



CHTH 231/331

Christianity, War, and Violence

Distance/Campus Course Description

Lecturer: Dr Andrew Shepherd

Brief Introduction to the Paper

This paper builds on the introduction to Christian ethics provided in CHTH131. After an investigation of the role of the Bible in Christian ethics, attention is given to the way war and violence is conceived within the Biblical narrative and broader Christian history. The paper explores the ethical traditions of 'just war' theory and Christian non-violence/pacifism, and reflects on a range of practices (legal frameworks, holy war, civil disobedience / non-cooperative resistance, martyrdom) that have characterised the Church's response to war and violence.

The course is divided into three modules:

Module 1: Texts: Humanity, Violence, and the Bible

- Introduction
- The Bible in Christian Ethics
- Defining Violence
- A Covenant Community: Liberation & Violence, Law & Hope
- Christ as Victim-Victor; Sacrifice-Scapegoat
- Ecclesia, Empire, and Eschatology

Module 2: Tradition: Ethical Theories and Enacted Praxis in Church History

- Just War Theory
- Apocalyptic Millenarianism, Holy War, & Liberation
- Pacifism and Martyrdom

Module 3: Today: Contemporary Realities and the Praxis of Peace

- Total War and Technological Violence
- Non-Violent Resistance: Christian Protest & Peace-making.
- Legislation and Limits on War Violence

Assessment

This paper is fully internally assessed. There is no examination.

CHTH 231:

Assessment #1: 1500 words = 30%;

Assessment #2: 1750 words = 30%;

Assessment #3: 2000 words, 40%

CHTH 331:

Assessment #1: 1750 words = 30%;

Assessment #2: 2250 words = 30%;

Assessment #3: 2500 words, 40%

Teaching schedule

The course is taught as a blended campus-distance course. Classes consist of 2 hr classes each week. Students can participate in these classes in-person (in Wellington), with other Dunedin-campus students (in an AV suite), or independently via Zoom.

Timetable details are available at <https://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/timetable>

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students at 200 level should be able to:

1. understand the theological framework within which Christian ethics has its place;
2. recognise and understand the distinctive features of a Christian approach to ethics; and
3. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of this approach as it pertains to contemporary challenges in the global community.

At the end of the course, students at 300 level should be able to:

1. critically evaluate the theological framework within which Christian ethics has its place;
2. outline and critically engage with the distinctive features of a Christian approach to ethics; and
3. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of this approach as it pertains to contemporary challenges in the global community

For more information

Please direct any administrative enquiries to the Theology Administrator:

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