

The Morality of War

Theo 397 (section 3) – Fall 2009



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Course Description

Against the background of historical debates within the Christian tradition, this course examines circumstances in which military force may be justified and the moral constraints that apply to its conduct. Major attention to concrete case studies will familiarize students with standard just war criteria and develop their capacity to apply them in difficult situations. Students explore emerging debates over questions such as: Who decides whether a war is just? What place does war have in the evolving international system? What prospects has Gandhian nonviolence opened up for transarmament? Is there an obligation for humanitarian intervention even in the absence of national self-interest? Prerequisites: Theology 101 and one 200-level Theology course.

Objectives

1. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view *through...*
 - *close reading of texts – both historical texts that continue to influence Christian moral reflection on war, and contemporary positions grappling with new challenges.*
 - *respectful engagement and debate between diverse voices in the Christian tradition, public square, and our own classroom.*
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories, *specifically ...*
 - *the standard just war criteria for determining when it may be moral to go to war, how war might be waged morally, and what moral commitments follow a war.*
 - *major varieties of active nonviolence and Christian pacifism.*
 - *ongoing challenges for both just war and pacifist approaches.*
3. Learning to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions *by...*
 - *regularly working through real-world case studies in the classroom.*
 - *working in a team to present a major case study.*
4. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally and in writing *through ...*
 - *two major writing assignments.*
 - *classroom discussion and a team presentation.*
5. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values *through...*
 - *honest, conscientious, and respectful participation in all of the above!*

Course Readings & Resources

Required

- Fahey, Joseph. *War and the Christian Conscience: Where Do You Stand?* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005.
- Holmes, Arthur F. *War and Christian Ethics: Classic and Contemporary Readings on the Morality of War*. Second ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005.
- **PLUS:** On-line course packet, article handouts and/or library reserve readings.

Recommended (students will review **one** of the following; wait to purchase until assigned)

- Bacevich, A. J. *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Belknap, Michal R. *The Vietnam War on Trial: The My Lai Massacre and the Court-Martial of Lieutenant Calley*. Landmark Law Cases & American Society. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2002.
- Cortright, David. *Gandhi and Beyond: Nonviolence for a New Political Age*. 2nd Edition. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2009.
- Cortright, D., and G. A. Lopez, eds. 2007. *Uniting against Terror: Cooperative Nonmilitary Responses to the Global Terrorist Threat*. Forward by L. H. Hamilton. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Mayer, Jane. *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals*. New York: Doubleday, 2008.
- Packer, George. *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- Power, Samantha. *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- Solis, Gary D. *Son Thang: An American War Crime*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997. [Out of print. Order used via Amazon.com or another online service.]
- Stassen, Glen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008.
- Yoder, John Howard. *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*. Rev. ed. With a foreword by Charles P. Lutz, with an afterword by Drew Christiansen. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002.

Assignments & Evaluation	Assignment	Due	%
	Book review	27 October	15
	Case study, part 1: team presentation:	8 October	10
	Case study, part 2: final paper	12 December	20
	Quizzes	unannounced	7½
	Midterm exams	10 Oct & 14 Nov	15
	Final exam	15 December	25
	Participation	consistently	7½

Major assignments:

- **Book review:** Students will write a 5- to 6-page book review of one of the recommended books listed above. A sign-up sheet will be available early in the semester in order to insure a roughly even distribution of reviewers, in preparation for section IV of the class schedule. Guidelines for writing a book review are available at <http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/gwschlabach/reviews.htm>.

Case study, part 1: team presentation: Students will work in teams of 3-5 persons in order to do background research on a topic, prepare a presentation of the issues involved from various perspectives, and lead a class discussion. Team presentation should clearly and fairly represent the responsible rival views on a specific case. Student teams must assign readings for other students at least one week prior to their presentation. Optimally, this assignment should either be a specific case study *and* a background paper, *or* a single reading that provides both. Normally, all students on the team will receive the same grade.

Case study, part 2: final paper: Each student will write a 6- to 8-page argumentative paper on the same case study that presents the student's own analysis and considered position on the case, along with responses to reasonable objections to that position. The basic structure of the paper should follow classic essay format (outlined with a thesis, point-by-point development of argument backing up that thesis, interspersed evidence, conclusion) and should include standard academic apparatus (footnotes OR parenthetical references and page of works cited) consistent with a standard academic stylebook.

Quizzes and "extra credit": Quizzes on readings may be given at any time. No exceptions will be granted except for *extended* and *documented* medical or family emergencies – *period*. However, you *can* have a low or absent quiz score thrown out by attending certain special events and bringing us your notes. Your professors will announce these events. *This is the only "extra credit" opportunity that will be available.*

Exams: Midterm exams will test terms and concepts introduced in the units that you are completing at the time. The final exam will do the same for the final part of the course but will also require you to synthesize the course as a whole.

About attendance: Significant absences will affect your grade. Because this class relies heavily on classroom discussion and participation it is not really possible to "make up" for missed classes. If you must miss a class, you (not your professors) are responsible to compensate as best you can by borrowing notes or handouts from other students. Your professors will, however, make appropriate accommodations in accord with university-wide influenza planning:

Influenza planning: The University of St. Thomas is committed to a healthy campus community. During the 2009-2010 academic year, there will be ongoing concerns regarding the prevalence among university faculty, staff and students of both the H1N1 virus and seasonal influenza. To help limit the spread of these illnesses, the Centers for Disease Control has provided college campuses the following recommendation: students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illnesses (temperature of 100.0° or greater, plus a cough or sore throat) are directed to self-isolate (or stay home) for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. In the event that students are unable to attend classes due to this self-isolation recommendation, they should consult the university's pandemic web site <http://www.stthomas.edu/pandemic/plan/default.html> and complete an on-line form informing professors of their absence. In accordance, faculty will provide opportunities for these students to participate in alternative educational delivery due to this illness.

About participation: Constructive participation in discussions is the key to a good "participation" grade. Students learn in different ways, however. Some learn by thinking out loud, while others need to listen a while before forming their own conclusions. Even for more reserved students, classroom discussion is an important way to think through questions and ideas, so all students are expected to participate in classroom discussions regularly. Reserved students are hereby assured (and assertive students hereby warned) that well-reasoned and respectful contributions to class will value more than the sheer quantity of a student's interjections.

About promptness: Our policy is to reduce the grade on any late assignment by up to half of a letter grade per day late, except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

About academic integrity: The requirements of academic integrity preclude the unacknowledged use of other people's words and ideas in one's own writing. Such use is known as "plagiarism." Information on

[UST policies regarding academic integrity](#) is available in the [student policy book](#). It is your responsibility as a student to understand these policies, recognize plagiarism and avoid it. As applied to this class, academic integrity does **not** preclude discussions on readings, brainstorming, or mutual assistance in formulating approaches to assignments. *Collaboration must end, however, when each student begins writing.* Your written work, quizzes and exams must be your own.

For students with disabilities: Qualified students with documented disabilities who may need classroom accommodations should make an appointment with the Enhancement Program – Disability Services office. Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315. You may also make an appointment in person in O’Shaughnessy Educational Center, room 119. For further information, you can locate the Enhancement Program on the web at <http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/>.

Grading scale	97-100	A+	74-76	C
	94-96	A	70-73	C-
	90-93	A-	67-69	D+
	87-89	B+	64-66	D
	84-86	B	60-63	D-
	80-83	B-	< 60	F
	77-79	C+		

Course Outline & Schedule

Your professors reserve the right to make changes in this schedule of topics, readings, and tasks. Ordinarily, changes will be minor and announced in advance.

Date	Period	Topic	Reading / Assignment
I. Introductions. <i>Students will: 1. Review or introduce key ethical theories that students encounter in other UST ethics classes. 2. Find out how much just war theory they may already know. 3. Start to name some of the key reasons why Christians debate whether they need the just war theory and how it is supposed to work.</i>			
15 Sep	1	· Syllabus and course introduction	
	2	· Opening case study #1	Stanton, “ Could the Rwandan genocide have been prevented? ”
22 Sep	1	· Key terms (conscience; pacifism; just war; total war; solidarity) and related concepts	Fahey, pp. 3-25 Hawk & Schlabach, “ A Short Primer on Ethical Theory ”
	2	· Opening case study #2	Reid, “ The Forgotten Case of Louis Negre ” Johnson, “ Just War, As It Was and Is ” Bell, “ Can a War Against Terror Be Just? ” Niebuhr, “Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist” (in Holmes)
II. Paradigms for Framing the Ethics of War <i>Students will: 1. Identify underlying assumptions that shape the way that Christians think about the morality of war. 2. Be able to explain the strengths and weaknesses of four or five different “paradigms” or ways of framing the question of war.</i>			
		· National security	Pierce, “ War: strategy vs. ethics, ethics ”

29 Sep	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The war of the Lamb 	and strategy?” Lopez, “ The Ethical Legacy of Dirty Harry ” New Testament selections
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Satyagraha & social power · Peacemaking as Christian vocation 	Fahey, pp. 29-69 Gandhi, selections US Catholic Bishops, <i>Harvest of Justice</i> , introduction & part I
6 Oct	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Human security · <i>Summary discussion</i> 	World Council of Churches. Vulnerable Populations at Risk US Catholic Bishops, <i>Harvest of Justice</i> , part II and part III

By Saturday, Oct 10, take Midterm Exam #1 online

III. The just war theory

Students will be able to apply just war criteria for making judgments about when it is moral to go to war, how war may be waged morally, and the moral obligations of victors in war.

13 Oct	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jus ad bellum – what justifies going to war? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How Christians made peace with war 	Fahey, pp. 70-114 In Holmes: Cicero, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine to Count Boniface
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles and cases 	In Holmes: remaining excerpts from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas Beach, “ Secessions, Interventions and Just War Theory ”
20 Oct	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles and cases 	In Holmes: Francisco de Vitoria Gingras & Ruby, “ Morality and modern air war ”
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jus in bello – how can war be waged morally? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why just war Christians grew uneasy with war 	Fahey, pp. 115-146 Ford, “ The Morality of Obliteration Bombing ”
27 Oct	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles and cases 	Dworkin, “ The Strike Against Zargawi ” Rizer, “ Bombing Dual-Use Targets ”
	2	Team organizing for 2nd ½ of course	Book review due
3 Nov	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles and cases 	Articles on use of cluster bombs in Lebanon (choose enough to familiarize yourself with the debate) Peachey, “ The Case for a Ban [Against Cluster Bombs] ” + Appendix 1
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jus post bellum – what are the conditions for peace we must be seeking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where pacifist and just war Christians are converging 	Fahey, pp. 148-187 In Holmes: Friesen, “The Convergence of Pacifism and Just War”
10 Nov	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles and cases 	Allman, “ Postwar Justice ” Powers, “ Our Moral Duty in Iraq ”

By Saturday, Nov. 14, take Midterm Exam #2 online

IV. Midstream Reality Checks

Students will be able to enter into debates over whether the just war theory as a whole “works” and / or what it would take for it to “work.”

17 Nov	1	· Rationality amid the fog of war?	Clausewitz, “On Danger in War” Jonathan Shay, “Berserk,” ch 5. of <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i> McGirk, “Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?”
	2	· When is surrender a moral obligation?	Yoder, “Surrender: A Moral Obligation” [may only be available from on campus]
24 Nov	1	· So who decides?	In Holmes: George Weigel; Rowan Williams

V. The perpetual goal: subjecting war to the rule of law

Students will identify and imagine ways to: 1. Improve the actual practice of just war theory, and / or 2. Find realistic alternatives to war.

24 Nov	2	· International law: how theology of just war is embodied in law	In Holmes: Vitoria, Suarez, Grotius Pages 3-9 of Peifer, “Stopping Mass Killings in Africa”
1 Dec	1	· Can law and politics ever displace war? Prospects for “transarmament”	Sharp, “Civilian-based defense as a peace strategy” Ackerman, “Between Hard & Soft Power”
	2	· Where & how to institutionalize the JWT? ○ What kind of church can practice the JWT? ○ What kind of people must we be to practice just war discipline and/or active nonviolence?	Yoder, “Just War Tradition: Is It Credible?” Schlabach, “Just Policing”
8 Dec	1 - 2	Course evaluation Team presentations	
by Sat., 12 Dec		Paper on case study due	
15 Dec		Final exam	