

# P50SF04 Special Ethics: Violence and Wars

Master of Theology Degree

Pacific Theological College

Semester 2B, 2014

Course Lecturer: Dr Richard Davis, Richard.Davis@ptc.ac.fj

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## Course Description

This course will explore various aspects of violence and wars. It will explore the presence (origin?) of the myth of redemptive violence in ancient Mesopotamia/Babylon, which predates the biblical (Genesis) myth of the “very good” creation. It will further explore the myth of redemptive violence that surrounds the Christ Event – the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and will expose and critically analyse the prevalence and even dominance of this myth of redemptive violence in popular and/or military culture today. The course will then explore the associations in history of violence and wars with empires and economics, religion and religious fanaticism and/or fundamentalism, and will highlight the issues of just wars and pacifism, and Christian Zionism and Islamic jihad. The course will encourage students to seek and articulate non-violent relational ethics based on (re)appropriation of Jesus’ teachings and relevant feminist perspectives on non-violent ethics.

## Objectives

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- Distinguish between force and violence
- Understand the traditions of violence and non-violence in scripture
- Understand the shifts of understanding of violence in the early church
- Understand developments in just war theory
- Apply Christian understandings of violence to contemporary issues

## Course Outline

This course is taught over 6 weeks with two sessions a week.

This is guided reading course where close readings of primary source texts and secondary sources will be the basis of class discussion.

### **Week 1 - Introducing Violence (week beginning 15 September 2014)**

During the first week students will be introduced to the concept of violence and how this has been understood by philosophers and theologians. The readings will introduce the concepts to be considered throughout the course.

## Session 1: Philosophical Perspectives

### Required Reading/Watching

- Slavoj Zizek - 'Ideology of Violence' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHpNXP7IA0>
- Rene Girard - *Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979. Chapter 1 'Sacrifice' (in library)
- Newton Garver - 'What Violence Is', <http://www.newtongarver.com/files/What%20Violence%20Is.doc>

### Further Optional Reading

- Hannah Arendt - *On Violence*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970.
- Slavoj Zizek - *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, London: Profile, 2009. (in library)

## Session 2: Theological Perspectives

### Required Reading/Watching

- Walter Wink - Nonviolence for the Violent Series
  1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC8pffvX1to>
  2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUC3lAhJs8c>
  3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UejcCTSwJ6I>
  4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9buysvm0SGE>
  5. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_1jpwHsRus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_1jpwHsRus)
- Jacques Ellul - *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective*, chapter 1, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=573&C=712>
- Walter Wink - 'The Myth of Redemptive Violence', <http://www2.goshen.edu/~joannab/women/wink99.pdf>

### Further Optional Reading

- John Howard Yoder - *The Politics of Jesus*, Grand Rapids, Mich. : Carlisle, UK: William B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1994. (in library)

## Task for the Week

Write one page on the readings and videos for this week discussing one point of interest and how it has expanded your understanding of violence.

## Week 2 - War and Violence in the Bible (week beginning 22 September 2014)

This week we explore the biblical record on war and violence and strategies to read non-violently both the Old and New Testaments.

### Session 1: Violence and the Old Testament

#### Required Reading

- Philip Jenkins - 'Dark passages', [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2009/03/08/dark\\_passages/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2009/03/08/dark_passages/)

- Eric A. Seibert - 'Reading the Old Testament Nonviolently' in *Conversations with the Biblical World* 31 2011, p 1-32. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001941200&site=ehost-live>

#### Further Optional Reading

- Millard C. Lind - *Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1980. (in library)

### **Session 2: Violence and the New Testament**

#### Required Reading

- G. H. C. Macgregor - *The New Testament Basis of Pacifism*, London: The Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1958. Chapters 1 and 2 (in library)
- Andy Alexis-Baker - 'Violence, Nonviolence and the Temple Incident in John 2:13-15', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001905028&site=ehost-live>

#### Further Optional Reading

- Richard McSorley - *New Testament Basis of Peacemaking*, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1985. (in library)

### **Task for the Week**

Pick one verse from either the Old or New Testament that is used to justify or condemn violence and write a one page reflection on this passage in relation to the topic of war or violence.

### **Week 3 - Before and After Constantine (week beginning 29 September 2014)**

This week we examine the early church theologians on war and participation in the military. Then we consider what some theologians have described as the fall of the church with the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the 4th century.

#### **Session 1: Before Constantine**

##### Reading

- Selections from Albert Marrin's *War and the Christian Conscience: From Augustine to Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Chicago: Regnery, 1971. Chapter 1, 'Early Christianity and the Problem of War'
  - Tertullian, 'The Soldier's Chaplet'
  - Lactantius - *Divine Institutes*
  - Acts of Saint Maximilian the Martyr
- James F. Childress - 'Moral Discourse about War in the Early Church', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000942152&site=ehost-live>
- Hans von Campenhausen - 'Christians and Military Service in the Early Church' in *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures in Church History*, London: Collins,

1968. (in library)

#### Further Optional Reading

- Cecil John Cadoux - *The Early Christian Attitude to War: A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics*, <http://www.archive.org/details/earlychristianat00cadouoft>
- Jean-Michel Hornus - *It Is Not Lawful For Me To Fight: Early Christian Attitudes Toward War, Violence and the State*, Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1980.

### **Session 2: After Constantine**

#### Reading

- Ambrose - *The Duties of Clergy*, Book 1, Chapters 28-29 and Book 2, Chapters 15-16 <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3401.htm>
- Augustine - Letter 138: Augustine to Marcellinus, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102138.htm>
- Augustine - *Contra Faustum*, Book XXII, §74-76 <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140622.htm>
- Augustine - *The City of God*, Book XIX, Chapters 11-14, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XIX.11.html>
- John Langan - 'Saint Augustine's Views on the 'Just War'', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000942153&site=ehost-live>

#### Further Optional Reading

- Robert A. Markus - *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970. (in library)
- Louis J. Swift - *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service*, Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983. (in library)

### **Task for the Week**

Taking the work of one ancient theologian, describe their position on war or violence, and on what basis Christians may or may not participate in war or violence.

### **Week 4 - Just War, Old and New (week beginning 6 October 2014)**

This week we look at the emergence of the Just War tradition and follow this tradition down to today.

### **Session 1: The Development of Just War Thinking**

#### Reading

- Aquinas - "On War" in *Summa Theologica*, Part II, Q. 40 - <https://archive.org/stream/summatheologi09thom#page/500/mode/2up> pp. 500-509; articles 1-4.
- Francisco Suárez - 'The Three Theological Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity: On Charity, Disputation 13, War' in Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds. *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100-1625*, Grand Rapids: William

B. Eerdmans, 1999. Pages 736-742. (in library)

- Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, Book 1, Chapter 2: Inquiry Into the Lawfulness of War [http://www.constitution.org/gro/djbp\\_102.htm](http://www.constitution.org/gro/djbp_102.htm)

#### Further Optional Reading

- Roland H. Bainton - *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. (in library)
- Joan D. Tooke- *The Just War in Aquinas and Grotius*, London: S.P.C.K., 1965. (in library)
- James Turner Johnson - 'The Idea of Defense in Historical and Contemporary Thinking about Just War' <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001692314&site=ehost-live>

### **Session 2: Modern Just War Thinking and its Critics**

#### Reading

- Leo Tolstoy - *What I Believe*, Chapters 2 and 3 <https://archive.org/stream/whatibelievemyr00tolsgoog#page/n26/mode/2up>
- Reinhold Niebuhr - *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960. Chapter 10 'The Conflict Between Individual and Social Morality' (in library)
- John Howard Yoder - 'Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000651339&site=ehost-live>

#### Further Optional Reading

- Oliver O'Donovan - *The Just War Revisited*, London: Cambridge University Press, 2003. (in library)
- Maria Pilar Aquino and Dietmar Mieth - *The Return of the Just War*, London: SCM Press, 2001. (in library)
- Daniel M. Bell Jr. - *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church rather than the State*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.

### **Task for the Week**

Does Jesus' nonviolent ethics in the Sermon on the Mount have any meaning beyond the individuals in our violent world?

## **Week 5 - Religions and Violence (week beginning 13 October 2014)**

This week we look at other religions and violence and examine the common criticism of religion that religion causes violence and war.

### **Session 1: Other Religions and Violence**

#### Reading

- Khalid Yahya Blankinship - 'Parity of Muslim and Western Concepts of Just War', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001858547&>

site=ehost-live

- Suzanne Last Stone - 'The Jewish Law of War: The Turn to International Law and Ethics' in Sohail H. Hashmi, ed. *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. (in library)
- Ines Angeli Murzaku - 'The Role of Religion in Peacebuilding', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001969434&site=ehost-live>

#### Further Optional Reading

- David Fisher and Brian Wicker, eds. *Just War on Terror?: A Christian and Muslim Response*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. (in library)

### Session 2: Does Religion Cause War?

#### Reading

- Sam Harris - 'No Ordinary Violence' <http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/no-ordinary-violence>
- Mark Juergensmeyer - *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. Chapter 8 'Cosmic War' (in library)
- William T. Cavanaugh - Colonialism and the Myth of Religious Violence in Timothy Fitzgerald, ed. *Religion and the Secular: Historical and Colonial Formations*, London ; Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub., 2007.

#### Further Optional Reading

- Wim Beuken and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds. - *Religion as a Source of Violence*, London: SCM Press, 1997. (in library)
- Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, Michael Jerryson - *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

### Task for the Week

How would you answer someone who claimed that religion causes violence?

## Week 6 - Gender Violence and Capital Punishment (week beginning 20 October 2014)

### Session 1: Violence Against Women

#### Reading

- Marjorie Proctor-Smith - 'Reorganizing Victimization': The Intersection between Liturgy and Domestic Violence in *Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. Chapter 9.1 (in library)
- Joan Alleluia Filemoni-Tofaeono and Lydia Johnson - *Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania*, London: Equinox, 2006. Chapter 4 (in library)
- Mary Grey - The Role of Women in Overcoming Violence in Wim Beuken and Karl-Josef Kuschel eds. *Religion as a Source of Violence*, London: SCM Press, 1997. (in library)

### Further Optional Reading

- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and M. Shawn Copeland eds. *Violence Against Women*, London: SCM Press, 1994. (in library)

## Session 2: The Death Penalty

### Reading

- Glen Stassen - 'Biblical Teaching on Capital Punishment', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001017059&site=ehost-live>
- Norman P. Dake - 'Who Deserves to Live? Who Deserves to Die? Reflections on Capital Punishment', <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000928710&site=ehost-live>
- John Howard Yoder - *The Christian and Capital Punishment*, Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1961.

### Further Optional Reading

- James J. Megivern - *The Death Penalty: An Historical and Theological Survey*, New York: Paulist Press, 1997. (in library)
- Glen Stassen - *Capital Punishment: A Reader*, New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1998. (missing in library)

### Task for the Week

Discuss one argument either for or against the death penalty.

## Assessment

### Minor Assessment

There are 6 pieces of minor assessment, being the weekly tasks I set. The first 2 are due on 30 September covering the first two weeks. And then each Thursday for that week's readings. So that is 2, 9, 16, and 23 October. I will grade these and hand them back with a grade and comments. You can, if you wish, correct and amend them for final submission at the end of assessment week on 31 October 2014. I have asked for one side of an A4 page (estimated to be 500 words, which should be considered a minimum guide for this work). The total of the 6 pieces is worth 50% of the overall grade for the course.

### Final Essay Questions

The major piece of assessment is an essay of between 3000-4000 words on a topic of your choice. This is worth 50% of the course and is due for final submission at the end of assessment week on 31 October 2014. You must agree your topic with Dr Davis as soon as possible. The sooner you agree on your topic the sooner you can begin. Questions may be on any topic of violence and wars but must be related to the course material and lectures. In order to complete the essay satisfactorily you must clearly define your terms (for example, between 'violence' and 'power' and 'force') and use them consistently. You must also engage theologically and ethically with the topic of your choice.

By this I mean you should draw on theological resources (such as scripture, tradition, and the work of other theologians) in your discussion. The readings and optional readings are good places to start. Do not spend too long thinking about your topic, it is sometimes better to get writing earlier.

Sample questions could include:

- Does just war theory have any relevance in the Nuclear Age?
- Should the church provide chaplains to the military?

Or, you may like to engage with a particular author or a single work on violence more deeply. For example, you might write a critical review of one of the articles or books on the reading list, or discuss the debate between two authors who disagree with each other.