Religious Approaches to Conflict Resolution
Course code: 1044-4053 Fall 2023 Thursdays 16:00 – 17:30
Naftali 004
Prof. Yitzhak Reiter: yr2121995@gmail.com
Office hours: Thursday 15:00-16:00 (by appointment)

Course Description:
It is increasingly becoming evident that for peace and conflict resolution approaches to be effective and sustainable they must take into consideration the religious traditions of the communities involved. As such, religions have direct impacts on the way peace is conceptualized and the way conflicts are resolved in different societies, because they embody and elaborate upon the highest morals, ethical principles and ideals of social harmony. In addition, most of the territorial and national conflicts in the world have an embedded religious nature, and this aspect makes such conflict more difficult to manage and resolve.

For that reason, conflict resolution scholars and practitioners must take into consideration the religious and traditions of the communities to address conflicts involving them, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Although the current image of religion is often associated with conflict and violence, in fact, notions of peacebuilding are deeply embedded in the religious vision of the communities and religious leaders have developed various approaches and tools to address conflicts. Exploring different perspectives religious conflict resolution approaches, this course will explore principles, values, and practices of peace and conflict resolution rooted in religious traditions. This is an interactive course in which students are expected to engage with the ideas and thoughts presented in the class through the study of religious texts, dialogue, and theoretical academic research.

Theoretical and practical aspects of the religious role in conflicts and conflict resolution will help us to better understand the sources of conflict and how religious texts, cultures and communities deal with conflicts and hopefully tips on how they can be solved.

The final goal of this course is to conduct in class a Simulation play of negotiating the future of the Jerusalem Holy Compound within the framework of the Jewish Israeli and the Muslim-Palestinian conflict.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Active participation: 10% of your final grade will be based on attendance and the quality of your participation in class. Reading assignments should be completed before the class for which they are assigned.

Reflection Article: 10% of your final grade will be based on a 1-2 pages reflection paper. They should include, your name, the name of the article, a couple of key points that you learned and questions you are left with after reading the article. The reflection paper must be
submitted by the due November 30. Students are required to submit an electronic copy of all assignments.

**Final Paper:** 80% of your grade will be your final assignment. The final assignment will be based upon the preparation for the simulation. Instructions for the final assignment will be given in class. The final assignment is due by January 4, 2024 at midnight. Students are required to submit an electronic copy of all assignments via the Moodle.

**Course Outline**

1. **Theoretical approaches to religious-based conflict resolution** (Oct. 19)
   
   **Required reading:**
   
   

   **Recommended:**
   

2. **Religious narratives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** (Oct. 26)

   **Required reading:**
   
   

   **Recommended:**
   
   
3. Is religion a barrier or an advantage for achieving peace in the Middle East? (Nov. 2)

Required reading:

- Reiter, Yitzhak, "Religion as a Barrier to Compromise in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", in Barriers to Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov, ed.), The Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 2010 Chapter 6.

4. Hollowed land: The link between religion and land in territorial conflicts (Nov. 9)

Required reading:


Recommended:


5. Islamic approach to war, peace and conflict resolution (Nov. 16) – guest lecturer – Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway (Al-Quds University)

Required reading:


Recommended


6. **Christian approach to war, peace and conflict resolution (Nov. 23)– guest lecturer – John Munayer** (Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue)

   Required reading:

7. **Jewish approach to war, peace and conflict resolution (Nov. 30)**

   Required reading:
8. Jerusalem – Competitive religious symbols in conflict (Dec. 7)

Required reading:

Recommended:

9. The conflict over the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound (Dec. 14)

Required reading:

10. A Jewish intra-religious conflict – the case of the Western Wall (Dec. 21)

Required reading:

Recommended:

11. Preparation for simulation play on management and resolution of the conflict over the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound (Dec. 28)

12. Simulation play and conclusion (Jan. 4)

13. Conclusion and reflection (Jan. 11)

General reading for preparing the simulation on the Jerusalem Holy Compound and writing your papers:

**Academic Fraud**

Any person found guilty of academic fraud will be subject to severe sanctions. Some examples of academic fraud include:
• plagiarism or cheating of any kind;
• submitting work of which the student is not the author, in whole or in part (except for duly cited quotations or references);
• presenting research data that has been falsified or concocted in any way; and
• submitting, without written prior approval from the professors concerned, the same work for more than one course.

**Classroom rules**

• Students are expected to arrive to all classes on time.
• Please do the readings as parts of the class will be discussion based