ECS 5311 Religious Identities and Conflict

Implication of religious identities, traditions and actors in escalating, diverting or transforming deep-rooted conflicts in different societies. Comparative multi-religious framework. Sociology of religion and contextual theological hermeneutics.

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Time: Monday 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Room: 1130
Office hours: Thursday 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Introduction

Religion has played a critical role, often violent, in the making of humanity and the development of human societies. Today as yesterday, contradictory appeals to God are made to legitimize either violence or peaceful action to challenge social norms and / or transform societies.

Based on a distinction but not on a separation between ethnic and religious identities, the course focuses on the polarization within nations around the world between proponents of modernity and fundamentalism, tolerance and sectarianism, atheism and religious faith, open society and theocracy, secularization and re-enchantment of the world.

Particular attention is paid to the role of Christian religions in the establishment of imperial powers who through the violent process of colonization dedicated themselves to the civilization and the conversion to Christianity of the “Other”. In this context, light is also shed onto the role of religions (indigenous or indigenized versions of Christianity) in the subsequent movements of resistance to European occupation, wars of independence, and the construction of post-colonial identities.

Such conflicts which arise in the midst of nations and ethnic groups often endure in diaspora communities are analyzed from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Required readings (Books available at USP Bookstore)


Journal articles available on line (PDF files)

& Coursepack available at Rytec, 404 Dalhousie Street, near Rideau, (613) 241-3555.
Course Outline

September 12th  - Introduction (course outline, requirements, lectures and discussion)

I: KNOWLEDGE, FAITH AND POWER

September 19th  - The social reality of religion: the what, the how and the why
September 26th  - The struggle for the real
October 10th  - THANKSGIVING
October 17th  - To live: what for? in the name of God? : hero / peace activist
October 24th  - STUDY WEEK

II: THE COLOUR OF GOD IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

October 31st  - A Fundamental Distinction between God’s Chosen People and Others
November 7th  - God is Black / The Civil Rights Movement in the USA
November 14th  - God is Red / The Red Road in Canada and abroad

III: FREEDOM OF RELIGION / FREEDOM FROM RELIGION?

November 21st  - Religions, nationalism and nation-states
November 28th  - Laïcité and tolerance / A time for reasonable accommodation?
December 5th  - Synthesis: The Religious Imagination, Yesterday and Today
Methodology

Lectures and discussion / Seminars / Reading summaries / Essays

Evaluation

Two essays (due on 18 October and 29 November) 50%
Student-led seminar and class discussion of readings 25%
Participation and reading summaries 25%

Student-led seminar / beginning October 3 or 10

19 September: Students sign up for leading seminars

Groups of 4 students design and deliver (in coordination with the professor) a seminar based on the assigned readings for the class. If additional reading is called for, students make them available to their colleagues at least one week ahead of time.

Ten days prior to their seminar students meet with the instructor during office hours (unless an alternate time is agreed upon) to discuss the seminar design and delivery.

Multi-media services will provide a laptop and projector for power point presentations. If students require additional equipment they will inform the instructor of their needs ten (10) days prior to the seminar.

On the day of a student-led seminar, those not engaged in its delivery submit in class a single-spaced summary (Times New Roman 12) containing:

(i) the author’s research (quoted and paraphrased)
(ii) definitions of two of his or her key concepts (quoted and paraphrased)
(iii) a discussion of data and/or a point of view presented by the author, and
(iv) two most significant sentences (quotations)
Duration, objectives, features and evaluation criteria of seminars

**Duration**: 1h20 minutes (5:30 p.m. to 6:50), followed by ten minutes of evaluation using forms prepared by the instructor.

**Objectives**: To grasp and critically assess the approaches and concepts found in readings that deal with the religious and ethnic dimensions of conflicts.

**Features**: creative presentation of information, class discussion and/or small-group activities, and finally, a synthesis of learning experience.

**Evaluation**: Students complete an in-class evaluation of the seminar (form will be distributed in class by instructor). Each member submits to the instructor his or her evaluation of the seminar preparation and delivery. Taking into consideration the self-evaluations and peer-evaluations, the instructor will give students their grade along with his written evaluation of their work.

15 points Understanding of topic, analysis and theoretical approach

- Clear focus on an issue / conflict;
- Clear explanation of terminology authors use to buttress their analysis of issue / conflict;
- Detailed presentation and critical assessment of theoretical perspectives;
- Coherent presentation of case studies supported with relevant empirical data;
- Insights gained in the analysis of the religious dimension of a conflict;
- Presentation of new questions and new directions for research.

10 points Quality of preparation and delivery:

- Development and discussion of design and discussion with instructor;
- Effective oral and non-verbal communication;
- Relevant illustrations
- Ability to engage with colleagues;
- Use of teaching aids: handouts, visual projection, other.
Essays  

Handed in on Tuesday October 17, and Monday November 28.

Option 1: two analyses of the ethnic and religious dimensions of a conflict as presented in movies or videos (see list on next page). The analysis and discussion of the conflict draws exclusively on the authors discussed in class. Readings from first three weeks for first essay; readings from October 11 to November 22 for second essay. Only quotations allowed in support of analysis are from readings assigned for the course. Quotations are followed by a reference (author date: page number).

Option 2: one analysis of a conflict (as in option 1) and an essay on a topic related to the course, based on a one page proposal (topic and sources) submitted to and approved by the instructor.

Length of each essay: 3000 words / 12 pages double spaced [New York Times 12 (5 characters per cm / 12 per inch) with margins of 2.5 cm.]

Submit two copies: one electronic before class, one printed, in class.

Criteria for evaluation of Essays

1. Content: 15%

   - The topic and organization of the paper are clearly stated in the introduction.
   - The sources used in the analysis are well identified and understood.
   - The evidence presented in support of assertions and conclusions is critically assessed.
   - The paper is original in terms of comments made, questions raised, and critical assessment of concepts introduced in the analysis.

2. Form: 5%

   - Times New Roman, font 12, spaced 1.5.
   - Title page and organization, titles and subtitles if appropriate.
   - Sources are quoted and paraphrased appropriately.
   - Quotations longer than three lines are indented and single-spaced.
   - The text is free of spelling and grammatical errors.
   - No page number on title page – page numbers at bottom of all other pages

To ensure fairness, extensions are allowed only if due to serious health problems or documented family emergencies. Late papers attract a reduction in grade of 5% per day late.
First analysis due October 17

**The necessities of Life**: 2009, 102 minutes Screenplay: Bernard Émond

In 1952, an Inuit hunter named Tivii with tuberculosis leaves his northern home for a sanatorium in Quebec City. Uprooted, far from his loved ones in an alien world, unable to speak French, he becomes despondent, wishing die. His nurse has a young orphan, Kaki, transferred to the institution. He has experience with both worlds and speaks both languages. Sharing his culture with Kaki and opening it up to others, Tivii rediscovers his pride and energy. Ultimately he also rediscovers hope through a plan to adopt Kaki, bring him home and make him part of his family.

Available at Ottawa U [MRT Audiovisual - DVD02572 and](http://mrt.ualberta.ca/audvisual/recordings) Ottawa Public Library.

or

**The Sea Inside**, 2004, 130 minutes Director: Alejandro Amenabar

The real life story of Spaniard Ramon Sampedro, who fought a 30 year campaign in favor of euthanasia and his own right to die.

Second analysis for November 28


An undercover Tehelka journalist secretly recorded mass murderers confessing, and boasting of their crimes. The recordings implicate high-level officials. The crimes occurred during the 2002 riots in Gujarat, which pitted Hindu against Muslim. The riots began when 57 Hindus on a train were burnt to death by a Muslim mob. Over the next three days, Hindus went on a killing spree, murdering Muslims as revenge. “There was this pregnant woman, I slit her open, sisterf***er, showed them what’s what. What kind of revenge we can take if our people are killed.” - An example of one of the confessions to the Tehelka journalist.

and

**Final Solution**, 130 minutes Director: Rakesh Sharma

A study of the politics of hate. Set in Gujarat during the period Feb/March 2002 - July 2003, the film graphically documents the changing face of right-wing politics in India through a study of the 2002 genocide of Moslems in Gujarat.

or

(other option to be communicated in class)
REQUIRED READINGS          FALL 2011

Week Two – 19 September          The social reality of religion


Apology from The Dialogues of Plato, Volume 2 ; (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892). Translated by Benjamin Jowett


Week Three – 26 September          The Struggle for the Real


Goulet, Jean-Guy A. 2007 : Chapter 9: Moving Beyond Culturally Bound Ethical Guidelines, (pp. 208-236) in Extraordinary Anthropology. Transformations in the Field, Jean-Guy A. Goulet and Bruce Granville Miller, eds. With a Preface by Johannes Fabian. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press. PDF file


Week Four – 3 October          To kill : in the name of God? : martyr / terrorist


Bloom, Mia, 2007: Women as Victims and Victimizers. eJournalUSA. May issue http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0507/ijpe/bloom.htm PDF on line

Week Five, 10 October THANKSGIVING


Week Seven, 24 October STUDY WEEK

Week Eight, 31 October God’s Chosen People and Others


PDF on line

http://www.jstor.org/stable/i330197  
PDF on line


Week Nine : 7 November  

God is Black

PDF on line


Schaap, Andrew 2005 : Recognition, Chapter 3 (pp. 41-55) in Political Reconciliation. Routledge.


Week Ten, 9 November  

God Is Red


PDF file

Week Eleven -- 21 November  Religions, nationalism and nation states


Week Twelve – 28 November  Laïcité, tolerance and reasonable accommodation


Comité sur les affaires religieuses. October 2006. Secular Schools in Québec. A Necessary Change in Institutional Culture. Brief to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports. PDF on line


Week Thirteen – 5 December  TBA
Academic fraud and plagiarism

(for complete statement see http://www.ustpaul.ca/index.php?page=685#Fraud )

Fraud

Definition: Academic fraud is an act by a student which may result in a false academic evaluation of that student or of another. Without limiting the generality of this definition, academic fraud occurs when a student commits any of the following offences:

a. Submits a work of which the student is not the author, in whole or in part (except for duly cited quotations or references). Such works may include an academic paper, essay, test, an exam, research report, or thesis, whether written, oral, or other.

b. Presents as research data material which has been falsified or concocted in any way.

c. Attributes a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted.

d. Submits the same piece of work or significant part thereof for more than one course, or a thesis or other work which has already been submitted elsewhere, without written authorization of the professors concerned and of the academic units concerned.

e. Falsifies an academic evaluation, misrepresents an academic evaluation, uses a forged or falsified academic record or supporting document, or facilitates the use of a falsified academic record or supporting document.

Plagiarism

The following acts are considered plagiarism:

- to submit another’s work as one’s own
- to use one or more passages from someone else’s work without reference or citation
- to paraphrase passages of text of others without reference or citation
- to take the work of others and present it as if it was one’s own including materiel from internet.

Sanctions

A student who has committed or attempted to commit academic fraud, or who has been a party to academic fraud, is subject to one or more of the following sanctions:

1. The mark of F or zero for the work concerned; or
2. The mark of F or zero for the course concerned;
3. Expulsion from the Faculty of Human Sciences;
4. Expulsion from the Saint Paul University for at least three years, etc.