

University of Waterloo  
Conrad Grebel University College

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

Fall 2017

Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:20 p.m.

Location: CGR 1302

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Bergen

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00 p.m., Thursdays 2:30-3:00 p.m., and by appointment

**Land acknowledgement**

*We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.*

**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 the most prominent Christian approaches: pacifism, and just war, as well as Christian realism. 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, just war, and Christian realism
- 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). While the first edition contains the same substance as the second edition, the different pagination will make it more difficult to use effectively in class.
- Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Just War as Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009).
- All other required readings have been posted on LEARN.

## 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.

## 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](#).

## 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. Be sure to bring a copy (paper or electronic) of the required readings for each particular class.

Please consider others: Do not come and go during class. Use devices for taking notes. 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, double-spaced (consider 4.5 pages a very bare minimum, and 8 pages a maximum).

*First paper:* Reflect on Reinhold Niebuhr's "Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist." First, summarize the author's main thesis and supporting argumentation (around 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 Thursday, October 5.*

*Second paper:* Reflect on and respond to the visits of the two guest speakers (expected November 14 and November 16), 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 Thursday, November 23.*

### **3. Critical book review essay (35%).**

This assignment is explained in detail in an appendix to the syllabus.

*Due in class Tuesday, November 14.*

### **4. Take-home exam (35%).**

*Due at 1:00 p.m., Thursday, December 7.* Submit hard copy to the main reception desk of Conrad Grebel University College. 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 November 30 and will *not* be posted on LEARN.

### **Further information about assignments**

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.*

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, book review) will be penalized 3% per calendar day (including weekends), and can be accepted no later than the last day of class. 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.

### **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 – Changes, reminders, etc. will be posted on the Announcements section of this course. I will communicate with you by email if a class is cancelled.
- Readings – All required readings, other than the books by Yoder and Bell, will be posted in LEARN.
- 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.

## Student Societies

PACS Student Society: Connect at [PACS Society Facebook page](#), or contact the Executive at [pacsocwaterloo@gmail.com](mailto:pacsocwaterloo@gmail.com)

RS Student Society: This society welcomes any students who take RS courses, not just RS majors. Search UW RS Society on Facebook.

## Outline of class meetings and required readings

1. September 7 – Introduction

2. September 12 – Early Church, Constantine

- “Acts of Maximilian,” in George Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 158-160.
- Tertullian, “Christians and Government” and “Christians and Military Service,” in *War and Christian Ethics*, ed. Arthur F. Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 39-47.

3. September 14 – Middle Ages, Crusades

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, question 40, articles 1 and 2

4. September 19 – Reformation

- 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. September 21 – Enlightenment, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

- “War and the Social Gospel,” *The Christian Century*, 27 December 1917, 5-7.

6. September 26 – Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism

- 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.

7. September 28 – Christian Realism today

- Robin W. Lovin, “Christian Realism for the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37 (2009): 669-682.

8. October 3 - Jesus and Ethics

- Walter Wink, “Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way,” in *Christian Peace and Nonviolence: A Documentary History*, ed. Michael G. Long (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 8-11.
- Yoder, chapter 1-2

9. October 5 – Old Testament

- Yoder, chapter 3-4

*First reflection paper due*

Note: No class on October 10 due to Fall Break

10. October 12 – Jubilee justice and nonviolent resistance
    - Yoder, chapter 5-7
  11. October 17 – Christ and Power
    - Yoder, chapter 8 and 10 (not chapter 9)
  12. October 19 – War of the Lamb
    - Yoder, chapter 11-12
  13. October 24 – Yoder: assessment and implications
    - David C. Cramer et al., “Theology and Misconduct: The Case of John Howard Yoder,” *The Christian Century*, August 20 2014, 20-23.
    - David Cramer, “A Field Guide to Christian Nonviolence,” *Sojourners*, January 2016.
  14. October 26 – The Just War
    - Bell, Introduction, chapter 1-2
  15. October 31 – Just War as Christian Discipleship
    - Bell, chapter 3
  16. November 2 – Legitimate Authority, Just Cause
    - Bell, chapter 4-5
  17. November 7 – Right Intent, Last Resort, Reasonable Chance of Success
    - Bell, chapter 6-7
  18. November 9 Discrimination, Proportionality
    - Bell, chapter 8 and Conclusion
  19. November 14 – GUEST SPEAKER  
Rev. Bob Holmes, Coordinator for Pastoral Support, [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#)
- Critical book review assignment due*
20. November 16 – GUEST SPEAKER  
Rev. Dr. Maj. (ret) Harold Ristau, retired Chaplain, Canadian Forces
  21. November 21 – R2P and Just Policing
    - Tobias Winright, “Just Policing and the Responsibility to Protect,” *The Ecumenical Review* 63 (2011): 84-95.
  22. November 23 – Just Peace
    - *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2011).

*Second reflection paper due*

23. November 28 – Responses to ...  
[readings to be determined]

24. November 30 – Conclusion  
Take-home exam distributed

*Take-home exam due at the main office of Conrad Grebel University College, 1:00 p.m.,  
Thursday December 7.*

UWaterloo Policies:

### **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. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts 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. 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 advisory, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean of Arts. 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](#).

*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](#).

Other information for students:

### **Accommodation 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. [AccessAbility webpage](#).

### **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: [Counselling Services webpage](#), 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. [Health Services webpage](#).

**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 [Writing Centre webpage](#).