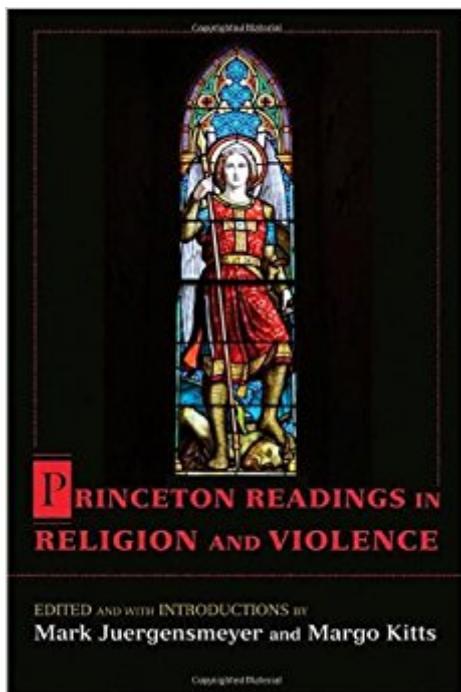


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Princeton Readings In Religion And Violence



Synopsis

This groundbreaking anthology provides the most comprehensive overview for understanding the fascinating relationship between religion and violence--historically, culturally, and in the contemporary world. Bringing together writings from scholarly and religious traditions, it is the first volume to unite primary sources--justifications for violence from religious texts, theologians, and activists--with invaluable essays by authoritative scholars. The first half of the collection includes original source materials justifying violence from various religious perspectives: Hindu, Chinese, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist. Showing that religious violence is found in every tradition, these sources include ancient texts and scriptures along with thoughtful essays from theologians wrestling with such issues as military protection and pacifism. The collection also includes the writings of modern-day activists involved in suicide bombings, attacks on abortion clinics, and nerve gas assaults. The book's second half features well-known thinkers reflecting on why religion and violence are so intimately related and includes excerpts from early social theorists such as Durkheim, Marx, and Freud, as well as contemporary thinkers who view the issue of religious violence from literary, anthropological, postcolonial, and feminist perspectives. The editors' brief introductions to each essay provide important historical and conceptual contexts and relate the readings to one another. The diversity of selections and their accessible length make this volume ideal for both students and general readers.

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Customer Reviews

The editors show a misunderstanding of their own selected readings. For example, Aquinas' treatment of war is included under the section about justification of war. Aquinas, and the tradition he represented, knew that kings and princes needed no justification for war because it came naturally to them. (Even a Nobel Peace Prize winning American President finds it easy to engage in multiple wars for eight years.) What Aquinas actually did was to lay down a series of strict requirements in order to limit war and to make justification for war difficult in any case and to make aggressive war almost impossible. More broadly, it appears that the editors have set an agenda that equates religion of any kind with violence. Their motive is most clearly shown by the utter absence of religious readings that condemn violence. A balanced and genuinely critical approach would have included such a section to follow the justification of violence section. Had a student of mine delivered a work such this to me, I would send him or her back to the library to complete their research on the topic. The editors' bias severely damages the book as a work of scholarship and gives the impression that it is more of a hatchet job against religious traditions in general. Finally, one other reviewer says that it was a required book, I suspect in a Princeton course. I'm disturbed by the thought of how students are being presented with such a cherry-picked and biased presentation, such a bad example of critical thought that seeks less to inform than to subvert. - JD Donovan PhD

No quote from the Gospels. This speaks volumes.

A bit disappointing as many excerpts don't really touch the subject.

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