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 nonviolence in scripture
- Understand the shifts of understanding of violence and nonviolence in the early church
- Understand developments in just war theory
- Apply Christian understandings of violence and nonviolence to contemporary issues

Readings

A "Course Reader" will be available from the PTC bookshop. In addition to the readings listed in the Course Outline below, these two essays are relevant to discussing these topics in the Pacific:


Assessment

Minor Assessment

There are seven pieces of minor assessment, being the weekly tasks I have set. The first two are due in Session 4 covering the first two weeks. And then one is due in each even numbered Session after that (with assignments being due in 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14). I will grade these and hand them back with a grade and comments. Only the top six grades...
out of seven will count toward your final grade. I ask 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 six best pieces is worth 48% of the overall
grade for the course, with each piece being worth 8%.

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 52%
of the course and is due for final submission at the end of assessment week on 3 November 2017, by 4pm. 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 nonviolence but must be related in some obvious way 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, culture, 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. Or, you
may like to engage with a particular author or a single work on violence more deeply. For example, you might to
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. You may examine a topic of violence in your own culture or nation.

Course Outline

This course is taught over seven weeks with two sessions a week. Sessions will combine lectures and class discussion
based on close readings of primary source texts and secondary sources. This means students must come to class
prepared to discuss the readings.

Week 1 - Introducing Violence and Nonviolence (week beginning 11 September 2017)

Task for the Week

Based on the readings for this week, discuss one point of interest and how it has expanded your understanding of
violence.

Session 1: Philosophical and Social Scientific Perspectives on Violence and Nonviolence

Suggested Reading (there is no Required Reading for this session)

Further Optional Reading/Watching
Session 2: Theological Perspectives on Violence and Nonviolence

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading


Week 2 - Violence and Nonviolence in the Bible (week beginning 18 September 2017)

Task for the Week

Select one or several verses 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.

Session 3: Violence and Nonviolence in the Old Testament

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading


Session 4: Violence and Nonviolence in the New Testament

Required Reading

- Matthew 5

Further Optional Reading

Week 3 - Violence, Nonviolence, and Christian Doctrine (week beginning 25 September 2017)

Task for the Week

Is violence a necessary part of our world or of our faith?

Session 5: Creation and Ontologies of Violence and Nonviolence

Required Reading
- Genesis 1:1 - Genesis 2:4a

Further Optional Reading

Session 6: Violent and Nonviolent Theories of the Atonement

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading


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Week 4 - Christian Violence and Nonviolence Before and After Constantine (week beginning 2 October 2017)

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.

Session 7: Christian Violence and Nonviolence Before Constantine

Required 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', which includes selections from:
  - Tertullian: "The Soldier's Chaplet"
  - Lactantius: *Divine Institutes*
  - Acts of Saint Maximilian the Martyr
  - Acts of Saint Marcellus, Centurion and Martyr


Further Optional Reading
Session 8: Christian Violence and Nonviolence After Constantine

**Required Reading**

  - *The City of God*
  - Against Faustus the Manichean
  - Letter 138: Augustine to Marcellinus
  - Letter 189: Augustine to Boniface
  - On Free Choice of the Will
  - Letter 229: Augustine to Darius
  - Questions on the Heptateuch
  - On True Religion
  - Letter 93: Augustine to Vincentius
  - Letter 185: Augustine to Boniface
  - Letter 133: Augustine to Marcellinus

**Further Optional Reading**

Week 5 - Just War, Old and New (week beginning 9 October 2017)

Task for the Week

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

Session 9: The Development of Just War Thinking

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading

Session 10: Modern Christian Realism and Pacifism
Week 6 - Violence in the Pacific: Gender Based Violence and Torture (week beginning 16 October 2017)

Task for the Week

Assess one argument either for or against the use of torture.

Session 11: Violence in the Pacific: Gender Based Violence

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading

- Tarai, Jope. 2016. "Re-thinking the Fijian Man." ONLINE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qh_ClbaVTs

Session 12: Violence in the Pacific: Torture

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading


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**Week 7 - Christian Nonviolence in Practice (week beginning 23 October 2017)**

**Task for the Week**

Should Christians follow nonviolent means even if they don't seem effective?

**Session 13: Nonviolent Resistance: Parihaka**

**Required Reading**


**Videos**

- "Tatarakihi - The Children of Parihaka" (Paora Te Oti Takarangi Joseph, 2012)

**Further Optional Reading**

Session 14: Nonviolent Resistance: African-American Liberation

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading

- King, Martin Luther, Jr. 2015. The Radical King, edited and introduced by Cornel West. Boston: Beacon Press.