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.

Professor: Jean-Guy Goulet  Time: Wednesday 5:30 to 8:30 pm
Phone no.: 236-1393, extension 2252  Room:
Email: jggoulet@ustpaul.ca  Office hours: TBA

Introduction

Religion has played a critical role, often violent, in the making of humanity and the development of human societies. Numerous contemporary conflicts are rooted in the violent process of colonization by Europeans determined to subject ‘others’ to their rule and to Christianize them. In this context, light is also shed onto the role of religions in the subsequent movements of resistance to European occupation, wars of independence, and the construction of post-colonial identities which draw upon and reaffirm ancestral, pre-Christian religions.

Today as yesterday, contradictory appeals to God are made to legitimize either violence or peaceful action to challenge social norms and/or transform societies. Conflicts with a deep religious dimension which arise in the midst of nation-states often extend to diaspora communities. Based on a distinction but not on a separation between ethnic and religious identities, the course focuses on the polarizations which drive individuals and groups within nations and in the international arena to oppose each other in sectarian terms.

The multidisciplinary analysis of the ethnic and religious dimensions of recent and contemporary conflicts draws mainly from the work of historians, socio-cultural anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists and social psychologists.

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 5th - Introduction (course outline, requirements, lectures and discussion)

I : KNOWLEDGE & FAITH

September 12th - The struggle for the real
September 19th - The social reality of religion: the what, the how and the why

II : THE WILL TO KILL and TO LIVE

September 26th - To kill : what for? in the name of God? : martyr / terrorist

III : THE COLOUR OF GOD IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

October 10th - God is Black / The Civil Rights Movement in the USA
October 17th - God is Red / The Red Road in Canada and abroad

October 24th STUDY WEEK

IV: RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND NATIONAL HISTORIES

October 31st - A Fundamental Distinction between God’s Chosen People and Others
November 7th - Religion and nationalisms
November 14th - Religious identities in intra-national conflicts

V : FREEDOM OF RELIGION / FREEDOM FROM RELIGION?

November 21st - Laicity and tolerance
November 28th - Multiculturalism and reasonable accommodation
Methodology

Lectures and discussion / Seminars / Reading summaries / Essays

Evaluation

Two essays (due on 17 October and 21 November) 50%

Student-led seminar and class discussion of readings 25 %

Participation and reading summaries 25 %

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.

Student-led seminar / beginning 26th of September or 3rd of October

12 September: Setting up teams for leading seminars – depending on the number of students in the course teams will consist of 2 members or more.

Teams design and deliver 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.

On the day of a student-led seminar, those not engaged in its delivery submit in class a single-spaced summary of a paper whose author’s name appears in bold in the list of readings assigned for the week. The summary contains:

(i) a quotation and a paraphrase of the author’s research question

(ii) a paraphrase of two of his or her key concepts

(iii) a discussion of a point of view presented by the author or the application of his perspective / concept(s) to a particular conflict, and

(iv) two most significant sentences (quotations)
Duration, objectives, features and evaluation criteria of seminars

Duration: 1h40 minutes 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 a signed in-class peer-evaluation of the seminar (form will be distributed in class by instructor). Each team member completes a self/team evaluation of the seminar preparation and delivery. Taking into consideration these evaluations, the instructor give students a written evaluation of their work and a common grade, based on the following criteria:

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 21.**

17th of October: an analysis 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 from September 12th to 17th of October.** Only quotations allowed in support of analysis are from readings assigned for the course. Quotations are followed by a reference (author date: page number, e.g., Geertz 1972: 111).

21st of November: either an analysis 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 from 10th of October to 14th of November,**

**or**

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 to 3500 words / spacing: 1.5 or 2 / font: Times New Roman 12.

**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%
   - No page number on title page – page numbers at bottom of all other pages.
   - Left margins 3 cm and right, top and bottom margins 2.4 cm.
   - Organization of paper apparent in titles and subtitles if appropriate.
   - Sources are quoted and paraphrased appropriately.
   - Quotations longer than three lines are indented and single-spaced, without quotation marks.
   - The text is free of spelling and grammatical errors.
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 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.

or Jesus Camp (USA 2006), Mutluluk (Bliss) (Turquie 2007), A Separation (Iran 2011), Circumstance (Iran 2011).

Second Analysis for November 21


An undercover Tehelka journalist secretly recorded mass murderers confessing, and boasting of their crimes. The 2002 Gujarat 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) – Available on Web.

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 **Earth** (1997), by Indian born Canadian movie director Deepa Mehta The story is set in Lahore in the time period directly before and during the 1947 partition of India.

OR 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.
REQUIRED READINGS FALL 2012

Week Two, 12 September

The Struggle for the Real


Recommended PDF on line


Week Three, 19 September

The social reality of religion


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


Recommended PDF on line:


Week Four, 26 September  

To kill: in the name of God? : martyr / terrorist


Recommended PDF on line:


Week Five, 3 October  

To live: what for? in the name of God? : hero / peace activist


Week Six, 10 October  

God is Black

King Jr., Martin Luther, Letter from the Birmingham Jail. 1994. PDF on line


Week Seven, 17 October

God Is Red


For local events see Website of IPSMO (Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

Week Eight 24 October STUDY WEEK

Week Nine, 31 October

God’s Chosen People and Others


Zivkovic, Marko, 2000 : The Wish to be a Jew: The Power of the Jewish Trope in the Yugoslav Conflict. Cahiers de l’URMIS, no. 6: 69-84. PDF on line

Recommended:

Bowman, Glenn, 1993: Nationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and shifting identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories. Man (N.S.) 28, no. 3: 431-460. PDF on line


Week Ten, 7 November


Recommended:


Week Eleven, 14 November


**Week Twelve, 21 November**

**Laicity and tolerance**


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]


*Social Compass* 47(30), 2000. Special Issue: “Twists and turns of laicity”. [PDF on line]

**Week Thirteen, 28 November**

**Multiculturalism and reasonable accommodation**


*Mukadam, Anjoon and Sharmina Mawani*, 2007 : Post-Diasporic Indian Communities: A New Generation (Chapter 5 : 105-127) in *Locating the Field. Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*, Simon Coleman and Peter Collins (eds.).
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.