

CH 3XP3/6XP6: CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON WAR AND PEACE

McMaster Divinity College

Winter Semester, 2015
Monday, 10:30am-12:20pm
Instructor: Gordon L. Heath
gheath@mcmaster.ca
905-525-9140 ex.26409

“Dulce bellum inexpertis”
Desiderius Erasmus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The beginning of the twenty-first century has been marked by terrorism, war, and violent persecution of religious minorities. Christians are to engage culture, but what do they do when that culture is violent? How are Christians to live in the midst of such horrors? Do they take up arms to defend themselves and others, or do they turn the other cheek? This course will examine Christian thinking and practice on militarism, the restraint of war and paths to peace, including just war, non-violence, pacifism and revolution.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Knowing

- to provide an understanding of how the church's view of a Christian's participation in warfare has developed and differed over the centuries
- to examine various ways in which the church has attempted to live in and engage with the wider culture during specific military conflicts
- to understand the process of theological development

Being

- to encourage students to reflect on and develop their own view of Christians and war
- to nurture a sense of how to live in a culture of violence yet still be a faithful servant of Christ

Doing

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents and situations from an historical perspective
- to develop the ability to think theologically about profoundly complex ethical issues
- to sharpen rhetorical skills

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Roland Bainton. *Christian Attitudes to War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1988 (paperback edition). [B]
- Lisa Sowle Cahill. *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994. [C]

- Thomas F. Madden. *The New Concise History of the Crusades*. Lanham/Boulder/New York/Toronto/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006. (updated student edition)
- Gordon L. Heath, ed. *Canadian Churches and the First World War*. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2014. [H2]
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008. [H1]

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

METHOD

Instructor's Presentations:

Classes will have a presentation by the professor. This presentation will seek to build upon and further develop the assigned readings. An important part of these presentations will often be a discussion of primary source reading distributed by the professor.

Assignments:

- Personal Reflection: This three-page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes personal reflection should be a brief summary of the student's personal opinion about whether or not Christian's should ever be involved in warfare. Mention of why such an opinion is held is also expected.
- Research Paper: This ten page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes research paper is on a Christian response to a particular war. This paper requires a thesis to be defended, and should be based on primary and secondary sources. See *Doing Church History* for more details on writing a history research paper with a thesis.
- Book Review: This three-page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes review of *The New Concise History of the Crusades*. See *Doing Church History* for more information on how to write a review.
- Movie Review/Discussion: The class will watch a movie (*The Mission* or *Romero*) and then discuss it. The discussion will focus on the question: what was the Christian response to the advance of Portuguese or to the military junta of El Salvador? No written work required - just preparation to discuss the movie.
- Primary Source Assignment: Some classes will have a short primary source reading that should be read before the class begins. On certain days there will be a discussion of the source. See *Doing Church History* for more details on questions and issues related to primary sources.

GRADING:

- Research Paper 40%
- Book Review 25%
- Personal Reflection 20%
- Movie Reflection/Discussion 10%
- Participation: 5%

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.
- Please follow the McMaster Divinity College style guide for assignments. <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/MDCStyleGuide> McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.
- Essays must be submitted on the day they are due (email submissions are acceptable). All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 3% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor.
- The essay should be handed directly to the instructor. To avoid any potential problems, students are advised to keep their working notes and a copy of their paper until a final mark has been received.
- Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins.
- Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g. the flu).

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Jan 5 **Introduction to the Class**
 Readings: H1. entire book

- Jan 12 **Early Church Attitudes to War**
 Readings: B. 1-5; C. 1-3
Personal Reflection Due
- Jan 19 **The Development of the Just War: Constantine, Augustine, and Ambrose**
 Readings: B. 6; C. 4
- Jan 26 **The Barbarianization of the Church?**
 Readings:
- Feb 2 **The Crusades**
 Readings: B. 7; C. 5,7
Book Review
- Feb 9 **Spreading Civilization and Christianity: Imperialism and the Church**
 Readings: B. 8-10; C. 6,8
Movie Review
- Feb 16 **Reading Week (no class)**
- Feb 23 **Great Hopes & Shattered Dreams: Nineteenth Century Peace Movements and the World Wars**
 Readings: B. 11-13; H2 entire book
- Mar 2 **Church and War in a Nuclear Age**
 Readings: B. 14-15; C. 9-11
- Mar 9 **Post-Christendom Developments**
 Readings: articles – handed out in class
Research Paper Due
- Mar 16 **Research Papers**
- Mar 23 **Research Papers**
- Mar 30 **Research Papers (and/or debate - TBD)**
- Apr 6 **Exam Week (optional – TBD)**

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.