

Religion and Violence (syllabus)  
(3 semester hours, RECU 65033/85033/95033)  
Spring 2013, Brite Divinity School, Harrison 204, Tuesday, 1:00-3:30

**Instructor:** Charles Bellinger [c.bellinger@tcu.edu](mailto:c.bellinger@tcu.edu) 817-257-7668

**Course Description:**

This course explores the highly ambiguous relationship between religious faith and violence. It provides an overview of situations in modern history that are examples of this ambiguous relationship, including terrorism and the responses it provokes. Students are exposed to authors who seek to comprehend violent behavior using explanatory theories. Students are also exposed to theological arguments relating violence and atonement. The goal is to allow students in the course to develop an understanding of various dimensions (ethical, social, psychological, political, and theological) of the relationship between religious faith and intentional actions that result in ending human lives.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to express informed views on the relationship between religious faith and violent behavior in the contemporary world.
2. Students will be able to articulate an understanding of violent behavior that is not only psychological or sociological, but also *theological*.
3. Students will be able to lead religious communities in reflection on these important issues in public theology.

**Instructional Methods:**

Lectures and discussion of assigned texts. There will also be an online discussion component.

**Texts:**

Bellinger, Charles. *The Trinitarian Self: The Key to the Puzzle of Violence*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2008. ISBN: 1556352328 \$22\*

Delsol, Chantal. *The Unlearned Lessons of the Twentieth Century: An Essay on Late Modernity*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2006. ISBN: 1932236473 \$18\*

Heim, Mark. *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. ISBN: 0802832156, \$19\*

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. ISBN: 0520240111, \$21\*

Mitchell, Beverly Eileen. *Plantations and Death Camps: Religion, Ideology, and Human Dignity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009. ISBN: 0800663306, \$29\*

\*these are list prices; books can often be obtained for less through various vendors.

There will also be required readings made available as Internet links or electronic reserves.

**65033 Grading Procedures:**

1. Attendance and class participation, 30% [missing more than one class and not contributing to discussion will negatively impact grade]
2. Five short papers (3-4 pp. each), 30%

3. One final paper (10-12 pp.), 40% [on a topic chosen by the student, in consultation with the instructor]

### 85033/95033 Grading Procedures

The final paper for Th.M., D.Min., and Ph.D. students will be 20-25 pages, on a topic approved by the instructor.

<b>Schedule:</b> (reading assignments should be completed by the date next to which they are listed)				
This syllabus represents current plans that are subject to change. Such changes, communicated by the instructor, are not unusual and should be expected.				
	<b>date</b>	<b>themes</b>	<b>reading assignments</b>	<b>writing assignments</b>
Week 1	Jan. 15	Introduction to Course		
Week 2	Jan. 22	no class	Mitchell, <i>Plantations and Death Camps</i> , 1-66 Montgomery, "Slavery, Human Dignity and Human Rights" <a href="http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rel-viol/JohnWarwickMontgomery-on-slavery.pdf">http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/rel-viol/JohnWarwickMontgomery-on-slavery.pdf</a>	online posts
Week 3	Jan. 29		Mitchell, <i>Plantations and Death Camps</i> , 67-115	3-4p. response to Mitchell
Week 4	Feb. 5	no class	Mark Juergensmeyer, <i>Terror in the Mind of God</i> , ch. 1-6	online posts
Week 5	Feb. 12		Mark Juergensmeyer, <i>Terror in the Mind of God</i> , ch. 7-11  Wm. Cavanaugh, "Does Religion Cause Violence?: Behind the Common Question Lies a Morass of Unclear Thinking." <i>Harvard Divinity Bulletin</i> 35, no. 2 (2007) <a href="http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/bulletin_mag/articles/35-23_cavanaugh.html">http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/bulletin_mag/articles/35-23_cavanaugh.html</a>	3-4p. response to Juergensmeyer
Week 6	Feb. 19	<b>Minister's Week, no class</b>		
Week 7	Feb. 26		Delsol, <i>Unlearned Lessons</i> , 1-106 lecture on Giorgio Agamben	optional online posts
Week 8	March 5		Delsol, <i>Unlearned Lessons</i> , 107-36, 153-202	3-4p. response to Delsol
Week 9	March 12	<b>Spring Break, no class</b>		
Week 10	March 19		Bellinger, <i>The Trinitarian Self</i> , 1-82	
Week 11	March 26	holy week, no class	Mark Heim, <i>Saved from Sacrifice</i> , 1-104	online posts

Week 12	April 2		Bellinger, <i>The Trinitarian Self</i> , 83-156	3-4p. response to Bellinger
Week 13	April 9	no class	Mark Heim, <i>Saved from Sacrifice</i> , 107-215	online posts
Week 14	April 16		Mark Heim, <i>Saved from Sacrifice</i> , 219-329	3-4p. response to Heim
Week 15	April 23		student presentations on papers in progress	
Week 16	April 30	<b>final paper due 10-12 pages</b> ThM 20-25 pages		
		May 11 hooding		

Inclusion Statement:

Brite Divinity School values people of all cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions, with regard to characteristics such as sex, gender, sexual identities, social class, age, and differing abilities. We are committed to promoting a diverse and just environment, in which language and practices support the achievement of inclusion. Brite seeks to remove all barriers to the maintenance and aspirations of its Mission Statement and Non-Discrimination Statement.

Inclusive Language Statement:

Brite Divinity School promotes inclusive language. This includes such matters as language about God, humanity, cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religions, with regard to characteristics such as sex, gender, sexual identities, social class, age, and differing abilities. We are committed to promoting a diverse and just environment for all, in which language and practices encourage inclusion. To this end, Brite will maintain and update as necessary a webpage of resources for current best practices of inclusive language.

Statement on Disability Services:

Brite Divinity School complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact TCU's Coordinator, Student Disabilities Services, located in Sadler Hall 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from Student Disabilities Services, Sadler Hall 1010, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at 817-257-6567.