It is clear that religion plays a role in the conflict in the Middle East. In recent times more and more people are becoming aware of this and are recognizing the need to address religion and religious communities in the context of the peace effort. Despite this positive development, most of the work done in this field focuses on “liberal religion”. The challenge that we must face is how to deal with the non-liberal religion that is widespread in the region and which, in Israel plays a significant role, for example, in the settler ideology. Assuming that the liberalization of radicals is not a viable option, what paths are there to peace dialogue with non-liberal religious actors?

Peace is a fundamental value in both Biblical and Rabbinic texts. But, in contemporary Israeli politics, peace is a value almost exclusively associated with the secular West. Perhaps some of the problem's in today's efforts to achieve Middle East peace can be accounted for in the light of this observation. This course will focus on the meaning of "peace" as a classical Jewish value demonstrating the significant differences between it and the modern Western secular model.

The course will start with an analysis of the politics of peace in western philosophy, tracing this discourse from the work of Kant to that of contemporary post-critical political philosophers. We will trace similarities between contemporary critiques of Kant and the alternative strategies for peace-making offered in the Jewish tradition. We will study the meaning of peace in both classical and modern Jewish literature, examining the connection between peace and Messianism and exploring the implications of this connection for Zionist and religious Zionist political thought. Finally we will look at the different ways in which alternative articulations of peace might suggest entirely new approaches to the challenge of accomplishing peace in today's Middle East after a fashion that will enable us to tackle such loaded questions as the sanctity of the holy land, the Temple Mount etc.

**Pre-requisites** – one course in either Jewish Studies, Political Philosophy, Middle East Studies or International Relations.

**Course Requirements**

1. Attendance
2. Readings and Class Participation
3. 4 short papers (3-4 pages) – 40% of final grade (NB students will be able to resubmit these papers as often as they choose throughout the course).
4. Final Paper (10-15 pages) 60% of final grade

All readings will be distributed by the teacher via e-mail

**Course Topics:**
Kant, the Enlightenment and the western secular theory of Peace
The privatization of religion and the separation of Church and State
The State and Religion in post-critical thought
Prophetic Peace; Anti-Politics, the Unity of Opposites and the Knowledge of God
Peace in Biblical Literature
Peace in Rabbinic Literature
The clash between Peace and Zionism in the writings of Rabbi Ashlag and Rabbi Tamaret
Peace in Rav Kook’s Religious Zionism
Engaging Radical Religious Leaders in Peace dialogue today

Bibliography:

Primary Texts – Handed out in Class

Articles and chapters for Reading:

“Legal Fiction”, in American Law Encyclopedia, volume 6:
http://law.jrank.org/pages/8149/Legal-Fiction.html


http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/articles/doyle/


Heschel, Abraham Joshua. “No Religion is an Island” Union Theological Seminary Quarterly Review 21 (January 1966).
http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~alan/chaplain/Heschel.html


