



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Proposal

The attached document contains the narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful proposal may be crafted. Every successful proposal is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the program guidelines at www.neh.gov/grants/education/enduring-questions for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: NEH Enduring Questions Course on Just War

Institution: Macomb Community College

Project Director: Elliott Meyrowitz

Grant Program: Enduring Questions

NEH Enduring Questions Course Proposal Narrative

What is a Just War?

The History of a Moral Debate from Ancient Rome to the Present

Intellectual Rationale and Teaching Value: War has been a constant preoccupation of human beings, nearly as unabated as human efforts to justify and limit it. Throughout history whenever states have sought to settle political, economic or ideological disputes, they have typically resorted to armed conflict. Although such wars have been destructive, for reasons of self-interest or even ethical concerns, the political and military leaders of those states have on many occasions observed limits to the resort to and the conduct of war.

Warfare in the 20th century has been the most technologically advanced and destructive in history. By some estimates approximately 150-200 million people have died as a result of various types of armed conflict. This amount of bloodshed is overwhelming and difficult to escape. We are surrounded by vivid reminders of warfare. On nightly newscasts, in newspapers, movies and the Internet we see wounded and dead men, women and children, and their family members overcome with grief. Viewing these tragic tableaux over and over again can psychologically inure us to it. If one is far from the carnage, what is one more wounded or dead soldier, one more dying mother and child, one more family broken apart by war? Paradoxically, it is, at the same time, quite easy to become discouraged about the seeming propensity to go to war and to believe that many of these wars were avoidable and gratuitous. It is no great leap from that conclusion to the inference that all war should be condemned. Yet, this is not a tenable position either when the complexities of realpolitik or moral ambiguity inject themselves into the picture. Perhaps this is partly why, from the time of the Roman Empire and early Christianity philosophers and theologians began to develop the concept of a “just war.”

Efforts in ancient Rome to develop a moral justification for war are remarkably similar to our own contemporary efforts. Indeed, many modern politicians, military leaders, theologians and philosophers would be very comfortable with the basic outline of ideas first enunciated by Cicero, a first century Roman philosopher, who is considered by some scholars to be the “father” of just war theory. In his essay *On Moral Duties (De Officiis)*, written in 44 BCE, he articulated a just war theory the basic elements of which (just cause, last resort, comparative justice, right intention, public declaration, proportionality, discrimination and good faith) would later be reflected in the Christian just war theory first articulated by St. Augustine who, in 426 in his book *The City of God*, originated the very phrase, “just war”. Nine hundred years later St. Thomas Aquinas would, in his book *Summa Theologica*, specifically define the conditions under which a war could be just.

For over 2000 years the meaning and the relevance of the just war theory has been debated by those imbued in the Western tradition. For many people the precise definition and application of the theory remains elusive and misunderstood. In the meantime, advances in military technology and tactics during the Cold War (1945-1991) and increasing instances of religious and ethnic conflict and acts of terrorism, the question of what is just war is becoming all the more pressing. Since the events of September 11, 2001, Americans have debated whether the use of force in Iraq and Afghanistan was justified and, if it was, whether the weapons and tactics employed were lawful. This debate introduced Americans to the concept of just war theory, regardless of their awareness that this is what was happening. Unfortunately, the debate occurred in the absence of a historical understanding of the origins and evolution of just war theory, and pervasive ignorance on the subject did not facilitate the discussion. Hopefully, this course will provide an antidote.

Course Design: The course is designed to provide students with an interdisciplinary history, philosophy, theology and international law and comparative study of the origins, evolution and application of just war theory from ancient times to the contemporary world. The basic texts of just war theory that developed out of two different historical and cultural traditions - the Christian religious tradition and the international law of armed conflict tradition- will be central to the course. The course is designed to enhance students' ability to distinguish between justifiable and unjustifiable use of armed force. Accordingly, the central question to be explored is: under what circumstances is the resort to military force justified (*jus ad bellum*), and if determined to be just, what are the legal constraints that apply to the weapons and tactics employed (*jus in bello*)?

During the first part of the course, students will become acquainted with the various just war theories drawn from the fields of moral and political philosophy, theology, history, and law of the western and eastern intellectual traditions. In the second part of the course, students will examine how these thinkers as well as military strategists have thought about alternatives to just war theory. In the third part of the course, students will examine as case studies World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in which just war criteria were applied. Finally, in the fourth part of the course students will be asked to apply just war theory to a range of circumstances such as total war, nuclear war, guerrilla war, genocide, ethnic cleansing, civil war, asymmetric war, and acts of terrorism.

This course seeks to develop the critical tools by which a student can understand and challenge the various intellectual arguments advocated by politicians, journalists, commentators, professors and lawyers on the issue of war and morality. Such tools will provide each student with new concepts by which to analyze problems and the ideas of others; enhance each student's

ability to think critically by asking relevant questions; strengthen each student's confidence to construct an argument knowing that new information might change his or her analysis; provide each student with the courage to defend his or her conclusions using relevant evidence and reasoned argumentation; and improve each student's ability to communicate his or her thinking clearly to others.

In order to understand the intersection of war and morality, it is important to emphasize the meaning of words and the use of language. Why, you might ask, does the course focus on these things? Language is fundamental to human evolution and adaptation. It is the keystone of human culture. As humans we construct and make sense of our lives through language. Language permits humans to fashion abstract thought, that is, to generalize, distinguish and hypothesize.

Since ideas, like language, change over time, ideas must be studied as historically created and not as arbitrary and unchanging constructs. Throughout this course, rather than simply describing "what happened", stress will be placed on the ideas and dynamics giving rise to events. When it comes to history, the bare facts of this or that event, by themselves, are simply not enough. Facts without context are worse than useless; they may be dangerously distorting. Thus, this approach to history does not simply consist of a chronology of sequentially linked events, but rather of an on-going story of the pressures and concepts that influenced people.

Nevertheless, when we engage in historical analysis it is imperative that we recognize that our understanding will never be more than partial and evolving. The study of history requires an open mind as conventionally accepted "truths" may often unravel over time and require reinterpretation in light of our, hopefully, increasing knowledge and perspective. But, not all

interpretations are equally valid; rather, valid interpretations are those that must be based upon a foundation of evidence and that are held together by rationality and reasonableness.

Throughout the course I will offer my own analyses of the various issues raised in this course. Students may find them interesting and, possibly, even convincing. On the other hand, students may reject them in favor of their own interpretations. Having students agree with me is not the objective of the course. Upon completion of this course a student will be able to: analyze and explain the origins and basic principles of just war theory (*jus ad bellum*); analyze how key moral and political philosophers such as Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Vitoria and Grotius contributed to the evolution of the just war theory; understand how other non-Western cultural traditions developed their own respective just war theories; examine and explain the basic tenets of alternative perspectives on war such as realism and pacifism; understand how just war theory was incorporated in international law; analyze how the laws of war (*jus in bello*) govern the conduct of an armed conflict and apply just war theory and the laws of war to specific historic and contemporary examples of armed conflicts such as World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan and the “war on terrorism”.

Faculty Preparation and Plan of Work: I have taught western civilization, world history and international relations courses at the community college level over the previous fourteen years. In all of those courses, I have emphasized that the past offers lessons important to understanding contemporary problems. Indeed, this relationship has recently been highlighted by the amount of scholarly literature that has been produced since September 11th on just war theory. As my scholarly interests focus primarily on the causes of armed conflict, and as those causes are a constant in all of the courses that I teach, I have made just war theory a logical component of that subject matter. Consequently, I assign primary source readings that include

thinkers identified with the theory. This is, for example, the case in the two specialized history courses that I have developed and teach: The Vietnam Wars: An International History and War, Genocide and the Holocaust. Incidentally, my long-standing interest in the causes of armed conflict derives in large measure from my combat experience during the Vietnam War, and this interest has become a mainstay of my scholarly writing. (I have written a book and numerous articles dealing with the relevance of the laws of war to weapons of mass destruction.) This grant would help me achieve the goal of making a course on the study of just war theory in relation to the causes of war a permanent part of the history curriculum at Macomb Community College.

As to my plan of work, I intend to engage, between January and August 2014, in an exhaustive study of the scholarly literature on just war theory, select the core literature that I intend for use in the course, and develop the syllabus for the course. The course would be offered in the fall 2014 semester, and winter and fall 2015 semesters. I also plan, during these semesters, to give two public lectures on just war theory as it relates to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The first talk would be for the students of Macomb Community College and the second would be for the larger community of Macomb County

Core Reading List

Primary Sources

Aquinas, St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*
Augustine, Saint, *The City of God*
Cicero, *On Moral Duties (De Officiis)*,
Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*
Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*
Machiavelli, Nicolo, *The Prince*
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

Secondary Sources

Blainey, Geoffrey, *Causes of War* (1988)
Christopher, Paul, *The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction to Legal and Moral Issues* (2003)
Corey, David D. and Charles, J. Daryl, *The Just War Tradition: An Introduction* (2012)
de Paulo, Craig J. N., Messina, Patrick A. and Tompkins, Daniel P., *Augustinian Just War Theory and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (2011)
Elshtain, Jean Bethke, *Just War Theory* (1991)
Fisher, David, *Morality and War: Can War Be Just in the Twenty-first Century?* (2012)
Guthrie, Charles and Quinlan, Michael, *Just War: The Just War Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare* (2007)
Hauerwas, Stanley and Ramsey, Paul, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility* (2002)
Holmes, Arthur F., *War and Christian Ethics: Classic and Contemporary Readings on the Morality of War* (2005)
Johnson, James Turner, *Can Modern War Be Just?* (1986)
Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare* (1994)
Kinsella, Kinsella and Carr, Craig, *The Morality of War: A Reader* (2007)
Karoubi, Mohammad Taghi, *Just or Unjust War: International Law and Unilateral Use of Armed Force by States at the Turn of 20th Century* (2004)
Mattox, John Mark, *St. Augustine and The Theory of Just War* (2009)
May, Larry and Crookston, Emily, *War: Essays in Political Philosophy* (2008)
May, Larry, Rovie, Eric and Viner, Steve, *The Morality of War: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (2005)
O'Brien, William V., *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (1982)
Ramsey, Paul, *The Just War: Force and Responsibility* (1968)
Regan, Richard, *Just War: Principles and Cases* (2013)
Reichberg, Gregory M., Syse, Henrik and Begby, Endre, *The Ethics of War* (2006)
Reichberg, Gregory and Syse, Henrik, *Ethics, Nationalism, and Just War: Medieval and Contemporary Perspectives* (2007)
Roberts, Adam and Guelff, Richard, *Documents on the Laws of War* (2001)
Robinson, Paul, *Just War in Comparative Perspective* (2003)
Sorabji, Richard, *The Ethics of War: Shared Problems in Different Traditions* (2006)
Walzer, Michael, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (2006)
Zupan, Daniel S., *War, Morality And Autonomy: An Investigation in Just War Theory* (2004)

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Best, Geoffrey, *War and Law Since 1945* (1994)
Blainey, Geoffrey, *Causes of War* (1988)
Brodie, Bernard and Fawn, *From Crossbow to H-Bomb: The Evolution of the Weapons and Tactics of Warfare* (1973)
Brough, Michael W., Lango, John W. and Van Der Linden, Harry, *Rethinking the Just War Tradition* (2007)
Christopher, Paul, *The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction to Legal and Moral Issues* (2003)
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de Paulo, Craig J. N., Messina, Patrick A and Tompkins, Daniel P., *Augustinian Just War Theory and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (2011)
Dockrill, Michael and Paskins, Barrie, *The Ethics of War* (1979)
Duffy, Helen, *The "War on Terror" and the Framework of International Law* (2005)
Elshtain, Jean Bethke, *Just War Theory* (1991)
" " " , *But Was it Just? Reflections on the Morality of The Persian Gulf War* (1992)
" " " , *Just War Against Terror: The Burden Of American Power In A Violent World* (2004)
Fisher, David, *Morality and War: Can War Be Just in the Twenty-first Century?* (2012)
Fotion, Nicholas, *A New Just War Theory* (2008)
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Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan* (1988)
Holmes, Arthur, F., *War and Christian Ethics: Classic and Contemporary Readings on the Morality of War* (2005)
Holmes, Robert and Cohen, Marshall, *On War and Morality* (1989)
Howard, Michael, *The Causes of War* (1984)
Johnson, James Turner, *Can Modern War Be Just?* (1986)
Kamm, Frances, *Failures of Just War Theory* (2004)
Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*
Karoubi, Mohammad Taghi, *Just or Unjust War: International Law and Unilateral Use of Armed Force by States at the Turn of 20th Century* (2004)
Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare* (1994)
Kelsay, John, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (2007)
Kinsella, David and Carr, Craig, *The Morality of War: A Reader* (2007)
Lackey, Douglas, *The Ethics of War and Peace* (1988)

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