

GlobalSt 701 Topics in Globalization

Winter 2017, Tues. 3:30-5:30 in Wilson Hall 3001
T. Kroeker (kroekert@mcmaster.ca; 23385; UH 117)
Office hours: Mon. 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

Title: Global Ethics and Religion

This seminar examines the contributions of religious ideas and practices to global ethics and, conversely, the implications of global ethics for religious practices. This term the focus will be on religious conceptions and interpretations of violence and ethics in the context of colonial and postcolonial state violence. The seminar will begin with two classic literary representations that offer religiously informed accounts of European colonial violence from different perspectives: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* set in 19th c African Congo during King Leopold's European "civilizing" mission; and *Black Elk Speaks*, the spiritual autobiography of a Lakota holy man who experienced the colonizing arrival of the Wasichus on the Great Plains in 19th c North America. Both texts have been widely read and criticized from a range of perspectives—political, religious, racial, indigenous—that we will also consider. We then turn to two significant Canadian case studies that focus on supposedly "postcolonial" expressions of state approaches to the treatment of Indigenous peoples and lands: the recent Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and its 6 year investigation of the residential school system (including its history and legacy) and 94 recommendations; the Berger report on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry which includes valuable testimony from both First Nations and corporate representatives on the meaning of land, economic development and cultural justice. Here again we will include a range of theoretical perspectives, but we will take up these questions in the form of roundtable discussion/debate on ethics and religion, which the seminar will then debrief. The final sessions of the seminar will be devoted to the presentation and discussion of individual student research on topics related to the seminar theme.

Required Texts:

- 1) Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Norton Critical Edition, 5th edition)
- 2) *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, as told through John G. Neihardt (Bison Books; U. of Nebraska Press)
- 3) *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry*, by Thomas Berger (Lorimer). See also:
<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/special-projects/berger-inquiry.html>
https://wiki.ubc.ca/Berger_Inquiry#Annotated_Bibliography
- 4) *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Volume 1: Summary* (Lorimer). See also:
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>
- 5) Various readings will be made available on the Avenue to Learn course website

Optional sources (selected):

Taiiaki Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford)
William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford)
Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Bloomsbury)
Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State* (California)
Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton)
Talal Asaad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford)
Vine Deloria, Jr. *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (Routledge)

Requirements and Evaluation:

Participation 30%

Careful reading and preparation of assigned readings is required in order to participate effectively in the weekly seminar discussions. For the sessions on *Heart of Darkness* and *Black Elk Speaks* students will also submit a one paragraph response that raises a critical question for discussion of ethics, violence and religion in relation to a particular interpretation of a passage or issue in the reading for that session.

Roundtable Presentations 30%

Students will be divided into groups to submit briefs for the roundtable sessions on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and the Berger report on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. Further detailed instructions forthcoming.

Final Essay 30%

Each student will develop a conference presentation essay (ca. 10-12 double-spaced typewritten) on a research topic of interest, to be decided upon in consultation with the professor before the term break (i.e., by Feb. 17). Students will make short presentations on their papers (15 minutes), followed by seminar discussion and engagement (15-20 minutes). Final essays are due on or before April 24.

Schedule:

Jan. 10 No class—professor at a conference. Please prepare the readings for next week!

17 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, session 1
Read parts 1 and 2; and at least one of the following essays in the 5th Norton Critical Edition: Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”; Edward Said, “Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*”; J. Hillis Miller, “Should we Read *Heart of Darkness*?”

24 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, session 2
Read part 3; “The Price of Precious,” photoessay by Marcus Bleasdale, *National Geographic* (October 2013) (link on Avenue); Travis Kroeker, “Darkness Unveiled: The Apocalypse of Chrapitalism in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” (Avenue)

31 *Black Elk Speaks*, session 1
Read chapters I-IX; one of the chapters from *The Sixth Grandfather* (Avenue) and Vine Deloria, Jr., “Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom” (Avenue)

Feb. 7 *Black Elk Speaks*, session 2
Read Chapters X-end; one of the chapters from *The Black Elk Reader*, ed. Clyde Holler (Avenue); Travis Kroeker and Carole Leclair, “Mennonite and Metis: Adjacent Histories, Adjacent Truths?” (Avenue)

14 Roundtable 1: *TRC* Final Report

21 Term Break, no seminar

Feb. 28 Debrief on *TRC* Report and Roundtable

Mar. 7 Roundtable 2: Berger Report: *Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry*

14 Debrief on Berger Inquiry and Roundtable

21:

28: Student research presentations

Apr. 4:

Academic Dishonesty: You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity> The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2. Improper

collaboration in group work. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Possible modification of the Course: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any change.