

Rel 370 The Senior Seminar in Religion
Tuesday evenings: 6:30 – 9:00 pm; PPHAC 338
Instructor: Dr. Kelly Denton-Borhaug
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Office Hours: M/W 2:30 – 3:30 pm, by appointment, email and/or by you stopping by my office to see if I'm free/in!

Course Description: This writing intensive course is required of all religion minors and majors, and serves as the first half of the writing/research intensive year for senior religion majors (who will participate in Rel 385 "Directed Reading" in the spring). The theme and content of the course changes from year to year, depending on the students and professor teaching the course. This year we will focus on questions related to the interplay of religion(s) and violence. We will take advantage of the visit/lecture of Karen Armstrong to our campus by beginning our focus with study of her most recent work. This will be followed by additional study, research, writing, and class presentation/leadership that the 370 class will create together.

Note! This is an evening seminar! Please eat dinner BEFORE coming to class. You are welcome to bring beverages. We will have a short break in the middle of our time each week. Please DO bring your laptop with you to take notes; other digital activity should not be exercised during class time.

Required Text:

Karen Armstrong. *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*. New York: Knopf, 2014. Available in the bookstore

We will build upon this first text with additional resources that individual students choose for our class through their own research related to questions of religion and violence, in consultation with the professor. See below for more information.

Learning Goals:

- To enhance skills of careful reading, thinking, researching, analyzing and evaluating arguments for and against different views on the problem at hand vigorously, fairly, and with sympathy.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different conflicting views, and expand our intellectual horizon.
- To diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes our mind against speculation.
- To enrich our intellectual imagination.
- To improve upon skills for writing explicitly, clearly, and succinctly.
- To think creatively, and to be able to imagine alternatives to familiar views and situations.
- To improve our understanding of the complexities of the problem, and the rationale behind different position has been taken on this issue.

Grading Rubric

15% of your total grade will derive from your course participation. “A” students will Students who wish to receive an A for participation will:

- Demonstrate leadership and engagement, especially through their consistent participation in class discussions, excellent note-taking in class, and elsewhere. All students are required to spend a minimum of 2.5 hours rigorous study outside of class for every hour in class, to read all material and come to class with detailed annotations, written questions, and otherwise excellent preparation for our seminar.
- Exhibit professional behavior with respect to consistent class attendance, and prompt communication with the professor regarding any necessary absences, and by coming to class with all the day’s materials enthused and prepared to engage (*note: the only excusable absences are for serious illness, religious observance or family emergency; any absence from class should be communicated to the prof with as much advance notice as possible. Because each unexcused absence represents missing a full week of class, students will lose half a grade level for each unexcused absence*).

30% of your total grade will derive from your performance on the midterm exam.

25% of your total grade will derive from your leadership of one of our class seminars, including your collaboration with the professor to decide upon and choose appropriate readings for the class (in connection with the specific question you are exploring for your final paper); vigorous, stimulating, creative and insightful presentation of the material you have chosen; inspired leadership of class discussion/engagement with the material.

30% of your total grade will derive from your work on your final research paper, due on Dec. 10.

--Your final paper will be 10-12 double spaced pages; plus a works cited page. You may use internal citation or footnotes (MLA format preferred).

--Your final paper should in some way continue from the work that we began with Karen Armstrong’s questions about the relationship between religion and violence, and also move past what we have accomplished in our first unit of study.

-- Choosing your own question to pursue related to the interrelationship(s) between religion and violence, you will engage in robust research and eventually decide upon 3-4 outside resources, each being 25-40 pages in length (in other words, a book chapter or peer-reviewed journal article), to comprise your research resources for this specific project. It is up to you to request a meeting with the prof for approval of your resources to use in your seminar. Your paper will draw upon these research resources to help you further explore the question you have articulated.

--You will submit the scans of **two** of these resources to the prof for the purpose of our second unit of study. One or both of these two resources will become the “germs” of your class presentation/leadership of discussion on your given day. **All your classmates will carefully read and study the materials you share, so that they can participate enthusiastically during the seminar you lead.** You are required to consult with the professor in advance of this deadline along the way of this decision-making.

--Along the way of your writing, you will participate in a peer review process with another student. Pairs will be assigned by the prof. Please see the guidelines below in the course schedule.

--*Your final research paper is due on Dec. 10. Please submit this through our BB site.*

Policy on Academic Honesty

Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly. A Moravian student, moreover, should neither hinder nor unfairly assist the efforts of other students to complete their work successfully. This policy of academic integrity is the foundation on which learning at Moravian is built. The College's expectations and the consequences of failure to meet these expectations are outlined below. If at any point in your academic work at Moravian you are uncertain about your responsibility as a scholar or about the propriety of a particular action, consult your instructor. See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38.

Plagiarism

A major form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we define as the use, whether deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment; an "outside source" is defined as any work (published or unpublished), composed, written, or created by any person other than the student who submitted the work (adapted from Napolitano vs. Princeton). Instructors often encourage—and in the case of research essays, require—students to include the ideas of others in their writing. In such cases, students must take care to cite the sources of these ideas correctly (in other words, to give credit where credit is due).

Students Disability Policy

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Schedule of Classes

Unit One: *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, Karen Armstrong

Sept. 1

Introduction to the Senior Seminar.

--review of syllabus

--how to prepare for class each week

--Question for class: How best to ensure that everyone carefully reads their colleagues' materials during the last weeks of the semester? Additional exam? Quizzes? Other? We will decide this together.

--Opening Discussion: What are your beginning thoughts about the relationship between human violence and religion(s)? What questions would you like to explore related to this theme? What have you learned thus far as a religion major/minor about this relationship?

Sept. 8 Armstrong, Introduction and Chapter 1, "Farmers and Herdsmen" – When, how and why has violence entered human experience?

(also introduce material from Douglas P. Fry)
seminar led this week by Denton-Borhaug

Sept. 15

Armstrong, Chapters 2 and 3, India and China
Prof. Emeritus Don St. John may join us

Sept. 22 (Professor away)

Armstrong, Chapters 4 and 5, Judaism and Christianity

Professor Jason Radine to lead discussion for first half of class; students to record their own discussion about his presentation and this material during the final 45 minutes of class, to give to Prof. Denton-Borhaug. This is a graded conversation, and will contribute to your participation grade overall. See the rubric for an "A" in participation above.

Sept. 24, Thursday: Convocation: All Students will attend the 10:00 am lecture by our Convocation speaker, Karen Armstrong, author of *Fields of Blood*
Johnston Hall

Please be ready to attend a small gathering for "face time" with Armstrong -- the "Fireside Chat" this same evening at 7:00 pm, in the HUB by the fireplace

Sept. 29

Armstrong, Chapters 6, 7 and 8, Byzantium, Islam, Crusade and Jihad
--seminar led by KDB

Oct. 6

Armstrong, Chapters 9 and 10, Religion's Arrival, Secularity's Triumph
--seminar led by KDB

Oct. 13

NO CLASS/FALL BREAK TONIGHT!

READ: Armstrong, Chapter 11 – to the end of the book: Where we are NOW

--This week: PLEASE spend some time thinking about where each of us will go from here with respect to our own questions, research and class presentation/ I encourage members of our class to come and meet with me to discuss your thinking and plans.

Note: By **October 19**, each student will respond to the BB assignment regarding submission of a paragraph on BB Discussion Board regarding the research question you intend to pursue. Please read the prompt for the Discussion Forum carefully, since you are required to submit more than just this one post. After receiving the prof's approval of your direction, begin your

research! This would be an excellent week to make an appointment to meet with the prof about your thinking regarding your final project.

Oct. 20

In class midterm writing exam (open book; bring your own laptop or use college computer)

Oct. 27 Tonight our class will focus on attending the lecture by Irshad Manji. How is argument about Islam and violence similar to and different from the argument woven by Karen Armstrong?

Read: Selection from Irshad Manji, *Allah, Liberty and Love: The Courage to Reconcile Faith and Freedom*. New York: Free Press, 2011. Posted in BB.

Oct. 31, Halloween!!

By midnight tonight, email me with the digital scans of TWO research resources that you have chosen for your classmates for Unit Two in conjunction with your own research project. You should have consulted with me and obtained approval for these resources BEFORE sending this email/scans. These are the two resources that we all will study for your presentation and that will form the centerpiece of your class leadership for your given seminar.

Note: late entries may cause you to turn into a pumpkin!

Unit Two: Continuing our Exploration of the Interrelationship between Religion(s) and Violence

--During this unit, two students will take charge of class each week. Each student has 35 minutes to present on the material you have chosen for all of us to read, in conjunction with the particular direction you are choosing for your final research paper; and you also will jointly lead us in vigorous discussion of the readings/your presentation during the last 1.25 hours of class.

Nov. 3

Debrief Manji visit. Focus on Denton-Borhaug's work in this area; prof to model leadership with respect to a) presenting on the selected reading material for the day; b) developing questions and leading class discussion.

--seminar led by KDB

Note: Nov. 6, Friday -- by today everyone will submit their idea map or linear outline of their paper thesis, main arguments, intentions regarding use of research resources to the prof for her feedback. Please use the BB submission link for this assignment.

Nov. 10

--seminar led by

Nov. 17

--seminar led by

Nov. 24 (Professor away; no class this week)

Dec. 1

--seminar led by

Dec. 2: *by today everyone will submit to the prof evidence that they have exchanged at least 7 pages of their paper draft with a peer editor in our class for peer review, and completed the peer review process. Please note the peer review process you are asked to follow in our BB course content link, and email your peer review of your partner's work BOTH to your colleague and professor by the above due date.*

Dec. 8

--seminar led by

Dec. 10, midnight: Final papers due to prof through BB submission link.