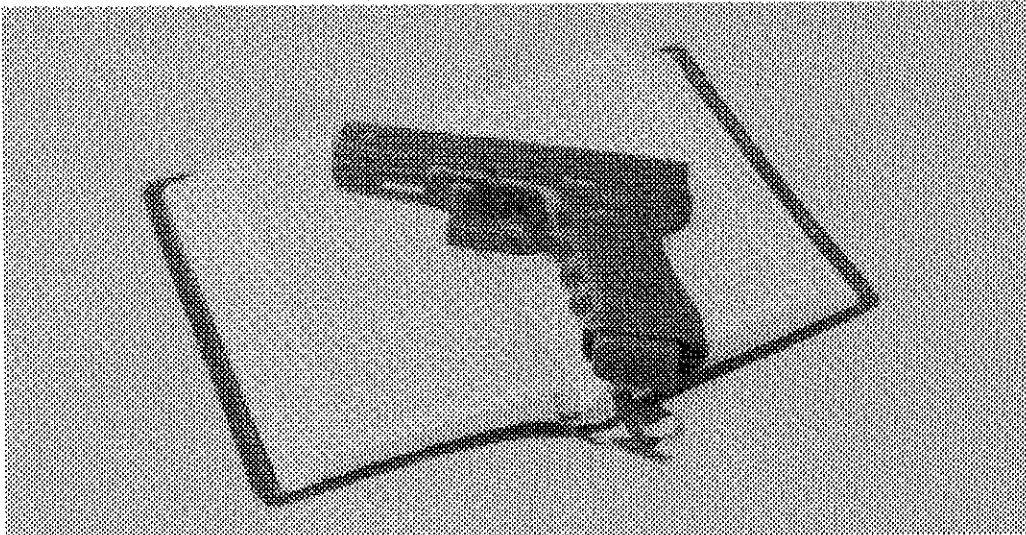


RSOC 188, *Religion and Violence*

William J. Dohar, Ph.D.

Winter Quarter, 2016



Course Syllabus

Course Description: Most of the wars being fought in the world today have at some place in their complex ideologies religious incentives. Religion and religious attitudes are powerful sources of transformation but they can also tend towards destruction. War is a major theme in this course, but in a sense war is only one result of enthusiasms, memories, and ideas that can give a violent edge to religion. Other themes include images of God and their capacity for violence, global terror and religion, radical dualism, sexual ethics and violence, religious exclusion, and apocalyptic conflicts.

Core Learning Objectives: This is an R-S-O-C course which, as you know, expands to Religion and Society. As such, our main focus is on religion and violence and how this combination occurs in various historical and contemporary **cultural settings**.

So, our first Core Learning Objective (CLO 1) is to **think critically and analyze diverse (and divergent) situations in which religion is crossed with violence.**

Second, we approach this broad phenomenon from a **variety of historical and theological source perspectives** including, scripture, law, fiction, documentary film, etc. How do these various cultural artifacts inform our understanding of religion-based violence? (CLO 2).

Since ventures into this controversial topic touch upon the core beliefs of others, we are invited to **consider our own world-views and ways of believing** (CLO 3).

Every assignment will actively pursue one or more of these objectives. (See the particular CLO in parentheses below.)

Course materials: We use one book in this course, Charles Kimball's *When Religion Becomes Evil* (Harper, 2002); all **other readings** are either found on the web or have been uploaded to our course site at **Camino**. Three documentary **films** are also required, and so students should work out access to these films (available via Netflix, Amazon Prime, and YouTube). Our Camino course page will host at least twice-weekly **announcements** regarding the next class and will often include guide questions to assist more strategic reading and discussion. For any passages from the **Bible**, students may consult a printed copy of the scriptures or find pertinent passages online.

Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback: course learning objectives are assessed in three main ways: a **writing** component consisting of **six course journals** (1-2 pages). These are responses to questions raised and are intended to encourage the development of **opinions and judgments** regarding our subject. The prompts for journals will appear in Camino Announcements. In a course that cries out for commentary and expression, **class participation** is a critical part of the learning experience. Since not everyone participates in the same way in that setting, students will find each other, along with thought-out ideas and observations, in three **online discussions**. Those are three dates on which we will not meet as a class (see the schedule below). The **final exam** is meant to help students synthesize major ideas encountered in the course.

To get a more precise look at how scoring is done in this course (and to decide what you're willing to work towards), take a look at the **scoring rubric** at the end of the syllabus (to be added in the final version of the syllabus).

Instructor feedback reaches students through comments on papers and online discussions and, in more general ways, during online office hours. Students can arrange to find me at Skype or for a chat at Camino anytime they'd like. Just let me know.

Course Credit is apportioned in the following ways:

Journals (6)	30%
Class Participation	25%
Online Discussions (3)	30%
Final Exam	15%

Due-dates and plagiarism: All assignments (reading and writing) are due the day assigned. **Plagiarism** in any form will result in certain failure of the project in question and may result in a failing grade for the entire course according to University policies and procedures. Please see the **Academic Integrity Pledge** at the end of this syllabus.

Class Meetings

I. Administration:

T Jan 5 Introduction to the course

II. Approaches to Religion and Violence:

R Jan 7 The Nature and Types of Violence
C. Kimball, *Introduction* and Chapter 1 (*Is Religion the Problem?*)

T Jan 12 Who is God? **Journal 1 (CLO 3)**
Eve's Various Children? (The Brothers Grimm)
Psalm 33; Genesis 3: 1-24
Dies irae (i Day of Wraths)
The Battle Hymn of the Republico (YouTube)

R Jan 14 Are some religions more prone to violence than others?
J. Galtung, 'Religions Hard and Soft'

III. Absolute Truth and Blind Obedience:

T Jan 19 Truth as a possession (not an aspiration) **Journal 2 (CLO 3)**
C. Kimball, Chapter 2 (*Absolute Truth Claims*)

R Jan 21 I'm a soldier in the army of the Lord
Jesus Camp (film and online discussion: **no class meeting**) (CLO 1, 2)

T Jan 26 The non-obedience of blind obedience
C. Kimball, Chapter 3 (*Blind Obedience*)

IV. Does God Demand Sacrifice?

R Jan 28 Making Sacrifices to God
Genesis 22:1-19
Shirley Jackson, 'The Lottery' **Journal 3 (CLO 3)**

T Feb 2 Must God be appeased with violence?
J. Dennis Weaver, 'Violence in Christian Theology'

R Feb 4 Violent Ends: Martyrdom
'Martyrs and Demons' (from Mark Juergensmeyer's *Terror in the Mind of God* (Ch 9)

V. War in Heaven:

- T Feb 9 The Last Days are Here Again
C. Kimball, Chapter 4 (*Establishing the 'Ideal' Time*)
Glen Beck and John Haggee on the End Times (YouTube video)
- R Feb 11 Do the ends always justify the means?
C. Kimball, Chapter 5 (*The End Justifies Any Means*)
Journal 4 (CLO 3)

VI. Sexuality and Violence:

- T Feb 16 Of Gods and Men
R. Eisler, *Chalice and the Blade* (excerpt)
- R Feb 18 Saving Uganda
God Loves Uganda (film and online discussion: no class meeting)
(CLO 1, 2)
- T Feb 23 Sexual Bars to Holiness
Leviticus 19, 20
Peter Lewis Allen, *The Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution*

VII. War, Terrorism, and Peace:

- R Feb 25 Holy War Journal 5 (CLO 3)
C. Kimball, Chapter 6 (*Declaring Holy War*)
- T Mar 1 Holy Terror
Heather Gregg, 'Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious
Terrorism'
- R Mar 3 Jews, Arabs, and the God of Abraham
With God on Our Side (film and online discussion: no class meeting)
(CLO 1, 2)
- T Mar 8 Spirituality and Alternatives to Violence Journal 6 (CLO 3)
C. Kimball, ch. 7 (*An Inclusive Faith Rooted in a Tradition*)
Luke 6: 27-35
- R Mar 10 Thomas Merton, *The Contemplative Life in the Modern World*

Administrative Matters

Office Hours: 305 Kenna
TR 9:15 – 10:15 (and by appointment)

Contact Info: wdohar@scu.edu

Disabilities Resources: If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I'm happy to assist you, I'm unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Academic Integrity Pledge: Santa Clara University is implementing an Academic Integrity pledge designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Pledge states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

I ask that you affirm this pledge and apply these principles to your work in this class.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX) Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife/about/osl.cfm and

click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com or <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

Extended Statement on Title IX and Reporting Practices (adapted, with permission, from Scott Lewis, J.D.) While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue involving harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the Office of Student Life.

If you would like to reach out directly to the Office of Student Life for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the Wellness Center, the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

Assignment Scoring Rubric

All course assignments in RSOC 188 have a 5-point value (5, 10, 15 points-worth of credit). Reaching the maximum of any of these categories represents '**outstanding**' work matched with the letter-grade A. The evaluation of each assignment also focuses on three areas: **critical thinking**, **expression** and **participation** (both in timeliness and overall

quality). The final score of any one assignment is the average of all points scored in each of these three areas. Here follow more specific descriptions of the scoring rubric:

Critical Thinking:

- 15, 10, 5 The work shows that the student has a real grasp of the key concepts in a reading or presentation; there's an independence of thought and a willingness to critique respectfully the work of others as well as provide **solid evidence for points made**. This evidence appears in the form of references to content from the readings, audio presentation, videos, etc. It also helps to raise questions and comments that take the discussion to a **deeper** level.
- 13, 9, 4 The student has a good idea of the key concepts but shows a tendency to withhold rather than follow through with his or her ideas.
- 12, 8, 3 There's more summary of basic points than there is critical thinking.
- 10, 6, 2 Effort is minimal and overly casual or repetitious of points others have made; simple agreement with a point rather than engagement.
- < 10, 6, 2 There's very little by way of critical thinking or personal involvement in the assignment. The student was a no-show.

Expression:

- 15, 10, 5 The student uses well-constructed, grammatically correct sentences; expression is creative, clear, concise and logical. The writer uses vocabulary emergent in the course. There are no mistakes in spelling, usage or grammar. (This kind of correctness is **not so much expected** in discussion forums, though too little attention paid to form in those settings can soften the impact a student wants to make in those discussions.)
- 13, 9, 4 There's an effort at sound and creative expression, but there's too much imprecision or mistakes in form.
- 12, 8, 3 The student makes his or her point but without much originality or quality of expression.
- 10, 6, 2 A minimalist contribution with too many errors in form; lacks focus.
- < 10, 6, 2 The argument or points are sketchy and rushed; many errors in form.

Participation (in timeliness and overall quality):

- 15, 10, 5 Contributions are prompt, relevant and proactive; remarks are posted freely on all assignments within the guidelines set out for the assignment.

- 13, 9, 4 The overall quality of participation is good but some critical contribution is missing such as thoughtfulness, creativity, promptness, etc.
- 12, 8, 3 Something of the above but with greater compromises to the quality of participation.
- 10, 6, 2 The contribution is sketchy, hasty or off-point; errors in form make it difficult to understand or respond to
- <10, 6, 2 Some important aspect of the activity is missing (e.g., one response is given when two are asked for); the central point of the discussion has been lost or not understood; contributions are minimal and the content hard to follow.

Grading Scale:

A	100-95	exceptional
A-	94-90	excellent
B+	89-87	very good
B	86-83	good
B-	82-80	solid performance
C+	79-76	average
C	75-72	
C-	71-69	
D	68-64	
D-	63-60	
F	< 59	