

Christians, the “Other,” and Violence

01:840:311:01

T/Th 2.50-4.10

Hardenbergh Hall A4 on Tuesdays, A5 on Thursdays (College Avenue Campus)

Instructor: Prof. Diane Fruchtman

dsf79@religion.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: M 3.30-5.30pm and by appointment

Loree Classroom Building 110

Overview:

In mainstream American public discourse, we frequently hear the refrain that Christianity is a religion of peace, and that “true” Christians would suffer violence, rather than inflict it. History shows us that the story is far more complicated, and that the terms “religion,” “Christian,” and “violence” must be used with attentiveness to their nuances and complexity.

This course offers history and analysis of Christians as both victims and perpetrators of violence from early Christianity to the present. Topics will include martyrdom, crusades, the European Wars of Religion in early modern Europe, 20th century religious conflicts, and contemporary political discourse.

The aim of the class is to complicate our thinking about Christianity, violence, and the creation of religious “Others,” and to give students tools to assess “religious violence” in any historical setting, even (and especially) our own.

Grade Breakdown:

1. **Participation (20%)**—You are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in every class period. For more information, see “Assignment Instructions” below.
2. **Homework (30%)**— For every class, you will need to write at least one Forum post on Sakai. For more information, see “Assignment Instructions” below.
3. **Writing Assignment(s) (35%)**— The writing assignments for this class will be due October 6, November 10, and December 8. You will also write a reflection, due with your final exam, on the body of your writing. An optional re-draft of your choice of assignments is also due with your exam. NB: This is a complete re-submission, so your grade could go down.
 - a. October 6 (10%): A 3-4 page paper due on any topic or question that has come up in class or as a result of class. You must engage with at least one primary source and one secondary source.
 - b. November 10 (10%): *Either* a 3-4 page paper due on any topic or question that has come up since the last paper (engaging at least one primary source and one secondary source) *OR* a 5-7 page paper due expanding on your first paper (engaging at least one primary source and three secondary sources).
 - c. December 8 (10%): *Either* a 3-4 page paper due on any topic or question that has come up since the last paper (engaging at least one primary source and one secondary source) *OR* a 5-7 page paper due expanding on your first or second paper (engaging at least one primary source and three secondary sources) *OR* a 10-12 page paper due expanding on any previous paper (engaging at least two primary sources and 6 secondary sources).
 - d. Reflection (5%): Due with your exams. A 2-4 page reflection on your writing and what you’ve learned from your explorations in this class. What did you write about? How?

Would you do it differently now? What did you learn that was valuable? Whether you wrote deeply on one topic or more cursorily on three, what are the overall takeaways from your writing for this class that you want to share?

4. **Final Exam (15%)**—The Final Exam will ask you to discuss selections from texts you have *not* read for class (and possible by authors you will not have encountered in class). You must analyze these texts using the critical skills you have developed in class and compare/contrast them to texts and authors you *have* read for class.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Become familiar with a wide variety of Christian understandings of violence and Christian identity, both historical and contemporary.
- Exercise their ability to critically analyze primary source documents and secondary scholarship on the issue of religion and violence.
- Develop and refine their own thinking on the relationships between Christianity, violence, and the “other” with reference to various scholarly assessments.

And because this is a WCr course, students will also:

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Readings:

- Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- All other readings are available, numbered, on Sakai under “Resources.”

Schedule of Readings and Assignments			
Day	Date	Class Theme	Readings/Assignments
Week 1: “Christians, “the Other”, and “Violence”			
1	9/5	1.	J. Z. Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious” selections (in class).
2	9/7	2.	William Cavanaugh, <i>The Myth of Religious Violence</i> , 1-14, 181-230.
		3.	Alan Page Fiske and Tage Shakti Rai, <i>Virtuous Violence</i> , xxi-16.
Week 2: Violence and the Hebrew Bible			
3	9/12	4.	Regina Schwartz, <i>The Curse of Cain</i> , ix-xi, 1-38, 143-176,
4	9/14	5.	Robert Eisen, <i>The Peace and Violence of Judaism</i> , 3-64
Week 3: Violence and the New Testament			
5	9/19	6.	Selections from the New Testament
		7.	Hector Avalos, <i>Fighting Words</i> , Introduction and Chapters 8-9: “Christianity and the New Testament”.

6	9/21	8. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, <i>Killing Enmity. Violence and the New Testament</i> , chapters 1, 3, and 4.
Week 4: Early Christian Martyrdom		
7	9/26	9. Deaths of Jesus (Gospel Parallels) 10. Acts 7 11. Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs 12. Martyrdom of Polycarp 13. Nicole Kelley, "Philosophy as Training for Death."
8	9/28	14. Arthur Droge and James Tabor, <i>A Noble Death</i> , 113-158 15. Passion of Perpetua 16. Passion of Pappylus, Carpus, and Agathonike <i>Writing Deadline #1 9/29, 11.59pm</i>
Week 5: Early Christian Attitudes to War and Peace		
9	10/3	17. Tertullian, <i>On the Crown</i> 18. Despina Iosif, <i>Early Christian Attitudes to War, Violence and Military Service</i> , 1-18, 45-86, and 145-186.
10	10/5	19. Tertullian, <i>Apology</i> (selection) 20. Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i> (selection) 21. Despina Iosif, <i>Early Christian Attitudes to War, Violence and Military Service</i> , 213-286. <i>Writing Deadline #1 10/6, 11.59pm</i>
Week 6: Christian Identity after Constantine		
11	10/10	22. Paulinus of Nola, <i>Letters to Crispinianus</i> 23. Augustine of Hippo, <i>Letters to Boniface</i> 24. Despina Iosif, <i>Early Christian Attitudes to War, Violence and Military Service</i> , 187-212, 305-307.
12	10/12	25. Prudentius, <i>Peristephanon</i> 3, 5, 9, 11, and 14
Week 7: Making and Finding "Others" in the Late Ancient Church		
13	10/17	26. Augustine of Hippo on Coercion—Excerpts from Anti-Donatist Texts 27. Hal Drake, "Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance" 28. Maureen Tilley, "When Schism Becomes Heresy" (selection)
14	10/19	29. Michael Gaddis, <i>There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ</i> , Chapter 5
Week 8: Just War		
15	10/24	30. Alan Fitzgerald, <i>Augustine through the Ages</i> (s.v. "War") 31. Robert A. Markus, "Saint Augustine's views on the 'Just War'"
16	10/25	32. Frederick H. Russell, <i>The Just War in the Middle Ages</i> (selections)
Week 9: Crusade		
17	10/31	33. Urban II's Speech to the Council of Clermont 34. Thomas Asbridge, <i>The First Crusade</i> , ch. 1: "Holy War Proclaimed"
18	11/2	35. Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an act of Love" 36. Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood"
Week 10: Reformation		
19	11/7	37. Martin Luther, "Eight Sermons at Wittenberg" 38. Martin Luther, "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants."
20	11/9	39. William Cavanaugh, <i>The Myth of Religious Violence</i> , Chapter 3 <i>Writing Deadline #2 11/10, 11.59pm</i>
Week 11: Reformation, Continued.		

21	11/14	40. Balthasar Hubmaier, "Concerning Heretics and Those Who Burn Them." 41. Schletheim Confession 42. Melchior Hoffman, "The Ordinance of God" 43. Harold S. Bender, "The Pacifism of the Sixteenth-Century Anabaptists."
22	11/16	44. Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence"
THANKSGIVING RECESS		
Week 12: "The Troubles"		
23	11/28	45. David McKittrick, <i>Making Sense of the Troubles</i> (selections)
24	11/30	46. Claire Mitchell, <i>Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland</i> (selections) 47. Hempton, "The Fog of Religious Conflict" 48. Bourke, "Languages of Conflict"
Week 13: Christians, "Others," and Violence in Bosnia		
25	12/5	49. Michael Sells, <i>The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia</i> , ix-92
26	12/7	50. Michael Sells, <i>The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia</i> , 93-156. <i>Writing Deadline #3 12/8, 11.59pm</i>
Week 14: Contemporary Christians on War and Peace		
27	12/12	51. Reading TBA
FINAL EXAM FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 8:00AM <i>Exam will take place in Hardenbergh Hall A4</i> <i>Writing Reflections and Optional Re-Writes due with Final Exam</i>		

Assignment Instructions

1. Participation:

- a. Your participation in each class will be graded on a 4-point scale.
 - i. Contributing thoughtfully to class discussion by making informed comments and asking questions constitutes full participation, but so does participation in class activities and engaged listening: in other words, you do not have to speak in front of the whole class in order to fully participate.
- b. Showing up after attendance has been taken will result in a 1-point deduction from that day's participation grade.
- c. Not having your texts ready to go when class begins, evincing unpreparedness when asked a question in class, or being inattentive in class (dozing, reading a newspaper, writing an email, checking Facebook, doing work for another class, etc.) will result in a 2-point deduction from that day's participation grade.
- d. Distracting other students from the class discussion will result in a 0 for that day's participation grade.
- e. Four classes will be excused without documentation (i.e. your four lowest participation grades will be dropped).

- f. If you miss class due to a documented difficulty, you can get 2 points for classes that you have missed if you show me documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note, a dated receipt from an auto repair shop, etc.).

2. Homework Assignments: Original and Response Posts on Sakai Forums

- a. Under “Forums” in Sakai there is a Forum for every week of class. You must post in the current week’s forum prior to every class period, in response to another student’s thread. For 5 classes (which you will sign up for in the first week of class), you must originate a thread.
- i. **Original Posts:** You will originate a thread. This must be posted, at latest, by 10:00pm the night before class. Late submissions will receive no credit.
- Your post may be a comment, question, rant, poem, or thought experiment, but it must include quotations from at least one of the texts assigned for that day.
 - ❖ I highly recommend giving your post an illustrative and compelling title, so your classmates want to click through and read your comment.
 - ❖ While these are not essays, they should have a foregrounded thesis or a take-away point or question that your classmates can easily discern. In other words, to be intelligible, these posts must be focused.
 - ❖ While there is no set word-count, a post that is shorter than 500 words is unlikely to be in-depth enough to satisfy the rubric criteria and a post that is longer than 1000 words is unlikely to be focused enough to satisfy the rubric criteria.
 - Each assignment will be graded on a 5-point scale according to the following rubric:

Grade	Criteria
5	Thoughtful, insightful, thorough, and focused, with excellent choice of quotes, excellent use of quotes, and clear, elegant writing. (Outstanding)
4	Thoughtful and focused, with good choice and use of quotes and clear writing. (Good)
3	Thoughtful but unclear or confused, with passable choice and use of quotes. (Satisfactory)
2	Unclear or confused, with questionable or insufficient use of quotes. (Unsatisfactory)
1	Unclear or confused, with questionable or insufficient use of quotes, demonstrating serious misconceptions and/or minimal effort. (Poor)
0	No assignment submitted by deadline

- ii. **Response Posts:** For every class period (even on the days that you have originated a thread) you will respond to another student’s post. Your response must be posted by 11am on the day of class.
- Your post may be a comment, question, rant, or thought experiment, but it must engage with *both* the original post *and* the material for that day’s class.
 - ❖ i.e. You cannot just say “Good job!” or “I agree!”—You must further the discussion and add insights of your own, without going too far afield from the day’s readings.
 - Your lowest 6 grades will be dropped, and each response will be graded on a 5-point scale according to the following rubric:

Grade	Criteria
5	Thoughtful, clear, and insightful, with excellent and respectful engagement with the material and your classmates’ comments. The response is clear and elegantly written. (Outstanding)
4	Thoughtful and clear, with good, respectful engagement with the material and your classmates’ comments. The writing is easily intelligible. (Good)

3	Thoughtful but unclear or confused, with passable but respectful engagement with the material. (Satisfactory)
2	Unclear or confused. (Unsatisfactory)
1	Unclear or confused, demonstrating serious misconceptions, minimal effort, and/or disrespect for your classmates. (Poor)
0	No assignment submitted by deadline.

- b. **Questions:** If you are passionate about something (or just plain confused about it) and you want to test out your ideas on me before or instead of sharing it with your classmates, you may, instead of a Forum response post, email me a question or something you want to address about the readings or what is happening in class. To be clear: you may always email me, for any reason at all, but a few times in the semester a thoughtful email will count as an assignment and you will receive credit for it. This is, essentially, a venue for asking questions or making comments without all of your classmates seeing it, and thus not something to be done frequently.

Classroom Policies:

1. **Civility:** This semester we will at times be discussing most of the things you are not supposed to discuss in polite company. In order to ensure that everyone feels comfortable participating in these discussions, we must all show respect to one another, to one another's ideas, and to the material we are discussing. Dismissive or abusive comments will not be tolerated.
2. **Academic Integrity:** Rutgers has strict policies regarding academic integrity, with which you must be familiar. They can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>. My only addition to this policy is a reminder: no matter how small the assignment or assignment component (a forum post, a quiz response, one sentence in a 5-page essay, etc.), **all** work that you submit in this class must be your own. If you have received help on an assignment, that is fine—but you must acknowledge that help (even if you are using a translation service). If you plagiarize on any part of any assignment, you will receive a zero on that assignment and receive a warning from me. If it happens again, no matter how insignificant the infraction, you will receive a failing grade in the course and I will submit a disciplinary report to the University that could result in your expulsion from Rutgers.
3. **Technology:** Any and all technology is acceptable in the classroom, with a few caveats:
 - a. **All texts must be available to you at the beginning of the class period.** Whether that means printing them out or downloading them so they are ready to go on whichever devices you intend to use, you must have all of the day's readings accessible for your reference during class. You should be able to reference texts easily, without having to wait for a page to load. Not having your texts ready to go at the start of class is akin to coming to class unprepared, and your participation grade may suffer accordingly. **NB:** If you are reading from a phone, annotations to PDFs might not be visible. I often use annotations to indicate what portions of texts you should focus on, so be sure to do the course readings on a desktop, laptop, or tablet, and if you will be doing your in-class reading on your phone, make a paper note of relevant annotations.
 - b. **Do not become distracted.** If I notice that you are distracted, you will lose half of your participation points for the day.
 - c. **Do not distract your classmates.** If I notice that you are distracting your classmates, you will lose all of your participation points for the day. If you are being distracted by another student, please let me know so that I can let them know they are being distracting.