

To: Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations
 Merrimack College
 315 Turnpike Street
 North Andover, MA 01845

From: Peter Ochs
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 PO Box 400126, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126

It was wonderfully helpful to have received the Merrimack grant, and I am pleased to report about its consequences for my course on *Religion and Foreign Affairs*. Bearing in mind the topics that you ask us to cover in the final report, I have adopted the following approach: to place the syllabus and other discrete archives (such as website information, number of students, a sampling of their papers) in appendices to this letter and to write the letter as a narrative about the course as a process. I will narrate the following stages of this process: (1) My application for the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations grant (in small font, the application will be Appendix A); (2) The pre-syllabus for the course, which students would have seen in my website prior to the class and then again on the first day of class (Appendix B includes the pre-syllabus as Part One); (3) The detailed syllabus for the first seven weeks of class, which students and I created together on the first day of class (Appendix B includes the 7 week-syllabus as Part Two); (4) The detailed Syllabus for the Classes #8-13 (Appendix B includes the final 5-6 weeks as Part Three); (5) A running narrative about what went on in each of the 13 class sessions, with excerpts from the emails I sent to students before each class session, preparing them for what we were going to do; (6) a review of the student's final project, which was an edited collection of essays (of which the outline and a few samples Are Offered in Appendix C).

“Religion and Foreign Affairs” as a Process of Teaching and Learning

(1) *Application*

The first stage of the course was, in this case, a grant application. I had already set my sights on a course in this area, but the Merrimack grant got me focused and going sooner than I would have, and probably with more care and deliberation!

(2) *The Course as a Laboratory, Beginning with a Pre-Syllabus to Be Completed Only by the “Laboratory Team” (the students in the class).*

The course was offered as a modest-sized seminar for both upper-level undergrad and for grad students earlier in their tenure at UVA. Eleven students took it. As illustrated in Appendix C, the class website boasted a pre-syllabus, rather than a syllabus: an abstract of the course and an outline of what I considered to be the most important spread of topics and readings. But it would be up to the students on the first of class to review, discuss, and debate the pre-syllabus and decide as a class if these were indeed

the topics they wanted to cover and if so what the order of the course would be. This seemed to be the best way to have the class become a team, like a laboratory team; judging by the energy the students put into the final project of the term – a team-written “journal issue” – I think it worked.

On the first day of class, after introductions, I lectured a bit from readings about how diplomats and peacebuilders as well have tended for decades to ignore religion both as a major topic of study of, and as a possibly unnoticed resource for, conflict resolution. I then introduced two topics for two long stretches of discussion: What is it that motivates contemporary foreign policy teachers and practitioners to overlook religion? And what about religion contributes to this? How can religion apparently contribute to so much conflict and not at the same time contribute to our responses to it? I then suggested to the students that we had only three months to examine evidence from both sides of the question, the recent histories of foreign policy and of religion #1 and then come up with convincing responses to these questions and hopefully to the issue itself. We would construct the class the kind of laboratory to undertake this investigation. The first task would be for the potential lab researchers— all students in the class— to decide if this is what they wanted to do; they could otherwise undertake the class, and the readings I had already laid out, in a more standard lecture/discussion fashion. After some lively discussion, the class decided to take the riskier lab approach, despite some cautions expressed by a minority of the students.

After a brief break (the once-a-week, 2.5 hour seminar, has a 10 minute break in the middle), the class discussed and debated broadly what hypotheses they might adopt to address the questions I raised, what areas of inquiry they would have to undertake in order to articulate and test their hypothesis/es, and what readings as well as order of readings would they consider for the first seven weeks of the class? I convinced them that it would be best to preplan seven weeks and then, somewhere in the middle of that period, to plan the rest of the semester based on how things were going so far. To provide content for the discussion, I had brought to class printouts of excerpts from sample readings taken from each part of the syllabus as I preplanned it. Students sat in small groups reading through the samples and then, as discussion opened and heated up, they decided to have individuals keep track on the blackboard of a whole series of potential subjects and methods of inquiry that would enable them most efficiently to answer the class questions. We recorded this outline, revisited it several times during the course, and observed in the last week of class that the revised outline remained the foundation of our final team work.

Next time: *next time I teach this class (planned for an undergrad class in spring 2016)* I will probably keep the laboratory structure, but come with more of the class sessions preplanned. I plan to refocus the topic of the class to the work of the “Global Covenant of Religions (GCR),” a peacebuilding NGO cofounded by Jerry White, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; David Ford, Regius Prof. of Theology at Cambridge University and cofounder of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning; and me. Mr. White retired from the DOS to serve as executive director of GCR (see Appendix E for a June 2015

preface to the future work of GCR). To serve the “laboratory” aspect of the course, I plan to organize the class into several different teams, rearranged perhaps two or three times during the course. If possible, I’d like to gather students within the class from different majors, especially religious studies, politics, systems analysis, and anthropology: working initially in discipline-specific teams, and then for the rest of the time in integrated teams.

(3) *Class fashions a detailed syllabus for the first seven weeks of class.*

As outlined in part two of Appendix B, the class decided to devote their second week to gathering a shared understanding of Abrahamic monotheism, since non-religion majors in the class might need to catch up a bit. We used Karen Armstrong’s somewhat popular book, which served fairly well, even though I offered the class a critique of some of her omissions. The first part of the day was lecture— on deism, theism, atheism, monotheism—followed by student comments, around the table, on “what is religion,” followed by another lecture on the gods in ancient Greece and Ancient Near East, ending with extensive study and discussion of a few features of the God of Tanakh, New Testament, and Qur’an.

The plan for Class #3 was to turn next to a detailed ethnographic and mini-historical study of one case of ongoing interreligious conflict: contemporary Burma/Myanmar, which was a current focus of attention at the State Department. I asked students to review historical and journalistic materials I had examined during my time as academic consultant to Jerry White at the State Department. Then, we organize the class session as a laboratory exercise: students divided into small teams to “figure out” the role of religion, politics, NGO’s, and history in the current crisis of the Rohingya. In Appendix C, I print out most of the instructions I emailed to students about how to prepare for the in-class lab.

The plan for Class #4 was, after our introductions to monotheism and to religious crisis, to turn to an introduction to US foreign policy in the 20th and early 21st century. Our background reading was in *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11*. Our UVA colleague, Prof. Philip Zelikow, has an essay on “US Strategic Planning” in the book, so I invited him to open the class with a lecture on how US policymakers make decisions in times of political crisis. He also offered more personal recollections of his policy work as a White House advisor. Class discussion with Prof. Zelikow was terrific, leading us to lively reviews of the other chapters of *In Uncertain Times*; the focus was US policy during the latter years of the Cold War.

The plan for Class #5 was to take a first step in synthesizing our previous lessons by investigating the focal theme of religion in American foreign policy. Our text was William Charles Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment*. As an illustrative subtheme, we examined Christian leanings in American foreign policy, in particular during the Nixon administration. . I invited UVA to read the first and last chapters of Owen and Owen, eds, *Religion, Enlightenment and the New Global Order*. Prof. Owen offered the class his take on Inboden and, then, his overview of the role of

enlightenment and religion in foreign affairs today. It was a lively class that brought students into spirited engagement on the relationship between a “home religion” (like Christianity) and US politics as well as “other religions,” which they took to mean the “overseas” religions that may also be addressed in foreign policy.

During this class, we also began making detailed plans for classes #8-13, a process that we concluded after Class #6.

The plan for Class #6 was, finally, to begin the focal topic of the course: recent calls for making religion a significant subject matter of US foreign policy. Our reading was Scott Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, which I consider the most significant entrée into the topic of peacebuilding and religion today. Because of the book’s importance, I devoted the entire class to a close reading of most of Appleby’s chapters. I prepared the students beforehand with this email (excerpted here):

Topic #1: Read his Introduction: prepare to discuss: For Appleby, what is the overall promise of religious peace building?

Part I: What are religious tendencies to violence? to nonviolent activism?

Topic #2: Read chapter 1: prepare: What is the sacred? (I also asked a series of page-specific Q’s)

Topic #3: Read thru chapters 2-3: prepare: What conditions violence in the name of the sacred?

(I also asked a series of page-specific Q’s)

Topic #4: Read chapter 4: prepare: What conditions non-violent activism in the name of the sacred?

Discuss, in particular, his treatment of Comunità di Sant’Egidio.

Part II: What might be gained by involving religious actors in peace building?

Topics #5-6: Read Chapters 6 and 8. Prepare: (a) Which of the functions and social locations of religious actors (as described in this chapter) impress you his most likely to contribute to religious peace building? (b) The same question, but apply to government agencies NGOs and so forth, as reviewed in Chapter 8. (I also asked a series of page-specific Q’s on types of conflict transformation and on religious violence and education.)

The plan for Class #7 was to address “A Call for Considering Muslim Resources for Framing American Foreign Policy,” based on the reading, Emile Nakhleh, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World* (Princeton, 2008). In my absence that week, the class was led by UVA Islamic studies Prof. Ahmed al-Rahim, who, in addition to his scholarly work on medieval Muslim philosophic commentaries, also brings foreign policy experience from his work at the State Department. Prof. al-Rahim began with the latter, leading into a lecture and brought discussion on sources of Muslim engagement with and in American foreign policy.

(4) *Class fashions Classes #8-13 only after sharing five weeks of study together.*

This delayed planning proved successful because, by Classes #5-6, students had a good sense of what they as a class-team preferred to study in order to answer what became for them the best topic for a final, class project. The project would be an edited collection of essays, like a journal issue, written as if to advise the State Department on why it is urgent to introduce religion as a focus of foreign policy and

how best to do it. They decided to devote the equivalent of three class sessions to studying, and directly engaging members of, the State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO)— the bureau for which I had been an academic consultant to Jerry White. They decided to devote two prior class sessions to recent work in religion, politics, and peacebuilding, and two final sessions of the course to presentations of student work. Preparation for the final student essay collection began during week #8, with in-class and outside-class planning meetings about the best topics for each chapter of the final writing and about who would prepare which chapter and who would also serve as overall editors. I believe the class, as well as I, enjoyed the process, because it was an exercise in policy thinking, integrating the semester studies of foreign policy and of religion and also because the final work would actually be received by our colleagues at CSO.

The plan for Class #8 was to return to approaches like Scott Appleby's: in this case that of Marc Gopin, as illustrated in *Between Eden and Armageddon*. Our focus was his examination of religious conflict and possible religious peacebuilding, in Israel/Palestine and the Middle East in particular. By this time in the course, students had submitted to two papers to me so, in response to some of their writing habits, I was beginning to encourage more attention to detail and precision, in class discussion as well as in reading and in writing. Consistent with their own goals to begin already to anticipate their final papers, I also encourage them to comment on all of our readings from now on with attention to their individual approaches to our overall theme of attending to religion in US foreign policy. Looking, for example, at Gopin's themes of Rebecca and Jacob in Chapter 6, I asked them to consider the conflict of secularism versus religiosity as a significant issue in the politics of Israel and perhaps as well in the State Department. Following leads in Gopin's writing, we also discussed how a society's overall mentality, feeling at peace or ever-at-war, affected government policy as well as public mood, and what it meant to introduce new approaches to memory and history, dialogue and justice. Drawing on two students' experiences, we brought Mennonite approaches to peacebuilding into dialogue with Gopin's approaches, and then concluded by discussing his remarks on the rabbinic model of repentance or *teshuvah*.

The plan for Class #9 was to examine a related approach to peacebuilding that I had been developing in dialogue with several grad-student research assistants, Reuben Shank, Nauman Faizi, and Betsy Mesard. These students and I co-presented our approach to "Hearth-to-Hearth Inter-religious Peacebuilding." Readings included drafts of our ongoing work in a Luce foundation research project to be undertaken in Lahore, Pakistan; a CSO/Department of State training module on *Religion and Conflict* that drew on our technical model of "hearth to hearth diagnostics"; other CSO documents on religious conflict in Burma, and two presentations I had made at SAIS (the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies) on religion and on ethnolinguistic field diagnostics. An optional reading was my essay, "Reasoning from 'Hearth to Hearth': A Path of Peace across the Borders of Competing Religions" (which appeared as "The Possibilities and Limits of Interreligious Dialogue," in *The*

Oxford Handbook of Religion, Peace, and Conflict Resolution, eds. S. Appleby and A. Omer (Oxford, 2014). It was a good class, with significant interactions between class members and the student researchers, integrating theory and personal experience, academic and governmental work, and ranging from the quite technical to the very practical.

After Class #9 until the end of the semester, our plan was to focus on CSO and its relation to our policy studies. Throughout these four weeks, we met outside of class as well as in: small groups meeting each week to plan details of our visit to the State Department, to develop questions for members of CSO, to refine plans for the “journal issue,” to work on writing, and to share the writing for team editing. One reason for the complexity was that the topics for the journal issue, which would at the same time be topics for interrogating CSO members, belong to an overall class planned for a comprehensive study of religion and foreign policy: to some degree we sought to link students to topics of greatest interest to them but we also wanted what the class took to be complete coverage of the topic. Since some students had more specialized knowledge in certain areas than others, this meant that students contributed modest sections to one another’s papers to fill in areas of needed expertise; small team also prepared the introduction and conclusion to the issue; and another team served as editors: in sum, there are lots of reasons for students to seek more time for meeting, planning, negotiating.

Class #10 was devoted to this kind of work, focusing in particular on introduction to CSO’s new approaches to religion and foreign affairs and regional conflict. As indicated in the Syllabus bibliography, readings for the class were primarily written by CSO staff: books, journal essays and web items by Sec. Kerry, Assistant Secretary Barnett, Deputy Assistant Sec. Jerry White, and his associate Liora Danan. I added several additional readings:

- R. Scott Appleby, Richard Cizik, and Thomas Wright, *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy: Report of the Task Force on Religion and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2010).
- Thomas F. Farr and Dennis R. Hoover, *The Future of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Recommendations for the Obama Administration*. (Washington DC: The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Center on Faith and International Affairs, 2009.)
- Optional reading (required the following week): Daniel Philpott and Gerard Powers, *Strategies of Peace* (Studies in Strategic Peacebuilding) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

After my review of the approaches and personalities of the CSO staff, the class became a workshop for planning questions for staff members and planning other features of our trip to the State Department.

Class #11 was a full day of meetings in Washington DC: a 2 hour visit with Jerry White’s staff at CSO followed by a joint 2 hr. session at SAIS hosted by Prof. Leila Austin and her SAIS grad students. The CSO meeting was shaped by questions framed by our students. As framed by CSO staff, the meeting took the following form:

CSO April 1, 1:00-3:00 p.m.**I. CSO Overview****II. Panelist Introductions**

- What is your background? What are your foreign affairs interests?
- How did you come/Why did you choose to work for CSO?
- What are your main responsibilities at CSO? How do you understand the objectives/goals of CSO?

III. The Way that CSO Approaches Religious Communities (Theory)

- What are some of the obstacles, from the perspective of the State Department, to discussing, reaching out to and working with religious communities?
- How does CSO define a “religious leader” and a “religious community”?
- How does CSO choose with whom to engage?
- How is “religion” integrated into CSO’s policy strategies?

IV. The Places Where CSO Has Engaged with Religious Leaders/Communities (Practice)

- Burma, Honduras, Haiti

V. Training Materials and Ongoing/Future Projects

- Religion and Conflict Training Modules for FSI
- Religious Engagement Country Studies for O/FBCI
- Intercommunal Violence Roundtable with SCA, INR, etc.

It was a very generous meeting, longer and with more of CSO staff participants than planned. The UVA students had ample time to speak with Jerry White and interview a broad range of panelists on their full range of planned questions. Panelists included specialists in most region-specific assignments, in education/training, in policy, in relations to USAID, in development, in religion and conflict.

The meeting at Johns Hopkins/SAIS was hosted by SAIS Prof. Leila Austin (Professorial Lecturer in Global Theory and History and Middle East Studies, deputy director of Cultural Conversations at the Foreign Policy Institute at SAIS.) The meeting centered on the Religion & Conflict training manuals we had produced at CSO. We featured the NGO hired to do the video and text work for the manuals, IPSI (International Peace & Security Institute), with presentations by the IPSI Director, Cameron Chisolm, Program Dir. Kate Elci, and by me on how we brought the “Hearth to Hearth” approach into a manual. The presentations were received very well and led to a spirited discussion that the two student groups decided to extend into a dinner and then post-dinner meeting. The two groups had significant mutual interests: SAIS students wanted to hear more about UVA’s approach to religion, and the UVA students wanted to hear more about SAIS’s approach to foreign policy.

Class #11B took place three days later: a visit to UVA by Jerry White, who delivered two talks. One was a lunchtime presentation/chat with the class; the other was a public lecture on Religion and Conflict, followed by a post-lecture meeting with the class. Overall, it was a high-energy week for class students, who emerged highly energized and well instructed for their final writing projects.

Class #12 was a laboratory class, during which the students and I put together an outline for the journal issue. Here is the email I sent back to them with some added details summarizing which students signed up for which set of projects and so on:

April 11, 2014
Dear Students,

Thank you for a simply terrific laboratory class, you learned well how to do this in-between discourse (between theory and practice). Sorry for the delay, here is my summary of what we wrote on the blackboard earlier in the week:

Overall Title: (something like)

Engaging Religion and Religious Actors: Recommendations for CSO

By UVa Grad Seminar in "Religion and Foreign Affairs" Spring 2014

[Note to class: here comes one of your prof's typically complicated texts.]

You will see an outline for our overall report. Each chapter in that report should be prepared as an 8-10 page ms. So, please plan to write that first. Then, after we receive your full reports, we will then secondly discuss plans to have each of you recompose the reports as a 3 page, very succinct argument with 5+ pages of more detailed appendices. But, after the description of each chapter you will see the complex part. Please don't be confused! It struck me that most of you will develop an expertise in some single area that could also be applied to certain aspects of every chapter in the book. Therefore I have, under each chapter, also suggested how each of you could add advice or a few words to each of the other chapters.]

A. Introduction: Overall author Emily (with writing also contributed by Tori and Omar)

- Overall, the intro should provide reasons that would convince diplomats that religion is now a vital theme of study and attention
- Major focus is on security: arguing how attention to religion serves the overall security interests of the U.S.
- Establishment clause: here is where Omar should add some writing, to be then edited in by Emily, on how religion can be engaged without offending the First Amendment
- Burma Case Study: here is where Tori should offer significant writing, again to be edited in by Emily, on how we are using Burma as a case study throughout the report. Tori and team should decide how much detail is needed in this section to prepare readers for the report as a whole. Perhaps the team will decide that there should be a full appendix or even subchapter just on Burma. I don't know, it is up to your judgments.
- The intro should also explain how certain ongoing topics are reiterated in each chapter: for example, Burma, establishment clause, anthropology, etc. Burma is the biggest one
- The intro may need to be longer than I first thought: perhaps 10 pages plus appendix? We shall see.
- Wisdom and/or writing to be gleaned as well from each of the following. This first list identifies what individuals might be contributing to all the chapters of the report. Emily and they can decide if some of that contribution will appear in the intro:
 - Taylor: what current state department policy is relative to the topics of each chapter.
 - Tori: what aspect of Burma studies (gathered from Morgan/Cecily, and more) offers a good case study for each chapter.
 - Omar: what aspect of the establishment clause needs to be considered for the recommendations in each chapter
 - Emily: what security issues should be attended to in some chapters
 - Rebekah: what aspects of ethnographic work should be attended to in some chapters
 - Elena: what definitions of religion should be attended to in some chapter
 - Jacob: what training elements should be applied in some chapters
 - Shannon: how the work of some of the chapters should address the role of local communities and NGOs

B. Elena: What religion is/what religions and religious groups are

- Taylor: on what state department currently thinks religion is
- Tori: how this relates to the study of Burma
- Omar: against what challenges from the establishment clause
- Rebekah: how religious groups are defined ethnographically
- Shannon and Jacob: how FSOs can be trained to attend to religion as it appears locally and in local NGOs

C. Omar: what new principles or values will guide foreign policy work on religion?

- The prime work of this chapter is to show how these new principles or rules of engagement (and the values that guide them) will emerge from out of a "dialogue" (or interaction) among at least 3 sources of values and principles: a) government values (such as human rights, freedom, democracy), b) the professional/personal/religious values of individual FSO, c) the values/principles of each of the religious groups that the U.S. engages in a particular campaign.\

- With advice from
 - Taylor: on what the state department thinks its current values are
 - Tori: how this relates to the study of Burma
 - Omar: against what challenges from the establishment clause
 - Rebekah: how religious groups are defined ethnographically
 - Shannon and Jacob: how FSOs can be trained to attend to religion as it appears locally and in local NGOs
 - Emily: concerns about security as a source of government values
 - Elena: how definitions of religion apply to these values
- D. Jacob: Training/education: how diplomats/FSOs should be trained to acquire new understandings about religion and religious groups**
- With advice from
 - Taylor: on what the state department thinks its current values are
 - Tori: how this relates to the study of Burma
 - Omar: against what challenges from the establishment clause
 - Omar: what new values and rules of engagement apply here
 - Rebekah: how religious groups are defined ethnographically
 - Shannon and Jacob: how FSOs can be trained to attend to religion as it appears locally and in local NGOs
 - Emily: concerns about security as a source of government values
 - Elena: how definitions of religion apply to these values
- E. Rebekah: The place of ethnography in designing and conducting field studies of religious groups**
- With advice from
 - Taylor: on what the state department thinks its current values are
 - Tori: how this relates to the study of Burma
 - Omar: against what challenges from the establishment clause
 - Omar: what new values and rules of engagement apply here
 - Shannon and Jacob: how FSOs can be trained to attend to religion as it appears locally and in local NGOs
 - Emily: concerns about security as a source of government values
 - Elena: how definitions of religion apply to these values
- F. Shannon: Track 1.5 work with local communities and NGOs**
- How to locate and identify such communities and NGOs and how to draw them into the work of the FSOs
 - With advice from
 - Taylor: on what the state department thinks its current values are
 - Tori: how this relates to the study of Burma
 - Omar: against what challenges from the establishment clause
 - Omar: what new values and rules of engagement apply here
 - Jacob: how FSOs can be trained to attend to religion as it appears locally and in local NGOs
 - Emily: concerns about security as a source of government values
 - Elena: how definitions of religion apply to these values
- G. Reuben and Nauman: (very tentative): Recommendations on H2H [Hearth to Hearth]**

Appendix: Primary arguments that underlie the report as a whole

1. CSO needs to convince the government that religion matters!
2. CSO needs to engage actual, local religious groups in regions of conflict
 - a. Diagnose group tendencies (module 3)
 - b. Conduct ethnographic studies to get empirical evidence about how religion is operating
3. Do a much better job integrating these 3 sources of values and principles (or say “promote a better dialogue among these”):
 - a. U.S. government values
 - b. Other hearths (individual FSOs, etc)
 - c. The religious groups and traditions engaged in each region
4. CSO needs to achieve better definitions and understandings of religion and religions

Note: Our class also noted that CSO needs to achieve better protocols for working with researchers and for addressing matters of religion. This includes finding better legal models for protecting freedom of science and inquiry. But we decided that the content of this urgent recommendation fall outside the purview of this course.

Due Dates:

- *April 17th: 10 PM meeting at a bar/restaurant. Burma report: Tori reports to us on what is most important to attend to for the Burma case studies. We then hear brief oral reports from each student and Tori and Students decide what aspects of the Burma study should be developed within each chapter*
- *April 23rd: 10 PM meeting at a bar/restaurant. 10+ minutes oral reports from each chapter. Time for recommendations from each “expert” on what to add to these chapters*
- *May 1st: 10 PM meeting at a bar/restaurant. Rough drafts submitted.*
- *May 7th: 10 PM meeting at a bar/restaurant (unless we decide to be a little more formal and invite other profs and underage children): Final gathering, with some editorial work yet to do after that.*

The equivalent of Class #13 was held at a favorite bar/restaurant: four evening meetings during which students discussed and proposed revisions to individual writings. During the two weeks, I also met separately with smaller student teams to work on final editing. And that was it! (See Appendix E for excerpts from some chapters of the “journal issue.”

Appendix A

Application for a Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations Grant



REVISED VERSION 6PM May 10

May 10, 2013

Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations
Merrimack College
315 Turnpike Street, GL-55
North Andover, MA 01845

Dear Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations:

It is good to hear of your work. I am pleased to attach two pre-syllabi as submissions for your Interfaith Curriculum Grant RFP.

If the competition is only open to newcomers to interfaith, then I do not qualify. Twenty years ago, two Anglican colleagues (David Ford and the late Daniel Hardy) and I founded a practice of interfaith study we later called Scriptural Reasoning (SR). The Society for Scriptural Reasoning now has regional boards in North America, the UK/Europe, Middle East, and China, overseeing different regional species of SR. In most places our practice is inter-Abrahamic, but the China program is now adding Asian Religions, some other groups have added Baha’i and experiments are underway, as well, with other forms of what we call “study across the borders of sacred texts and traditions.”

At the University of Virginia, I direct a graduate program in “Scripture, Interpretation, and Practice,” which is primarily inter-Abrahamic studies, with a new project in Abrahamic-Asian comparative scriptures, as well. We have so far graduated 6 Phds in this program and 11 MA’s; 12 Phds and 5 MA’s are currently enrolled. In addition to this academic teaching and our associated academic writings related to SR, we also have community-based programs (the North American project for communities is called “1000 Cities.” Among the websites for our programs are www.scripturalreasoning.com (attached to which is a week-long summer course our grad students have taught on

“The Religions Of Abraham: Sources Of Peace And Conflict” (it was under my supervision: as part of their graduate work, our PhD students do community work, teaching, journal editing, and so on); <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/jsrforum/>; <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/ssr/>; and our sister program at Cambridge University (www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/).

If this ongoing work does not render me unqualified, then there is either one of two course projects I would appreciate your considering for the interfaith course competition. Both courses are new and, if approved, one would be taught in Spring 2014 and one in Fall or Winter 2014-2015.

A. Proposal for a Interfaith Seminar on Religion and Foreign Affairs

Peter Ochs, Dept. of Religious Studies, UVA, May 1 2013

Abstract of the course: A study of the recent turn to “Religion” as a focus of attention in US foreign affairs. Why did religion receive relatively little attention before 9/11 in the US Department of State and in university graduate programs in international affairs and diplomacy? The course begins with a survey of US government reports and foreign affairs literature on religion over five decades before 9/11. What happened in the early 21st century to make religion a front-page international news topic and a topic of at least modest (and growing) concern in think tanks and agencies devoted to international affairs? The course examines the role of religion in political and military conflicts over the past decade, including detailed case studies of religion and conflict in the Middle East and in East Asia. And what now? The second half of the course addresses very recent academic writing and US Department of State policy on the probable role of religion in conflict and peace in the coming decade. Classwork will be supplemented by field visits to religious communities in Virginia and by guest speakers in foreign affairs and international inter-religious diplomacy. During the last weeks of the course, students will interview State Department staff members on current events and policy.

1. **Proposed Readings and Assignments** (a sampling of the kinds of sources I’d hope to include in the course)

Part I: Religion and Foreign Affairs Before 9/11:

William Charles Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul Containment*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Scott Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*. 2009. Simon & Schuster
Class packet of Dept. of State archives.

Study focus (a) The meaning of “religion” for US foreign affairs officers, 1950-2000; (b) Religious actors: their presence or absence in US diplomacy 1950-2000.

Part II: Religion and Conflict in the Early 21st Century

Mark Jurgensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (U of California 2003 [2000]).

Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford, 2000).

Scott Appleby, ed., [*Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East*](#) (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Emile Nakhleh, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World* (Princeton, 2008).
Class packet of Dept. of State archives.

Special studies: class visits by scholars of religion and religious leaders. Class visits to local religious community.

Study focus: (a) Religion as terror: US perceptions after 9/11; (b) Approaches to religion and conflict transformation in the early 21st cent.

Part III Religion and Foreign Affairs in the coming Decade

Davidson, W. D. and Montville, J. D. (1981-82), "Foreign policy according to Freud," *Foreign Policy*, No. 45, Winter, pp. 145-157

Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford, 2007)

[Daniel Philpott](#) and [Gerard Powers](#), *Strategies of Peace* (Studies in Strategic Peacebuilding) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Liora Danan, “Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religions in Conflict-Prone Settings,” *A Report of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2007.

R. Scott Appleby, Richard Cizik, and Thomas Wright, *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy*: Report of the Task Force on Religion and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2010).

Thomas F. Farr and Dennis R. Hoover, [*The Future of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Recommendations for the Obama Administration*](#). Washington DC: The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Center on Faith and International Affairs, 2009.

Opt: R. Scott Appleby and Atalia Omer, eds. *Oxford Handbook in Religion, Peace, and Conflict Transformation* (Oxford, 2014).

U.S. Department of State, One Year Progress Report of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (2013).

Special studies: class visit by scholars in religion and international relations; class interviews of US State Department staff (from the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations).

Study focus: Redefining religion in contemporary foreign affairs; (b) Religion as source of conflict or conflict transformation?

2. Contribution to the University of Virginia

Intended for upper level undergraduates and for masters students, the course would be the first of its kind at UVA: a religious studies course that combines in-depth studies in international affairs and politics with in-depth studies of the three Abrahamic religions in peace and conflict. On the undergraduate side, the course would contribute to studies in Christianity, in Islam, in Judaism, and in non-western cultures. It would bring together students (hopefully) and scholars in politics and in religious studies and would also introduce students to State Department staffers and their work. Outside the classroom, students would meet local religious leaders and foreign affairs officers. On the MA level, the course would be a warm-up or test for a possible new MA in Religion, Peace, and Conflict Transformation. It would be offered within the UVA Religious Studies grad program in "Scripture, Interpretation, and Practice (SIP)." SIP Phd students would serve as in-class mentors.

3. Instructor's Qualifications for the course

P. Ochs directs the SIP grad program and has previously designed and taught courses on the Abrahamic religions and on Peace and Conflict among the Abrahamic Religions. The proposed course takes a significant step beyond the latter courses, since it will integrate the instructor and the SIP program's work on Abrahamic religions with historical and contemporary studies in foreign affairs. P. Ochs currently serves as Consultant to the US Department of State Working Group on Inter-religious Conflict. He would draw on the latter experience to frame the course and would introduce students to State Dept. contacts and their work.

4. Budget

- a) July-September, 2013: Course preparation. Summer Work release: 1/2 summer time = \$4000
- b) Course preparation assistance at US Dept of State: 3 visits (Charlottesville to Washington DC) @ \$170=\$510 (application would be made to UVA Office of the Dean).

5. Learning Objectives:

- a) To provide students sophisticated familiarity with the role of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in international conflicts in the past century, with an emphasis on the past decade. This is not a course for beginners, but will presuppose prior course work in at least two of the Abrahamic traditions. Course study will emphasize both indigenous accounts of the political force of traditional beliefs and academic studies of the place of traditional religious beliefs in what foreign affairs officers identify as "religious conflicts."
- b) To introduce students to the way US foreign affairs professionals (in government, academia, and NGOs) perceive the three Abrahamic religions, individually and in their inter-actions, in situations of both peace and war. Attention will be directed to the foreign policy in the past century and, in particular, in the past decade. The course will not require prior studies in politics.

6. Learning Assessment:

The course will be heavy on writing assignments. Students will submit two essays for each of the three parts of the course. Essays will be judged according to learning objectives noted above as well as on more general standards of excellence.

7. Instructor Preparation

The instructor will draw on interviews and counsel from State Dept. officers, from politics faculty at UVA, and from researchers in the area of peace and conflict resolution (such as Prof. Scott Appleby of the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame; Dr. Joseph Montville at Merrimack; and others.). A summer month would be devoted to library research.

8. Experiential Learning

Inside the classroom and in their reading and writing, students will be examining events and issues of immediate pertinence to world news and world affairs. In and out of class time, they will meet and interview local religious leaders, local retired ambassadors, and US State Dept. officers and staff. In class teaching will be supported by in-class media facilities at UVA (powerpoint, in-class web-site study, and documentaries).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter Ochs
Edgar Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies
pochs@virginia.edu

Appendix B Course Website

- *Website* (I have added Dr. Longabaugh-Burg's email to the website for the sake of access):
<https://collab.itc.virginia.edu/portal/site/2c9dd1e4-ca88-43a0-ba40-75d692625322>
- *Students completing the course:*
Omar Baig, Taylor Brown, Emily Churchill, Mian Muhammad Nauman Faizi, Shannon Hagginbothom, Jacob Marthaller, Rebekah McCallum, Victoria Rodgers, Reuben Shank, Elena Weissmann.,

Appendix C: Course Syllabus

The Syllabus includes Three Stages, all combined here into one document:

- a) The pre-syllabus for the course, which students would have seen on my website prior to the class and then again on the first day of class;
- b) The detailed syllabus for the first seven weeks of class, which students and I created together on the first day of class;
- c) The detailed Syllabus for the Classes #8-13 and assignments.

Seminar on Religion and Foreign Affairs

Relg 3559: Seminar on Religion and Foreign Affairs

Maury Hall 110 T 330-6

Peter Ochs Spring 2014 (46718, pwo3v; OH W 330-5)

Abstract of the course: A study of the recent turn to "Religion" as a focus of attention in US foreign affairs. Why did religion receive relatively little attention before 9/11 in the US Department of State and in university graduate programs in international affairs and diplomacy? The course begins with a survey of US government reports and foreign affairs literature on religion over five decades before 9/11. What happened in the early 21st century to make religion a front-page international news topic and a topic of at least modest (and growing) concern in think tanks and agencies devoted to international affairs? The course examines the role of religion in political and military conflict over the past decade, including detailed case studies of religion and conflict in the Middle East and in East Asia. And what now? The second half of the course addresses very recent academic writing and US Department of State policy on the probable role of religion in conflict and peace in the coming decade. Classwork will be supplemented by field visits to religious communities in Virginia and by guest speakers in foreign affairs and international inter-religious diplomacy. During the last weeks of the course, students will interview State Department staff members on current events and policy.

Part I: Religion and Foreign Affairs Before 9/11:

William Charles Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11, Auth/Eds Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (Published in Association with the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs).

Scott Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999).

Study focus (a) The meaning of "religion" for US foreign affairs officers, 1950-2000; (b) Religious actors: their presence or absence in US diplomacy 1950-2000.

Part II: Religion and Conflict in the Early 21st Century

Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford, 2000).

Emile Nakhleh, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World* (Princeton, 2008).

Qamar-ul Huda, *Crescent and Dove, Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* (2010)

W.D. Davidson and J.D. Montville, J. D. (1981-82), "Foreign policy according to Freud," *Foreign Policy* 45 (Winter, pp. 145-157).

Kenya:

Samuel Elobia, "Religion and the Road to Democracy in Kenya," in *Religion, Conflict, and Democracy in Modern Africa*, ed. Samuel Elobia (Wipf & Stock, 2012), pp. 101-130.

Grace Gedys Harris, "Casting out Anger, Religion among the Taita of Kenya," in Janet McIntosh, *The Edge of Islam, Power, Personhood, and Ethno-religious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast* (Cambridge, 1978)

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9041841/the-war-on-christians/>

Burma:

<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-burma> (Jonathan Aitkin President Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/5324040/I-went-to-prison-for-telling-a-lie.-In-Burma-people-are-in-prison-for-telling-the-truth.html>

Special studies: class visits by scholars of religion and religious leaders. Class visits to local religious community. Study focus: (a) Religion as terror: US perceptions after 9/11; (b) Approaches to religion and conflict transformation in the early 21st cent.

Part IIIA Religion and Foreign Affairs in the coming Decade: Introduction

Daniel Philpott and Gerard Powers, *Strategies of Peace* (Studies in Strategic Peacebuilding) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

R. Scott Appleby, Richard Cizik, and Thomas Wright, *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy: Report of the Task Force on Religion and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2010).

Thomas F. Farr and Dennis R. Hoover, *The Future of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Recommendations for the Obama Administration*. (Washington DC: The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Center on Faith and International Affairs, 2009.)

Part IIIB Religion and Foreign Affairs in the coming Decade: CSO

(US Department of State, Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations)

(1) CSO Deputy Assistant Secretary Jerry White: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_White_\(activist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_White_(activist))
Jerry White, *I Will Not Be Broken* (St. Martins, 2008).

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/banmines/qna/profile2.asp>

<http://www.seattlepi.com/m/local/article/A-moment-with-Jerry-White-global-activist-1274080.php>

<http://www.abilitymagazine.com/jerry-white.html>

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20100927/local/the-mine-that-set-off-a-mission.328707#.UtLyhvQVp8E>

<http://www.uscbl.org/about-uscbl/>

<http://www.survivorcorps.org/>

(2) CSO

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/11/177636.htm>

<http://www.state.gov/j/cso/>

(3) Secretary John Kerry: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/>

(4) The "J" Family of Bureau's c/o Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

Maria Otero: <http://www.state.gov/j/>;

<http://www.state.gov/j/ogp/index.htm>

(5) CSO Assistant Secretary Rick Barton <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/187400.htm>

<http://www.state.gov/j/cso/releases/other/2013/204020.htm>

- (6) Liora Danan: http://csis.org/files/publication/120706_Mendelson_InevitableConflicts_Web.pdf
 Liora Danan, "Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religions in Conflict-Prone Settings,"
A Report of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies,
 July 2007.
 Liora Danan, "Shaping the Narrative of Religious Freedom," in *Religion and Public Diplomacy*, ed. Philip
 Seob (Palgrave- Macmillan, 2013).

Optional:

- R. Scott Appleby and Atalia Omer, eds. *Oxford Handbook in Religion, Peace, and
 Conflict Transformation* (Oxford, 2014).
 U.S. Department of State, *One Year Progress Report of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations*
 (2013).

Special studies: class visit by scholars in religion and international relations; class interviews of CSO staff.
 Study focus: Redefining religion in contemporary foreign affairs; (b) Religion as source of conflict or conflict
 transformation.

Syllabus: Stage 2: as fashioned in class 1/14/2014:

1. **(Class#1):** *Organizing the Class as a Laboratory dedicated to raising and testing hypotheses* about (A) why US foreign policy has tended not to examine religion as a significant subject of study and policy making; (B) if, how, and why this tendency ought to change; (C) how religion could be examined in a way that strengthened US foreign policy.
2. **(Class#2):** *A Shared introduction to Abrahamic Religions.* (Jan 21) Read and study Karen Armstrong, *A History of God, the 4000 year quest by Judaism Christianity and Islam*. (Some students may substitute Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God*). Shared reading: Chap 1-5. In addition, students should examine chapters on the Enlightenment since its reasoning deeply influenced the founding fathers of the USA and remains a prototype for a rationalist approach to world affairs. Additional chapters may be selected depending on individual interests.
3. **(Class #3)** *A case study in ongoing interreligious conflict: (Jan 27 or 29)*
[Burma: http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-burma;](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-burma;)
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/5324040/I-went-to-prison-for-telling-a-lie.-In-Burma-people-are-in-prison-for-telling-the-truth.html> (Jonathan Aitkin President Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

Excerpts from:

- Guillaume Rozenberg, *Renunciation and Power: the Quest for Sainthood in Contemporary Burma* (Yale, 2010).
 Trevor Ling, *Buddhism Imperialism and War* (George Allen, 1979)
 Andrew Selth, *Burma's Muslims: terrorists or terrorized?* (Australian National University, 2003).
 Ingrid Jordt, *Burma's Mass Lay Meditation Movement: Buddhism and the Cultural Construction of Power* (Ohio University, 2007).
 Juliane Schober, *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures in Myanmar* (University of Hawaii, 2007)
 Bardwell Smith, ed., *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma* (Anima, 1978).

4. **(Class #4)** *US Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century and Early Twenty-First* (Feb 4)
 Reading: *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs) Melvyn P. Leffler, Jeffrey W. Legro.
5. **(Class #5)** *Religious (Christian) Leanings in twentieth century American foreign policy?* (Feb 11)

Reading: William Charles Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

6. **(Class #6)** *A Call for Religion in the Subject Matter of US Foreign Policy* (Feb 18)

Reading: Scott Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

7. **(Class #7)** *A Call for Considering Muslim Resources for Framing American Foreign Policy* (Feb 25)

Reading: Emile Nakhleh, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World* (Princeton, 2008). 8-13: to be planned in class Feb 4.....

Assignments: to be planned Feb 4.

Syllabus: Stage 3: as fashioned in class 2/04/2014:

8. **(Class #8)** *Marc Gopin, Between Eden and Armageddon* (May 4)

Reading: Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon* (Oxford, 2000). A study of religion and diplomacy applied to the Middle East conflict, in particular Israel/Palestine.

9. **(Class #9)** *Hearth-to-Hearth Inter-religious Peacebuilding* (Mar 18)

With P Ochs, R. Shank, N. Faizi, B. Mesard: this is the fruit-in-progress of a Luce Foundation Grant which this UVA team is applying to test a new approach to religion and violence in regions of potential conflict. The project has also brought this UVA team into detailed relations with CSO. (We shall send out readings online)

10. **(Class #10)** (Mar 25) CSO's new approaches to religion, foreign affairs, and regional conflict (readings as suggested already on the syllabus, but I shall pare that down for you a little later).

11. **(Class #11)** (Apr 1): full-day visit to CSO: to meet Jerry White and staff, to hear their individual stories of what brought them to CSO and what they hope to achieve, and within the limits of time for us to ask questions from out of our current work to them.

11.5 (Apr 4): Jerry White visits UVA to give two talks:

- 1) a lunchtime presentation/chat with US in our course.
- (2) a public talk Friday afternoon.

12-13+: **(Classes #12-13+)** Readings and topic yet to be scheduled, As we move toward teamwork and an individual writing on our learning exercise of proposing foreign policy changes to meet the needs for new forms of attention to religion in conflict zones. [See narrative; texts provided after Class #11.]

Assignments:

- 1) By Class 6 (Feb 18), write a 4-5 pp. essay on "foreign policy setting for our course laboratory." (4-5pp. written very tightly and efficiently, like a brief for a consultation). From our readings for class 4 and 5, narrate one aspect of US foreign policy tendencies that you feel would be necessary for us to consider carefully before we later proposed ways of adding to this foreign policy some new consideration (or a revised consideration) of the role of religion in regional conflicts and in peace building efforts in relation to them. You would each, in other words, offer a selective and sampling treatment of tendencies in US foreign policy (which would enable you to offer more clarity and precision than you could if you sought to offer a broad overview of many tendencies).
- 2) Due by Class 9, a comparably sized paper with another sampling response, this time to the question: why does the topic of religion merit increased attention in contemporary US foreign policy? how urgent an issue is this? and how, for example, would you, individually, direct one subject or area of

foreign policy practice to attend (by way of illustration) to one aspect of religion (i.e., of religious behavior, religion policy, etc).

- 3) For Class 11, we shall organize ourselves to bring our class concerns about religion (or not!) to the offices we plan to meet at CSO. That teamwork (+ preparation for our Washington visits) would represent the third assignment for the course.
- 4) The final assignment will be individual, again: a closing paper on something you all recommend for reviewing our project after the encounter with CSO)..... [See narrative; texts provided after Class #11]

Appendix D: Samples of Instructions for Specific Classes

Class #3: A Laboratory on Religion-Crises in Burma

Dear Religion and Foreign Affairs folks:

This e-mail is about the content rather than the time of our class Burma. **Please** "listen" carefully, because this class depends how we conduct it.

(A) This will be fully a laboratory class. Our goal is not in one mere class to master the state-and-religion politics of these ongoing conflicts in Burma/Myanmar. Our goal is, instead, to jump right into the overall class method and exercise our capacity as a team (two teams actually) to do the following: to survey information on a conflict, to make judgments (even if they are guesses) about how "religion" (as we defined it in various ways last week) may contribute to the conflict, and finally to offer hypotheses about anyway that religion could be summoned as a resource in healing the conflict (that is, in contributing to transforming or lessening it). For this first exercise, the goal is not to "get it right," but to practice and feel what it is like to conduct this kind of inquiry. For several weeks thereafter, we shall engage primarily in theory. Then, in April, we shall take up new cases like this and attempt to do a better job at such an exercise.

(B) Now for details:

For this exercise, we rely solely on the information we all share in the readings I have sent out. It is really important that you come to class having read the minimum amount I suggested in the "Burma readings" I sent out on January 24. (It is best to use the attachment I sent, since that is clearer). "Minimal" means these: (if for some reason you get pressed for time, then read two items in each category rather than three; otherwise as indicated).

- Myanmar: Encyclopedia Overview
- Recent Conditions of Muslims (Read 3+)
 - Terror in Burma
 - [Burma concentration camps](#). (Muslim Suffering)
 - Burma's Muslims and the War on Terror
 - Peace Conditions (Buddhist violence)
- History (Read 3+)
 - How She Overcame (Aung San Suu Kyi)
 - Land of shadows: civil war conditions 2011
 - Taylor (=Myanmar in 2009: On the Cusp of Normality?)
 - Burma Civil war in 2002 (Societal analysis)
 - [Burma Historical Overview](#) (1948 on)
- Buddhism and the state and War:
 - Buddhism and Power (=monks, morality and military)
- Buddhist-Christian Relations
 - Buddhism and Christian theology
 - [Burmanization a christian view](#)
- Religious Responses to the War (Read 1+)
 - [Journal of Refugee Studies](#) (= Faith Based Humanitarian Work)
 - Safron Revolution (Religion in the movement for Democracy 2008)

You can see the additional readings and videos as listed in the Burma readings.

NOW for the actual work. As you go over the minimum readings, please begin in your notebooks to make relatively quick judgments about the following topics. (No, I am not cavalier about the details; I simply want us, as a first step, to exercise this method of making judgments. If we decide as a class to make Burma one option for a term

paper, then students who specialize in Burma will have plenty of time to move past the exercise into more sober analysis. But for now, quick judgments are simply an exercise.) Remember, the notes you take it home will be relatively brief. More work will follow in class and after. So, the topics:

1. A "headline" paragraph or outline of what aspect of the conflict, today, would grab our single greatest attention (not as students, but as if we were foreign service officers, or others with some responsibility to act).
 2. A "brief" on the single most conspicuous role that "religion" may play in this aspect of the conflict. (Make a quick judgment and point to two items of evidence that you would investigate if you were undertaking a longer study of this "brief.")
 3. A "brief" on the geopolitical setting of the conflict and of this particular aspect of it. You won't have time to make this lengthy. Practice getting down to elemental claims.
 4. A "brief" on one or two items in the long history of this conflict that seem to contribute most to the geo-political setting you just described.
- b. Work to do during your in-class laboratory:
- I shall devote a few minutes to extending some of last week's review of Christianity and then Islam. We shall return in more detail to such work later in the term.
 - We then sit as a laboratory team in devote 15 min. only to hearing one another's briefs -- or briefer overviews of one another's notes on items 1-4 above.
 - For perhaps one hour +, we then conduct the meat of the teamwork: working as one group to make shared judgments on the following, additional topics:
 1. The group's best, shared hypothesis about what role (if any) religion has played in generating or extending this conflict.
 2. The group's best judgment about the kinds of evidence that should be investigated to support and then test this hypothesis.
 3. Within this time limit, the group's best, shared hypothesis about what role (if any) religion could possibly now play in helping repair this conflict.
 4. The group's best judgment about the kinds of evidence that should be investigated to support and then test this second hypothesis.
 5. Within this time limit, the group's best, shared hypothesis about HOW an inter-national entity (representing the USA and other world powers, or representing NGOs) could conceivably play a role in purging, or guiding or mediating this "positive contribution of religion" (as noted in 3).

Can we do it?

Class #4: A Note on Student Work in Class #3

Dear Class,

In the past week, we completed a fine workshop/laboratory on current inter-religious conflict in Burma. 2 Teams each reviewed about 20 essays and news pieces on the conflict and imagined what they would do as FSOs assigned to evaluate one particular recent conflict: in which conflict was religion a significant factor? what historical background and regional context best illumines the conflict? what major factors contribute to it? how would your team begin to propose a fundable initiative for US government were it asked to intervene?

I believe the exercise succeeded in raising major questions the class will need to consider for the rest of the term, such as:

- (1) CONFLICT SPECIFIC Q's: how to identify major factors contributing to a given regional conflict? when and how to identify "religion" as one such factor? how, if possible, to isolate religion among closely related factors such as ethnicity and ethnic identity, various nationalisms, and so on?
- (2) FOREIGN POLICY Q's: will "religion" come to receive greater attention among those who frame and explore future directions in US foreign policy? how will it (religion) be identified as a factor in regional conflicts and in regional responses to such conflicts? what difference will closer study of the role of religion (in conflict and peacebuilding) make in US foreign policy.

AND there was also a friendly competition: Which team did this lab best?
Both picked aspects of the same conflict:

GROUP I's Conclusion: The problem is sectarian violence along religio-ethnic lines as allowed by the government against Muslim minorities in Rakhine state. This is an important problem to address because such a violation impinges on human dignity and innate human rights, including the right to free travel, religious practice, and safety. As a potential solution to this problem, we propose a dual campaign to address institutional discrimination in security forces and cultural insensitivity towards Rakhingya Muslims. This will require diplomatic engagement at a national level as well as the direct engagement of religious experts. In proposing this, we recognize that a long-term solution will require extensive investment in the future of a unified Burmese society.

GROUP II's conclusion: The conflict is religious violence between the 969 organization and the 786 organization in Rakhin. Religion is being used as basis for violent actions and retaliation. Our prescription is to gather together religio-political authority figures of the 969, 786 and other groups who have an interest in religious and general peace in Burma and create an interfaith dialogue between these groups in order to form solutions to the problem. This is an urgent problem due to the potential growth of Islamic extremist organizations from the refugee groups that are excluded from Burma (knowing that such groups have already begun to recruit here) and the worrying tendencies of ethnically motivated aggression of the Muslims and other minorities in the country.

The winner is..... Two awards:

- 1) Most doable proposal for reparative action: Group II (since the plan in Group I is huge, almost global: how actually do it? Group II envisions a more finite dialogue, still a bit broad however)...
- 2) Most focused analysis: Group I (since they zeroed in on police and military roles, while Group II focused on the whole conflict).
- 3) Most effective process: Group I (since Group II spent a good bit of its time in broader discussions, more academic than practical, while Group I got to work: they recognized that our class focus is considering what Could be done practically in situations of conflict).

On we go, great work.

Appendix E: Excerpts from the Final “Journal Issue”:

Engaging Religion and Religious Actors: Recommendations for CSO

UVa Grad Seminar in “Religion and Foreign Affairs” Spring 2014

1. Introduction: Religion and Foreign Affairs

Emily Churchill with Victoria Rodgers and Omar Baig

In the development and implementation of US foreign policy, the Department of State must consider how it engages religion around the world. A majority of people in the world identify as religious, and religious leaders, communities, ideologies and practices have significant impact on how individuals chose to live their lives. The Department of State is currently not doing enough to incorporate an understanding of religion in its policies. Religion requires greater attention from the US government in both study and action, and by improving the understanding of religion among Foreign Service officers and others charged with leading the nation’s foreign policy, the Department will be better positioned to advance US interests abroad.

The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) is one of the newest offices at the Department of State dealing with these issues. Understanding how the CSO currently identifies opportunities for engagement and helps shape US foreign policy can illuminate how the devotion of greater attention to religion is in this nation’s interests.

[.....]

How the US Government has failed to Properly Consider Religion

In the United States Constitution are the words, “Congress shall make no law respecting any establishment of religion.” This phrase, now known as the establishment clause, has created a great deal of tension in both domestic and international affairs, as it does not specify the extent to which US officials may publicly engage with religion. Problems with this clause have arisen over time and have led to legal disputes with wildly disparate rulings regarding US national security and religious involvement, especially in regards to establishing a set of standards international engagement.

In *Lamont v. Woods* (1991), the Supreme Court attempted to discern the constitutionality of a USAID program that funded international Catholic and Jewish schools in light of the establishment clause. Some saw government funding of these educational programs as in the United States’ security interests, and, in the end, the Court struck the program down. Moreover, the Court ruled that the establishment clause always applies abroad but under a different set of standards than domestically. However, these differences were never fully explained and there have been no other noteworthy cases that have taken on this issue since.

In 2007, in *Hein v. Freedom from Religion Foundation* (2007), the Court returned to this issue....
[.....]

Both legal examples demonstrate how the United States has failed to fully clarify the establishment clause for federal workers trying to engage with religious communities. The cases also demonstrate how the United States government is failing to see religious communities as a pathway to peace-building, or religious engagement as grounds for national security enhancement. Rather, this type of engagement is seen as unnecessary red tape, which slows down government work instead of solving problems. By prompting a reinvigorated discussion on the meaning and limits of the establishment clause, the government could engage religious actors more effectively.

The CSO has already begun to work at a new understanding of this clause, in order to more specifically define what religion is and determine with whom the US government may interact.. This conversation will aid in the expansion of religious engagement by giving US officials a new understanding on how to best work with religious communities.

[.....]

Defining Religion

Elena Weissman

Introduction: Motivation and Definitions

For the purposes of this paper, *religion* is defined as a systematized relationship with the divine, including a belief system and the manifestation of these beliefs through word and action. *Divine* is defined as a non-human source of human origin and purpose as conceptualized by actors defining the relationship between a group of people, its individual members, and this non-human source. A *religious group* is defined as the arrangement of more than one person who consciously and deliberately self-identify as members of the same schema of belief and ritual for relating to the divine.

Prevailing religious scholarship varies widely in prescribing lenses for defining and studying religion. R. Scott Appleby defines *religion* as “the human response to a reality perceived as sacred,” and defines *sacred* as “the

ultimate reality; the source of all being in the universe.”¹ This chapter expands Appleby’s definition to include not only an active response to the sacred, but also the very conception of the sacred as part of religion’s definition.

This chapter seeks to construct a working definition of religion that can be used by the State Department to define religion in its zones of engagement, but also asserts the importance of contextualization. Through the example of Burma, this chapter provides a context-specific definition of Buddhism, with complementary discussions on Islam and Christianity as well. Although this chapter will incorporate various theories for defining religion, the argument is grounded within the context of Burma and should not necessarily be applied in other religious contexts.

Though the United States government does not explicitly define religion, this study extrapolates the government’s definition from the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). By detailing the five actions which constitute a violation of religious freedom, IRFA essentially defines religion and clarifies religious freedom by highlighting its absence. These actions are:

arbitrary prohibitions on, restrictions of, or punishment for: (i) assembling for peaceful religious activities such as worship, preaching, and prayer, including arbitrary registration requirements; (ii) speaking freely about one’s religious beliefs; (iii) changing one’s religious beliefs or affiliation; (iv) possession and distribution of religious literature, including Bibles and other sacred texts; (v) raising one’s children in the religious teachings and practices of one’s choice.²

Therefore, by State Department standards, religion is defined primarily by the manifestation of belief, not by religious belief itself. This functionalist model asserts that religion is best understood through both public and private displays of religious beliefs. While this chapter acknowledges that religious practices are important considerations when defining religion, it also recognizes the importance of belief systems for religious groups. To account for both religious belief and religious expression, the study uses four types of boundaries or breaking points between different types of religious expression to define religion. This method was chosen because of the human tendency to “impose order by categorizing phenomena, by separating them from other phenomena by conceptual boundaries.”³ This is especially true with religion because any change to an existing boundary can “threaten to dilute or relativize The Truth” and members have an incentive to maintain relatively static boundaries.⁴ Our boundaries of study are:

1. *Boundaries between oneself and the divine*
2. *Boundaries between the ingroup and outgroup*
3. *Boundaries between religion and civic identity*
4. *Boundaries between leaders and the group*

Each of these categorizations of religion will be specifically considered within the Burmese context. When identifying these boundaries and discussing their implications, it is important to avoid projecting one’s own cultural

¹ Appleby, R. Scott. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham, Maryland. 2000.

² “International Religious Freedom Act of 1998”. [22 USC 6401 note.]

³ Barker, Eileen. “We’ve Got to Draw the Line Somewhere: An Exploration of Boundaries that Define Locations of Religious Identity.” *Social Compass* 2006 53: 201. International Society for the Sociology of Religion.

⁴ *Ibid.*

context onto the case study. A specific example is religious linguistics, where the same words, such as “divine,” “god,” and “sacred” can have different connotations within different contexts.

[.....]

(1) *Boundaries between oneself and the divine*

The critical step in drawing the boundary between religion and other social forces is recognizing that “what distinguishes religion is ... nonhuman and typically ‘super’ human being(s) and/or force(s) with which humans are understood to be in relation[....]Defining religion involves identifying the boundary between where human society ends and where divine presence begins. Because this boundary requires some sort of tangible manifestation in order to be studied, this study concludes that it should be defined based on its influence on “the discourse, the language and practice, or the means by which human society and culture is extended to include the nonhuman,”⁵ which is the prevailing anthropological perspective for studying intangible beliefs of the sacred.

In Burma, identifying this boundary and its nature should occur separately for different religions. For Buddhism, the foundation of the relationship between humans and the divine is the perpetuation of morality, for which “the personal subject [is] the principal vessel.”⁶ [.....]

(2) *Boundaries between the ingroup and the outgroup*

Identifying a religion’s relationship with God is a particularly useful element in defining religion because it incorporates each person’s origin, which sets them apart from other groups and further defines them. The nature of this relationship can be expanded to a group’s distinct boundary from the rest of society as well: If God is part of one person’s community, and another person is not, then God is conceived as not part of that other person’s community, and they are perceived as at odds with God.[.....]

(3) *Boundaries between religious and civic identity*

Religious identity in Burma is so deeply intertwined with other elements of society that “being Burmese is synonymous with being Buddhist,”⁷ and Buddhism is “more than a religion – it is a matter of national identity.”⁸ Burma’s conflicts, governance, and overall culture are so foundationally informed by religious identity that “one cannot talk of Myanmar without mentioning the Buddhist way of life.”⁹ Still, defining Buddhism as a distinct force requires identifying the boundaries between religion itself and the ethnic or national elements to which Buddhism is so “closely tied.”¹⁰

Without a clear understanding of where religion ends and civic identity begins, practitioners cannot effectively define Buddhism or the minority religions of Christianity and Islam as they exist in Burma. [.....]

(4) *Boundaries between leaders and the group*

A religion’s conception of its leadership is very telling of its values, and is included in most of the scholarship sources discussed in this study. Appleby emphasizes the role of leaders, even going so far as to say that

⁵ Eller, 2007.

⁶ Gravers, 2012.

⁷ Adams, Daniel. “Universal Salvation? A Study in Myanmar Christian Theology.” *Asia Journal of Theology*. v.22 n.2. 219-236. 2008.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Adams, 2008.

any study of religion should focus on religious leaders because they are the strongest predictors of religious trends and behaviors.¹¹ In discussing the “critical interpretive role of leadership in forming and mobilizing the religious community,” scholars can better understand not only the personnel structures of religions, but also their prevailing belief systems.¹² [.....]

Faith-Conscious Diplomacy: Religious Education for Foreign Service Officers

Jacob Marthaller

I. Issue

Foreign Service Officers play an indispensable role in implementing American foreign policy abroad. Although FSOs receive training in virtually every aspect of the culture they engage with, religion has largely been overlooked in FSO education, subsequently inhibiting interaction with religious groups.¹³ If American diplomats are to be successful in an era of diplomacy marked by an increase of religious activity, their education must prepare them to address religion more thoroughly.¹⁴

To incorporate better training for improving diplomatic interaction with religious groups, the US government should consider making both conceptual changes—that is, how religion is taught conceptually—and practical changes—how religious particulars (such as creeds, doctrines, and practices) are taught—to FSI religious education. In keeping with the theme of this report, the following recommendations are tailored towards engagement in Burma. Restructuring how FSOs are educated will first require turning to past training mistakes.

II. Misgivings

[.....]

One reason for the neglect of religion in FSO training is that many FSI and senior DOS officials undervalue educating future diplomats on religion. In past generations, senior DOS officials saw political affairs as being more urgent than cultural or religious ones, thereby diminishing the need for religious education.¹⁵ Furthermore, it was generally understood that “religious affairs, when reported at all, [were] handed to the most junior political officer”; imparting the message that religion should not be a high priority for FSOs looking to advance.¹⁶ While this kind of thinking has changed somewhat since 9/11—with religion being given greater attention in foreign affairs overall¹⁷—FSO education continues to inadequately teach religion. When religion is discussed at FSI, it typically falls under

¹¹ Appleby, 2000.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Theodore Lyng, “Engaging Muslim Leaders to Promote People to People Ties”, in *The Foreign Service Journal* 90, no. 9 (September 2013), 36.

¹⁴ Religion and foreign policy expert Thomas Farr reaches a similar conclusion in discussing how religion informs his diplomatic work. See Thomas Farr, “Bringing Religion into International Religious Freedom Policy” in *God and Global Order*, ed. by Jonathan Chaplin (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 45-70.

¹⁵ Bruce K. Byers, “The Limits of Diplomacy: Changing our Perceptions of Other Societies”, in *American Diplomacy* (February 2011), 6.

¹⁶ Monteaegle Stearns, *Talking to Strangers: Improving American Diplomacy at Home and Abroad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1996), 118.

¹⁷ For more information on this, see Melvyn Leffler and Jeffrey Legro, ed., *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2011).

the Area Studies division and is taught alongside other social, political, or cultural phenomena¹⁸, arguably diminishing how significant religion is to that particular society. Additionally, diplomatic handbooks—written by former diplomats and FSI educators—explicitly mention religion largely to prepare future diplomats for what dietary restrictions and/or attire they will encounter in religious people at their post.¹⁹ While any treatment of religion in foreign affairs is better than none, this report contends that FSI education must treat religion as independent, distinct issue of concern if FSOs are to be prepared for engaging with religious individuals, and the Department of State will need to make significant changes to the way FSO training is conducted.

[.....]

III. Faith-Conscious Diplomacy

[.....]

Conceptual Change:

Equipping diplomats to more effectively confront issues of religion requires educating FSOs on the phenomenon of religion itself rather than religion as another aspect of culture. Although religion is certainly an aspect of culture, assigning religion to the same status as other cultural components fails to underscore the significance religion may possess within that culture. To provide diplomats with the best tools for engaging with religious individuals, FSI education should not teach religion solely through the lens of culture.

In addition, recent forums have discussed whether international religious freedom should be given more careful consideration in FSO education.[.....]

Practical Change:

Along with changing conceptual paradigms of religion, FSI should alter the way it teaches lived religion by increasing training on the features of particular religions. Undoubtedly, obtaining a comprehensive understanding of different religious characteristics depends on the way religion is defined by the Department.²⁰ In order to provide more education and training on specific elements of religion, the State Department should also conduct and implement more ethnographic training at FSI.²¹ Generally speaking, this requires instituting more courses at FSI that address specific religions: by increasing the number of religions that are taught at FSI, FSOs could develop supplementary tools to further their diplomatic efforts abroad. Of these supplementary tools, FSOs should also be educated on what alternative resources for peace-building there are within particular religious traditions,

[.....]

IV. Recommendations

1) Treat Religion Qua Religion:

One way to more effectively address the phenomenon of religion in foreign policy is to begin teaching religion on its own terms and not as an auxiliary component of culture, with training focused specifically on religious concepts rather than ethno-religion identity or analyses of religion in society. Numerous experts are contributing countless materials to this expanding discipline in an effort to assist in this endeavor, and FSI educators

¹⁸ Foreign Service Institute, *Continuum for Civil Service Employees* (Washington DC: Department of State, 2004), 6.

¹⁹ Ralph G. Feltham, *Diplomatic Handbook* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2004), 156.

²⁰ See Elena Weissman's essay in this volume for ways the DOS can define religion for diplomatic engagement.

²¹ See Rebekah McCallum's essay in this volume for how ethnography can assist the DOS in understanding the practices and relationships of religious groups for diplomatic engagement.

could draw from these resources as they train diplomats to address religious issues. Books like Caplin's *God and Global Order* and Shah, Stepan, and Toft's *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs* are just two potentially beneficial tools that could alter the way religion is approached at FSI.

[.....]

2) Educate Diplomats on the Importance of International Religious Freedom:

Since the IRFA's passage in 1998, the United States has institutionalized its commitment to international religious freedom. Despite this, reports have shown that international religious freedom has received little attention from FSOs, while religious persecution continues across the globe.²² This issue is especially significant in Burma, where persecution of Rohingya Muslims is commonplace and little is done to counteract the violence perpetrated by the primarily-Buddhist military.²³

[.....]

5) Create a Religion Incentive Program:

One possible way FSO religious education could be improved is by emulating the progress made in language training at FSI. When Secretary Clinton first took her post in 2009, she saw that several elements of the Foreign Service were in need of overhaul. In particular need for improvement was the language capabilities of diplomats, with 31% of FSOs failing to meet the language requirement of their respective positions.²⁴ To overturn these developments, Clinton instituted what came to be known as Diplomacy 3.0, an initiative that provided incentive pay for those who undertook FSI language education.²⁵

By many accounts, Clinton's Diplomacy 3.0 has been successful, with one 2011 report showing the number of linguistically-unqualified diplomats dropping to 28%.²⁶ Given Diplomacy 3.0's success in improving the language capabilities of diplomats by offering incentive pay for language learners, FSI should consider instituting similar incentives for FSOs who enroll in religious training. Instituting educational opportunities like the Language Incentive Program (a kind of Religion Incentive Program) could increase the number of FSOs who enroll in religion courses at FSI, as well as the number of diplomats who engage with religious individuals in the field.

Ethnography: A Studied Approach

Rebekah McCallum

[.....]

Ethnography is often characterized by years-long projects of in-depth analysis and study culminating in a research paper or book. But "text" is a part of the recording process as well as the writing:

²² Shah, Stepan, and Toft, *Rethinking Religion*, 271-273.

²³ For recent acts of religious persecution in Burma, see Graeme Wood, "A Countryside of Concentration Camps", in *The New Republic*, February 3, 2014.

²⁴ Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, "A Review of Diplomatic Readiness: Addressing the Staffing and Foreign Language Challenges Facing the Foreign Service", the United States Senate, September 24, 2009, see especially the testimony of Jess T. Ford beginning on page 7.

²⁵ Jared Pendleton, phone conversation with author, April 22, 2014.

²⁶ Stimson group, *Diplomacy in a Time of Scarcity* (Washington DC: American Academy of Diplomacy, 2012), 34.

“Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript—foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior”²⁷.

Reading society and culture as a text expectedly results in multiple interpretations and multiple readings. This close “reading” also accentuates the importance of language, an idea that will be emphasized later in this section and in other sections throughout this treatise (Hearth to Hearth, training of FSOs).

In more succinct terms, ethnography, according to Stanley Tambiah, involves using the material you learn about “the particular to say something about the general”²⁸. In examining case studies, the ethnographer is able to recognize elements that speak to the larger society or to humankind in general. And vice versa—metanarratives or “mega-concepts” like “meaning—can be given the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely about them, but, what is more important, creatively and imaginatively *with* them”²⁹.

[.....]

Ethnography of Religion

If we understand religion to be something that is done in community, through shared ideas, practices and behaviors³⁰, then it naturally follows that it must be politically engaged as a public entity. Despite any preconceptions that we may have about religion being a matter of private life, the nature of religion lived out in many milieus, is public. And even beyond that, we may retain generalizations about how a particular religion is lived out throughout the world. However, “all religion, like all politics, is local”³¹. This is not to say that there are not international networks of religious groups that often influence and direct the religious practices of groups in different nations, but that religion lived out is often affected and directed by cultural specificities. Within a religion there is differentiation, and even so within one religious community. These “local” religions provide frameworks of meaning, a lens by which participants view the world and the people around them. It shapes the way business is done, governments are run, aid is apportioned, etc. in local settings. [.....]

Language

The language of a religious community is an essential component of who they are, intricately connected to their “values and meanings”³². The terminology we may apply to a given religion or religious group may be shaped by our own definitions of the words, or a previous application of that word to a very different circumstance. It is fitting here to do inductive interpretation when it comes to language. Hear what is being said, “the story they tell themselves about themselves”³³. But this must be done with care. There is a distinction between knowing what is being said (understanding the language) and understanding the people- particularly why they are saying what they are saying, what history or environment shapes what is being said, etc. [.....]

²⁷ Geertz Thick Description pg. 5

²⁸ Anthropology of Religion Book

²⁹ Geertz Thick Description pg. 12

³⁰ Eller pg. 3

³¹ Eller pg. 3

³² Eller pg. 5

³³ Geertz Cockfight pg. 10

Ethnography in Milieus of Social Conflict

Clifford Geertz writes: “Social conflict is not something that happens when...cultural forms cease to operate, but rather something which happens when...such forms are pressed by unusual situations or unusual intentions to operate in unusual ways”³⁴. What has been observed in a smaller cultural context or in times of peace are not completely destroyed in times of conflict, modified, but not destroyed. Identity, delineated by lines of religion, kinship, economic status, political leanings, etc.; can often be intensified when certain leaning demarcated group boundaries and group associations. It delineates “ a symbolic structure in which, over and over again, the reality of their inner affiliation can be intelligibly felt”³⁵. Certain action shaped by identity in areas riddled with conflict becomes an indicator of community and individual vitality and agency³⁶. Action can be shaped by group consciousness. “Violence is formative; it shapes people’s perceptions of who they are and what they are fighting for across space and time—a continual dynamic that forges as well as affects identities”³⁷ Religion, when looked at as something that shapes identity, plays a large role in maintaining and fixing identity in a time of flux. Ideologies become markers of inclusivity and exclusivity and theological differences can become sources of alienation. Religion can often find its place along ethnic line when necessary to provide a means for thinking about difference and histories. “Like creativity and altruism, violence is culturally constructed....[it] gives shape and content to specific people within the context of particular histories.”³⁸ Violence, and the same can be said about religion, “reconfigures lives in the most dramatic of ways, affecting constructs of identity in the present, the hopes and potentialities of the future, and even the renditions of the past”³⁹.

Doing Ethnography in These Settings

“Ethnography emerges as a methodology for exploring the zones (literally and figuratively) where people are entangled, abandoned, engaged, and altered by the reconfiguration of states”⁴⁰. But “any rendition of the contradictory realities of violence imposes order and reason on what has been experienced as chaotic”⁴¹. The interlocutor’s retelling and the ethnographer’s subsequent retelling are both culturally shaped- perhaps it’s a desire to speak for those who can’t speak for themselves⁴² or the desire to make sense of something that is inherently meaningless. Therefore when conducting ethnography in these settings of violence, certain parameters and responsibilities must be set for how to approach and think about what is being observed.

- *Recognize Enhanced and Increased Responsibilities:*
- *Allow for Inductive Interpretation of Violence (and religion):*⁴³
- *Be aware of the Varied Definitions and Focal Points of ‘Violence’:*
- *Be attuned to the layers of violence: ...*
- *Observe everyday life as particular, not engaged on a global scale:*

³⁴ pg. 15

³⁵ Geertz Cockfight pg. 11

³⁶ Greenhouse in Ethnography in Unstable Places pg. 3&4

³⁷ Robben and Nordstrom pg. 4

³⁸ R&N pg. 3

³⁹ R & N pg. 5

⁴⁰ Greenhouse EUP pg. 4

⁴¹ R & N pg. 12

⁴² R&N pg. 11

⁴³ Robben and Nordstrom pg. 4

- *Know that violence itself is not meaningful, but is often given meaning....*

[.....]

Track 1.5: FSOs Working with Partners

Shannon Hagginbothom

The mission statement of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations within the United States Department of State can be condensed down to providing innovative solutions to violent conflict. One of CSO's general goals is to "leverage partnerships, prevent conflict, address sources of violence, build on existing resiliencies, and promote burden sharing by working with non-governmental and international partners". The articulated goals of CSO acknowledge civil society as a strong agent for change. [.....]

When discussing civil society, it must be recognized that cultural, political, and religious identities are often tied together. Although the intertwining of religious and civic identity can be complex and is specific to a certain context, the categorization and expression of these identities remains crucial to understanding engagement with local counterparts. If FSO's are to appropriately and effectively engage with local partners, they must first understand the motivation of these groups. [.....]

FSO Training in Engagement

First, increased education in the identifying of religion in the field, examining the present role of religion, and exploring factors religion plays in shaping diplomacy remain crucial to the interactions between FSOs and local religious actors. In working with both religious and secular community groups, FSO's should be well educated the spiritual perceptivity of groups and accordingly focus on shaping those goals for the purpose of restorative justice.

Cultural sensitivity remains crucial in working with partners in the field. Since "two-thirds of contemporary wars turn on issues of religious, ethnic, or national identity", FSOs need to be knowledgeable about the situations they are working in (Appleby). Cultural sensitivity allows FSOs to address pertinent ideological issues, whereas the alternative of not addressing issues of religious, ethnic, or social identity as to not offend any actors can never tackle the root issues of conflict. Henceforth, cultural sensitivity entails choosing non-threatening vocabulary when discussing sensitive work. Here, increased education about cultural patterns through ethnographic research of the field environment serves as a useful recommendation for CSO engagement.

Practical Methods of Engaging Religious NGOs

Creative ways to engage helpful religious dialogue when working with local partners.

As the glue that holds dysfunctional states together, civil society organizations play a necessary role in the countries where the CSO sends its FSOs. While religious dialogue should be a part of peace building discussion with both civil and religion-based groups, there should exist separate policy frameworks for FSO interactions with these two sectors. These two frameworks will provide a guideline for FSOs working in relation with NGO and other community based groups. Because religious dialogue needs to be incorporated in local solution discussion, there should be a better-defined protocol for FSOs interaction that utilized religious means, such as "Hearth to Hearth Dialogue," through horizontal engagement with local partners.

Both civil and religious groups have an ideological value that can be related back to a religious identity. They are both central players in areas of religious conflict. From providing basic services, to influencing social goals, sharing important political debate, to achieving goals of peace and justice, local partner groups are a large portion of a lasting solution. Thus, FSOs should engage in not only humanitarian engagement but they should also address the fundamental 'religious' values of groups that they are working with to rebuild communities.

[.....]

Internal Pluralism in Religion as a Tool for Preemptive Policy

Tori Rodgers.

Past and current administrations employ the policy of "preemption" to impede threats to American interests abroad and prevent global violence. The internal pluralism of religious groups provides an opportunity for the United States government to utilize religion in its policy of "preemption" and preventative intervention by engaging religious actors as peacebuilding allies and deterring religious violence. Internal pluralism enables policy makers to interact with religious groups at different facets of the religion, while also fostering discussion among the sects to strengthen peacebuilding movements. In order to effectively and preemptively engage with this characteristic of religion, the State Department will need to become proficient in the identifiable traits of each group, highlight shared ethical norms among the differing groups, and utilize dialogue and mediation between religious actors.

The term "internal pluralism" is defined as "an array of laws, doctrines, moral norms, and practices sacralized and sanctioned at various times by the community and its religious authorities."⁴⁴ Religious communities continue to rediscover and remake themselves, reinterpreting religious traditions in response to new and pressing external and internal pressures.⁴⁵ Religious tradition becomes a "sustained argument, conducted anew by each generation about the contemporary significance and meaning of the sources of sacred wisdom and revealed truth", offering a "storehouse of religiously approved options" that are available to religious leaders to respond to the needs of their communities.⁴⁶ These transitions and changes within a religion, as well as the limited flexibility allotted religious authority figures, can reinforce violent or peacebuilding movements, and is a noteworthy opportunity for the U.S. government to act preemptively to prevent global violence. "It is this internal evolution of the great religious traditions that commands our attention, for these traditions spawn the most significant religio-political movements of our time, from the violent extremists cadres to the organizations of militant peace-makers."⁴⁷ In order to effectively engage with the internal pluralism of a religion through foreign policy, it is crucial to acknowledge the unique characteristics of a religious community while also identifying shared values that can be used for preemptive conflict resolution.

Internal pluralism demands the education of policy makers in basic religious doctrine, terminology, history, and organizational structure. Generalizations and sweeping assumptions will not properly address the needs and

⁴⁴ Appleby p. 33

⁴⁵ Appleby p. 32

⁴⁶ Appleby p. 33

⁴⁷ Appleby p. 31

concerns of different religious communities. With a foundational understanding of the *religious doctrine* and ethical norms, policy makers will be able to effectively dialogue with religious communities using that religion's established language, laws, practices, and traditions. The government will then be able to meet religious groups on their terms, building trust and mutual respect. The *terminology* used by religious groups highlights the implications and assumptions made by religious groups when internalizing external crisis, and is therefore should be a crucial point of study. It is important to look at traditional texts, as well as current academic and religious discourse when analyzing religious vernacular. The *history* of a particular religious community may offer insight into how violence within the tradition is instigated and handled, and how outside aid and foreign influence is perceived. A religion's history may also illuminate previously successful methods for conflict resolution, offering policy makers effective options that hold authority within a religious tradition. It is critical for policy makers to be educated on the *organizational structure* within the religion. Religious leaders are often empowered to reinterpret tradition and redirect religious sentiments, and are therefore influential in communities' quest for peace or for spurring violence. Empowering policy makers through religious education will allow them to more effectively identify possible partners for peacebuilding, while also understanding religious queues and triggers for violence. The diversity present in religion must be met with a strong foundational understanding by government officials. To act preemptively and to anticipate opportunities to encourage peace and dissuade violence hinges on the ability of policy makers to identify these transitions. A background in religious doctrine, terminology, history, and organizational structure is crucial for effective preemptive policy.