

University of Waterloo
Conrad Grebel University College

Theological Studies 637 / Peace and Conflict Studies 670
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

Office: CGR 2212

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Phone: 885-0220 ext. 24234

Office hours: I am in my office most days. Drop in anytime my door is open; make an appointment for any conversation of more than a few minutes.

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.

Note: this course is cross-listed with RS 353 and PACS 330. Most of the students in the classroom will be undergraduates.

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 the 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.

Course requirements

1. Attendance and informed participation.

Graduate students participate in all aspects of the course (attending all class sessions and doing all readings), though with different assignments. There will be one or two additional meetings of graduate students with the instructor, to be arranged at a time convenient for all.

At the graduate level, attendance in all classes is expected. If you must be absent, please let the instructor know in advance. (While there are no “participation” marks per se, the instructor reserves the right to deduct up to 5% of the total grade for the course if a student has missed a large number of class sessions, been or has not met minimal expectations for contributions to class discussion.)

2. Three critical reflection papers (10 + 10 + 15 = 35%), each about 5-6 pages, double-spaced, in length.

- a. On Reinhold Niebuhr’s “Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist.” This reflection should include a brief summary of the thesis and argument (2 pages or so), and then a critical response to two or three issues raised by the article. Due in class, October 5.
- b. On Yoder’s *Politics of Jesus*. Specifically: describe and assess the role the church plays in Yoder’s argument in favour of Christian pacifism. Due in class, October 26.
- c. On the visits of the two guest speakers (expected November 14 and 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? 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 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, November 23.

3. *A critical book review and seminar presentation (30%)*. The paper, which should be around 12 pages in length, is due on the day of the graduate seminar, likely the week of November 7 or November 14. Each student should prepare to summarize their book and their criticism of the book in about 15 minutes, after which other participants in the seminar will engage with the presenter for an additional 15 minutes. The paper will be worth 75% of the assignment, and the presentation 25%.

Students will choose one of the following books, and no two students should present on the same book:

- Nigel Biggar, *In Defence of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Gerald W. Schlabach, ed., *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).
- Miles Werntz, *Bodies of Peace: Ecclesiology, Nonviolence, and Witness* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

The document “Book Review Guidelines,” posted on LEARN, which outlines the requirements for undergraduate book reviews, is a helpful guide. The book review should consist of about 2/3 summary of thesis and supporting argumentation, and 1/3 critical engagement.

4. *A research paper on a theme arising from the course, about 15 pages in length (35%)*. Consult with the instructor about a suitable topic and working bibliography.

Final paper is due Friday December 8. Submit the paper in hardcopy during regular business hours to the main office at Conrad Grebel University College.

Further notes about assignments:

- All assignments must be submitted in *hard copy*, double-spaced, standard margins and 12-point font, with no report covers.
- Add page numbers.
- *For TS 637*: citation of sources must be Chicago Style (Turabian), footnote/bibliography format. An online version is available through the UW library website: Resources for Research / Online reference shelf / Citation and Style Guides / Chicago Style / Chicago Manuel of Style Online
- *For PACS 670*: Chicago Style (Turabian) is the strongly preferred style, though given the diversity of the discipline, another style may be acceptable. Consult the instructor.
- Use inclusive language when referring to people.
- There is no binding rule about the number of sources to use in the research. It is often better to use a few sources well than to cite a dozen books and/or journal articles superficially. For the research paper you should expect to do significant reading beyond the required readings discussed in class.
- My general rubric for marking research papers is as follows: 1/3 for a fair and accurate representation of your sources, 1/3 for your critical analysis, 1/3 for the quality of writing.
- Late submission of any assignment will be penalized 3% per calendar day if alternate arrangements have not been made.

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.

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, 19th and early 20th centuries

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

6. **September 26** – Christian Realism, Reinhold Niebuhr

- 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 critical 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

Second critical reflection paper due

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](#)

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).

Third reflection paper due

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

24. November 30 – Conclusion

Final paper is due Friday December 8. Submit the paper in hardcopy during regular business hours to the main office at Conrad Grebel University College.

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, Grebel Dean, or the Graduate 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](#).