PSC 4373: Special Topics in Political Philosophy:

***The Just War Tradition***



Spring 2013

Tuesdays 11-12:15

Draper 329

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**Required Books\***

*Augustine: Political Writings* (Hackett)

*Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (Cambridge)

*Vitoria: Political Writings* (Cambridge)

*Locke: Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge)

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (Basic Books)

Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford)

\* Other course materials will be made available electronically.

Recommended: Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style* and Robert McMahon, “Real World Writing”

**Goals and Objectives**

The main goals of this course are to help students (1) develop an interest in questioning contemporary warfare from an ethical point of view, (2) learn how to engage in political analysis in a way that is philosophically sophisticated, not facile or ideological, (3) acquire a basic knowledge of how key writers of the past contributed to the tradition of just war thinking and (4) come to appreciate how the study of great texts can help us to put contemporary events into perspective and teach us how to engage them philosophically as citizens. More specifically, students will learn how six different seminal writers in the just war tradition (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Vitoria, Grotius, and Locke) advanced our thinking about the ethics of war. Students will also develop their own schematic map of the major topics of just war thinking, be able to subject current conflicts to a just war analysis, and be able to engage in constructive conversation with diverse kinds of people about the intersection of war and ethics.

**Course Overview**

The course begins with an introductory lecture that defines the just war tradition in relation to realism, pacifism and contemporary just war theory. We turn then to a six week long, in-depth study of the just war tradition, focusing on the authors and texts that have contributed most to the shape of just war thinking today. After we have gained a sense of the origins and historical developments of the tradition, we turn to some contemporary texts of just war theory, Michael Walzer’s monumental *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977); and Jeff McMahan’s more recent *Killing in war* (2009). The class concludes with an in-depth consideration of two theological perspectives that have most threatened to eclipse the just war tradition among Christians today: Christian realism and Christian pacifism.

**Grading Policy**

The course will be reading-intensive and managed like a seminar. Thus students must not only read the assignments for each class session but also come prepared to discuss these assignments in detail. In order to encourage good reading habits from the start, quizzes will be administered at the beginning of each class and will constitute a significant part of the course grade. The final grade for the course will be composed of the following elements.

***Attendance*.** As the fruits of this course come largely by way of classroom conversation, attendance is required. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, so there is no need to tell me why you were absent or to worry about a doctor’s note. Students who miss more than three class sessions will receive a lower grade. Leaving early or arriving late will count as one-half absence.

***Classroom Participation*.** The quality of your participation is important both for your grade, and for the success of the course. The participation grade will reflect the frequency with which you volunteer pertinent contributions to the discussion. If you have not read the texts or have not read them with sufficient care to make informed comments, your participation grade will reflect this too. Since attendance is a precondition of participation, poor attendance will affect your participation score.

***Quizzes.*** Quizzes on the assigned reading material will be administered regularly. These typically take the form of multiple-choice questions, but other types of quizzes may also be administered. My quizzes present no difficulty to the student who has read the assignment for the day with care; they are designed simply to ensure your disciplined preparation.

***Papers.*** There will be two papers (5-7 pages each). The first will compare two canonical just war writers. The second will analyze a contemporary conflict using just war categories.

***Exams****.* There will be two exams for this course. An in-class midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the semester and will constitute 20% of your final grade. A cumulative final exam worth 25% will test your recall of objective knowledge from the course as well as your ability to synthesize and interpret the tradition as a whole.

**Grade Scale**

100 - 90% = A 79 - 77% = C+ 59 - 0% = F

89 - 87% = B+ 76 - 70% = C

86 - 80% = B 69 - 60% = D

Attendance & Participation 10%

Quizzes 15%

Paper 1 15%

Midterm 20%

Paper 2 15%

Final Exam 25%

**Honor policy**

Any act of academic dishonesty, on *any* assignment may result in a grade of zero for the entire course. Integrity, honesty, and relying on your own abilities are some of the most important lessons you’ll learn in college and carry with you into the “real” world. Remember: each written assignment for the course is designed to stretch your abilities.

**Class Schedule**

T 1/15 Class Introduction: *Ad Fontes!*

**I. Recovering the Tradition**

Th 1/17, Augustine, Letters 138 and 189; Against the Manichaean XXII.73-9; excerpts from *City of God* and *On Free Choice*.

T 1/22, Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Secunda secundae, Question 40, Art. 1-4

Th 1/24, Luther, *Whether Soldiers Too Can be Saved; On War Against the Turk*

T 1/29, Luther, *On Secular Authority*

Th 1/31, Vitoria, *On the American Indians;*

T 2/5, Vitoria, *On the American Indians;*

Th 2/7, Vitoria, *On the Law of War*

T 2/12, Vitoria, *On the Law of War*

Th 2/14, Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (excerpts)

T 2/19, Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (excerpts)

Th 2/21, Locke, *Second Treatise* (excerpts)

T 2/26, Locke, *Second Treatise* (excerpts)

Th 2/28, International Law (Murray Forsyth, “The Tradition of International Law,” in Terry Nardin and David Mapel, eds., *Traditions in International Relations*. William V. O’Brian,“The International Law of War as Related to the Just War Tradition,”in John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, eds., *Just War and Jihad*. )

T 3/5 Midterm Exam

Th 3/7, Paper 1 due

**II. Contemporary Just War Theory**

T 3/19, Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

Th 3/21, Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

T 3/26 , Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

Th 3/28, Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

T 4/2 , Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

Th 4/4, Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*; Paper 2 due

T 4/9, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

Th 4/11, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

T 4/16, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

T 4/23, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

Th 4/25, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

T 4/30, Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*

**III. Avoiding Two Temptations: Christian Realism & Christian Pacifism**

Th 5/2 Reinhold Neibuhr, Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist; John Howard Yoder, “Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Pacifism” *MQR* (1955).

Final Exam: Friday, May 10, 9:00 -11:00 a.m.