Conrad Grebel University College
University of Waterloo

PACS 326.001/RS 380.001: Religion and Peacebuilding
Fall 2017

Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m.
Location: CGR 1300

Instructor: Nathan C. Funk
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 p.m., and by appointment
Office Location: Room 2103A
Phone: 519-885-0220 x24295
Email: nfunk@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description:
In much public discussion of religion and conflict, religion is cast either as a driving force behind contemporary strife or as a largely irrelevant factor. Often, religion is represented as a force from the past – if not a spent force, then a threatening and divisive one. On occasion, however, accounts of current events reveal a more dynamically hopeful and affirmative face of religion: religion as an inspiration for peacemaking and perhaps also as an impetus for advancing social justice.
Starting from the premise that peace is a widely shared and yet variably defined value of the world’s major religious traditions, this course provides a framework for academic and personal exploration of religiously motivated peacebuilding and social justice advocacy. By exposing students to writings of contemporary peace researchers and to examples of religiously motivated peacebuilding from several different religious traditions, the course seeks to stimulate active intellectual engagement with the following questions:

- **What are some basic teachings about peace in major world religions (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism)?** What is the role of interpretation? How do conceptions of peace differ within as well as between religions, and what are the practical implications? And how do distinctively religious perspectives on peace differ from and/or complement secular perspectives?
- **If most religious traditions affirm peace as a social value and as an important condition of the spiritual life, how is it that religious ideas and identities have sometimes been found to sharpen conflict or to provide cover for more mundane rivalries and ambitions?** Why do religious individuals and communities often appear to fall short of their peace-related ideals? How does religion interact with other factors, such as economics or ethnic and national identity, in contemporary conflict situations?
- **What types of religious visions and personal commitments are associated with religious peacebuilding and activism for social justice?** What are some things that peacebuilders from various traditions have in common?
- **What are some of the different practical approaches to religious peacebuilding?** What are the relevant methods and organizational forms? And what are some significant cases in which religious peacebuilding has made a difference?
- **What role can religious ideas play in efforts to respond to pressing global problems such as war, environmental degradation, poverty, and human rights abuses?** Can people with different religious convictions find common ground as they face such challenges – even while continuing to disagree on other matters? And what are some local tasks for religious peacebuilders in our own communities?
- **What does religious peacebuilding mean to you?** Do you wish to become involved? If so, how?

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completing PACS 326 students should be able to:

- Describe ways in which religion can contribute to both conflict and peacemaking;
- Differentiate between “religious” and “secular” factors that contribute to present-day conflicts;
- Articulate personal convictions about the role of religion and spirituality in peacebuilding, conflict transformation, reconciliation, and the cultivation of “peace culture”;
- Discuss significant cases of religious peacebuilding from a number of different settings around the world;
- Identify relevant terms in the religious vocabularies of several world religions for peace, social justice, and reconciliation;
- Identify “peace traditions” and positive examples of peacemaking within multiple religious communities, and describe similarities and differences between approaches to peace and peacemaking;
- Offer explanations for different views that may be found within a particular religion on such issues as religious diversity, peacebuilding, social justice, and human rights;
- Describe notable characteristics of religious peacemakers, including qualities that may distinguish them from other practitioners within the same religious tradition;
- Discuss relevant applications of various religious peacebuilding practices, including nonviolent action/witness, interfaith dialogue, multifaith projects/coalitions, hermeneutics, education/training, mediation, and advocacy for peace, social justice and/or coexistence;
- Discuss the relevance of course topics to personal ethical or spiritual concerns; and
- Develop a proposal for religious peacebuilding in the world today.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria:

1. **15% Participation:** Fifteen percent of your final grade will be based on the quality of your active participation in class. Participation presupposes both attendance and preparation (i.e., *reading*). It manifests through thoughtful engagement with discussions of readings and lecture topics, as well as through contributions to small-group activities. Failure to attend at least two thirds of all class sessions is likely to result in a loss of all participation points.

2. **5% Personal Background and Worldview Exercise:** Five percent of your grade will be based on a short, reflective essay (600-900 words) due on Wednesday, Sept. 20. In this issue you will describe your personal “relationship with religion” and how this relationship influences your thinking about roles of religion in conflict and peacemaking. The goal of this writing assignment is for you to explore the deeper background from which your assumptions, values, and perceptions emerge, so that you can link your personal ideas to formative experiences as well as to your larger family and community backgrounds.

Although there will be no formal presentations associated with this exercise, we will discuss different student responses to the assignment within the classroom. You are likely to find that personal “relationships with religion” vary quite widely within the classroom, and that people are coming from many different religious as well as non-religious communities and experiences. A key goal is for us to enhance our awareness of ourselves as people whose ideas, attitudes, and experiences are not purely individual in character, and emerge from a larger context of family and social history. Even if you do not consider yourself to be a religious person, please use this as an opportunity to conduct some investigative research into at least two generations of your family history, ideally asking parents and relatives for input and commentary. Identify ways in which experiences with religion shaped your forebears’ values and beliefs, and consider the impact of this legacy (directly or indirectly, as a source of guidance and inspiration or as a set of experiences from which you may differentiate yourself) on your own worldview and assumptions about religion, peace, and conflict.

You may find the following questions helpful as you begin your reflections and your research for this exercise:

a. *What is my personal relationship with religion?*

b. *How have recent generations within my own family (nuclear or extended) related to religion? What were their attitudes toward religion and its role in community and public life? What traditions and beliefs informed people’s worldviews, values, and daily routines? Have members of my family ever experienced conflict over issues pertaining to religious belief and identity? Discrimination? Have they experienced religion as a source of peace? Why or why not?*
c. How do I relate to this family history? What sense do I make of it, and how does it inform my own understanding of issues under discussion in this class?

3. **10% Weekly Talking Point Memos:** Ten percent of your grade will be based on the quality of five talking point memos submitted throughout the term. These memos should be typed and **uploaded to the relevant dropbox in Learn** by the beginning of the final class session of the week for which they have been written (it is up to you to decide which weeks you would like to write). Each memo should show engagement with all assigned readings for the week in question, and should contain 2-3 **substantive talking points per chapter or article assigned.**

This is your opportunity to “bring something to the table,” by identifying themes you consider worthy of affirmation, deliberation, clarification, or debate. Please precede each talking point with a single, italicized or bold-faced word or phrase that conveys the overall character of your response (for example, **Affirm: ...**, **Question: ...**, **Qualify: ...**, **Clarify: ...**, **Wow!: ...**, **Had no idea: ...**, **Confused by this: ...**, **Inspired by this: ...**, **Not sure: ...**). The commentary provided should go beyond mere summarization or reaction to the author’s writing style; each point should engage key claims or conceptual arguments from the readings, ideally in the space of one or two sentences. Please include a reference to specific page numbers for each entry. Talking point submissions will be graded on a ten-point scale. Criteria for evaluation include: **clarity of communication**, **substance** (do the talking points address one or two peripheral issues, or do they go “to the heart of the matter” and engage central themes?), and **scope** (is there evidence of serious reading, or could the points have been composed after reading only one or two paragraphs?).

4. **20% Midterm Writing Assignment:** Twenty percent of your final grade will be derived from one short (6-8 pp., double-spaced, 12-point font) writing assignment that will ask you to interpret and integrate course material. Topics and more specific instructions will be provided approximately two weeks before the Oct. 27 due date. As with all other major assignments, please note that hard copies (rather than faxed or e-mailed submissions) are expected.

5. **25% Substantive Project:** Twenty-five percent of your final grade will be based on a course project. There are three options for completing this assignment. You are expected to commit to one of these options **by the fourth week of class:**

   a. **Option 1: Research Paper.** Write a short research paper exploring a theme related to religion, conflict, and peace. Many topics are possible – for example, you could examine bases for peace in a particular tradition, analyze a case of religious peacebuilding/conflict, or study the practices of a specific non-governmental organization. A handout describing a range of possible options and approaches will be distributed in class. The text of the paper (not including the bibliography) should be between 7 and 9 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, regular margins). **Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 17.**

   b. **Option 2: Service Learning.** If you are interested in becoming actively involved with a religiously based peace, development, or social service organization, you can choose a service learning option. To receive credit for this option, you will have to make formal arrangements to volunteer for the organization on a weekly basis. Your service learning efforts will be evaluated on the basis of a final report that reflects on your experiences in relation to a series of questions provided by your instructor; feedback from an administrator at the organization itself will also be sought. **Final report due by Monday, Dec. 4.**
c. Option 3: In-Depth Weekly Journal. Writing a detailed weekly journal provides you with an opportunity to articulate a personal and intellectual response to the course experience that ties together major themes from readings, lectures, discussions, and activities. Be sure to go beyond mere summarization and offer carefully considered insights and reflections. Criteria for evaluation include thoroughness (integration of different readings and themes, responsiveness to lecture material and the overall class experience), thoughtfulness (depth of analytical insight, critical engagement with multiple perspectives, creativity, ability to connect key concepts with personal experiences or world events), and clarity of communication (language usage, readability, mechanics). Handwritten journals in a single notebook are acceptable, but unless you have especially clear handwriting a typed and printed product would be preferred. If typed, the final installment of your printed journal should be approximately 20-24 pages in length (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, regular font – like 12-point New Times Roman). **Due by Monday, Dec. 4.**

d. Option 4: Creative Arts-Based Project. Next term the Grebel Gallery will host an exhibit featuring the creative work of PACS students and demonstrating the value of the visual arts for promoting reflection on peace issues. By choosing the creative arts-based option for your final project, you could become a part of this exhibit. Note that a first-rate creative project, like an effective research paper, requires significant research and preparation. Before proceeding with this option you are expected to submit a 1-page proposal detailing how the project will be completed and how the effort required will be commensurate with the other options. The final art piece must be presented to the class before the end of the term **(ideally on Dec. 4)**, and must be accompanied by a 3-page report that includes the following elements: 1) a clear statement of the project’s objective; 2) a summary of how the piece contributes to the field of religious peacebuilding and of why the medium chosen is important; 3) a short, reflective account of what you learned while completing this project; and 4) references for resources you consulted while developing the project.

6. 25% Take-home Final Exam: The term will conclude with a take-home final exam, consisting of short essay questions asking you to apply concepts from readings and lectures to real or hypothetical religious peacebuilding scenarios. The expected length of submissions is 8-12 pages. **Due by Monday, December 11.**

**Required Reading Materials:**

2) PACS 326 Electronic Reserves. Available at reserves.uwaterloo.ca. (Reserve readings are marked with an “*” in the schedule below.)

**Web Page:** This course will make use of the WATERLOO LEARN website. This site will provide general information for the course as well as electronic readings, lecture outlines, drop boxes for talking points memos, and grades for term assignments. Important announcements such as the cancellation of class due to illness or inclement weather will also be posted there, so please try to check the site before each class, just in case.
Breakdown of Evaluation Criteria, Key Assignments, and Due Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Assessed at end of term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Background &amp; Worldview Essay</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Wednesday, Sept. 20th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five Weekly Talking Points Memos</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout term, 5 times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Writing Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Friday, Oct. 27th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper (Option 1)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>Friday, Nov. 17th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning (Option 2)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>Monday, Dec. 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Depth Weekly Journal (Option 3)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>Monday, Dec. 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Arts-Based Project (Option 4)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>Monday, Dec. 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Monday, Dec. 11th</td>
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Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Assigned Letter Grades</th>
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<th>Average Calculation Values</th>
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<td>90-100</td>
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Late Policy:

Deadlines matter. They keep us on track, enable us to be productive, and help us to meet our educational goals. There are times, however, when even the most organized and disciplined person faces difficult obstacles and unexpected challenges. If this happens, it is your responsibility to take the initiative and demonstrate commitment to getting the job done in a timely manner. Students who contact Prof. Funk well in advance of a due date to discuss realistic complications that may postpone completion of work often receive favourable consideration.

A penalty will be applied to assignments that arrive late without prior clearance. The standard deductions for late work are as follows:

- One day to one week late: -5%
- Eight days to two weeks late: -10%
- Fifteen days to three weeks late: -15%
- More than three weeks late: -20%

Please do not make the mistake of failing to submit an assignment. The penalties for late work are not insignificant, but up until final exam time late truly is much better than never.
Appropriate Use of Laptops, Phones, etc.:

Laptops, iPads, smartphones and related devices are amazing tools, with remarkable capabilities. Among other things, they allow us to download PowerPoint slides, maintain a portable work station, keep neatly typed lecture notes, and stay in touch with friends through social networking sites, texting, and instant messaging.

Because activities that provide entertainment for an individual (e.g., movie trailers, party photos, status updates, communicating electronically with people outside the classroom) often prove distracting, there is a need to follow basic rules of electronic etiquette in a classroom setting. Whether you are sitting with friends or by yourself, please consider the impact of your electronic activities on your own learning process as well as on others who are attempting to listen to lectures, watch class films, and participate in discussions. All students are expected to comply with a simple principle: if it might distract you or someone else, or if it could convey disrespect to a speaker, don’t do it.

Further details concerning the PACS 326 policy on laptops and other gadgets will be discussed on the first day of class.

Additional Considerations:

As we progress through the course, please remember:

- In academics as in life more generally, what we get from an experience depends on what we put into it. Preparation for class (completing reading and writing assignments on time, tracking world events) is the basis for effective learning.

- When we come to class prepared to participate and pose questions, we transform the classroom environment, making active and collaborative learning possible. We discover that learning is a communal rather than a solitary endeavor, and that each one of us is a resource for everyone else in the learning process.

- The subject matter covered by this course is inevitably open to multiple interpretations. This means that you will not always agree with ideas presented in course readings, lectures, and discussions. In such cases, disagreement is often a good thing, so long as it motivates you to develop an enhanced understanding where you stand in relation to others. What matters most is not whether or not we all agree, but whether or not we are willing to engage one another with respect and integrity.

- Collaborative learning requires not only preparation and self-expression, but also a commitment to active listening. Active listening is a communication skill that we develop as we begin to hear not only words, opinions, and ideas, but also the experiences and the awareness behind them. When we practice active listening, we cease to merely debate and begin to sharpen the focus of our deliberations. We clarify divergent perceptions and develop deeper understanding of contrasting perspectives. We become a clear mirror, reflecting back what we have heard and asking questions to learn rather than to score rhetorical points. In the process, we test and refine our own ideas and those held by others.

- Throughout the term, we will be privileged to host several guest speakers. Please treat these visitors to our classroom with the same respect you would extend to a guest in your home – for example, by maintaining eye contact as much as possible, by asking questions, and by following the basic rules of “electronic etiquette” described above.
Course Schedule:

PART I:
EXPLORING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION AND PEACE

WEEK ONE (Sept. 11 and 13): MEETING ONE ANOTHER AND EXPLORING THE SUBJECT
Who are we? Why are we here? What are our goals for this course? What are some of your own working assumptions about religion, conflict, and peace, and how do these assumptions relate to some influential academic frameworks?

Required reading for Wednesday:

- Daniel Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  - Preface (pp. x-xii) and Introduction (pp. xiii-xxvii).
  
WEEK TWO (Sept. 18 and 20): ENGAGING DIVERSE WORLDVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES
Does the diversity in our classroom reflect diversity in our community and in the larger world? What can we learn from our differences and similarities? How have our worldviews and our deep assumptions about religion, conflict, and peace been formed?

Required reading for Monday:


Required reading for Wednesday:


Personal Background and Worldview Essay due at the start of class on Wednesday, Sept. 20.

Source: http://interfaithcouncil.net/aboutus.aspx
WEEK THREE (Sept. 25 and 27): CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT AND PEACE
What are some ways in which peace and nonviolence have been understood within the Christian tradition? How have textual sources and historical experiences shaped these understandings?

Required reading for Monday:

Required reading for Wednesday:
- Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  - Chapter 10 (Smith-Christopher on Christian Nonviolence, pp. 171-196).

WEEK FOUR (Oct. 2 and 4): INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES
What are some ways in which peace and nonviolence have been understood within North American Indigenous traditions? What are some distinctive aspects of these understandings?

Required reading for Monday:
- Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  - Chapter 5 (Smith-Christopher, pp. 76-85).

Required reading for Wednesday:
- Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  - Chapter 6 (Tamihere, pp. 86-106).

Students will declare intentions for the Substantive Project by Wednesday, Oct. 4.

WEEK FIVE (Friday, Oct. 13): JEWISH PERSPECTIVES
What are some ways in which peace and nonviolence have been understood within the Jewish tradition? How have textual sources and historical experiences shaped these understandings?

Required reading for Friday:
- Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  - Chapter 9 (Milgrom on Modern Judaism, pp. 144-170).
WEEK SIX (Oct. 16 and 18): ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

What are some ways in which peace and nonviolence have been understood within the Islamic tradition? How have textual sources and historical experiences shaped these understandings?

Required reading for Monday:


Required reading for Wednesday:

• Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  o Chapter 7 (Harris on Islam, pp. 107-127).
  o Chapter 8 (Hussain on Post-9/11 America, pp. 128-143).

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WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 23 and 25): PERSPECTIVES FROM JAINISM, HINDUISM, AND BUDDHISM

What are some ways in which peace and nonviolence have been understood within the Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions? How have textual sources and historical experiences shaped these understandings?

Required reading for Monday:

• Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  o Chapter 1 (Chapple on Jainism, pp. 1-13).
  o Chapter 3 (Lun on Hinduism, pp. 38-56).

Required reading for Wednesday:

• Smith-Christopher, ed., Subverting Hatred.
  o Chapter 2 (Queen on Buddhism, pp. 14-37).

Midterm writing assignment due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 27 at the Grebel Reception.

Source: http://members.iinet.net.au/~pictim/peace/flag.html
Source: http://www.boerner.net/jboerner/?p=7181
PART II: FRAMEWORKS FOR RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

WEEK EIGHT (Oct. 30 and Nov. 1): REFLECTING ON ROLES OF RELIGION IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

What are some of the different ways in which religion can become a source of conflict or a resource for peace? How do we make sense of highly divergent religious responses to conflict, even within the same religious tradition?

* Required reading for Monday:
  - Smith-Christopher, ed., *Subverting Hatred*. Epilogue (Swearer, pp. 197-208).

* Required reading for Wednesday:

WEEK NINE (Nov. 6 and 8): TAPPING RELIGIOUS RESOURCES FOR PEACE

What are some ways in which spirituality and religion can inform practical peacemaking efforts, particularly when there are forces seeking to divide people? How can the role of religion in conflict be transformed to support active peacemaking?

* Required reading for Monday:

* Required reading for Wednesday:

WEEK TEN (Nov. 13 and 15): CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS PEACEMAKERS
What qualities do we encounter in religious peacemakers? How does gender play a role in the practice of religious peacebuilding? What are some distinctive contributions of women to this field?

Required reading for Monday:


Required reading for Wednesday:


Research paper option due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 17.
WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 20 and 22): NGOS AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

What are some ways in which religious peacebuilding can be organized, implemented, and sustained? What is the role of faith-based organizations in contemporary peacebuilding?

Required reading for Monday:


Required reading for Wednesday:


WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 27 and Nov. 29): FOSTERING RECONCILIATION AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

Can religious peacebuilding play a special role in promoting reconciliation, and in creating spaces for transformation and coexistence? How can religious peacebuilders reach across divides and work together to address challenging global issues such as poverty, ecological degradation, human rights abuses, and war?

Required reading for Monday:


Required reading for Wednesday:


Source: www.digital-culture.net/Sulha/source/5.htm  
Source: www.onearthpeace.org/drupal/
WEEK THIRTEEN (Dec. 4): PRESENTATIONS AND WRAP-UP

What have we learned this term – from our course materials and from one another? What ideas and insight will you be taking with you?

Take-home final exam due by Monday, Dec. 11.

UWaterloo Policies

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. Arts: Academic Integrity website University of Waterloo: Academic Integrity Office

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.

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.

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.

Other sources of information for students:

Note for students with learning differences: The AccessAbility Services (AAS) office, 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 ASS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Counselling Services: Counselling Services provides free confidential counselling, in both individual and group sessions, with qualified professionals to help registered students, faculty and staff with personal concerns, educational career decisions, and strategies to studies and exams: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs, ext. 33528, NH Room 2080.

Accommodation for Illness: A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. More information can be obtained from Health Services and the form is available in pdf: https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness

The Writing Centre: Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre