

## University of Waterloo

### Religious Studies 353 / Peace and Conflict Studies 330 WAR AND PEACE IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Conrad Grebel University College

Fall 2013, Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:20 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Bergen

Office hours: Wed, 2:30-3:00, Thurs, 2:30-3:00, and by appointment

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#### Course Description

The Christian tradition has sustained a long and complicated debate about war and peace. Is it permitted for a Christian to serve in the army? Does the command to love one's neighbour sometimes require the violent defense of the neighbour? Is it possible to interpret Jesus' instruction to love one's enemy in such a way that nevertheless permits killing of an enemy? Does God command war? Does Christianity provide guidance for the conduct of war? In what ways are the life and teachings of Jesus authoritative for contemporary Christian ethics?

In this course, we will survey the theological accounts of war and peace that Christians have given from the early church to the present. We will pay particular attention to two of the most prominent Christian approaches: pacifism, and just war. Through a careful study to two primary books, we will examine how each draw on biblical texts, theological concepts, ecclesiological assumptions, interpretations of history and context, and ethical theory.

#### Course Objectives

- to appreciate the diversity of Christian theological approaches to war and peace
- to understand, analyze, and evaluate the theological arguments that Christians, especially Christian theologians, have employed in favour of pacifism and just war
- to develop theoretical/ethical frameworks from which to think about contemporary and practical issues of war and peace
- to read theological texts carefully and critically
- to develop skills in written communication
- to engage in respectful and critical dialogue with other students

#### Required Texts

- John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2d. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).
- Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Just War as Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009).
- Various articles and chapters posted on the LEARN (as marked\* below), or through the UW library e-journals.

#### Optional Text

- A. James Reimer, *Christians and War: A Brief History of the Church's Teachings and Practices* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). A copy will be placed on reserve at the Grebel library. Copies have not been ordered to the bookstore but this title is readily available from online booksellers.

## Course requirements:

1. *Attendance and informed participation.* In this course, learning happens at the intersection of individual reading, listening, thinking, and writing, and interaction with the instructor, fellow students, and guest speakers. Though there are no formal marks associated with attendance, those who do not do the readings and/or come to class typically finish the course with significantly lower marks than those who do. They may be several small writing exercises throughout the course (either in-class, or in advance of class)—the completion of which will contribute significantly to learning.

Please consider others: do not come and go during class, switch off all phones/smartphones, use laptop/tablet for taking notes only (not playing games, watching videos, surfing, etc. - you may be asked to leave class if you violate this requirement).

2. *Two reflection papers* (2 x 15 = 30%) of 5-6 pages each (consider 4.5 pages a very bare minimum, and 8 pages a maximum).

- a. Reflect on Reinhold Niebuhr's "Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist." First, summarize the main thesis or argument with which you will engage (around 1.5-2 pages). You don't need to cover everything, but you do need to demonstrate that you have understood the author on his own terms. Then, identify two or three issues raised by the author, analyze and reflect on them. What is at stake in the author's position? What are the implications? What assumptions are operative? What does the author fail to take into consideration? I encourage you to develop your own position on these issues, but you must go beyond simply reporting what you agree or disagree with. Give reasons. You will be marked in terms of your understanding of the reading, a clear statement of the issues, depth of analysis, and quality of writing. Due in class **Monday, Sept 30**.
- b. Reflect on and respond to the visits of the two guest speakers (expected October 23 and November 4), especially regarding the relationship of theory and practice. How do the comments by the speakers add to or change your perspective on the various theoretical approaches examined in the course, especially those of Yoder and Bell? Was anything said that you found especially enlightening, surprising, or puzzling? Respond to the ways each speaker integrates his own faith commitments and beliefs about violence, war, and peace, with his institutional role. And/or, imagine how Yoder and/or Bell would respond to the experiences of each speaker. Be sure that you engage with the "big picture" of their respective approaches to war and peace; avoid basing your reflection on a single comment by one speaker. Due in class **Wednesday, November 13**.

3. *Final project* (40%). There are two options for a final project – you must choose an option by October 21.

- a) Critical book review essay, small group discussion, and reflection.
- b) Individual research essay

These assignments are explained in detail in a separate document.

Due in class **Monday, December 2**.

4. *Take-home exam* (30%).

Due at noon, **Monday, December 9**. This is an absolute deadline. Neither late nor electronic submissions will be accepted, other than for exceptional circumstances (documentation required). The exam will be distributed in class on December 2 and will *not* be posted on LEARN.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the assignments, please contact me before the due dates. *There are no “make-up assignments” in this course.*

For those assignments submitted on time, my goal to return them to you within one week.

All assignments must be submitted in hard copy, double-spaced, standard margins and 12-point font, with no report covers. *Add page numbers.* Late assignments (reflection papers, final project) will be penalized 3% per calendar day (including weekends), and can be accepted no later than December 9. You may “stop the clock” by emailing an assignment to me over the weekend, but *only* if you submit it in hard copy to the Grebel front office on the next business day.

### **Other academic plans**

This course may be taken by graduate students as TS 637 or PACS 670 (additional assignments, separate syllabus).

This course may fulfill a requirement of a Mennonite Studies plan.

See: <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/academics/undergraduate-studies/mennonite-studies>

### **LEARN**

I will be using LEARN for several elements of this course. All students must familiarize themselves with the LEARN platform and check it regularly.

News – Class cancellations, changes, reminders, etc. will be posted on the News section of this course.

Content – All handouts in class, including the regular course outline, will be posted in LEARN, usually prior to class. If you miss a class, there is no need to ask me for a handout. If you wish to record lectures, please check with me first.

Discussion – There is no requirement to participate in any online discussion. However, I will start by making two forums available. “Ask a question” is the forum in which to ask the instructor about course content and/or course requirements. “Start or continue a conversation” is a place to start or continue a conversation about a particular topic. That forum is primarily for students, though I will monitor it, and may contribute from time to time.

Grades – All grades will be recorded and calculated in LEARN.

### **RS Student Society**

This society welcomes all students in RS courses, not just RS majors. Like the Facebook page (search UW RS Society), and participate in social events with other students.

### **PACS Student Society**

There is a PACS group as well. Search Peace and Conflict Studies @ uWaterloo on Facebook.

### **Outline of class meetings and required readings**

1. Sept. 9 – Introduction

2. Sept. 11 – Early Church, Constantine

Read: “Acts of Maximilian,” in George Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 158-160

\*excerpts from Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius.

3. Sept. 16 – Middle Ages, Crusades  
Read: \*Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, question 40, articles 1 and 2
  4. Sept. 18 – Reformation  
Read: \*Martin Luther, “The Soldier and His Conscience,” [excerpt] in *War and Christian Ethics*, ed. Arthur F. Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 140-147.
  5. Sept. 23 – Enlightenment, Christian Realism  
Read: \*Reinhold Niebuhr, “Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist” in *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr*, ed. Robert McAfee Brown (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 102- 119.
  6. Sept. 25 – Jesus and Ethics  
Read: Yoder, ch. 1 and 2
  7. Sept. 30 – Old Testament  
Read: Yoder, ch. 3 and 4  
**First reflection paper due**
  8. Oct. 2 – Jubilee justice and nonviolent resistance  
Read: Yoder, ch. 5, 6, and 7
  9. Oct. 7– Christ and Power  
Read: Yoder, ch. 8
  10. Oct. 9 – Revolutionary Subordination; The State  
Read: Yoder, ch. 9 and 10
- [Thanksgiving]
11. Oct. 16 – Authority of the State  
Read: Yoder, ch. 11 and 12
  12. Oct. 21 – Yoder: assessment and implications  
Read: Earl Zimmerman, “The ‘Politics of Jesus’ as Social Practice,” [excerpt] in *Practicing the Politics of Jesus* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2007), 226-250.  
**Deadline for indicating which final project option (a or b) you will do.**
  13. Oct. 23 – GUEST SPEAKER  
Fr. Bob Holmes, Christian Peacemaker Teams
  14. Oct. 28 – The Just War  
Read: Bell, Introduction, ch. 1 and 2
  15. Oct. 30 – Just War as Christian Discipleship  
Read: Bell, ch. 3
  16. Nov. 4 – GUEST SPEAKER  
Capt. Harold Ristau, Chaplain, Canadian Forces

17. Nov. 6 – Legitimate Authority, Just Cause  
Read: Bell, ch. 4 and 5
18. Nov. 11 – Right Intent, Last Resort, Reasonable Chance of Success  
Read: Bell, ch. 6 and 7
19. Nov. 13 – Discrimination, Proportionality  
Read: Bell, ch. 8 and Conclusion  
**Second reflection paper due**
20. Nov. 18 – Case study  
Readings to be determined
21. Nov. 20 – Forgiveness  
Read: \*Mark R. Amstutz, “Restorative Justice, Political Forgiveness, and the Possibility of Political Reconciliation,” in *The Politics of Past Evil*, ed. Daniel Philpott (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 151-188.
22. Nov. 25 – Just Policing  
Read: \*Tobias Winright, “Just Policing and the Responsibility to Protect,” *The Ecumenical Review* 63 (2011): 84-95.
23. Nov. 27 – Nuclear Weapons
24. Dec. 2 – Conclusion  
**Final project due**  
**Take-home exam distributed (due at noon, Monday, December 9, at the main office, Conrad Grebel University College).** Please pick up your marked project at that time (available 8:30 a.m. Monday morning.)

## **Further information for all Arts Syllabi**

### **Cross-listed course:**

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

### **Academic Integrity:**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**

[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity>

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.