LS650/THEO401: Valparaiso - Religion Culture and Value: Global Violence and Human Rights
Instructor: Prof. James Moore
Tuesdays 6:30-9:15

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A recent conference was entitled The Century of Genocide marking one of the most obvious features of the Twentieth century. In truth, however, the last century was characterized by both a series of horrendous wars and genocidal activities as well as a development of unprecedented recognition of the rights of all humans and the guarantee of those rights for more and more people. Thus, our recent experience has been this parallel experience of opposites that show the human potential for both great evil and great good. This course will explore the reasons and effects of both the violence and the progress toward human cooperation and the greater respect for human rights by focusing attention on the Holocaust, its causes and aftermath, as a case study and as a way to see how the future can point toward either more instability and violence or greater prospects for peace and justice. The course will involve weekly discussions around readings and a student developed research project that can be shaped in whatever way the student determines is most beneficial for her/his academic program or personal intellectual interests.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Barry, Brian, WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE MATTERS
Midlarsky, Manus, THE KILLING TRAP: GENOCIDE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Roth, John and Michael Berenbaum. THE HOLOCAUST.
Stern, Jessica, TERROR IN THE NAME OF GOD: WHY RELIGIOUS MILITANTS KILL.
Waller, James, BECOMING EVIL: HOW ORDINARY PEOPLE COMMIT GENOCIDE AND MASS MURDER.
Wiesel, Elie. NIGHT.

GRADUATE SCHOOL SLOs:
1. Students will understand and practice methods of inquiry and strategies of interpretation within the student’s field of study.
2. Students will master the knowledge and skills pertinent to the student’s field of study.
3. Students will effectively articulate the ideas, concepts, and methods through written and oral presentation.
4. Students will understand the connection between their knowledge and skills on the one hand and their professional identity, responsibilities, and demands on the other.
5. Students will integrate knowledge and methods of their study with cognates and other disciplines.

6. Students will study, reflect upon, and practice ethical behavior and cultural sensitivity as they relate to professional and personal responsibility.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE FOR GRADING:

1. One Exam, a Mid-term: The exam will be a single question essay exam focusing on the events of the Holocaust. Students will be evaluated on their ability to organize and reflect on the materials of the course, their willingness to show openness to a variety of issues and views, their evident struggle with the difficult issues raised in the course, and their sensitivity to the Jewish viewpoint and lifestyle. 25% of the grade.

2. A Research Paper: The term paper is to be a limited research paper designed to engage one of the principal issues of the course in more depth (not limited to specifically theological concerns). The paper is to be approximately 15-20 pages in length typewritten and double-spaced and properly documented. (40% of the grade.)

3. A Personal Journal: This journal will include daily entries that represent reflections on the readings, class discussions, etc. Entries should be short, should reflect creativity of style (prose, poetry, sketches or cartoons, for example), and should show the ongoing struggle to understand and respond to the questions of this course. These journals will be checked two times during the semester. 25% of the grade.

4. Class Attendance and Participation: Attendance is considered to be mandatory for this class especially with the importance of class discussions. Nevertheless, students are responsible for their own attendance though a record will be kept daily. Ample opportunity to participate and to evaluate student participation will be provided. Students are expected to be in class otherwise. The reading for the course is also a central component of the student's participation. Students will be expected to read from one of the recommended texts for each section of the course as a companion to what is assigned as required reading. 10% of the grade.