethnicity, and Nationalism," Nationalism and Ethnic Politics I,2 (March, April 1995)

Anthony Marx, Faith in Nation

Anthony Smith, Chosen Peoples


Class 2. Religion in International Relations

Required Reading:

Daniel Philpott, Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations, pp. 73-150

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, The Politics of Secularism in International Relations: chapters 1,2,4,8,9

Supplemental Reading:


Alternate Readings:

UNIT 3. Varieties of Ethical Approaches

Class 1. Deontological and consequentialist ethics: Is torture really wrong?

**Required Reading:**


Constitution Against Torture, arts 1-5

**Supplemental Reading:**


**Media Suggestions:**

Stanford Prison Experiment website ([http://www.prisonexp.org/](http://www.prisonexp.org/)) provides slides and videos of famous experiment about torture and abuse of prisoners

Class 2. Conceptions of international order and implications for war and peace

**Required Reading:**

*Just and Unjust Wars*: 51-73

Nye, *Nuclear Ethics*, 27-41

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, pp. 185-192 (paras 428-443)


**Supplemental Reading:**


Media suggestions:
"Breaker" Morant (1980): The final argument of the defense lawyer gives an eloquent and concise argument for why "war is hell" and normal moral rules should not apply

**UNIT 4. Religion, Conflict and the Use of Force**

**Class 1. Religion and Conflict: Does religion cause conflict?**

**Required Reading:**

Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*

James D. Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*

Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War"


"The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist Critique"/ Roy Mottahedeh

William Cavanaugh, "Does Religion Cause Violence?" *Harvard Theological Review*

David Little, "In Review: Required Reading: A Double-Edged Dilemma" *Harvard Divinity Bulletin 2007*

**Supplemental Reading:**


**Alternative Reading: religion, conflict the politics of multiculturalism**


**Media Suggestions:**

Film: The Last Valley (1971) on wars of religion

**Class 2. Just war: Muslim, Jewish, Christian perspectives**

**Required Reading:**


"The Development of the Just War Tradition," (1-13) and "Survey of Roman Catholic Teachings on War and Peace" (15-38) in Catholic Perspectives on Peace and War, T. Massaro & T. Shannon, eds (Sheed & Ward, 2003)

Supplemental Reading:

John Kelsay, Arguing the Just War in Islam (Harvard Press, 2007)


Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, pp. 213-20 (paras 488-505)


UNIT 5. The Jus Ad Bellum: Justice and the Resort to War

Class 1. Preemptive and preventative war: Iraq War 2003

Required Reading:


Just and Unjust Wars: Preface to SECOND edition, xi-xvii, xxii-xxiii

Supplemental Reading:


Archbishop Rowan Williams, "Weaknesses and Moral Inconsistency led us to War." *The Times*, March 25, 2003


**Media Suggestions:**

Video, Standoff in the Irish Sea (found readily on You Tube)


**Class 2. Humanitarian intervention**

**Required Reading:**

*Just and Unjust Wars*: xi-xvi (3RD ed), 101-108


**Supplemental Reading:**


**Media suggestions:**

Film: *Hotel Rwanda* (scene of foreigners leaving the hotel)

**UNIT 6. Jus in Bello: Fighting Wars Justly**

**Class 1. Protecting civilians in war: supreme emergency**

**Required Reading:**

Just and Unjust Wars: 251-268


Supplemental Reading:


Media Suggestions:

Documentary footage of carpet bombing of British, Japanese, and German cities is readily available through You Tube and other web sources.

Video: Killing of Reuters reporters 2007 http://www.pdnpulse.com/2010/04/leaked-milistary-video-shows-killing-of...

Class 2. Legitimate and illegitimate weapons: nuclear weapons

Required Reading:

Just and Unjust Wars: 269-283


Supplemental Reading:

Just and Unjust Wars: 251-283


Int'l Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on nuclear weapons (1996): paras 85-105


UNIT 7. Between War and Peace

Class 1. Jus Post Bellum: Occupation and the Ethics of Exit

Required Reading:

"Introduction," in Ethics and International Affairs 23:2 (Summer 2009): 115-120

Presbyterian Church, USA, "To Repent, to Restore, to Rebuild, and to Reconcile: A Study Paper on Lessons Learned and Directions Toward Peace in Iraq: 1-23 (http://oga.pcusa.org/publications/iraq_on_building_peace.pdf)

Supplemental Reading:


Transcript (or video) of Kroc/Fordham Conference (9/18/07, with Walzer, Hashmi, Powers), "Exit or No Exit" at http://kroc.nd.edu/events/07fordhamevent.shtml


Class 2. An ethics of war and an ethics of peacebuilding

Required Reading:


Nigel Biggar, "Making Peace or Doing Justice: Must We Choose?" Rothberg and Thompson, eds.

Supplemental Reading:


UNIT 8. Theorizing About Religion and Peacebuilding

Class 1. The ambivalence of the sacred: Implications for the praxis of religious peacebuilding

Required Reading:

Scott Appleby, The Ambivalence of the Sacred


Mohammed Abu Nimer Unity in Diversity Chapter Two "Interfaith Dialogue: Basic Concepts and Approaches" & chapter 3: "Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine"

Gerard F. Powers, "Religion and Peacebuilding" in Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World

Supplemental Reading:


Marc Gopin, Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religion, Violence, and Peacebuilding

Class 2. Women, Agency and Conflict Transformation

Required Reading:

Monique Skidmore and Patricia Lawrence, eds. Women and the Contested State: Religion, Violence, and Agency in South and Southeast Asia:

  o Peter van der Veer, "Contesting Traditions: Religion and Violence in South Asia";
  o Editors," Resisting Terror: Women, Agency, and the Micropolitics of Sri Lankan Life"
  o Patricia Lawrence, "The Watch of Tamil Women: Women's Acts in a Transitional Warscape";
  o Alexandra Argenti-Pillen, "Mothers and Wives of the Disappeared in Southern Sri Lanka: Fragmented Geographies of Moral Discomfort"
  o Mangalika de Silva, "The Other Body and the Body Politic: Contingency and Dissonance in Narratives of Violence"

Supplemental Reading:

Dorothy Smith, "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology" in Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber & Michele Vauser, eds. Feminist Perspectives on Social Research, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)
UNIT 9. Cases of Religious Peacebuilding

Class 1. Speaking and acting across cultural terrains

Required Reading:

Kevin Avruch, *Culture & Conflict Resolution* (selections)

John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*, (Syracuse University Press, 1995)

Supplemental Reading:

John Paul Lederach, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation* (selections)

Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*:

- "Finding Ritual on a Map of Peacebuilding"
- "Forming and Transforming Identities"
- "Forming and Transforming Relationships"
- "Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws: Designing Peacebuilding Rituals"

Class 2. Global and Transnational Religious Peacebuilding

*Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, Thomas Banchoff, ed.:

- Scott Appleby, "Building Sustainable Peace: The Roles of Local and Transnational Religious Actors"
- Leslie Vinjamuri and Aaron P. Boesenecker, "Religious Actors and Transitional Justice"
- Katherine Marshall, "Religion and Global Development: Intersecting Paths"
- Thomas Michel, S.J., "Peaceful Movements in the Muslim World"
- Recommended: John O. Voll, "Trans-state Muslim Movements and Militant Extremists in an Era of Soft Power"


- John Paul Lederach, "The Long Journey Back to Humanity: Catholic Peacebuilding with Armed Actors"
- W. Headley & R. Neufeldt "Catholic Relief Services: Catholic Peacebuilding in Practice"
- Thomas Michel, "Catholic Approaches to Inter-religious Peacebuilding: Lessons from Indonesia's 'Sad Years'"

UNIT 10. Cases of Religious Peacebuilding
Class 1. Hermeneutics

From Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions, Daniel Smith-Christopher, ed.: 

- Jeremy Milgrom, "Let Your Love for Me Vanquish your Hatred for Him"
- Christopher Queen, "The Peace Wheel: Nonviolent Activism in the Buddhist Tradition"
- Rabia Terri Harris, "Nonviolence in Islam: The Alternative Community Tradition"
- Donald Swearer "Reflections on Nonviolence and Religion"

From Religion and Peacebuilding, Coward & Smith, eds.: 

- Eva Neumaier, "Missed Opportunities: Buddhism and the Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka"
- Rajmohan Gandhi, "Hinduism and Peacebuilding," 45-68;
- Frederick M. Denny, "Islam and Peacebuilding: Continuities and Transitions"

Class 2. Praxis

From David Little (ed), Peacemakers in Action: 

- Introduction
- Chapter 2: "Peasant Power: Jose Innocencio Alas"
- Chapter 4: "Would You Shoot Me, You Idiot?" Friar Ivo Markovic"
- Chapter 6: "The Elder: Ephraim Isaac"
- Chapter 7: "The Power of Ritual: The Rev. Dr. William Lowrey"
- Chapter 12: "Underground Woman: Sakena Yacoobi and the Afghan Institute of Learning"
- Conclusion: "Religion, Violent Conflict, and Peacemaking"

Supplemental Reading:


SUPPLEMENTAL UNITS

SUPPLEMENT FOR UNIT 1.

Class 1. Non-violence: Theory and Practice

Required Readings.


Fahey & Armstrong, eds, A Peace Reader: 171-204 (passages from Gandhi, Erasmus, Fox, Hugo, Tolstoy, Niebuhr)

Supplemental Readings:

Ackerman and Duvall, A Force More Powerful: 1-9, 457-505 (lessons from cases)

John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*

Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (major historical writings)


**Media Suggestions:**

PBS Documentary, "A Force More Powerful" (see, eg, the Danish resistance to Nazi occupation)

**Class 2. Conscientious objection and selective conscientious objection**

**Required Reading:**


- K. Greenawalt, "Accommodation to Selective Conscientious Objection: How and Why"
- G. Flynn, "Selective Service and the Conscientious Objector"
- J. Langan, "The Good of Selective CO"

Carroll, *Behind the Lines*: 192-94

**Supplemental Reading:**


**Media Suggestions:**


**SUPPLEMENT FOR UNIT 2. Applying the Just War Tradition**

**Class 1. Just war tradition and the right to self-defense: the Gulf War (1991)**

**Required Reading:**


*Just and Unjust Wars*: Preface to SECOND edition, xi-xvii, xxii-xxiii
Wikipedia article on "Gulf War" and related articles on "Origins" and "Diplomacy and Operation Desert Storm" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War

Supplemental Readings:


G. Powers, "The Catholic Bishops and the Gulf War," *Theology and Public Policy* (Fall 1992)


**Class 2. Terrorism**

Required Reading:


Supplemental Readings:


**SUPPLEMENT FOR UNIT 3. The Possibilities**

**Class 1: Religion, Nationalism and Self-determination**

Required Reading:

A. Buchanan, "Secession, state breakdown, and humanitarian intervention," in *Ethics and Foreign Intervention* (2003): 189-211

Supplemental Reading:


**Class 2. Religion, peace processes, and cycles of conflict [2]**
Required reading:


Shapiro, I., "Theories of Change in Conflict Interventions". In Fitzduff, M. & Stout, C. *Psychological Approaches to War, Conflict Resolution and Peace* (Praeger Press, 2006).


Supplemental Reading:


SUPPLEMENT FOR UNIT 4. Religion, Conflict and the Use of Force

Class 1. Religion and Conflict: Comparative Analysis & Case Studies

Required Reading:

David Little, "Belief, Ethnicity, and Nationalism," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* I,2 (March, April 1995)[3]


Supplemental Reading:

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, "Bosnia: Ethno-Religious Nationalisms in Conflict" [http://repository.berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/BosniaConflictCaseStudy.pdf](http://repository.berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/BosniaConflictCaseStudy.pdf)


**SUPPLEMENT FOR UNIT 10.**

**Class 2: Case Study Israel/Palestine**

Jean Zaru, *Occupied with Nonviolence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks*


Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion can Bring Peace to the Middle East*


**ASSIGNMENTS**

15% **Class participation and attendance**: The success of this seminar depends on active, respectful, and informed class participation by all of us. In order to facilitate discussion, you will be asked, periodically, to prepare and hand in one- or two-paragraph responses to questions handed out prior to class. These responses will not be graded, but they will, among other things, allow those of you who are more reticent about speaking in class to demonstrate that you have reflected on the readings.

35% **Case Study Research Project**: 15 page research paper on a topic of your choice (with approval of professor)

Working with 1 or 2 other students, analyze a case or an issue pertaining to war and peace that shows how a particular religious tradition brings together its ideals (theology, ethics, spirituality), its institutional capacity, and its ability to mobilize people to manage conflict and promote peace. As a *research project*, your paper should reflect a close reading of the required readings for the class AND at least ten other books or *academic* articles, and it should conform to *standard footnoting and bibliographical styles used in your discipline*. In order to enhance the educational value of this project, I encourage students to consider choosing their topic in consultation with organizations in Washington, New York or elsewhere who could benefit from a well-researched and well-written paper on a particular topic.

25% **2 Short Papers Maximum 3 pages double-spaced**

Paper #1: Write a Statement for a religious leader on the morality of unilateral U.S. military intervention against the Lord's Resistance Army, which has been terrorizing civilians in Uganda, Sudan, and Congo

Paper #2: Write a paper exploring how theoretical conversations concerning the limitations of the categories of the 'religious' and the 'secular' challenge your own research project.

25% **Class Presentations with Handouts:**

*NewsHour Interview*. Two students at a time will participate in a televised panel discussion/debate that addresses issues related to the required readings for a particular class (see handout). The panel discussion will be filmed for your benefit. It will follow a News Hour format, with the professor as interviewer/
moderator. To help you prepare for this interview, please do talking points of no more than 1-page single-spaced. You will be graded on both the presentation and the talking points.

Class Presentation. Two students at a time will be responsible for working together to start the discussion for one class in the second half of the semester. That will entail a 10-15-minute presentation on one or two key issues raised by that day’s readings. You might want to critique one of the main points of an author’s arguments or propose an approach to the topic of that day not found in that day’s readings - but, if you choose to do the latter, you must refer to the readings and explain why they are lacking. Your presentation should NOT JUST SUMMARIZE THE READINGS, but should stimulate a vigorous discussion in class by raising the most interesting/ controversial aspects of the readings. Feel free to draw on the supplemental readings, as well as the required readings. In addition to your oral presentation, please send the class Talking Points of no more than 1-page single spaced.

Ungraded

In-Class Simulation (for end of first half of semester): As a way to pull together disparate themes of the course, one class could be devoted to an in-class simulation of an inter-religious dialogue on Shell’s Little War, a hypothetical case of civil war over oil in Nigeria. Groups of 2-4 students each represent a particular religious tradition. Given their ethical approach to the use of force and their understanding of the faith-based peacebuilding assets at their disposal, how would they contribute to the dialogue?

[1] There are important and interesting thematic overlaps here with Scott Hibbard's modules "Religion, the State and Governance in the 21st Century", especially the "Theory" section.

[2] Here there are important overlaps with Mari Fitzduff's modules. See "Religion and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Syllabus".

[3] This article is also assigned for an alternate class in Unit 2.