

POLITICS AND WORLD RELIGION BLHV 261

Course Description

Even a cursory glance at world affairs will show that religion and politics are at the heart of today's ongoing struggle between nations and ideology. Religion may be a motivator and catalyst in rallying popular support for waging war, and in fact may play a significant role in nurturing communal strife among various faith groups in their struggle to achieve governmental control.

This course is designed to acquaint students with the analytical study of religion, politics and conflict on the world stage. By design, the course is interdisciplinary, covering areas in religion (theology/philosophy), sociology (ethno-religious & identity conflicts), ethics and politics. Students will have an opportunity to focus on one or more of these areas for their semester paper. This course will help students comprehend the global resurgence of religion in intra-state and international affairs, and will focus on specific areas in the world where religion is the primary issue.

Through classroom lecture and discussion, reading assignments, media and student presentations, we will address the role religion and politics play in various global conflicts, the determination of whether religion is the basis of a given conflict, and possible resolutions to these conflicts.

Instructor

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Office Hours: Mondays, 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM, ICC Atrium, and by appointment

Course Goals

To provide an intellectual framework and analytical tools for students to discuss, reflect upon, understand, and propose solutions to a variety of religion and conflict issues throughout the world.

Evaluation

Students are expected to attend lectures, read assigned texts, submit term paper & essays, and participate in discussion, as well as display an ability to absorb, comprehend, and analyze the course material.

Course Requirements

- Reading Assignments
- Submit three short analytical essays (3 pages each, max) on assigned readings.
Topics will be distributed for take home one week in advance.
- Submit one 10-12 page paper

- Oral Presentation: a 10-15 minute review of your semester paper.

Study Groups

Depending on class size, study groups (usually four) will be formed to prepare class presentations on world “hot spots.” These 10-15 minute group presentations will take place near the end of the semester

Grading Policy

Final grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Class Participation/Discussion	10%
2. Analytical Essays	30% (10 X 3)
3. Term Paper	40%
4. Oral Presentation	20%

Disabilities Statement

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavay Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: *Honor Council Pamphlet*, “What is Plagiarism?”, “Sanctioning Guidelines”, and “Expedited Sanctioning Process.”

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Use of Electronic Devices

The use of audio/video recording devices in the classroom is strictly prohibited. Laptop computers may be used for note-taking, without internet surfing. Text messaging and/or cell phone use, except in emergency situations, is not permitted.

Readings Assignments

Required readings for each class are listed below, and should be completed before the class period. All others are highly recommended, and may be referred to in class. Shorter

articles will be uploaded to Blackboard. Additional websites and recently declassified government documents will be made available in class.

Course Syllabus

Week 1

Introduction to the Course

Foundations of Religious Conflict

Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Random House, 2000), Part One: The Old World and the New, 3-97.

Jerald D. Gort & Hendrik M. Vroom, "Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation," in Jerald D. Gort, Ed., *Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Multifaith Ideals and Realities* (New York: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2004), 1-10.

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 1-94.

Hendrik M. Vroom, "The Nature of Religious Conflict: Some Philosophical Considerations," Gort, 24-34.

Week 2

What Initiates Religious Conflict?

Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty & the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), Part One: God, Liberty, Country, 3-105.

Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), Chapter Three, "Why Modern Culture Fails to Understand Religiously Motivated Violence," 35-6

Week 3

Religious Conflict from Family Myth and Culture

First Analytical Essay questions distributed

Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, 135-166.

Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 7-57.

Week 4

Organized Religion as a Locus of Blame

First Analytical Essay Due: 3 pages max

Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty & the Almighty*, Part Two, "Cross, Crescent, Star," 109-154.

Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace*, 58-91.

Mark Juergensmeyer, ed., *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise in Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003).

Week 5

On the Road to Transformation

Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace*, 92-100.

Michael Nazir-Ali, *Conviction and Conflict* (London: Continuum, 2006), 1-83.

Week 6

Models of Reconciliation in Abrahamic Religions

Second Analytical Essay questions distributed

Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, 123-144.

Tzvi Marx, "Theological Preparation for Reconciliation in Judaism," Gort, 93-104.

Cees Van der Kooi, "Three Models of Reconciliation: A Christian Approach," Gort, 104-116.

Marc Gopin, "What is Missing from Religious Approaches to War & Peace," Chapter Four, *Between Eden and Armageddon*, 65-86.

Week 7

Models of Reconciliation: Judaism

Second Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max

Jerald D. Gort, "Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Ecumenical Initiatives Amidst Human Brokenness and Community Divisions," Gort, 117-133.

Marc Gopin, Chapter Six, "Patterns of Abrahamic Reconciliation," *Holy War & Holy Peace*, 103-143.

_____, Chapter Six, "Healing Religious/Secular Conflict," *Between Eden and Armageddon*, 115-138.

Week 8

Models of Reconciliation: Islam

Anton Wessels, "Can the Children of Abraham be Reconciled: Ishmael and Isaac in the Bible and the *Qur'an*," Gort, 134-144.

Ronald Young, "American Jews, Christians, and Muslims Working Together in the Middle East," in David R. Smock, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building*, David R. Smock, Ed. (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 63-71.

Week 9

Models of Reconciliation: Islam, continued

Third Analytical Essay questions distributed

Piet Meiring, "Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa," Gort, 279-289.

Farid Esack, "An Islamic View of Conflict and Reconciliation in the South African Situation," Gort, 290-297.

"Itjihad: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-First Century," *Special Report 125* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2004).

Week 10

Patterns in Abrahamic Reconciliation

Third Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max

Topics for Semester Paper due

Everett L. Worthington, ed., *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Templeton Foundation Press, 1998).

Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1998).

Week 11

Models of Reconciliation: the Balkans

Class Presentations

Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts* (New York: St Martin's Press), Part One: "Yugoslavia: Historical Overtures," 3-78.

David Steele, "Contributions of Interfaith Dialogue to Peacebuilding in Former Yugoslavia," *Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building*, David R. Smock, Ed, 73-88.

Donna Winslow, "Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation in Bosnia Herzegovina," Gort, 340-355.

Road 12

The Road to Peace

Class Presentations

Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace*, 186-197.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "The Miracles of Transformation through Interfaith Dialogue: Are You a Believer?" in David R. Smock, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building*, 15-32.

Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in William Zartman and Lewis Rasmussen, eds., *Peacemaking in International Conflict* (Washington: The United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

Week 13

**Practical Applications of Reconciliation Models
Interfaith Dialogue**

Class Presentations

Last day to submit semester research paper.

Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace*, 198-228.

Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*.
Review his ideas on peaceful reconciliation.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Amal I. Khoury, and Emily Welty, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington: The U.S. Institute of Peace, 2007), 3-41, 43-94, 207-231

Jaco Cilliers, "Building Bridges for Interfaith Dialogue," in David R. Smock, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, 47-60.

David R. Smock, *Religious Perspective on War* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2003).

United States Department of State, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>

End of Course. This syllabus is subject to updating and/or correction.

READING LIST

Suggested Additional Titles

Akbar Ahmed, *Journey into Islam* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007)

Michael Nazir-Ali, *Conviction and Conflict* (London: Continuum, 2006).

Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty & the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007).

Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: Harper Collins, 2000).

Juan R.I. Cole, "The Rise of Religious and Ethnic Mass Politics in Iraq," in David Little and Donald K. Swearer, eds., *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 43-62.

Ron Geaves, *Aspects of Islam* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005).

Dore Gold, *The Fight for Jerusalem* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2007).

Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford: University Press, 2000).

_____, *Holy War, Holy Peace* (Oxford: University Press, 2002).

Jerald D. Gort, Ed., *Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2002).

Vartan Gregorian, *Islam: A Mosaic, Not A Monolith* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2003).

Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics* (New York: Random House, 2003).

Khaled Abou el Fadl, "Conflict Resolution as a Normative Value in Islamic Law," in Douglas Johnson, Ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Menachem Klein, *A Possible Peace Between Israel and Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

David Little and Donald K. Swearer, eds., *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004), Chapter One, "One God, Many Prophets, 1-54; Chapter Two, "The Spectrum of Islam," 55-112.

Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2007). Chapter Nine, "The Islamic Component of Arab Responsibility," 152-164; Chapter 10, "Extremes and Emotions, Fantasy and Reality," 165-189.

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 1-94.

Edward W. Said, *From Oslo to Iraq* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 1-71.

Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in William Zartman and Lewis Rasmussen, eds., *Peacemaking in International Conflict* (Washington: The United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

David R. Smock, Ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2002).

_____, *Religious Perspectives on War* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2003).

Yaroslav Trofimov, *Faith At War* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 2006), 1-82.

Secondary Sources

Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1998).

Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

D. Smith-Christopher, ed., *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Tradition* (Boston: Boston Research Center for the Twenty-first Century, 1998).

William Chittick, ed., *The Essential Seyyed Hussein Nasr* (Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, Inc, 2007).

John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSan-Francisco, 1995).

Bruce Feiler, *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2002).

Jimmy Carter, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

Farid Esack, *Qu'ran, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective on Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oxford, U.K.: Oneworld Publications, 1997).

John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

_____, Darrell J. Fasching and Todd Lewis, *Religion and Globalization: World Religions in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, Oct 2007).

Peter W. Galbraith, *The End of Iraq* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

Ron Geaves, *Aspects of Islam* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2005).

Vartan Gregorian, *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith* (Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

Lee Griffith, *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

Ted Robert Gurr (with contributors), *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflict* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1993).

Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press).

Douglas Johnson, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2005).

_____, *Warrior Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need A Foreign Policy?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

Menachem Klein, *A Possible Peace Between Israel and Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

"Mujahid Usamah Bin Laden Talks Exclusively to *Nida'ul Islam* about the New Powder Keg in the Middle East," *Nida'ul Islam*, <http://www.islam.org.au>.

John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

Neil MacCormick, "Nation and Nationalism," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999).

Martin E. Marty, "Is Religion the Problem," *Tikkun* (Mar./Apr. 2002).

Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Apocalyptic Jesus: A Debate* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2001).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004).

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Amal I. Khory, and Emily Welty, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington: The United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2007).

Richard E. Rubenstein, "Unanticipated Conflict and the Crisis of Social Theory," in John Burton and Frank Dukes, eds., *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990).

Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, "The Development of *Jihad* in Islamic Revelation and History," in James Turner Johnson and John Kelsay, eds., *Cross, Crescent and Sword: The Justification and Limitations of War in Western and Islamic Tradition* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan C. Funk, and Ayse S. Kadayifci, eds., *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (Lanham, MD: University Press, 2001).

Edward W. Said, *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University Press, 1997).

Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Yaroslav Trofimov, *Faith at War* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 2006).

William Vendley and David Little, "Implications for Communities: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity," in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991).

Srdjan Vrcan, "The Religious Factor in the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in Paul Mojzes, eds., *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (Atlanta: American Academy of Religion Books, 1998).

Frinke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State of War: Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2002).

John Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapid: William B. Eerdmans, 1972).

United Nations and U.S. Government Documents

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/religion.htm>

Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief.
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/index.htm>

UNCHR Annual Report on Religious Intolerance.
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/annual.htm>

UNCHR Press Releases on Religious Intolerance .
<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/FramePage/intolerance?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=7&Expand=1>

Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr>.

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Convention/webConvenENG.pdf>

International Religious Freedom Report, US Dept. of State.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>

The Oslo Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief.
http://www.oslocoalition.org/html/oslo_declaration.html

Additional documents will be made available during the semester.