EMT 3672 / 6672: Theology, Violence, and Peace
Fall 2019

DRAFT – FINAL SYLLABUS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED DURING THE FIRST CLASS

Wednesday: 11:00-1:00 pm

Instructor: Tom Reynolds (tom.reynolds@utoronto.ca)
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People] never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.
Blaise Pascal

Good people will do good things. Bad people will do bad things. But for good people to do bad things, that takes religion.
Steven Weinberg

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among religions without dialogue between the religions.
Hans Küng

Course Description

This course explores the complex relationship between theological reflection and violence and peace, particularly in Christian traditions. Theories of violence and non-violence as well as case studies from the past and present will provide the means to investigate the ways faith-based claims justify or promote enmity and hostility and/or hospitality and peacemaking in spiritual/theological practice. Attention is given to violence/peace in connection with theologies of revelation; just war and pacifist traditions; gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and disability; histories of colonization; interfaith relations (particularly Abrahamic); and the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Required Course Texts

• Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. Violence and Theology. Abingdon Press, 2006
Other required and recommended reading will be available on reserve in the Emmanuel College library or distributed online via Quercus.

Intended Learning Outcomes:
--The student completing this course will be able to:
1. Identify scriptural sources of violence and peace.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the character of theological reflection as practice oriented.
3. Indicate a critical awareness of how theology can function to legitimate hostility toward others and/or sanction violent conflict (e.g., colonialism, misogyny, racism, anti-Semitism, Just War Theory, etc.).
4. Recognize salient theological themes related to peace and explain their role in promoting peaceful practices and right relations.
5. Show facility in analyzing the roots and consequences of violence and peace in various socio-political contexts.
7. Recognize sources of violence in oneself and one’s community.
8. Articulate personal/spiritual habits of peace in relation to oneself and others.
9. Recognize communal practices of conflict resolution and peace making.
10. Exhibit the capacity to participate as a citizen in a theological community:
    - displaying empathetic and critical thinking in reading, speaking, and writing…
    - demonstrating initiative in research and critical appraisal of sources used…
    - communicating responsibly, carefully, and clearly…
    - framing and developing theological arguments supported with evidence…
    - showing an awareness of oneself as an interpreter…
    - exhibiting tolerance for ambiguity while remaining genuinely committed

Class-Time Format

The basic arrangement of time in class will be that of lecture-presentation-discussion. Mainly, the course will operate in a seminar format, oriented toward discussing texts and themes in an interactive and open environment. Lectures will be offered to introduce, help clarify, and expand the context and substance of topics/materials. Class presentations from students will provide a way to introduce the readings and ask key questions to generate discussion (see Course Requirements, below, for more information).
Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Class Attendance and Participation………………………… 15%
2. Class Presentation……………………………………………… 20%
3. Book Analysis…………………………………………………… 25%
4. Case Study / Research Paper…………………………………… 40%

1. Regular attendance and informed participation in class is an important part of the learning experience. More than two absences may result in loss of course credit. Because discussion is a key part of the class, nurturing an engagement with course materials, your questions and comments are valued and will be a factor in the overall grade. Readings for each class will be discussed on the basis of student questions and classroom interaction in response to presentations and/or lectures. To this end, it is expected that you will have done the readings, critically reflected upon them, and be prepared to contribute substantively. Careful reading is fundamental to informed participation, so journaling or note taking while reading is encouraged.

2. Class Presentation. At each class session, one or two students, by pre-arrangement with the instructor, will initiate discussion by referring to salient points in the week’s reading assignments, then raising two or three questions to generate conversation over important issues/themes. BD students should address the class for approximately 10 minutes (or 15 minutes, total, if two students present). Graduate students should prepare a more substantive presentation, addressing key elements in the readings and highlighting salient implications, for approximately 15 minutes.

3. Book Assessment (5 pages for BD students, and 8 pages for Graduate students). This assignment, due no later than October 20th, asks students to select a text from the list to be provided by the instructor and analyze its salient argument(s) or theme(s), identifying the context for the writing and assessing the text’s relevance and credibility.
   • Basic Degree students are invited to engage the book in a ‘reflective style’ that draws from personal experience or vision of ministry/spiritual leadership, and draws out important implications.
   • Graduate students are invited to adopt a critical perspective that engages the book’s argument and assesses its merit.

4. Case Study / Research Paper (12-15 pages for BD students, and 20-25 pages for graduate students). This paper, due no later than December 14th at 4:00pm, should focus on a case study, figure(s), topic, or movement germane to the course and investigate, analyze, and appraise its implications. The assignment is both integrative and research oriented; it offers the flexibility to research a particular case, topic or issue of interest to the student, while also requiring the student to assess the relevance of the research to some of the materials read/discussed during the semester, drawing their own conclusions in the process.
Paper assignments should be clearly organized, well-documented, critical in scope, substantive in analysis and in assessing materials, careful in formulating evaluative claims, and prudent in applications. Excellent papers will not simply ‘state’ but ‘show’ their case, based upon an informed consideration of what is at stake. Excellent papers will demonstrate creative insight and provide reasons for claims, backing up these reasons with solid evidence while also noting the ranges of uncertainty and/or ambiguity in referencing evidence, noting potential counter arguments.

Papers should observe Emmanuel College academic regulations and policies, and note the “Other Qualities Expected of Students” in “The T.S.T. Grading Scale Used at Emmanuel College” for criteria for evaluation of assignments (found in 2008-09 edition of Handbook of Information for Basic Degree Students). More information about writing papers can be found at the web site “Writing at the University of Toronto” at www.utoronto.ca/writing/.

Specific Policies

- **Grading:** Grades will follow the TST grading scheme. See TST web site or BD Handbook.

- **Email assignments:** Emailed assignments will **not** be accepted except in rare cases with the prior permission of the instructor

- **Accessibility and disability policy:**
  Students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Office as soon as possible. It takes time to put disability related accommodations in place. The sooner you meet with a Disability Counselor at Accessibility Services, the quicker they can assist you to achieving your learning goals in this course. See the UT web site: http://www.sa.utoronto.ca/details.php?wscid=4.
--COURSE SCHEDULE--

Week One / September 11: Introductions -- No readings.

Week Two / September 18: Theology and Violence?
  • Required Reading:
    - Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. *Violence and Theology*, ch. 1
    - Lefebure, Leo D. *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), ch. 1 (online)
    - Steffen, Lloyd. *Holy War, Just War*, ch. 1
  • Recommended Reading:
    - Lefebure, Leo D. *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence*, ch. 2
    - Sacks, Rabbi Jonathan. *Not In God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (New York: Schocken Books, 2015), ch 1

Week Three / September 25: Religion—Life Giving and Destructive?
  - Steffen, Lloyd. *Holy War, Just War*, chs. 2-3
  • Recommended Reading:
    - Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney Lawrence Petersen (eds.). *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, chs. 4-5

Week Four / October 2: Violence in Biblical and Cultural Narratives
  • Required Reading:
    - Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. *Violence and Theology*, chs. 2-4
    - Lefebure, Leo D. *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence*, ch. 3
  • Recommended Reading:

Week Five / October 9: **Theorizing Links between Theology and Violence**

- **Required Reading:**

- **Recommended Reading:**
  - Girard, René. The Girard Reader, chs. 3, 8

Week Six / October 16: **Christian Theology and Violence – Two Cases: Anti-Semitism and the Doctrine of Discovery**

- **Required Reading:**

- **Recommended Reading:**
  - Miller, et. al., Discovering Indigenous Lands, ch. 4, “The Doctrine of Discovery in Canada”
  - Williams Jr., Robert A., Savage Anxieties: The Invention of Western Civilization, Introduction, chs. 8, 10 and 12

October 21-25: Reading Week

Week Seven / October 30: **Pacifism and Non-Violent Resistance**

- **Required Reading:**
  - Steffen, Lloyd. Holy War, Just War, chs. 4, 7
  - King Jr., Martin Luther. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (online)
  - Gandhi, Mohandas K., selections (online) http://gandhinamibhavan.org/gandhiphilosophy/philosophy_nonviolence_nonviolence.htm

- **Recommended Reading:**

Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney Lawrence Petersen (eds.). *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ch. 15


Week Eight / November 6: **Theology toward Peace (1)**

- **Required Reading:**

- **Recommended Reading:**

Week Nine / November 13: **Theology toward Peace (2)**

- **Required Reading:**

- **Recommended Reading:**

Week Ten / November 20: **Interreligious Dialogue toward Peace**

Guest Speaker: Paul Hutchinson

- **Required Reading:**
  - Thistlethewaite, Introduction and chs. 1-3

- **Recommended Reading:**
  - Lefebure, Leo D. *Revelation, the Religions, and Violence*, chs. 6-8
  - Reynolds, Thomas. “Toward a Wider Hospitality: Rethinking Love of Neighbour

Week Eleven / November 27: **Nurturing Interreligious Dialogue**

- **Required Reading:**
  - Thistlethwaite, chs. 4, 5, 6, 10
  - Barnett, Victoria. “Beyond Complicity: The Challenges for Christianity after the Holocaust,” in *Must Christianity be Violent*, ch. 6 (online)

- **Recommended Reading:**
  - McDaniel, Jay. *Gandhi’s Hope: Learning from Other Religions as a Path to Peace*

Week Twelve / December 4: **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

- **Required Reading:**
  - Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney Lawrence Petersen (eds.). *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, chs. 1, 2, 8, 10, 13, 18
  - Ransom, Lori and Mark MacDonald, “Systematic Evil and the Church: How does a Church Repent?” *Forum Mission* 10/2014 (online)
  - TRC Report: *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation* (113-26) (online)

- **Recommended Reading:**
  - De Gruchy, John W. *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*
  - Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools, *Reflections to Spark Conversation on Christian Theology* (online)
Select Bibliography


______. *God of Peace: Toward a Theology of Non-violence*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005


World Council of Churches, 2005.


_____.*Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and*