

War and Peace in the Biblical World

Religion 246**Classroom:** 111 Comenius Hall**Class times:** TTh 1:10-2:20**E-mail:** radine@moravian.edu**Professor:** Jason Radine**Office:** 108 Comenius Hall, x1314**Office Hours:** TTh 4-5pm
and by appointment

Course Description

This course will explore ideologies of warfare and other forms of sanctioned mass violence, as well as ancient hopes and expectation for peace. Ancient Near Eastern texts and practices will be studied in addition to biblical texts.

Course Goals

Biblical texts are often read as reflecting the assumptions of the reader. A closer examination of the biblical texts reveals a wide variety of attitudes about violence, ranging from poetic hopes for peace to disturbing calls for mass slaughter. This course will study biblical attitudes about war and peace against its Near Eastern background, in order to fully appreciate both the range of views as well as the historical realities these texts affirm or challenge.

Assignments and Grading

1) Grading will be based on four essay examinations and two research papers as well (see the Student Handbook for the academic honesty policy). The exams and papers are weighted equally, and the course grade will be based on an average of all of these assignments. Plagiarized papers will receive F grades, and will result in a one-letter grade reduction for your course grade overall at least, and a failing grade in the class at most. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

3) Active, in-class participation. Cell phones must be silenced in class, and texting is not allowed.

4) Readings, which should be done by the day on which they appear on the syllabus; that is, before class.

5) Attendance. After two unexcused absences, each further unexcused absence will reduce your overall course grade by one third of a letter. Two times late unexcused counts as one unexcused absence. This is not a passive-learning course; we will be actively studying and discussing the texts and other material in class.

Sample Paper Topics

In-depth study of particular war accounts in the ancient Near East

Ancient Near Eastern treaty language and biblical covenants

Women and warfare: Miriam, Deborah, Yael.

Restraint violence: rules for war

Required Reading:

- Craigie, Peter, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, 1978
Kelle, Brad, *Ancient Israel at War: 853-586 BC*, Osprey, 2007.
Kelle and Ames, eds., *Writing and Reading War*, SBL, 2008.
Niditch, Susan, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence*.
Oxford University Press, 1995.
Von Rad, Gerhard, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, Eerdmans, 1991.
The New Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible, with
Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books (Oxford University Press).

Class Schedule**Overview of War in the Ancient Near East and in Israel**

Geographic, Cultural Overview	January 14 th
Historical Overview <i>Readings:</i> Handout	January 16 th
Methods of Warfare <i>Readings:</i> Handout	January 21 st
Ancient Israel at War, Part 1 <i>Readings:</i> Kelle, 1-33	January 23 rd
Ancient Israel at War, Part 2 <i>Readings:</i> Kelle, 34-88	January 28 th

War Ideology in the Ancient Near East

Ancient Near Eastern War Ideology: Introduction <i>Readings:</i> Younger Introduction	January 30 th
Assyrian War Ideology <i>Readings:</i> Younger, ch. 2.	February 4 th -6 th
Hittite War Ideology <i>Readings:</i> Younger ch. 3.	February 11 th -13 th
Egyptian War Ideology <i>Readings:</i> Younger ch. 4.	February 18 th -20 th
Joshua's Conquest <i>Readings:</i> Younger ch. 5.	February 25 th

Biblical Conquest in Near Eastern Context <i>Readings: Younger ch. 6 and Conclusion.</i>		February 27 th
Theories of Biblical Warfare and Military Ideology		
Holy War in Ancient Israel, Part 1 <i>Readings: Von Rad 35-73</i>		March 11 th -13 th
Holy War in Ancient Israel, Part 2 <i>Readings: Von Rad 74-134</i>		March 18 th -20 th
Problem of War in the Hebrew Bible, Part 1 <i>Readings: Craigie 9-54</i>		March 25 th -27 th
Problem of War in the Hebrew Bible, Part 2 <i>Readings: Craigie 55-112</i>		April 1 st -3 rd
Ethics of Violence, Part 1 <i>Readings: Niditch 1-77</i>		April 8 th -10 th
Ethics of Violence, Part 2 <i>Readings: Niditch 78-155</i>		April 15 th -17 th
War in the New Testament <i>Readings: TBA</i>		April 22 nd -24 th
Final Exam	8:30am!	April 30 th