

**RELIGION AND VIOLENCE: LATE ANTIQUITY**  
**REL 4290/RLG 5297 Seminar-Biblical Studies**  
**Spring 2018**  
**TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm**  
**Dodd 207**

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos  
E-mail: [rfalcasantos@fsu.edu](mailto:rfalcasantos@fsu.edu)  
Office: Diffenbaugh 128D  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2pm–3pm and by appointment

Late antique literature abounds with accounts of heightened acts of violence between religious groups: Roman judges torture Christian prisoners; monks massacre banqueters and destroy temples with their bare hands; Nicene and Arian Christians clash on darkened city streets; Christians attack Jewish synagogues and festival-goers. What about the late antique religious context encouraged such violence? Were some religious groups more or less tolerant than their counterparts? Were incidents of violence merely rhetorical, or do they reflect the real volatility of social interactions? And might the literary representation of violence be an act of violence itself or encourage physical acts of violence? This course investigates the intersection of violence and religion from the third through the seventh century C.E., paying particular attention to questions of definition, legitimacy, and the interpretation of violent acts. As we explore these questions, we will engage with ongoing theoretical discussions about identity, violence, social performance, and boundary construction.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES.** This course has been approved to meet FSU's Liberal Studies Humanities and Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) requirements and is designed to help you become a thoughtful patron of and participant in cultural practices. *By the end of the course, students will:*

1. Interpret intellectual or artistic works within a cultural context.
2. Use a cultural, artistic, or philosophical approach to analyze some aspect of human experience.

**REQUIRED TEXTS.**

All students should purchase the following texts:

- Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (Columbia, 2007). ISBN 9780231129879. List price: \$32.00.
- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago, 2006). ISBN: 9780226482033. List price: \$20.00.

Graduate students should also purchase

- Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (California, 2005). ISBN: 9780520286245. List price: \$34.95.

Additional readings will be made available via Canvas/Library Reserves. Our in-library reserves are listed under REL 4290.



You should also have access to and follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17<sup>th</sup> edition) for your research. For biblical citations, follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

**If you need additional background in the social and cultural history of the period**, the following texts are helpful introductions:

- Joseph Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
  - This is a highly readable, undergraduate-level introduction to early Christianity through the late antique period.
- Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David Hunter, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
  - A more technically and theoretically involved handbook on a variety of topics related to the study of late antique Christianity.
- Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Philip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

A wealth of resources can also be found on the North American Patristics Website at <http://patristics.org/resources/other-resources-and-guides/>

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS.**

1. Participation in Class Discussion. (40%)
  - This class is a seminar. While I may begin class with a brief lecture to contextualize our readings, a significant portion of our class meeting will involve active discussion.
  - The quality of the course will depend on the sustained commitment and contributions of all its members. Attendance and careful preparation of the assigned texts are essential.
2. Research portfolio. (50%)
  - The following components will be due throughout the course of the semester. I will provide feedback on each assignment, so that you can make revisions before turning in your final portfolio.
    1. Identification of incident and summary of primary source. A list of incidents will be made available on Canvas. Graduate students may propose an incident not included in this list.
    2. Identification of additional documentation regarding incident (e.g., archaeological remains, law codes, inscriptions, other literary sources).
    3. History/summary of scholarship related to incident.
    4. Critical analysis of incident, relying on one of the theoretical models we've read.
  - **Graduate students** will develop their work into a seminar-length paper (25-30 pages).
3. Presentation of research. (10%)

### **COURSE POLICIES**

- According to federal definition, a credit hour consists of “one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit.” Students work at different paces, but most find it necessary to devote more time than specified in the federal definition. My expectation is that you will spend at least three hours preparing for class for every hour that you are in the classroom. Look ahead at your readings as some will take more time than others.
- Readings are listed in the course schedule according to the date they will be discussed. Be sure to read and annotate the assigned readings before coming to class and bring copies of the readings to class for reference.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class meeting. More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade for this class by half a letter grade for each additional absence.

Excused absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me in advance regarding an excused absence and provide appropriate documentation, except in the case of emergency.

- If you experience an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible regarding your absence. In such cases, it is also a good practice to contact the Dean of Students at 850-644-2428.
- You are still responsible for all readings and assignments missed due to an absence. In the event of an extended emergency absence, please be in touch with the Dean's office so that we can provide you the appropriate support.
- Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangement.

### **ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (FSU Academic Honor Policy at <http://academichonor.fsu.edu/policy/policy.html>).

The policy of the Dept. of Religion is that all violations of the FSU honor code, even first offenses, will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the Faculties. Additional sanctions may be imposed by FSU as part of the procedure for resolving academic honor allegations.

**PLAGIARISM IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE.** Using someone else's ideas or words without proper documentation, allowing someone else to write your essay, or taking an essay from another person or place (i.e., the Internet) is plagiarism. Plagiarism is but one of several forms in violation of the Academic Honor Policy. If you are uncertain about whether a practice would be considered a violation, do not hesitate to ask me. My interest is not in penalizing you but rather in teaching you how to be part of an academic community and to understand your participation in a lineage of learning.

### **ADA REQUIREMENTS**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center	(850) 644-9566 (voice)
874 Traditions Way	(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
108 Student Services Building	<a href="mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu">sdrc@admin.fsu.edu</a>
Florida State University	<a href="http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/">http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/</a>
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167	

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

As stated in the Florida State General Bulletin, University regulations stipulate that no student shall be penalized for missing class due to a religious holiday. Please notify the instructor in advance if a religious holiday you plan to observe falls on a day scheduled for class.

## **UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

## **SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and subject to change with advance notice.

### **Additional numbers and websites that you might find helpful:**

Dean of Students	850-644-2428
Disability Resources	850-644-9566 <a href="http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/">http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/</a>
Academic Center for Excellence	<a href="http://ace.fsu.edu">http://ace.fsu.edu</a>
Reading Writing Center	<a href="https://wr.english.fsu.edu/reading-writing-center">https://wr.english.fsu.edu/reading-writing-center</a>
Victim Advocacy	850-644-7161 850-644-1234 (after hours) <a href="https://dos.fsu.edu/vap/">https://dos.fsu.edu/vap/</a>
FSU Police	850-644-1234
Counseling Center	850-644-8255 <a href="https://counseling.fsu.edu">https://counseling.fsu.edu</a>
Crisis Help Line	211 (from local land line) 224-6333 (from local cell) 1-877-211-7005 (toll free)

## **Schedule of Classes & Readings**

You should always bring a copy of the day's readings to class.

### **Week 1 Course Introductions: Defining Violence**

Tues., January 9

*Please read before class:*

- Wendy Mayer, "Religious Conflict: Definitions, Problems, and Theoretical Approaches," from Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil, *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 1–19.

*Graduate students, also read:*

- William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), 15–56.

Thurs., January 11

- Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, Chapter 1.

*Undergraduates, please also read:*

- Sandra Sizer Frankiel, *Christianity: A Way of Salvation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 1–20.

*Graduate students, also read:*

- Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, Chapter 1.

### **Week 2 Prosecution or Persecution?**

Tues., January 16

- Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, Chapter 2, pp. 33–49.
- K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73.

Thurs., January 18

- Finish reading Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, Chapter 2.
- Ignatius of Antioch, *Letters*.

*Graduate students, also read:*

- David Riches, "The Phenomenon of Violence," from David Riches, ed., *The Anthropology of Violence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 1–27. LIBRARY RESERVES

### **Week 3 Martyrdom**

Tues., January 23

- Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, Chapter 3.
- Amy Hollywood, "Kill Jesus," in Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt, eds., *Mel Gibson's Bible: Religion, Popular Culture, and the Passion of the Christ* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 159–67. LIBRARY RESERVES

Thurs., January 25

- *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

*Graduate students, also read:*

- Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 1–115. LIBRARY RESERVES

#### **Week 4 Case Study: The Acts of Sharbil**

Tues., January 30

- Lee Ann Fujii, “The Puzzle of Extra-Lethal Violence,” *Perspectives in Politics* 11.2 (2013): 410–26.
- Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, Chapter 4.

Thurs., February 1

- *The Acts of Sharbil*
- *Martyrdom of Barsamya*

Graduate students, also read:

- David Frankfurter. “Martyrology and the Prurient Gaze.” *J ECS* 17.2 (2009): 215-245.

#### **Week 5 Framing Violence**

Tues., February 6

- Brent Shaw, “Judicial Nightmares and Christian Memory,” *J ECS* 11.4 (2003): 533-63.
- Neil L. Whitehead, “On the Poetics of Violence,” in Neil L. Whitehead, ed., *Violence* (Santa Fe: School of America Research Press, 2004), 55–77. LIBRARY RESERVES

Thurs., February 8

- H. A. Drake, “Intolerance, Religious Violence, and Political Legitimacy in Late Antiquity.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79 (2011): 193–235.

Graduate students, also read:

- Lois Presser, *Why We Harm* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), Chapters 1 and 2. LIBRARY E-BOOK

#### **Week 6 Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and Violence**

Tues., February 13

- Christine Shepardson, “Between Polemic and Propaganda: Evoking the Jews of Fourth-Century Antioch,” *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 2 (2015): 147–182.

Thurs., February 15

- John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews* (selected sermons).

Graduate students, also read:

- Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jew: Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). LIBRARY RESERVES

#### **Week 7 Case Study: The Conversion of the Jews on Minorca**

Tues., February 20

- Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (trans. Scott Bradbury).

Thurs., February 22

- Ambrose, *Letter* 74 (Maur. 40).
- Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994), 298–315. LIBRARY E-BOOK

**Graduate students**, also read:

- Judith Butler, “Burning Acts, Injurious Speech,” in her *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 43–50. LIBRARY RESERVES

## **Week 8      Intra-Christian Violence**

Tues., February 27

- Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, Chapters 2 and 3.

Thurs., March 1

- Athanasius, *Against the Arians I* and *In Defense of his Flight*.

Graduate students, also read:

- Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, Chapters 3 and 4.

## **Week 9      Temple Destruction**

Tues., March 6

- Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, Chapters 4.

Thurs., March 8

- Libanius, *Oration 30* (For the Temples).

Graduate students, also read:

- Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, Chapter 5.
- Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009), chapter 3. LIBRARY RESERVES

## **SPRING BREAK      MARCH 12–16, 2018**

## **Week 10      Religious Extremism?**

Tues., March 20

- Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, Chapters 5 and 6.

Thurs., March 22

- Mark the Deacon, *The Life of Porphyry of Gaza* (trans. Claudia Rapp in Thomas Head, *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*). LIBRARY RESERVES

Graduate students, also read:

- Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, Chapter 6.
- Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, Chapter 4. LIBRARY RESERVES

## **Week 11      Fake News? Narrative & Social Act**

Tues., March 27

- Nicoletta F. Gullace, “War Crimes or Atrocity Stories? Anglo-American Narratives of Truth and Deception in the Aftermath of World War I,” in Elizabeth D. Heineman, ed., *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 105-121. LIBRARY E-BOOK

Thurs., March 29

- Sokrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 7.
- Revisit *Life of Porphyry of Gaza*.

Graduate students, also read:

- Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, Chapters 7 and 8.
- If time, also read Luke Gardiner, “The Imperial Subject: Theodosius II and Panegyric in Socrates’ *Church History*,” in Christopher Kelly, ed., *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 244–68.

## **Week 12      Early Islam**

Tues., April 3

- Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (1971; repr. 1989), Chapters 15 and 16.
- Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009), Chapter 5.      LIBRARY RESERVES

Thurs., April 5

- Selections from the Quran.
- Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad* (selections).

Graduate students, also read:

- Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, Chapter 6.      LIBRARY RESERVES

## **Week 13      Early Byzantine Reaction to Islam**

Tues., April 10

- Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, Chapter 7.

Thurs., April 12

- The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius.      LIBRARY RESERVES

Graduate students, also read:

- Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, Chapter 8 and Conclusion.

## **Week 14**

Tues., April 17      Student presentations

Thurs., April 19      Student presentations

## **Week 15**

Tues., April 24      Student presentations

Thurs., April 26      Student presentations

**April 30–May 4      Final Examinations—Final Portfolios/Projects Due**