

Hartford International University, Spring 2024

Peace, Justice and Violence in Sacred Texts (IPP-611)

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Course modality: **14-weeks, weekly seminars, hybrid synchronous, with Canvas discussion topics**

Class time and location: **Wednesdays from 7:00 pm to 9:50 pm; 77 Sherman, via Zoom and Room 205**

Office hours: in person, via zoom or phone TBD (to schedule an appointment, email Crobertson@Hartfordinternational.edu and/or tyuskaev@hartfordinternational.edu).

Note: As the course progresses, minor adjustments to the syllabus are likely.

Description

Students in this course will examine sources from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur'an that relate to peace, justice, and violence. Students will analyze sacred texts in their original socio-historical contexts, and will explore diverse ways Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources confront and interpret these texts. Students will take a case study approach to investigate how texts from all three Abrahamic traditions can and have been used to legitimate violent conflict and injustice toward others in real-life settings (e.g., empires, religious persecution, colonialism, misogyny, racism, and Anti-Semitism), as well as how they can and have been used to promote peaceful practices and just relations (peace movements, provision of care for the poor and sick by religious orders and communities, peaceable co-existence and cooperation with religious and ethnic others, liberation and justice movements).

This course has been pre-approved for the BTI Consortium Interreligious Leadership Certificate. If you would like to register for the certificate, or learn more, visit: <https://www.bostontheological.org/certificates> . Contact btioffice@bostontheological.org with any questions.

This course fulfills the following requirements:

MAIRS - Core, and Sacred Texts as Living Documents requirement

MAC - Chaplaincy Elective

MAC - Islamic Chaplaincy Elective

MAP - Elective

Texts*

Required: Readings will include

- **Primary scriptural texts** from Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Recommended translations are
 - a. [JPS translation](#) of the Hebrew Bible
 - b. [New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#) of the Christian Bible
 - c. [Abdel Haleem translation](#) of the Quran.
- **Secondary readings**, articles and book chapters, with PDFs posted in CANVAS.

*Recommended pre-readings for those who might a refresher on the subjects of Christianity, Islam and Judaism:

- John Esposito, Darrel Fasching & Todd Lewis, *Religions of the West Today* (Oxford University Press, 2017), or Chapters 3, 4, 5 from the book *World Religions Today* by the same authors
- Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions*, chapter 8, 9, 10.
- Tamara Sonn & John Morreall, *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Religious Studies* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), chapter 6 (Western Monotheisms)

Coursework and Assessment

- Class Participation: 10%
- Weekly Reflections posted in CANVAS: 20% (**start posting reflections on the second week of the course**)
- One presentation: 10% (student presentations will begin on the third week of the course)
- Midterm paper (5-6 pages): 25% (**due on March 6**)
- Final paper or project: 35% (**due on May 3**)

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that includes attention to their origins, ritual practices, theologies, organizational forms, and internal diversity.
- Analyze concepts of peace, justice and violence in the sacred scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, explaining how the scriptures of each religion have been used to promote both violence and peaceful relations, both oppression and justice.
- Reflect on the experience of getting to know people of other faiths and experiencing substantive dialog with others who view the world differently than you do.

- Connect the concepts of conflict transformation to the concepts of just peace, positive peace and negative peace.
- Critique your own faith's teachings, history, and leadership in terms of their contributions towards peace and their role in injustice.
- Identify scriptures, theologies, and exemplary figures from Judaism, Christianity and Islam contributing to traditions of nonviolence.
- Interrogate your own biases and their impact on peacebuilding practices.
- Define moral imagination and identify examples of it. Recognize patterns of injustice from your home community which may require moral imagination to transform.

Plagiarism policy – plagiarism is not tolerated, see: <https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/student-affairs/student-resources/student-handbook>

Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning:

- Showing mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engaging in cross-disciplinary content and teaching.
- Paying attention to the whole personhood of another – history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank.
- Demonstrating how to disagree respectfully and welcome other opinions.
- Embodying mutuality – Learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

Schedule

1) January 17 – **Introductions**

2) January 24 – **Concept of Justice in Judaism and Christianity**

- Deuteronomy 16:19-20; Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 12:1-2, 14-21
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2011/may/20/jewish-social-justice-conference>
- Maurice Friedman, “Social Responsibility in Judaism,” *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October 1962): 42-60
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/18/opinion/social-justice-christianity.html>
- David Cloutier, "Justice," in *Redemption and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Restorative Justice*, eds. McCarthy, David Matzko, et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 3-20.

- 3) January 31 – **Interpretation of Scripture in Judaism and Christianity**
- Psalm 1; John 1:1-5, 17-18
 - Jacob Neusner, “The Center of Life: Study of the Torah,” Chapter 15 in *The Way of the Torah: Introduction to Judaism*, pages 81-85 (DTL)
 - Gail Ramshaw, "Why Is the Bible Central to Christianity?," in *What Is Christianity? An Introduction to the Christian Religion* (Fortress 2013), 9-12, 14-20.
 - Joel Lohr, et al., *Abingdon Introduction to the Bible: Understanding Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), three chapters (see Canvas module)
- 4) February 7 – **Interpretation of Scripture and Justice in Islam**
- Jane Dammen McAuliffe, “The Tasks and Traditions of Interpretation.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’ān*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 181–210. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. (available in CANVAS)
 - Fischer and Abedi, “Qur’anic Dialogics,” from Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, pp. 95-149 (posted in CANVAS)
 - Jonathan Brockopp, “Justice and Injustice”, from *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, vol. 2, pp. 69-74. (posted in CANVAS)
- 5) February 14 – **Violence and Non-Violence in Judaism**
- Genesis 4:15, 9:6; Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 10:19; Deuteronomy 20:16-18
 - Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism*, chapter 2 (The Bible)
 - Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford UP, New York, 1993), Chapter 3, “Reflection”
- 6) February 21 – **Violence and Non-Violence in Christianity**
- Matthew 5:38-48; Revelation 9:13-21

- Thomas Yoder Neufeld, *Jesus and the Subversion of Violence: Wrestling with the New Testament Evidence* (London: SPCK Press, 2011), chapters 1 and 2

7) February 28 – **Islam, Violence and Non-Violence**

- Bruce B. Lawrence, Introduction, Chapter 1, “Allah Invoked”, and Chapter 4, “Allah Debated”, from *Who Is Allah?* (UNC Press, 2014), pp. 1-54, and 118-140. (available via DTL)
- Rudolph T. Ware, Introduction, Chapter 3, “The Book in Chains”, and Chapter 4, “Bodies of Knowledge”, from Ware, *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (UNC Press, 2014), pp. 1-38, and 110-202. (available via DTL)

8) March 6 – **On Terrorism**

- Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (Columbia University Press, 2007) (Available either DTL or CANVAS)

Midterms due on March 6

Note: Since this is the day when your midterms are due, there is no need to submit a reflection. But make sure to incorporate an insight related to this week’s reading in your midterm. (Asad’s book is not long).

9) March 13 – **Colonialism and Racism**

- Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Acts 10:9-35; Quran, 7:11-12, 30:22, 49:13.
- James Cone, “Theology’s Great Sin: Silence in the Face of White Supremacy,” *Black Theology*, 2:2, 139-152.
- Steven Kaplan, “Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel: The Discourses of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Racism.” In *Race, Color, Identity: Rethinking Discourses about “Jews” in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by EFRAIM SICHER, 1st ed., 167–81. Berghahn Books, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qd22t.13>. Or: Hanan Chehata, "Israel: promised land for Jews... as long as they're not black?." *Race & Class* 53, no. 4 (2012): 67-77.
- Chin, James. "Racism Towards the Chinese Minority in Malaysia: Political Islam and Institutional Barriers." *The Political Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2022): 451-459.

10) March 20 – **Gender**

- Fulata Lusungu Moyo, “Gang-raped and Dis-Membered: Contextual Biblical Study of Judges 19:1-30 to Re-member the Rwandan Genocide,” in *Sexual Violence and Sacred Texts* (2017), 125-141.
- Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Sexism and Misogyny in the Christian Tradition: Liberating Alternatives,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 34 (January 2014): 83-94.
- amina wadud, Chapter 4, “A New Hajar Paradigm: Motherhood and Family”, from amina wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women’s Reform in Islam* (Oneworld, 2007) (available via DTL and in CANVAS)

March 27 –Advising week / Reading days (no classes)

11) April 3 –**Violence Against Earth and its Creatures: Theology of Ecology**

- Genesis 1, 2: Romans 8; Leviticus 25; Isaiah 24:4-6, Hosea 4:1-3 Revelation 11:16-18
Quran, 2:30, 30:41-43, 6:38, 6:99
- Ellen Bernstein, “Celebrating God, Celebrating Earth: Psalms, Sabbath, and Holy Days,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 37:5 (October 2010): 378-388
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, ¶1-2, 20-26, 65-75
- Afsan Redwan, “When the Earth Speaks Against us”:
<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/whe-n-the-earth-speaks-against-us-environment-al-ethics-in-islam>
- <https://www.cilecenter.org/resources/articles-essays/environmental-ethics-and-islam>

12) April 10 – **Violence Against Minorities**

- Deuteronomy 17:2-7; Matthew 7:15-20, 27:24-25; Quran, 9:26
- Thomas Haverly, “You Will Know Them by Their Fruits,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 35/2 (April 2008): 123-133
- Amy-Jill Levine, “Matthew and Anti-Judaism,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 34/6 (December 2007): 409-416
- Jasbir K. Puar, Chapter 4, ““The Turban Is Not a Hat’: Queer Diaspora and Practices of Profiling”, from Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke University Press, 2017) (available via DTL and in CANVAS)

13) April 17 – **Slavery, Holocaust, and Genocides**

- Genesis 1:28, 4:10, 12:6-7; Leviticus 25:44-46; 1 Samuel 15:1-9; 1 Peter 2:18-20
- Morrison, “The Religious Defense of American Slavery”
- Additional reading(s) TBD

14) April 24 – Closing discussion

- Michael Rothberg, “Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age,” in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-32 (posted in CANVAS)

Final papers are due on May 3