Course Syllabus:

Religious Studies 393A: Religion and Violence

CRN 87503

Semester: Fall 2016

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Dr. Jane Donovan

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Office Hours: MWF 9:15 to 10:00 a.m.; W 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

Course Schedule: MWF 10:30 to 11:20 a.m.

Location: 225 Brooks Hall

Course Objectives:

If religion is the human response to the sacred, then how and why does religion produce violence? When and how does religion justify the use of violence? Must religion inevitably express itself by the use of violence? The course will consider these and other questions by examining history, scripture, and theology, as well as the just war tradition, as they relate to violence and non-violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Following active participation in this course, students will be able to:

o synthesize concepts from significant texts, people, events, and ideas that have shaped the development of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim understandings of the appropriate uses of violence and warfare, including the just war tradition.

o analyze ways in which The Crusades impacted the development of Christian and Muslim understandings of the purposes and appropriate uses of violence.

o analyze significant strands of Christian non-violence and how those strands serve as a critique of Christian and Jewish uses of violence.

o apply methods of critical analysis and principles of academic methodology. This learning outcome will be pursued by writing textual analysis papers.

Method of Instruction:

The instructional methods for this course will include lectures, classroom discussion, in-class activities, and video.

Communication:

I will communicate with the entire class via the MIX system. If your account is not activated, please activate it now. You may communicate with me by telephone or email and I will respond promptly. If there are questions that apply to all members of the class, I will distribute the answers via the MIX system.

Required Course Texts:

1. *The Bible*. NRSV or New Oxford versions preferred. You will need a Bible that includes

2 Maccabees

2. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

3. John Howard Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, ed. Theodore J.

Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2009).

4. Additional readings are available on electronic reserve or on-line.

Course Grade:

Your grade will be based on successful completion of the following requirements:

1. Vocabulary Exam, Friday, September 2 20%

2. Midrash paper, due Friday, September 30 20%

3. Your own reading project on The Crusades, due Friday, October 14 20%

4. In-class Exam, Friday, November 4: what did the Crusades accomplish? 20%

5. Take home final exam, due no later than Tuesday, December 13 at 2 p.m. 20%

**Vocabulary Exam**, Friday, September 2: The exam will be based on a list of terms that is posted to the eCampus page for this class. Testing materials will be provided. This exam will make up 20% of your grade.

**Midrash Paper**, Friday, September 30: Rewrite one of the biblical stories of violence from the perspective of the victim. A sample Midrash essay is posted to the eCampus page for this course (Renita Weems, “My Daughters, Myself”) to help you understand the nature of the assignment. Your paper must be 6 pages long. You must choose one of these characters to write about:

Isaac or Ismail Jephthah’s daughter

an Egyptian soldier (from Exodus) a virgin of Jabesh-Gilead

Rahab’s next-door neighbor Onesimus

You must submit both a paper copy and via turnitin.com. This will make up 20% of your grade.

**Your Own Reading Project.**

Articles must be posted by Wednesday, October 5. Summaries are due Friday, October 14.

You must post at least one scholarly journal article about The Crusades to the eCampus page for this course. Your article(s) must be posted NO LATER THAN Wednesday, October 5. You must read your own article, plus two other articles submitted by your classmates, and provide brief summaries of all 3 articles. Your summaries must be at least 250 words on each article. You must submit both a paper copy and via turnitin.com. This will make up 20% of your grade.

**In-Class Exam**, Friday, November 4: What did The Crusades actually accomplish? You will be expected to write a full summary and review of the causes, major events, and results (both ***short-term and long-term)*** of The Crusades, from both the Christian and Muslim perspectives. Testing materials will be provided. This will make up 20% of your grade.

**Take home Final Exam**, due no later than Tuesday, December 13 at 2:00 p.m.

Choose two theologies of non-violence that we have discussed in class (Jesus, early church, Anabaptists, Quakers, Howard Thurman, Vietnam War protesters).

Answer two questions about those theologies. Each answer should be a 5-page essay.

Question 1: What would Augustine/Aquinas/Vitoria say about these two theologies of non-violence? How would Augustine/Aquinas/Vitoria analyze the non-violent theories? Would they believe that Christian non-violence is possible or realistic in a sinful world?

Question 2: What would Niebuhr say about these two theologies of non-violence? How does Niebuhr’s critique of pacifism apply to them? Does it apply equally to both of the non-violent systems you are discussing? Or does it undercut one type more than the other?

***You must choose different theologies of non-violence for the two essays.*** (Example: Jesus and the Anabaptists for question 1; Howard Thurman and Vietnam War protesters for question 2, or any other combination of the non-violent theologies). This will make up 20% of your grade.

Format of your papers:

All papers (the Midrash paper, the article summaries, and the final exam essays) MUST be submitted in both paper copy and via Turnitin.com, which is accessed through the eCampus page for this class.

Paper copies must have a cover page. Papers must be double-spaced (and NO MORE THAN double-spaced), with 1 inch margins on all sides, in 12-point Times Roman or equivalent font. Please number your pages and staple your paper together. Do NOT compromise the length of your paper by putting cover page information on the first page or by using overly generous spacing or font.

Readings:

You should read the texts as assigned BEFORE the lectures. The lectures do not always review the texts; they provide additional information which will be helpful to you in completing the assignments for the course.

Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 90 to 100% B = 80 to 89.9% C = 70 to 79.9%

D = 60 to 69.9% F = less than 60%

Grading Rubric:

An A paper is an outstanding essay which reflects a perceptive and thoughtful response to the assignment. It is clearly and logically reasoned throughout, and will include the writer’s own judgment. It is well-organized with excellent development of its ideas. It conforms to the requirements of the assignment. There will be few grammatical errors or misspellings.

A B paper is a good essay that fulfills the assignment and shows evidence of clear thought and good planning. It contains few critical judgments by the author. It conforms to the requirements of the assignment. The writing is fluent, and there are only minor errors in the mechanics of writing which do not interfere with reading the essay.

A C paper is a satisfactory essay that fulfills the assignment and is adequately developed. The writing is clear and coherent with relatively few errors in usage and mechanics, but the writer fails to demonstrate any particular strength which would distinguish an above-average essay.

A D paper is so poorly organized and written that it does not meet most of the require-ments of the assignment, although there may be evidence that the writer has at least attempted to do the required work. It may have difficulty with presentation of ideas (e.g., lack of a clear thesis, weak organization, poor development of ideas, or inappropriate diction, or poor spelling), be marred by enough errors in the mechanics of writing to seriously distract the reader.

An F paper ignores or shows no understanding of the assignment, no evidence of an attempt to do the assignment, OR evidence of dishonest work by the student, principally the use of ideas or writing which are clearly not the student’s own. Please refer to the West Virginia University Student Conduct Code at http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office\_of\_student\_conduct/

student\_conduct\_code

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required. You are expected to be on time for class. Attendance will be taken. You are permitted 5 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. For every absence beyond 5, your grade will drop by one full letter.

Days of Special Concern: WVU recognizes the diversity of its students and the needs of those who wish to be absent from class to participate in Days of Special Concern, which are listed in the Schedule of Courses. Students should notify the instructor by the end of the second week of classes or prior to the first Day of Special Concern, whichever is earlier, regarding Day of Special Concern observances that will affect their attendance. The instructor will make reasonable accommodation for tests or other assignments that a student misses as a result of observing a Day of Special Concern, but it is your responsibility to make arrangements to make up any missed work.

Participation in official WVU-sponsored activities does NOT count toward the 5 free absences, but you must provide a letter from the professor, coach, band director, or other WVU official who is leading the activity. I maintain the discretion to excuse other unavoidable absences when absolutely necessary. You are granted 5 free absences. Use them wisely.

Class participation is strongly encouraged; it gives you the opportunity to ensure that you understand the concepts and ideas that you will need to incorporate into your papers and exams. It is expected that you will take the exams and turn in the papers at the times specified on the syllabus. If, due to emergency, it is impossible for you to meet the course schedule, it is YOUR responsibility to negotiate a make-up date with the instructor.

Classroom Behavior:

Please make certain that all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off during class. You are expected to pay attention and avoid doing anything that would disrupt the class. Please respect your classmates and your professor.

Academic Integrity Statement:

The integrity of classes offered by WVU solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts that are considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsc.html.> Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me BEFORE the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Accessibility Statement:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the WVU Office of Disability Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>

Class Cancellation Policy:

If weather conditions or other unforeseen problems make it necessary to cancel class, I will notify you by MIX email no later than 9:30 a.m.

Sale of Course Material Statement:

All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other materials provided to students for this course are protected intellectual property. The unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the Campus Student Code.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please read:

You may have been the victim of violence, either physical violence or psychological violence, or both. You may have experienced secondary trauma, meaning that you have witnessed acts of violence or you have had close relationships with persons who have experienced violence and you have been affected by your witness to the consequences of violence. You may have served in combat and you may have strong feelings about the purposes, use, and efficacy of violence, including religious violence. You may have a close relationship with someone who has gone to war and you see the effects of war on your loved one.

If this is the case, you may find some of the material we cover in this class to be disturbing and you may find it difficult to engage with some of this material. Even just reading about violence, especially violence committed in the name of religion, can cause you to question the purpose of life and the goodness of human nature. Please know that I am aware of some of the personal and psychological issues that may arise and the need to treat this material and each of you with care.

If you ever feel that you need to express concerns about the material we cover in this class, or if you find some of our work disturbing, please come and talk with me. I will do everything I can to make this classroom and this course a safe place where we can discuss and process some very hard realities of human life.

Date Assigned Readings

Week One:

Wed, Aug 17: Introduction to the course no readings

Fri Aug 19: What is religion and why does it cause violent conflict? no readings

Week Two

Mon Aug 22: Is violence embedded in religion? Enuma Elish, 4th tablet

available on-line at http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sumer\_anunnaki/esp\_sumer\_annunaki01dd.htm

Wed Aug 24: The Jewish/Christian creation story Genesis 1:1-2:25; Job 38-41; Psalm 104

Fri Aug 26: The problem of human sin Genesis 4:1-26

Week Three

Mon Aug 29: Violence against non-privileged groups 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

Wed Aug 31: David and Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

Fri Sept 2: VOCABULARY EXAM

Week Four:

Mon Sept 5: Labor Day - NO CLASS

Wed Sept 7: Violence against women Judges chapters 11 and 21

Fri Sept 9: The Binding of Isaac Genesis 22:1-19

Week Five:

Mon Sept 12: The Crucifixion Matthew 26:1-27:56; Mark 14:26-15:39; Luke 22:39-23:49

Wed Sept 14: Violence against Creation Genesis 6:1-9:17

Fri Sept 16: The violence of slavery Exodus chapters 1, 5, 7-14

Week Six:

Mon Sept 19: Slavery, continued Exodus chapter 3, Philemon

Wed Sept 21: Slavery, cont John Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Slavery,” available on eReserve

Fri Sept 23: Holy War Juergensmeyer 219-232

Week Seven:

Mon Sept 26: In-class workshop on midrash paper drafts no readings

Wed Sept 28:Holy war, continued no readings

Fri Sept 30: The Conquest of Canaan Joshua, chapters 1-12; Yoder, 321-327

MIDRASH PAPERS DUE

Week Eight

Mon Oct 3: Genocide R.A.Warrior, “Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians,” available on eReserve

Wed Oct 5: The Maccabean Rebellion II Maccabees chapters 6-15

Rosh Hashanah - Day of Special Concern

Fri Oct 7: The Rise of Islam Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-21

Week Nine:

Mon Oct 10: The Crusades your own reading project

Wed Oct 12: The Crusades, continued your own reading project

Yom Kippur - Day of Special Concern

Fri Oct 14: Muslim perspectives on The Crusades your own reading project

READING PROJECT DUE

Week Ten:

Mon Oct 17: Holy War in the Modern World: Northern Ireland Juergensmeyer 3-14, 36-43

Wed Oct 19: Israel and Palestine Juergensmeyer, 45-60

Fri Oct 21: al Qaeda Juergensmeyer, 61-84, 181-189

Week Eleven

Mon Oct 24: ISIS Islamic State’s Creed and Path (available on eReserve)

Wed Oct 26: Jesus and violence Matthew 5; Luke 6:27-36, 12:49-53; John 2:13-22, 13:31-35

Fri Oct 28: Early Christianity Yoder 42-56 and

The Martyrdom of Perpetua, available at http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/tertullian24.html

Week Twelve

Mon Oct 31: The Constantinian Shift Yoder, 57-74, Deuteronomy chapter 20

Wed Nov 2: Augustine and Just War Theory Yoder, 74-104

Fri Nov 4: EXAM: What did The Crusades accomplish?

Week Thirteen

Mon Nov 7: Just war beyond Augustine Thomas Aquinas, “On War,” available on eReserve

Wed Nov 9: The Anabaptists Yoder, 161-195

Fri Nov 11: European Wars of Religion available on eReserve:

Martin Luther, “On Temporal Authority,” and “Against the Murdering and Robbing”

Veterans Day - Day of Special Concern

Week Fourteen:

Mon Nov 14: Quakers in England Yoder, 219-239

Wed Nov 16: Persecution of Quakers in America Yoder, 240-252

Fri Nov 18: Howard Thurman Howard Thurman, “The Discipline of Reconciliation,

Journal of Religion and Health 3:1 (October 1963), 7-26,

available at <http://www.jstor.org/www.libproxy.wvu.edu/stable/27504601>

November 21-25: NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen:

Mon Nov 28: A 20th century Christian martyr:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pages 257-298, from *Ethics*, available on eReserve

Wed Nov 30: Christian protests against the Vietnam War Yoder, 342-345

Fri Dec 2: Reinhold Neibuhr and Christian Realism Yoder, 285-298

Week Sixteen:

Mon Dec 5: Review and preparation for take-home exam

FINAL EXAM papers are due in my office no later than Tuesday, December 13 at 2:00 p.m.