

Issues in Social Ethics

MT 708 – Fall 2002

"All these considerations compel us to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude." — 2nd Vatican Council *Gaudium et Spes* 80

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Office hours:

Mon: 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Weds: 5:45-6:45 p.m. (in Brady lobby)

Fri: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

or by appointment.



Departmental course description

Analyzes selected moral issues in depth, using a variety of sources including Sacred Scripture, papal encyclicals and other documents. Topics will vary and may include poverty, immigration, business ethics, farm economics and the environment. For M.Div. students, particular attention will be given to questions that arise in the parish and other ministerial settings.

Specific topic

Nearly forty years after Vatican II called for a thorough reevaluation of war, Catholic thought and teaching concerning the moral status of war and the theological status of peace continues in flux. Is the magisterium slowly abandoning the just war approach in favor of some form of pacifism? What are the practical implications for pastoral ministry and political activism when bishops affirm the legitimacy of both the just war and pacifist traditions? And what will be the legacy of John Paul II's passion for peace? These will be the kinds of questions we pursue as we examine whether and how the Roman Catholic Church is becoming a "peace church."

Course readings

Required:

- article handouts, library reserve readings, and/or on-line readings.
- Gros, Jeffrey, and John D. Rempel. *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001.
- Musto, Ronald G. *The Catholic Peace Tradition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986.
- Stassen, Glen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*. Pilgrim Press, 1998.

- Yoder, John Howard. *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*. Rev. ed. With a foreword by Charles P. Lutz, and an afterword by Drew Christiansen. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996.

Optional for purchase:

- O'Brien, David J., and Thomas A. Shannon, eds. *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.

**Assignments
& evaluation**

Assignments	Percentage
In-class reports	15 %
Term paper	40 %
Midterm Exam	15 %
Final Exam	20 %
Participation	10 %

In-class reports: All students will need to prepare at least four in-class reports, and when appropriate, initiate follow-up class discussion. (The number of reports will depend on the number of students enrolled). These are the four kinds of reports:

- Discussion summary: At the beginning of each class a student will present a one-page summary of major points of discussion during the preceding session. This should not be an exhaustive summary, but rather, more like the minutes of a meeting. Unlike meeting minutes, however, these reports should close with the student's reactions or further reflections. These reports will serve to remind us of where we have been, indicate any need for clarification. Reports must reach my departmental mailbox or email inbox by noon on the day of class, so that I can make photocopies for all class members. They should not be more than one-page, single-spaced, with one-inch margins, in a readable font!
- Just Peacemaking report: On most days, a student will provide an oral report on one of the ten practices for "just peacemaking" in our textbook of that title. Since all class members will have read the same chapter, reports should do more than simply summarize the chapter. Begin with a summary, but quickly move on to identify some or all of the following: ways that parishes and church structures can engage in the respective practice, issues to anticipate in implementing the practice, theoretical or conceptual issues, whether the practice seems realistic or idealistic and why, etc. Reports should be approximately 10 minutes in length, plus follow-up discussion.
- Gros/Rempel chapter summaries: For the session in which we read from *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking*, each student will summarize a chapter concerning a Christian tradition other than one's own, focusing on the question of how that tradition understands peace, practices peacemaking, and locates peace in relation to its core confession of faith. Reports will be 5-10 minutes, depending on class size.
- Research reports: During the last two class sessions, students will present reports summarizing the research, findings, thesis and overall argument that they are in the process of writing up in their term papers. Reports may follow an outline similar to what will appear in the term paper, but should not involve reading from a draft of the paper. Students may wish to use discussion questions to solicit counsel from their colleagues concerning issues and hypotheses they are still trying to resolve.

Term paper: As the largest single assignment in this course, the term paper allows students to tailor the course to their interests, even while applying what they are learning through regular readings and discussions. A list of possible topics appears below, but students may also propose additional ones.

Papers should be approximately 12-16 pages in length, double-spaced, consistent according to one academic manual of style (Chicago, APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.), using in-text citations or footnotes and bibliography or “works cited.” Unified paragraphs that walk readers through your argument step-by-step are your best friend. The judicious use of headings and subheadings is encouraged. A clear and early thesis statement is required. A concluding paragraph that reiterates your now-established thesis is both a courtesy for your readers and a common sense way for you to check that your paper has done what your thesis promised it would do.

Did I say that I value clear and forceful writing? Good writing is not only a valuable skill for you, and a pleasure for readers, it is critical for an academic discipline such as theology. Communal discernment and accountability within the Christian community require careful thinking and communication. And rarely will you think something through carefully without writing.

Because of my commitment to clear theological writing, I welcome opportunities to guide and aid students in developing their writing skills. I strongly encourage you to choose a topic and consult with me about getting started within the first month of the class. I will be glad to discuss your major findings and emerging theses at any time. I suggest that you aim to write a tentative outline for your paper at least a month before it is due and to consult with me about it. And I promise to do a preliminary reading for any student who brings me a rough draft at least two weeks before the final due date.

Possible topics:

- Role of Vatican diplomacy in international politics
- Role of bishops, Catholic human rights offices, justice and peace commissions, etc. in regional and national peacemaking (international)
- Alternatives to war, post 9-11
- Assessing Roman Catholic and/or other churches’ responses to 9-11
- The “War on Terrorism” – a just war?
- Theologies of peace and peacemaking – comparative study of any two traditions
- War and peace issues in the context of globalization
- Early Christian attitudes toward war, peace, and bloodshed.
- Medieval peace movements
- The place of war and peacemaking in a “consistent ethic of life.”
- The emergence of “nuclear pacifism” in the 20th century
- “Development is the new name for peace” – the relation of peace, economic justice, and socialization
- Violence and nonviolence in liberation struggles
- The emergence and significance of human rights in the Catholic Church of the 20th century

- War, peace, violence and nonviolence in the thought of a major historical thinker such as:
 - Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian and/or other early Christian thinkers
 - Augustine
 - Francis of Assisi
 - Thomas Aquinas
 - Erasmus
 - Martin Luther
 - Anabaptist leaders
 - Francisco de Vitoria
 - Bartolomé de las Casas
 - Any 20th century pope
 - Helder Câmara
 - Oscar Romero
 - Dorothy Day
 - Thomas Merton
 - Etc. etc., etc.!!

- Significance of a major theme in Catholic social teaching for peace theology:
 - Solidarity
 - Human rights and dignity
 - Subsidiarity
 - Authentic development
 - Discerning the signs of the times
 - Etc.

- Significance of a major theological topic for Catholic peace theology:
 - Ecclesiology
 - Christology

- Trinity
- Sacramentality
- Anthropology
- Nature and grace
- Eschatology
- Etc.
- The relation between biography and theology in the life or lives of:
 - Dorothy Day
 - Thomas Merton
 - John Paul II
 - Paul VI
 - Catholic conscientious objectors
 - Franz Jägerstätter
 - Etc.
- An in-depth study of one or more of the ten Just Peacemaking practices, including theory, case studies, parish-level applications, etc.
- Peacemaking & formation in the parish, e.g.:
 - Assessment of current programs and practices in a parish.
 - Write a proposal for a new program, in consultation with parish leaders
 - Etc.

Exams: The major purpose of the midterm and final exams will be to test how students are integrating or synthesizing course materials. The midterm will also test students' ability to do a "close reading of texts." Exams will mainly involve essays, but may also include identification of terms.

About attendance: Preparation, promptness, regular attendance, and active participation are necessary for your success in this class. Because the class relies heavily on classroom discussion and participation it is not really possible to "make up" for missed classes. You will, therefore, be allowed only two absences over the course of the semester – with no exceptions except for documented medical or family emergencies. This means that one cannot receive an A with 3 absences, a B with 4 absences, etc.

Participation: Constructive participation in discussions is the key to a good "participation" grade. Students learn in different ways, however. Some learn by thinking out loud, some need to listen a while before forming their own conclusions, and some feel more comfortable conversing on-line. Even for more reserved students, classroom discussion is an important way to think through questions and ideas, so all students are expected to participate in classroom discussions regularly. But students can be assured that well-reasoned and respectful contributions to class will value more than the sheer quantity of a student's interjections.

About promptness: My policy is to reduce the grade on any late assignment by half of a letter grade per day late, except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. Computer glitches do not constitute excusable emergencies; plan to finish your assignment early and you'll have a buffer in case something goes wrong!

About the academic integrity: The requirements of academic integrity preclude the unacknowledged use of other people's words and ideas in one's own writing. Such use is known as "plagiarism." Information on [UST policies regarding academic integrity](#) is available in the [student handbook](#). It is your responsibility as a student to understand these policies, recognize plagiarism and avoid it. As applied to this class, academic integrity does **not** preclude discussions on readings, brainstorming, or mutual assistance in formulating approaches to assignments. **Collaboration must end, however, when each student begins writing.** Your written work, quizzes and exams must be your own.

For students with disabilities: I am glad to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the semester so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the Enhancement Program for disability verifications. This will allow me to determine the most helpful and reasonable academic accommodations.

Grading scale	95-100	A	75-78	C
	92-94	A-	72-74	C-
	89-91	B+	69-71	D+
	85-88	B	65-68	D
	82-84	B-	62-64	D-
	79-81	C+	<61	F

Course outline & schedule

Your professor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule of topics, readings, and tasks. Any changes will be minor and announced in advance.

	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
9-4	Introduction Overview questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christiansen, "After Sept. 11: Catholic Teaching on Peace and War" USCCB, <i>The Challenge of Peace</i> §66-79, (skim §80-110,) §111-121 	Read the syllabus more closely by next week
9-11	What dare we hope for our world? – "realism" vs. "transformation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niebuhr, "Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist" Weigel, "War, Peace and the Christian Conscience" <i>Civiltà Cattolica</i>, "Modern War and the Christian Conscience" <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, introduction 	
9-18	Reemergence of Catholic peace traditions – the witness of prophets and martyrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musto, chapters 12-15 (but also familiarize yourself with the rest of the book) <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 1 	Disc. sum.: _____ J.P. report: _____
9-25	The just war tradition – more than ever or "never again?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yoder, <i>When War is Unjust</i>, pp.1-101 (but also familiarize yourself with the appendices) <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 2 	Disc. sum.: _____ J.P. report: _____
10-2	A "whole new attitude" toward war? – themes from Vatican II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Vatican Council, <i>Gaudium et Spes</i>, §23-32, 40-45, 77-90 John XXIII, <i>Pacem in terris</i> Paul VI, <i>Populorum progressio</i> <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 3 	Disc. sum.: _____ J.P. report: _____
10-9	At the "threshold of hope" – John Paul II and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Paul II, <i>Redemptor hominis</i>, ch. 2-4 (= §7-22) 	Disc. sum.: _____ J.P. report: _____

	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
	Catholic moral anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei socialis • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 4 	
10-16	NO CLASS		
10-23	At the “threshold of hope” – John Paul II and the nonviolent revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Paul II, Centesimus annus • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 5 	<p>Mid-term exam, relating <i>Centesimus annus</i> to previous documents and developments</p> <p><i>J.P. report:</i> _____</p>
10-30	How to be a peace church? – Ecumenical conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gros/Rempel, <i>The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All read the introduction; chapters by Gritsch, Erickson, Paxson, Barrett, Puglisi; and final report • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 6 	<i>J.P. report:</i> _____
11-6	How to be a peace church? – Catholic contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCCB, “The Harvest of Justice” • Review Sollicitudo rei socialis and Centesimus annus • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 7 	<p>Disc. sum.: _____</p> <p><i>J.P. report:</i> _____</p>
11-13	Did 9-11 “change everything?” – assessing and reassessing the pacifist / just war debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivan Kauffman, “9.11: The Churches at the Crossroads” • USCCB pastoral statement, of Nov. 2001 • John Paul II, World Day of Peace 2002 message • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 8 	<p>Disc. sum.: _____</p> <p><i>J.P. report:</i> _____</p>
11-20	Towards a Catholic peace theology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lumen Gentium, §1-17, (skim 18-38,) 39-42, (skim 43-47,) 48-51 • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 9 	<p>Disc. sum.: _____</p> <p><i>J.P. report:</i> _____</p>
11-27	(Thanksgiving break; no class)		

	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
12-4	Towards a Catholic peace church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schlabach, "Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue." • Paul VI, <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i>, §6-39 • USIP, <i>Catholic Contributions to International Peace</i> • <i>Just Peacemaking</i>, ch. 10 	<p>Disc. sum.: _____</p> <p>J.P. report: _____</p>
12-11	Research reports Retrospective		Reports
12-18	FINAL EXAM		Term papers due Final exam