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 views 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:

- If most religious traditions offer at least nominal (and usually quite substantial) support for peace as a social value while also embracing peace as an important condition of the spiritual life, how is it that religious ideas and identities have sometimes been found to sharpen conflict or provide cover for worldly rivalries? And why is it that adherents of different religions so often appear to fall short of their peace-related ideals?
- What are peace researchers saying about religion’s role in conflict and peacemaking? How does religion interact with other factors, such as ethnic or national identity, in contemporary conflict situations? Is it possible to identify “risk factors” that encourage religiously justified violence, or “enabling factors” that facilitate religious peacebuilding?
- 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?
- What types of religious visions and personal commitments are associated with religious peacebuilding and activism for social justice? How are peacebuilders from various traditions similar to and yet also different from one another?
• What are some of the different practical approaches to religious peacebuilding? What are the relevant methods, principles, strategies, 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?

Learning 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 the diversity of 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.

Source: www.germany.info/relaunch/culture/new/images/coexistence_exhibit.jpg
Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

10% Participation: Ten 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., readings). 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.

10% Personal Background and Worldview Exercise: Ten percent of your grade will be based on a short essay (600-900 words) and a related presentation.

- The essay (5%): Describe your own “relationship with religion” and how this relationship influences your thinking about roles of religion in conflict and peacemaking. The goal of this reflective writing assignment is to explore the deeper background from which your assumptions, values, and perceptions emerge, linking your personal ideas to formative experiences as well as to your larger family and community backgrounds.

  Note 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. To engage this diversity within the classroom and in the broader world, we will start the term with an exercise intended 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:

  o What is my personal relationship with religion?
  o 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?
  o 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?

This essay is due on Wednesday, Sept. 30.

- The presentation (5%): In five minutes or less, share the key points of your essay with the class. Be sure to practice your presentation beforehand. As you prepare, focus particularly on the following criteria: timing, clarity of speech, moderate pace, expressiveness, confident posture, and eye contact with the audience. Presentations will be scheduled for Sept. 28 and Sept. 30.

30% Journal Assignment: Thirty percent of your final grade will be based on a two-part journal assignment. This journal will provide you with an opportunity to articulate your overall response to course 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 the different readings and themes, responsiveness to the overall class experience including films, lectures, or conversations that spark your thinking), thoughtfulness (depth of analytical insight, critical engagement with multiple perspectives, creativity, ability to integrate points from diverse sources as you make meaning with course materials), and clarity of communication (language usage, readability, mechanics).
Because this is a journal assignment there is some scope for creativity in format. Here are some of the most common approaches: 1) a weekly log of commentary on readings, lectures, and relevant personal experiences; 2) a comprehensive essay presenting a coherent and integrative perspective on the major themes from the relevant class periods; 3) a thematically organized set of reflections on crosscutting themes from the relevant class periods, with appropriate subheadings (e.g., “What Is Religion?” “How Religion Can Contribute to Peace,” “Obstacles,” “The Role of Spirituality”). 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, each of the two installments of your printed journals should be at least 7 pages in length (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, regular font – like 12-point New Times Roman). Please note that faxed and e-mailed papers cannot be accepted. Due October 23 and December 4 at the CGUC Reception Desk.

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:

- **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 6 and 8 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, regular margins). Due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13.

- **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 Friday, Dec. 11.

- **Option 3: Creative Project.** Creative projects should be collaborative (with up to 3 other students), and should culminate in 1) a presentation that lasts approximately 5-15 minutes (depending on team size), and 2) a 4- to 5-page statement about the intent of the project and its relation to major class themes. There are many possibilities here (skits, simulations, a ritual of reconciliation, or a participatory class exercises), but the goal is to educate both yourselves and your classmates about religion and peacebuilding. A first-rate creative project, like a good research paper, requires considerable research and preparation. Presentations should include a short handout for each member of the class, with information about the topic and references for those who want to learn more. Presentation and written statement must be completed by Wed., Dec. 2, the last regular day of class (arrangements for the timing of the presentation will be made through consultation with the instructor).

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 Friday, December 11.

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. Although exceptions may occasionally be made to account for exceptional circumstances, 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 (and Other Gadgets)**

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) often prove distracting for others, 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 those 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 someone else or 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.

**UW Policies on 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.

*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:*
  - Academic Integrity website (Arts)
  - Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo)

*Students with Disabilities*

The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension, 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.
The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and write in the style appropriate to their disciplines. 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.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, 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. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

Please note that writing specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not proof-read or edit for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.

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 a number of 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.

Required Readings


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

PART I: INTRODUCTION

WEEK ONE (Sept. 14 and 16): 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:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Preface, pp. xv-xvii.

WEEK TWO (Sept. 21 and 23): 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 account for highly divergent religious responses to conflict, even within the same religious tradition? What are some of the different ways in which religion can intersect with politics?

Required reading for Monday:

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 1 (“The Peacemakers in Action”), pp. 3-21.
WEEK THREE (Sept. 28 and 30): 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?

Personal Background and Worldview Essay due on Wednesday, Sept. 30

Presentations on Sept. 28 and 30

Required reading for Monday:

PART II: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

WEEK FOUR (Oct. 5 and 7): CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS PEACEMAKERS

What qualities do we expect to encounter in religious peacemakers? How can religious peace advocates respond to major social injustices and to situations in which religion has been playing a significant role in conflict? How can the role of religion in conflict be transformed to support active peacemaking?

Required reading for Monday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 3 (Northern Ireland)

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 2 (El Salvador)
No Class on Monday, October 12 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

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WEEK FIVE (Oct. 14): BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES
What are some approaches to religious diversity that have been embraced by religious peacebuilders? How can religious peacebuilders reach across deep divides and work together despite differences?

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 9 (Nigeria)
- Film: The Imam and the Pastor

WEEK SIX (Oct. 19 and 21): PROVIDING ALTERNATIVES TO DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT
What are some ways in which spirituality can inform practical peacemaking efforts, particularly when there are forces seeking to mobilize ethnic and religious identities for destructive conflict?

**Journal assignment #1 due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 23**

Required reading for Monday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 4 (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 5 (Kosovo)
WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 26 and 28): WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

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:
- David Little, *Peacemakers in Action*.
  - Chapter 8 (South Africa)

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, *Peacemakers in Action*.
  - Chapter 12 (Afghanistan)

WEEK EIGHT (Nov. 2 and 4): ELDERS, EXEMPLARS, AND RITUALS

How important are spiritually motivated role models, leaders, and exemplars in campaigns for social change? What roles do symbol and ritual play in religious peacebuilding? What are some ways of engaging traditional authority figures and elders in peacebuilding initiatives?

Required reading for Monday:
- David Little, *Peacemakers in Action*.
  - Chapter 6 (Eritrea/Ethiopia)

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, *Peacemakers in Action*.
  - Chapter 7 (Sudan)
WEEK NINE (Nov. 9 and 11): 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?

Research paper option due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13

Required reading for Monday:

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 10 (Sierra Leone)

WEEK TEN (Nov. 16, 18, and 21): PRACTICES OF COEXISTENCE

What roles can religion and spirituality play in coexistence initiatives and in advocacy for a more just and equitable society?

Required reading for Monday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 11 (Israel and Palestine)

Required reading for Wednesday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 13 (West Papua)

Field Trip on Saturday, November 21

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PART III: INTEGRATION

WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 23 and 25): FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND RECONCILIATION
Can religious peacebuilding play a special role in promoting reconciliation, and in creating spaces for transformation? What are some examples of religiously inspired reconciliation efforts?

Required reading for Monday:
- David Little, Peacemakers in Action.
  - Chapter 14

Required reading for Wednesday:

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WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 30 and Dec. 2): SEEKING POINTS OF UNITY
What are the prospects for cooperative interreligious efforts to address challenging global issues such as poverty, ecological degradation, human rights abuses, and war? What guidelines should apply to initiatives that seek points of unity in a religiously and culturally diverse world?

Journal assignment #2 due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4

Required reading for Monday:

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