

Winter, 2022

RS 335: The Violence of the Bible

Time: Tues., Thurs. 1-2:20 PM
Place: Room 1300, Conrad Grebel University College
Office: 4207, Conrad Grebel University College
Office hours: By appointment

Instructor: Derek Suderman, dsuderman@uwaterloo.ca
Teaching Assistant: Doaa Shalabi, doaa.shalabi@uwaterloo.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee (aka Iroquois) peoples. Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations in perpetuity, that includes 6 miles (approx. 10 km.) on each side of the Grand River.

I. Introduction

A. Course Description and Delivery

In this course we will explore ways in which the Bible has been employed to both justify and support as well as to challenge and oppose violence. In order to keep the scope more manageable we will limit ourselves to considering the Christian tradition in various historical and contemporary contexts. Our goal will be to identify negative and harmful interpretive patterns and to seek alternative possibilities. The course will consist of exploring case studies on various topics including: slavery, the crusades, the Doctrine of Discovery and the 'conquest/discovery' of the Americas, First Nations residential schools in Canada, gender-based violence, and the environmental crisis.

*A note on the ongoing challenge of the COVID pandemic: An essential part of this course lies in doing preliminary reading and then attending and participating in synchronous class sessions. Since the term will begin REMOTELY, students will be expected to attend two ZOOM class sessions per week held at the same scheduled time. I hope to meet in person later in the term, but this will depend on University policy and local Health guidance.

**As a third-year course related to the Christian tradition, some familiarity with the broad contours of biblical literature and history will be assumed. While religious conviction is welcome, it is not assumed, much less required, for success in the course.*

B. Difficult Topics and Conversations

This course addresses difficult topics, and in doing so includes exposure to highly objectionable sources and engages in challenging conversations. In particular, we will investigate and interrogate historical documents and perspectives that students will find offensive. Engaging such material does not reflect an endorsement of these perspectives,

but rather a means of understanding historical perspectives that have had significant ongoing repercussions. Assigning and discussing such material is not done lightly, but does represent an essential aspect of the course.

In this light, it is essential that we all engage each other (students, instructors, and guest speakers) with respect and sensitivity. We will strive to create a safe space for this inquiry and engagement, and welcome feedback on whether this is how students are experiencing the course. If a student feels unable to engage a specific topic given its particularly offensive nature, this can be communicated to the professor to be dismissed from class sessions and/or other alternative arrangements.

C. *Student Objectives*

During this course students will:

- discuss what constitutes “violence” in light of historical and contemporary examples;
- read primary and secondary sources from various contexts to identify how biblical interpretation and theological reflection has been used to justify and oppose various forms of violence;
- recognize a diversity of perspectives within the biblical corpus on these issues, and consider how they relate to one another;
- familiarize themselves with the literary, historical, and social settings and traditions of the Bible and consider their impact on this topic;
- consider the potential, complexity, and implications of biblical material for contemporary issues; and
- improve their critical reading and academic writing skills.

II. **Course Requirements**

A. *Textbooks and required materials*

1. The **Bible**

Students must each have their own copy, which they are *expected to bring to every class*. No one version is required — in fact, having a diversity present can enrich class discussion enormously. *However, paraphrases and Bibles which use a ‘dynamic equivalence’ approach to translation will not be appropriate for this course (the Message, Good News Bible, Today’s English Version, etc.)*. If you are not sure whether your version is suitable, ask. **Study Bibles** of various versions are also available (NIV, NRSV, NASB, etc), and can provide helpful additional information --- a Bible version **with cross-references** is highly recommended. For instance, students are welcome to choose from among:

- *Tanakh* (JPS - Jewish Publication society) – if you use this version you will also need a Bible with a New Testament
- *New American Bible* (NAB)
- *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) or the older *American Standard Version* (ASV)
- *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) or the older *Jerusalem Bible* (JB)
- *Common English Bible* (CEB)

- *21st Century New King James Version*, or the *New King James Version* (NKJV), or the *Authorized or King James Version* (AV or KJV)
- *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) or the older *Revised Standard Version* (RSV)
- *Revised English Bible* (REB) or the older *New English Bible* (NEB)
- *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) or the older *New International Version* (NIV)
- *Net Bible* (available free on-line at <http://www.bible.org>). This can be used for comparison, but students will be expected to bring Bibles to class so this will not be sufficient as the only version.

2. **Course Reader** (Required)

Readings for this term will be available in a course reader available from the UW Bookstore, which students will be expected to bring to class. Occasional additional material may be posted on the LEARN site or made available through e-reserves.

3. **Essays and Reports, Jewinski and Vardon** (Highly Recommended)

This small booklet, published by the Writing Centre at UW, is a great one-stop reference to guide you through the process of writing essays and trouble shoot common writing mistakes. I also highly recommend Harvey,¹ an excellent resource that provides a more detailed but very light-hearted and accessible guide to the style, grammar, formatting, and citation practices of academic papers.

B. **Student Evaluation**

The basic building blocks of this course will consist of engaging primary material (both historical and biblical) and secondary scholarly literature as well as consistent class attendance and participation. Class sessions will assume and build upon these readings. Since assignments will provide the basis for class discussion, extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. *Late assignments will be marked down 5% per school day.* Under normal circumstances, *no extensions will be granted for Critical Response assignments.*

In-Class Questions	5%
On-Line Discussion	5%
Critical Responses (7-2)	40%
Residential School assignment	
Background Paper (Due: Feb. 17)	10%
Virtual Tour Reflection and Response	5%

Final Project

¹ Michael Harvey, *The Nuts & Bolts of College Writing* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2003).

Proposal (Due: Mar. 11)	5%
Final Project (Due: Apr. 18)	30%

BONUS assignments (max 3 x 2%)

In-Class Questions

Throughout the term students will briefly respond to in-class questions, marked pass/fail.

****Consistent attendance will be crucial for success in this class.**

On-Line Discussion

Students will be expected to write an online post and respond to someone else's on a weekly basis, which provides the basis for this participation mark. Students can choose 2 weeks *not* to do so free of penalty.

Critical Responses to Readings

Students will write multiple brief (250-350 word) responses that critically engage primary and/or secondary readings. These assignments will respond to specific questions provided, are identified on the "Class Schedule" below as [CR], and will be ***DUE in the on-line LEARN 'INBOX' by 11PM the night before the relevant class listed (generally Wed. at 11 PM). Extensions will not normally be granted for these assignments, so make sure they are in on time.*** The two lowest marks for this element will be dropped. Further details regarding the expectations and marking breakdown of this element will be provided.

Residential School Assignment

Students will write a brief paper that engages secondary material regarding the creation, logic, and experience of Residential Schools in Canada. This assignment will consist of two parts:

Background paper – this assignment will engage a secondary source about the purpose and foundation of Residential Schools in Canada as well as parts of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' report describing children's experiences in these institutions (4-6 pp.; 1200-1800 words).

Virtual Tour Reflection and response – this reflection will be submitted after a private 'virtual' tour of the Mohawk Institute. Nicknamed the 'Mushhole,' this residential school near Brantford ON was one of the first and longest running residential school in Canada. Details re: the timing of this tour are still to be determined. *For students unable to participate in a tour of the Mushhole, an alternate assignment may be arranged.*

Final Project

Students will work on and submit a final project on a topic of their choice related in some way to violence/peace/ethics and biblical interpretation. In each case, the project will consist of two distinct elements:

Proposal – Given the wide range of potential projects, students will be required to submit a proposal that outlines their chosen topic, their proposed method and procedure for tackling it, and the final form the project will take, as well as a preliminary bibliography.

Final project – The final submission for this project can take on various forms, including: a paper (7-10 pp.; 2100-3000 words); an annotated bibliography of several resources on a specific topic; a short story or fine arts piece, accompanied with an explanation; a public speech/presentation; etc.

BONUS Assignments

There are many opportunities for learning and engagement outside of class at UofW and in the broader community, including special lectures, conferences, movies, podcasts, etc. Students are encouraged to attend/engage up to **three** such elements, and then **write a 1-page (250-300 word)** description and response that connects it to the discussions/topics of the course. These will be marked ‘pass/fail,’ with the bonus marks added to your final grade. *Written responses to in-class Guest Speakers also qualify.*

III. Further Instructions

A. Faculty of Arts Information

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 and Discipline

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. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. 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](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievances and Appeals

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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- **MATES:** one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- **Good2Talk:** Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7:** Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME:** set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

B. Academic Style

All assignments for this class will use in-text citations, ie: (Suderman, 54). While a bibliography is not necessary for CRs, **all other papers with references** for this course **will require a bibliography** that complies with **the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)**. Failure to do so will have a negative impact on marks for the assignment.

**** All submitted written material MUST provide a word count.**

****Longer papers require BOTH a word count AND a signed copy of the ‘Academic Integrity Statement’ (found on the LEARN site).**

In Biblical Studies certain conventions apply when citing biblical documents:

- Unless written within the flow of the paper, **book abbreviations consisting of the first three letters of the title** should be used. Thus: “At the beginning of Genesis...” within a sentence, but (Gen. 1:1-6) as a reference following a sentence.
- **Chapters and verses are separated by a colon**, while verses within the same chapter are listed with a hyphen when describing a section (Pro. 1:1-7) or separated by commas when speaking of specific verses (Gen. 5:14, 17). Verses from different chapters are separated by a semi-colon (Job 2:1-4; 42:1-6). As noted here, the parentheses should *precede* ending punctuation.
- Unlike other citations, **Bible citations are generally made in (parentheses) within the document itself**. During discussions clearly marked as dealing with a specific chapter, abbreviations for verse and verses should be used (v. and vv. respectively). If you provide a list of references (for instance, several other places where the same term is found), these should be placed in a footnote.
- Reference to **terms in biblical languages** (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) are placed **in italics**. So, you write peace (English) but *shalom* (Hebrew).

IV. Class Schedule

Secondary readings below are listed on the dates to which they correspond and will be done in preparation for class. See the LEARN site for **Reading Guides** and **Weekly Modules** that will identify and provide orienting questions for Bible and secondary readings, as well as **web-links, announcements**, etc.

Date and Topic	Biblical/Topical Elements	Secondary Readings	Assignment
Introduction Jan. 6 – Introducing “Christianity,” “Violence” and “the Bible;” Syllabus	Engaging difficult readings and conversations		
Jan. 11 – The Transformation of the Messiah:	Pss. 2; 18; 22; Cross in the NT Pax Romana	Suderman, “Faith Forged in Disorientation” https://canadianmennonite.org/stories/faith-forged-disorientation	

from Conquering King to Suffering Servant	Camara's Violence 1, 2, and 3	Dom Helder Camara, "The Spiral of Violence"	
Jan. 13 – Constantine and the Beginnings of a 'Christian Empire (State)'	Cross in the NT (con.)	Eusebius, "The Conversion of Constantine" and "the Edict of Milan, 313;" ² Leithart , "By This Sign" ³	CR
Jan. 18 – Constantine (con.) and the Crusades		Urban II's Speech at Clermont, 1095	
Jan. 20 – "Conquest" in God's Name	Doctrine of Discovery and the "Discovery" of the Americas	Restall , "Apes and Men" ⁴	CR
Jan. 25 – Warfare in the Bible (Joshua intro)	Exodus, Joshua, Judges	Seibert, "Introducing <i>Disturbing Divine Behavior</i> " Bailey, "Thoughts on Seibert's <i>Disturbing Divine Behavior</i> "	
Jan. 27 – Joshua and Divinely Sanctioned Violence	Joshua (con.)	Warrior , "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians;" ⁵ Hawk , "The Truth about Conquest" ⁶	CR
Feb. 1 – Joshua – an Alternative Reading	Joshua (con.)	Suderman, "Conversion to Wisdom" ⁷ Suderman, "Wrestling with Violent Depictions of God"	

² J. Stevenson, ed., *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 298-302.

³ Peter J. Leithart, "By This Sign," in *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 68-96.

⁴ Matthew Restall, "Apes and Men: The Myth of Superiority," in *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 131-46.

⁵ Robert Allan Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today," in *Native and Christian*, ed. James Treat (New York: Routledge, 1996) 93-104.

⁶ Daniel Hawk, "The Truth about Conquest," *Interpretation*, 2012-04, Vol.66 (2), p.129-140.

⁷ W. Derek Suderman, "Conversion to Wisdom," *Quest for Respect: The Church and Indigenous Spirituality*, ed. Steve Heinrichs and Jeff Friesen, *Intotemak* 46 (2017): 109-12.

Feb. 3 – Valladolid debate re: the status of Indigenous peoples		Avalos , “A Brave New World” ⁸	CR
Feb. 8 – Slavery in the Bible and the Southern US	Genesis, Slave laws (Ex, Deut, Lev.), Philemon	Warren, <i>Nellie Norton: Or, Southern Slavery and the Bible: A Scriptural Refutation of the Principal Arguments Upon Which the Abolitionists Rely.</i> ⁹ FREDERICK DOUGLASS...	
Feb. 10 – Slavery and Biblical hermeneutics / interpretation		Swartley , “The Bible and Slavery” ¹⁰ Powery, “The Bible and Slavery in American Life” ¹¹	CR
Feb. 15 – the Royal Proclamation and the Indian Act	GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Susan Roy (History)	“Colonization Road,” CBC Documentary https://gem.cbc.ca/media/firsthand/s02e09?cmp=sch-colonization%20road	
Feb. 17 – Forced “Inclusion”: The Logic and Purpose of Canadian		TRC final report ¹² <i>They Came for the Children</i> ¹³	Residential School – PAPER DUE

⁸ Hector Avalos, “A Brave New World: Las Casas Vs. Sepulveda,” in *Slavery, Abolitionism, and the Ethics of Biblical Scholarship*, The Bible in the Modern World (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 199–218.

⁹ Ebenezer W. Warren, *Nellie Norton: Or, Southern Slavery and the Bible: A Scriptural Refutation of the Principal Arguments Upon Which the Abolitionists Rely. A Vindication of Southern Slavery from the Old and New Testaments*, Electronic edition, 2000, Text scanned (OCR) by Jason Befort, Images scanned by Jason Befort, and Text encoded by Christie Mawhinney and Natalia Smith (Macon, GA: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864).

¹⁰ Willard M. Swartley, “The Bible and Slavery,” in *Slavery, Sabbath, War & Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*, foreword by Albert J. Meyer, Conrad Grebel Lectures (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), 31–64.

¹¹ Powery, Emerson B. “The Bible and Slavery in American Life,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible*, ed. America, Gutjahr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 304–18.

¹² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

¹³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools*, electronic resource (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

Residential Schools		Milloy, “The Founding Vision of Residential School Education” ¹⁴	
**Feb. 21-25 -- BREAK			
Mar. 1 – Legacy and Impact of Residential Schools (con.)	GUEST SPEAKER??	Lowman and Barker, “It’s Always All About the Land;” ¹⁵ McKay, “Expanding the Dialogue” ¹⁶	
Mar. 3 – On Obeying Government and Civil Disobedience		“Public Statement by Eight Alabama Clergymen;” Martin Luther King Jr. , “Letter From Birmingham City Jail” and “Our God is Marching On” ¹⁷	CR
Mar. 8 – Christians and the State	Rom. 13; Deut. 17; Mt. 5-7	Hauerwas, “MLK Jr. and Christian Nonviolence” ¹⁸	
Mar. 10 – “God as a Warrior”	Exodus, Isaiah, NT	Yoder Neufeld, “Waging Peace: Putting on the Armor of God” ¹⁹	<i>Project Proposal DUE</i>
Contemporary Issues Mar. 15 – Gendered Violence: Indigenous	GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Kelly Laurila (SDS)		

¹⁴ John S. Milloy, “The Founding Vision of Residential School Education, 1879 to 1920,” in *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*, Manitoba Studies in Native History (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 23–47.

¹⁵ Lowman and Barker, “It’s Always All About the Land” from *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2015), 48-68.

¹⁶ Stan McKay, “Expanding the Dialogue on Truth and Reconciliation - in a Good Way,” in *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools*, ed. Marlene Brant Castellano, Linda Archibald, and Mike DeGagne (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008), 103–15.

¹⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 289-302.

¹⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, “Martin Luther King Jr. and Christian Nonviolence” in *War and the American Difference* (Baker Academic, 2011), 83-95.

¹⁹ Yoder Neufeld, Thomas R., “Waging Peace: Putting on the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20)” in *Ephesians: Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Herald Press, 2002), 290-316.

Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Individuals			
Mar. 17 – White Supremacy and the Bible	GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Johonna McCants Turner (PACS)	<p>“Why is My Curriculum White?” http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/videos/curriculum-white/</p> <p>Drew G. I. Hart, “The Bible, Race, and White Supremacy.” https://peteenns.com/drew-g-i-hart-the-bible-race-and-white-supremacy-reissue/</p>	
Mar. 22 – Ecological Crisis	Genesis 1-4; Job 38-41; Pss 74, 104	Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation” ²⁰	
Mar. 24 – Christian Violence and Understandings of Jesus	Matthew 5-7	<p>Niebuhr, “Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist;”²¹</p> <p>Hauerwas, “Jesus and the Social Embodiment of the Peaceable Kingdom”²²</p>	CR
Mar. 29 – In Search of an Appropriate ‘Settler’ Response...	TRC Calls to Action	<p>Regan, “Peace Warriors and Settler Allies;”²³</p> <p>Suderman, “Reflections of a Christian Settler”²⁴</p>	
Conclusion			
Mar. 31 – Biblical Hermeneutics			

²⁰ Wendell Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation,” in *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community: Eight Essays* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994, c1993), 93–116.

²¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, “Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist,” in *War and Christian Ethics: Classic and Contemporary Readings on the Morality of War*, ed. Arthur F. Holmes (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 301–13.

²² Hauerwas, Stanley, “Jesus and the Social Embodiment of Peaceable Kingdom (1983)” from *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 116-41.

²³ Paulette Regan, “Peace Warriors and Settler Allies” in *Unsettling the Settler Within* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 213-237, 272-276.

²⁴ W. Derek Suderman, “Reflections of a Christian Settler in the Haldimand Tract,” in *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together*, ed. Steve Heinrichs (Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 2013), 263–74.

revisited --- why “the Bible says...” is not enough	Marrying Foreigners as a test case...		
Apr. 5 - The Ministry of Reconciliation in a Divided World; Exam Review	Ephesians 2-4; II Cor. 5	Brueggemann, “Scriptures of Peace” ²⁵	

²⁵ Walter Brueggemann, “Scriptures of Peace,” in *Christian Peace and Nonviolence: A Documentary History*, ed. Michael G. Long (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 2–7.

V. Potential Topics for a Final Project (not exhaustive or in priority order)

The possible topics for a final project are endless. Thus, the list below is exemplary rather than exhaustive, and not in priority order.

A. Historical / Political

- a specific historical speech/document (President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize speech; MLK's "I have a Dream" speech)
- Christian Anti-Semitism/Anti-Judaism (Pogroms, Nazi theology, etc.)
- Domestic violence & Gender dynamics
- Apartheid and the South African Kairos document
- Ecology and Environment
- "End Times" and violence
- Use of Scripture in a political issue (a Canadian or US election campaign)
- the scriptural background for a specific idea or topic ('Manifest Destiny,' American exceptionalism, capitalism, White Supremacy)
- Christian Zionism

B. Biblical

- Interaction with Other Religious Traditions (Islamophobia; anti-Semitism)
- Holiness, Chosenness, and Violence (Leviticus)
- "Us and Them" --- views of the "other" (Jonah / Nahum)
- Atonement and violence/non-violence
- "Texts of Terror" --- Domestic and Gender Violence in the Bible
- Ecology and Environment

C. Arts + Literature

- *Les Miserables* (movie) - character contrast in the use of the Bible/biblical themes (law, grace/mercy, compassion, etc.); *The Mission*; *The Two Popes*; *Dune*; *Lord of the Rings*
- The use of scripture in a literary work --- *The Poisonwood Bible* (Barbara Kingsolver), *The Orenda* (Joseph Boyden), *The Covenant* (James Michener), *East of Eden*, (John Steinbeck), *The Book of Negroes* (Lawrence Hill), etc