

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### **Religion, Conflict, and Peacemaking (TH-648)**

Fall 2005 – D. Min. Schedule

Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Sept. 20, Oct. 11, Nov. 1 and 15, and Dec. 3

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**Area of Curriculum:** Theology, Ethics

#### **Course Overview:**

This course will explore the paradox of religion as a source of division and conflict, on the one hand, and of peaceful aspirations and compassionate, sacrificial service on the other. Theoretical approaches to this paradox, drawn from the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, will be supplemented by practical case studies, with particular attention given to the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab dispute over the "Holy Land".

#### **Topics to be covered:**

1. Factors in religion that engender or exacerbate conflict
2. Factors in religion that help heal conflicts
3. How we can tap the healing potential in our religious traditions so that we can be faithful peacemakers ourselves
4. How to apply the lessons from case studies to promote genuine reconciliation

#### **Rationale and Goals:**

The course addresses a challenge in "applied theology," namely, how to effectively apply our faith commitments in the service of intercommunal reconciliation. If we are to transform our culture of violence into one of peacemaking, we have to learn how to "wage peace" with the proper tools or methods. Most conflicts have a spiritual dimension that underlies the political and economic factors under dispute. Secular, rationalist, utilitarian models of "conflict resolution" fail to address this spiritual dimension and, hence, they overlook critical aspects of the peacemaking agenda. The course will attempt to rectify this secularist bias by blending theological and psychological insights into conflict transformation. The theoretical approaches will be supplemented by case studies that illustrate both the challenges and the resources inherent in this approach.

The **goals** of the course are:

1. To impart theoretical information that can help students understand better the religious and cultural dimensions of intercommunal conflicts
2. To illustrate the challenges inherent in religiously-based peacemaking by examining some case studies
3. To stimulate the students' own creative, faithful responses to the challenge, inviting their questions and practical recommendations
4. To create a group dynamic that facilitates collective approaches to the issues studied, using simulation exercises to illustrate conflict situations as well as the strategic steps involved in peacemaking

**Anticipated Learning Outcomes:**

1. Awareness of the religious/cultural dimension to conflict and peacemaking
2. Greater understanding of how to apply faith commitments and sensitivities to the challenge of practical peacemaking
3. A deeper appreciation for how different faith traditions address conflicts
4. Enhanced skills in listening, developing empathy, and compassionate communication

**Methods of Delivery:** Lectures, Videotapes, Facilitated discussions, Simulation exercises

**Methods of Assessment:** Classroom participation (20%), Grasp of material as demonstrated in reflection statements (3 x 10% =30%) and final paper (50%). Two-page reflection statements commenting on the readings for each session are due at sessions 2, 3, and 4. The final paper, approximating 15 pages, is due by **December 13**. A 1-to-2 page preview of the final paper (including preliminary bibliography) should be submitted by session 4.

**Course Schedule: Topics and Readings** (readings indicated should be read for that session)

**September 20** Assigned readings: R. S. Appleby, THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SACRED, Introduction, chapters 1, 2, and 3  
Y. Landau, "Religious Responses to Atrocity," from TIKKUN, Sept/Oct 2003  
Y. Landau, "A Holistic Peace Process for the Middle East" (handout)  
K. Cobb, "Violent Faith," from SEPTEMBER 11

- A.M.** (9:30 start)
1. Self-introduction by Y. Landau
  2. Self-introduction of participants through exercise
  3. Course aims/methodology/requirements/grades

4. Ambivalence of the sacred (Appleby, introduction and ch. 1)
5. "Religious Responses to Atrocity," Y. Landau article
6. "Holistic" Middle East peacemaking [Y. Landau article]
7. DISCUSSION
8. Letter from Prince Hassan to Y. Landau
9. Prince Hassan and Marc Gopin's experience of mutual gratitude

**P.M.**

1. Religion as a source of violence/hostility [Cobb in *September 11*, Kimball, Juergensmeyer]
2. Identity formation: Religion and Ethnicity/Nationality, Bosnia case study [Appleby, ch. 2]
3. Ends and means: Religious justification for Violence vs. Nonviolence, & Victory vs. Compromise [OZ veSHALOM Materials; Deut. 6:18 and interpretations of this verse]
4. Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu religious extremism [Appleby, ch. 3]
5. DISCUSSION

**October 11**

Assigned readings: M. Gopin, HOLY WAR, HOLY PEACE, Part I  
 G. Muller-Fahrenheit, THE ART OF FORGIVENESS  
 Y. Landau, HEALING THE HOLY LAND: INTERRELIGIOUS  
 PEACEBUILDING IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE (U.S.I.P. Report)  
 Y. Landau, "Sharing Jerusalem: The Religious and Political  
 Challenges," from SIDIC Journal

**A.M.**

1. The power of foundational stories/myths [Gopin, ch. 2]
2. Rabbinic hermeneutical typology, PaRDeS
3. Examples of *midrashim*
4. Abraham as model peacemaker: Text study
5. Genesis liberation theology: sibling rivalry and reconciliation
6. Interreligious Peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine [U.S.I.P. report by Y. Landau]

**P.M.**

1. Jerusalem as mother-icon [Psalm 87, Corinthians]
2. "Sharing Jerusalem"—Armenians, Jews, Palestinians [Y. Landau article]
3. Turks/Armenians/Greeks/Cypriots: Healing the Wounds of History [Muller-Fahrenheit, Initiatives of Change materials]

**November 1**

Assigned readings: M. Gopin, HOLY WAR, HOLY PEACE, Part II  
R.S. Appleby, THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SACRED, chs. 5,6,8  
M. Abu-Nimer, NONVIOLENCE AND PEACE BUILDING IN ISLAM  
M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, ISLAM AND WORLD PEACE, pp. 1-42  
I. Mattson, "Stopping Oppression: An Islamic Obligation," from SEPTEMBER 11  
Y. Landau and Y. Hendi, "Jews, Muslims, and Peace" (handout)

**A.M.**

1. "Priestly" praxis of reconciliation: truth, justice, and peace [Zech. 8]
2. *Teshuvah* and *sulha* [Gopin ch. 6, Abu-Nimer]
3. Northern Ireland case study [Appleby, ch. 5]
4. South Africa case study [Muller-Fahrenheit, Wink]
5. Healing traumatic memories [Muller-Fahrenheit, Worsnip on Michael Lapsley]
6. Apology and forgiveness [Muller-Fahrenheit, Initiatives of Change materials]

**P.M.**

1. Religion and conflict management, resolution, transformation [Appleby, chs. 6 and 8; Gopin, part II]
2. Muslim approaches to reconciliation and peacebuilding [Abu-Nimer, Mattson chapter in *September 11*, Muhaiyaddeen]
3. "Jews, Muslims, and Peace" by Y. Landau and Y. Hendi

**November 15**

Assigned readings: Y. Halevi, AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE GARDEN OF EDEN  
OPEN HOUSE materials (handouts)  
Y. Landau, HEALING THE HOLY LAND (U.S.I.P. report)

**A.M.**

1. Personal actors and impact [Halevi]
2. The story of OPEN HOUSE, Ramle, Israel (handouts)
  - a. "Dalia" and "Bashir" SIMULATION EXERCISE
  - b. Viewing OPEN HOUSE videos, DISCUSSION
3. Other case studies from Israel/Palestine [Y. Landau, U.S.I.P. report]

**P.M.**

1. Personal disciplines of peacemaking
  - a. Prayer: minimizing ego, praying for adversaries
  - b. EXERCISE: COMPOSE PEACE PRAYER
  - c. Meditation, contemplation, Sabbath observance
  - d. Kinetic catharsis: martial arts, drumming, etc.
  - e. Compassionate/empathic listening

- f. Nonviolent communication (Marshall Rosenberg)
  - g. Interfaith relationships as lifestyle-commitment [Gopin, ch. 7]
  - h. Humanitarian aid to adversary or warring parties
2. DISCUSSION: Personal choice of discipline(s)

**December 13**      Recommended readings: D. Tutu, NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS  
W. Wink, THE POWERS THAT BE  
J. Howard Yoder, THE POLITICS OF JESUS

- A.M.**
- 1. Forging a culture of peace(making)
  - 2. Covenantal vs. contractual relationships
  - 3. The Jubilee vision and messianic ethics
  - 4. Nonviolent methods for addressing conflict:  
    Buddhist and Quaker consensus paradigm vs. Western adversarial/adjudication paradigm
  - 5. Truth-telling/confession instead of denial/repression and projection of evil onto adversary
  - 6. EXERCISE: DRAW YOUR OWN VISION OF PEACE

**P.M.**      OPEN DISCUSSION: How do we apply what we've learned? What peacemaking commitments will I make? What partners will I choose? CLOSURE