

“The Language of Religious Violence”
T 1-3:45pm
132 Lane Hall

Scholar:

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<http://scholar.vt.edu/>

Description

Why do some words make people kill and others simply do not? In this interdisciplinary seminar, we'll read theoretical work, as well as some individual case studies spanning the Middle Ages to today, to think about the connection between idea, rhetoric, and action.

Requirements will include attendance and participation in discussions, a plagiarism quiz, a short paper, an abstract & bibliography (tied to the final paper), a first draft (of the final paper), and a final research paper. The final paper is kind of important. . .

Office Hours

MW 3:45-4:30pm
342 Lane Hall (Bay 4, 3rd Floor)

If you can't make this time, just get in touch so we can work something out. I check my email regularly, and can always be reached after class to set up an appointment.

ADA Statement

If you have a university-sanctioned condition that requires my special attention, please come to my office hours or email me to set up an appointment.

Course Etiquette: Classroom & Email

Classroom:

- You may eat and drink in class, so long as it isn't a distraction to others. You will win brownie points for bringing me coffee.
- You should plan on talking – asking questions, responding to prompts, etc. – in this class. Feel free to disagree with anything either your classmates or I say, but be respectful in your tone.
- Please be sure to turn off all cell phones, PDAs, iPods, etc. before class begins. Also, feel free to use your computer to take notes but please mute the volume. What you do with VT's wireless network is up to you. You're all adults and I trust that you'll make intelligent choices.
- Be aware, however, that if I determine that your actions are becoming a distraction to your fellow students – for any reason – I will ask you to leave the classroom.

Email:

- Email is an essential component of this course and one of the primary means by which I'll communicate with you during the semester. Email, however, is not IM, nor is it Facebook. It's a more formal communication that you will undoubtedly use in your professional life both throughout the rest of our time at VT and in your future workplace.
- Until the end of the semester, I'm not your Dad. I'm not your friend. I'm not your boyfriend. Until the end of the semester, I'm essentially your boss. To that end, be sure the message you're composing is appropriate to the person receiving it (in this case, me).
- If you have any questions, please ask me or take a look at David Shipley and Will Schwalbe's *Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home* (with website -- <http://www.thinkbeforeyousend.com/>) or the briefer review article http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2007/07/13/email_etiquette/.

VT Honor System and Academic Research

Academic dishonesty (defined as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification) is taken very seriously in this class. Please refer to <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/> for a fuller statement of the Honor Code, as well as the Undergraduate Honor System Constitution. Also, consult this online web test for plagiarism at <http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/>.

You may, of course, study together. But everything you turn in should be a product of **your own** understanding and analysis of the material. Be aware that certain sources of information (such as non-academic websites – like SparkNotes.com or Enotes.com – and encyclopedias – like Wikipedia) are **inappropriate** to use for academic research. Also, material you get from other sources **must be cited/referenced properly**, using MLA or Turabian/ Chicago style.

- Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (New York, 2003)
 - basics also at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> and <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/MLAstyle.pdf>
- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago, 1967).
 - basics also at <http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian.html> and <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Chicago-Turabianstyle.pdf>

If you ever have any questions about any of this, please **ASK ME**. I bite only rarely.

Grading/ Requirements

The grading breakdown is as follows: class participation & in-class questions (18%), a plagiarism quiz (2%), an abstract & bibliography (tied to the final paper) (10%), a short paper (tied to the final paper) (20%), a rough draft (of the final paper) (15%), and a final research paper (35%).

*****Items will be considered “late” if not received by 3pm on the day they are due.*****

*****I will not accept ANY late assignments without a written, university-recognized excuse.*****

- Class Participation & Questions – Class participation is absolutely required. You must talk in this class because a substantial portion of your grade is determined by your participation in discussion. Consequently, a significant number of absences will adversely effect your grade.
 - Participation **DOES NOT** mean knowing the right answer; it means coming prepared to every class and offering an analysis or asking questions.
 - **Each week you must bring in 2 typed discussion questions** to help us get things going. They can be about something you don’t understand, something you found interesting (or “dumb”), etc. **Type** these questions up while doing your reading, bring them to class, and use the extra space on the page to take notes for that day. I’ll collect these at the end of each class in order to note that you’ve completed the assignment.
 - If we’re reading primary sources for the week, be sure that you listen to the appropriate podcast(s) for essential background (see below under **Readings**). There are NO podcasts for the secondary literature we’re reading.
- Plagiarism Quiz – A handout will be provided with details. You will only receive points on this assignment if you turn it in on time. If you miss the due date for some reason, you **MUST** still turn it in. Although this is only worth 2% of your final grade, successful completion of this assignment is **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL** to passing this class.

- Abstract and Bibliography – This is a short (1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced) summary of what your final paper will be about. It must include a clear thesis statement and a thorough, though not necessarily complete, properly-formatted (MLA or Chicago/ Turabian) bibliography on which you'll base your final paper.
 - **You will turn this in electronically, via Scholar.** I will comment on it electronically and return it to you again. We'll talk about this more in class.
- Short Paper – This will be a 3-4 page typed analysis of something related to the subject of the course. A handout for the assignment will be provided with more information. Please also see below (under “Final Research Paper”) for more information on paper writing.
 - **You will turn this in electronically, via Scholar.**
- First Draft of Final Paper –The first draft of your final paper should be a *completed draft*. It will be graded on the basis of the amount of work that you have put into it – eg, how coherent your thesis is, how many sources you have gathered, how well you use these sources, etc. In the end, this should be as close to the finished product as possible. **It must be at least 10 pages long.**
 - **You will turn this in electronically through Scholar.** I'll make comments electronically and then return to. We'll talk more about this in class.
- Final Research Paper – The paper should be no less than 12 (full) pages long and no longer than 18. Page count does **NOT** include bibliography.
 - **You will turn this in as a hard copy.**
 - Topic
 - You will pick your topic near the beginning of class. Your topic will be a case study of some instance of religious violence.
 - The topic can be something touched on in this class or something outside of it (I'm open to suggestions), but **YOU MUST HAVE YOUR TOPIC APPROVED** before proceeding.
 - You must consult **AT LEAST 10 ACADEMIC SOURCES** for this assignment (and I would *strongly* suggest more). This means no encyclopedias and websites of dubious merit. At least 70% of your sources must be actual, physical sources from either Newman library or ILL.
 - If you have never done a research paper before, see me ASAP.
 - Papers must have a clear thesis, be organized well, be properly referenced/ cited, and be proofread. Please refer to the various handouts given throughout the course, or talk to me for more information.
 - ****NB**** – This is a major assignment that governs a substantial portion of your final grade. You are being asked to quickly become masters of an unfamiliar landscape and produce a thoughtful, critical, analysis of a personage and a period.
 - Begin working on it early. You **CANNOT** complete it in the last weeks of the semester and expect to do well in this course.

Grade Breakdown

Grading will follow this schedule:

A	> 93
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	65-69
F	< 65

Readings

Things to buy: Buy from Bookstore, BN.com, Amazon.com, etc. Everything that our library owns is on 48-hour reserve too.

- Alberto Toscano, *Fanaticism* (Verso, 2010). ISBN: 9781844674244
- David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence* (Princeton UP, 1998). ISBN: 9780691058894

On-Line Texts (Scholar.VT.edu):

- Many of the readings for this course are available online, via Scholar (<http://scholar.vt.edu/> or <http://learn.vt.edu/>).
 - The appropriate PDFs for each week are in the “Resources” section of Scholar, then in the folder entitled “Weekly Readings”.

Schedule of Lectures & Readings**YOU MUST BRING YOUR READINGS TO CLASS EVERY MEETING!**

Week 1	Introduction & Syllabus
Tues. 1/17	What’s Religion? What is Violence? (What is Language?)
Week 2	Theory – Toscano
Tues. 1/24	<u>DISCUSSION OF PLAGIARISM QUIZ</u> Toscano, <i>Fanaticism</i> , intro-chap. 2
Week 3	Theory – Toscano
Tues. 1/31	<u>PLAGIARISM QUIZ DUE</u> Toscano, <i>Fanaticism</i> , chap. 3-end
Week 4	Theory 2
Tues. 2/7	SCHOLAR Stock, <i>Implications of Literacy</i> , pp. 88-151 Furet, <i>Interpreting the French Revolution</i> , pp. 1-79

- Week 5**
Tues. 2/14
- Theory 3**
ABSTRACT & BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
*****Guest – Prof. Brian Britt (Religion & Culture)*****
SCHOLAR
Britt, “Curses Left and Right,” 633-55.
(then, after Prof. Britt has to leave. . .)
Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp. 145-63
Asad, *On Suicide Bombing*, pp. 65-92
- Week 6**
Tues. 2/21
- Theory 4**
SCHOLAR
Davis, “Rites of Violence,” 152-87.
Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, pp. 127-65, 200-49.
- Week 7**
Tues. 2/28
- Theory 5**
SCHOLAR
Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, pp. 3-14, 181-230
Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, pp. 1-56
- Week 8**
NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- Week 9**
Tues. 3/13
- Apocalyptic Violence – Theory**
SHORT PAPER DUE
SCHOLAR
Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 252-86.
O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*, pp. 3-60.
- Week 10**
Tues. 3/20
- Apocalyptic Violence – Sources**
SCHOLAR
Book of Daniel
Book of Revelation
Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelations*
- Week 11**
Tues. 3/27
- Apocalyptic Violence – Medieval**
*****Guest – Prof. David Burr (History)*****
SCHOLAR
Readings TBA.
- Week 12**
Tues. 4/3
- Apocalyptic Violence – Modern 1**
SCHOLAR
Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*, pp. 91-136.
Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, pp. 248-58, 265-92, 457-59.

- Week 13**
Tues. 4/10 **Apocalyptic Violence – Modern 2**
 *****Guest – Michelle Goldberg*****
 SCHOLAR
 Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming*, pp. 24-49.
 Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*, pp. 201-83.
- Fri. 4/13 **FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE**
- Week 14** **NO CLASS (Work on Papers)**
- Week 15** **NO CLASS (Individual Meetings)**
- Week 16**
Tues. 5/1 **Course Evaluations**
 Brief Meeting (Recap)
- Week 17**
Tues. 5/8 **Final Paper**
 PAPER DUE BY 4PM @ MY OFFICE