

Initial Command and Staff Course (Maritime) Elective Course

Warfare and Religion: Case Studies of a Complex Relationship

**Lecturer: Dr Joel Hayward
Room ISSC06
Ext. 8126**



OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this short elective course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the complex and often-misunderstood relationship between warfare and religion. This topic is increasingly important in today's strategic environment; an environment that features, or so some commentators claim, a rapid collapse of secularisation ("the revenge of God," to quote one pundit), the rise of religious nationalism, and a "clash of civilisations".

This elective course does not attempt to determine whether religion *causes* war.

Taught primarily using a series of case studies, the course aims to provide students with a framework for analysing and making sense of the role of warfare in major religions, and the role of religions in major wars.

The specific case studies were selected not necessarily because they were or are explicitly "religious wars," but because they highlight the centrality of faith and religious belief in human experiences, perhaps most crucially during periods of chaos and carnage. The case studies are:

1. The Mongol Invasion of Eastern Europe, 1236-1241
2. Hernán Cortés and the Conquest of the Aztecs
3. The French Revolution, 1789-1799
4. The Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815
5. The American Civil War, 1861-1865
6. The Iranian Revolution of 1979
7. The Former Yugoslavia, 1991-1995
8. Kosovo and Metohija, 1999
9. The War on Terror, 2001 to the Present
10. The United States, Warfare and Religion

By the end of the course, students will be in a position analytically to address the key questions at the heart of this topic: Is warfare necessary to major religions? Is religion necessary during major wars? Does warfare encourage, discourage or have no impact on religious differences? Have there been periods when religion played greater or lesser roles in international relations? In this age of a "war on terror" is religion again a factor deserving of scholarly attention by strategic analysts?

More generic academic objectives of this course include the following: to enable students further to develop and practise a range of skills, including critical analysis, detailed historical research, intellectual creativity, logical thought and clarity of expression; to encourage engagement with scholarly literature, especially current research; to allow students to deal both systematically and creatively with the complex issues at the heart of the relationship between warfare and religion.

At the end of the course the students will be able to:

- understand what a religion is and what basic roles it plays within a nation, society and culture;

- understand the ways in which religion determines a people's perceptions and practices of inter-state and intra-state conflict and warfare.
- understand the impact of religion and faith on group dynamics during conflict and war;
- understand the way in which religion acts as a socio-political force;
- be able to comprehend the following concepts and vocabulary: nation, religious state, secular state, society, culture, ethnicity, religion, faith, morality, ethics, Christianity, Islam, Millennialism, Eschatology, Crusades, Jihad, fundamentalism, extremism, conversion, salvation, martyrdom;
- express their critical understanding of some weighty and pertinent issues, agreed upon in consultation with the course lecturer, through (a) the preparation and presentation of a ten-minute seminar and (b) the preparation and production of an assessed essay of 2,500 (two thousand five hundred) words.

TEACHING

Classes will usually involve: students giving ten-minute presentations based on their essay questions; discussions involving all students and the lecturer; and some straight instruction from the lecture to flesh out the case studies. All members of the group are expected to have done sufficient preparatory reading for the classes, drawing on the material listed in the bibliography.

Students are encouraged to seek guidance on their presentations and essays from the lecturer.

TIMETABLE

All classes take place in Syndicate Room 66

Dates:

16 March	1400-1445 hrs	Introduction
11 April	1205-1250	Lecture: Dr Hayward: What is religion and how does it operate within a society and its culture(s)?
12 April	1555-1730	Seminar Topic 1: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The Mongol Invasion of Eastern Europe, 1236-1241
		Lecture: Dr Hayward The Spread of Islam and the Crusades: Comparisons and Contrasts with today?

13 April	1205-1250	Seminar Topic 2: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: Hernán Cortés and the Conquest of the Aztecs
14 April	1030-1250	Seminar Topic 3: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The French Revolution, 1789-1799
		Seminar Topic 4: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815
		(IPS from 1205-1250)
15 April	1030-1115	Seminar Topic 5: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The American Civil War, 1861-1865
18 April	0920-1005	(IPS)
	1030-1250	(IPS)
	1400-1535	Seminar Topic 6: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The Iranian Revolution of 1979
		Seminar Topic 7: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The Former Yugoslavia, 1991-1995
	1555-1730	Seminar Topic 8: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: Kosovo and Metohija, 1999
19 April	0830-1005	Seminar Topic 9: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The War on Terror, 2001 to the Present
		Seminar Topic 10: Student Lead(s) followed by group seminar discussion: The United States, Warfare and Religion
	1030-1205	Lecture: Dr Hayward: Is the world experiencing a process of de-secularisation?

Lecture: Dr Hayward:
To what degree should religion be analysed as a factor in strategic studies and international relations?

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Formal assessment is based purely on the essay, with the presentation serving primarily to hone the main arguments.

Overall, students will be expected to use both their contributions to seminars as well as their essays to fulfil the relevant course objectives. The essay, as the only formal assessment of the course, will test depth of knowledge and critical understanding of key issues.

RECOMMENDED READING

Students are naturally not expected to read every book mentioned, but to select balanced reading for each week and to draw upon a more extensive bibliography for seminar questions and essay topics.

SEMINAR / ESSAY QUESTIONS

Students must present a ten-minute seminar *and* write an analytical prose essay of 2,500 (two thousand five hundred) words on one of the following essay questions:

1. Analyse the role played by religion in the European response to Mongol westward ambitions from 1221 to 1241?

(The seminar on this question is scheduled for 12 April)

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2. Analyse the role played by religion in the Aztec responses to the appearance, aggression and warfare of a Spanish force led by Hernán Cortés?

or

To what degree, and with what consequences, did the crusading zeal embodied in the Reconquista (722 to 1492) shape Spanish attitudes and behaviour towards the Mesoamerican civilisations encountered by Hernán Cortés in 1519?

(The seminar on these questions is scheduled for 13 April)

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3. Why, to what degree, and with what consequences was state secularisation pursued during the French Revolution?

or

To what degree, and with what consequences, did the secularisation of France during the revolutionary period motivate other European nations to oppose France?

(The seminar on these questions is scheduled for 14 April)

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4. Why, and with what consequences, did Napoleon Bonaparte negotiate and sign a concordat with the Catholic Church in 1801?

(The seminar on this question is scheduled for 14 April)

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5. Which side, North or South, had its war effort shaped by religious impetuses to the greatest degree during the American Civil War of 1861 to 1865?

or

Using examples from the Civil War only, explain the impact of religion or personal faith on any three (3) of these topics: propaganda, recruitment, civil-military relations, group cohesion, esprit de corps, morale, courage, military codes of conduct, self-sacrifice, tactics, strategy, leadership, followership. *Note: your essay can analyse either the North or the South, or both.*

(The seminar on these questions is scheduled for 15 April)

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6. What was the role of armed struggle or warfare in the revolutionary doctrine advocated/advanced by Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini during his years in exile preceding the Iranian Revolution of 1979?

or

In what ways did the 1980-1988 war between Iran and Iraq strengthen, weaken or otherwise alter the governance of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

(The seminar on these questions is scheduled for 18 April)

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7. In what ways was religion important to, and used by, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period from 1991 to November 1995?

(The seminar on this question is scheduled for 18 April)

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8. Was the role of religion more or less significant than ethnicity or territorial integrity in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's desire to retain sovereignty of Kosovo before and during NATO's air war in 1999?

(The seminar on this question is scheduled for 18 April)

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9. To what extent has the so-called War on Terror impacted on inter-faith relations in *either* the United Kingdom *or* the United States?

or

Why and with what consequences does Osama bin Laden believe that the United States and its allies are enemies of God?

(The seminar on these questions is scheduled for 19 April)

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10. Why and with what consequences does the United States—a nation that officially, indeed constitutionally, has a separation between Church and State—permit and pay for its armed forces to have chaplains?

(The seminar on this question is scheduled for 19 April)

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The essay is to be submitted to DDRNJD on Monday 25 April and is to be written in accordance with the guidance in the DSD handout, *The Electives and the Exam*.

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