

SRS 6907 CHRISTIANITY I: SELECTED TOPICS:
Understanding Christian Martyrdom
WINTER 2018, Wed. 2:00-5:00 pm, Desmarais 10-143
Prof. Emma Anderson

Coordinates: 10-112 Desmarais Building, (613) 562-5800, X1176, eanderso@uottawa.ca

Office hours: Wednesdays, 12:30 am - 2:00 pm (e.g. before class, please let me know when you will be dropping by). **Please note that I am UNABLE to see students after class (due to transportation issues).**

Course Description:

This course will examine the phenomenon of “Christian martyrdom” from the initial experiences of early Christian communities under the Romans to the present day. Often defined as voluntarily choosing torture and death at the hands of one’s religious persecutors rather than renouncing one’s Christian faith, martyrdom has been pivotal in defining Christian identity since the persecution of the early Church under the Romans. And yet some contemporary specialists now suggest that the degree and severity of Roman persecution of the early Christians has been highly exaggerated.

Our goal in this course is to explore the fascinating sea-changes which have attended the protean ideal of martyrdom over two thousand years of Christian history while remaining attentive to recurring issues, features and tendencies of martyrdom as a phenomenon. The course will thus chart the birth of martyrdom in Jewish and Christian struggles as religious minorities in the Roman Empire, explore the eclipse of the martyr figure by that of the saint in medieval Europe, and chart the re-emergence and re-definition of martyrdom in the Christian-on-Christian violence which accompanied the Protestant split with Rome. This new “Golden Age of martyrdom” – the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - was an epoch in which Christian schism and the unprecedented global expansion of competing “Christianities” presented would-be martyrs – both Protestant and Catholic - with new opportunities to “die for Christ,” both in religiously divided Europe or as missionaries in “new-found” lands (including our own). It will explore the usurpation of the martyrdom ideal by rebels during the French Revolution (and in Canada by Metis warrior-prophet Louis Riel), the gendered phenomenon of “white” (bloodless or spiritual martyrdom) from the seventeenth century to the present, and explore new articulations of the martyr in the twentieth century and our own time, from Bonhoeffer, the Protestant martyr who met his death at the hands of the Nazis, to Gandhi, the slain pacifist revolutionary, to the commemoration of certain Columbine victims as latter day saints and martyrs.

But as important as it is to understand martyrdom’s transmutations over the centuries, it is equally crucial to address the insistent questions or issues which it perennially seems to pose: How are we to define martyrdom? Where are its “outer reaches?” What is the precise nature of the relationship between martyrdom and religious (or political?) persecution? How are we to understand the psychology of the men and women who have made the choice to become martyrs? Should those who actively seek confrontation with persecuting authorities be considered “genuine” martyrs? Or is this the bizarre religious equivalent of “suicide by cop?” What about “martyrs” who take not only their own lives, but those of others? Can “true” martyrs inflict as well as receive violence?

Still more fundamentally, we must ask ourselves: why are Christians so predisposed to associate victimhood with sanctity? Why is the endurance of physical pain and death so indelibly linked in the Christian mind with religious fidelity? What can studying martyrdom tell us about the passionate Christian ambivalence regarding the body as the source of both sin and (in its overcoming, repudiation, and sacrifice), salvation? How is the experience and rhetorical construction of martyrdom a gendered phenomenon? Why and how do the (changing, adapting) stories or images of martyrs play such an important role in the creation of (sometimes competing) religious and nationalistic collective identities? Furthermore, what is the relationship between martyrdom and memory? To what extent are martyrs created decades, if not centuries, after their deaths? Can martyrs, having been thus “made” through interpretation, be “unmade” through re-analysis? What is the relationship between

martyrdom and factuality? Need a story be factually accurate to be spiritually “true?” What is the relationship between martyrdom and seemingly parallel phenomenon of Christian asceticism, the reception of stigmata, and the concept of the “victim soul?” Finally, what have been the indelible historical, sociological, and psychological effects of Christianity’s prevalent “martyrdom complex?” In an attempt to respond to these urgent questions, then, the second section of the course will offer thematic components to complement and supplement its historical focus in the first.

Course Readings:

A Course-Pack is available at Rytec Printing (404 Dalhousie Avenue, (613) 241-COPY). **To save students money, readings that are available electronically through the Morisset Library website are not reproduced in the Course-Pack.** All of the books used to make up the course pack are available on reserve at Morisset Library.

Student Projects:

*** Weekly Response Papers (30%)**

Each week, students will prepare a two page (typed, double spaced) response to the assigned readings for that week. The purpose of this exercise is two-fold: most obviously, to facilitate students’ thinking about the issues concerned, in preparation for the class lecture and Forum, but secondly, as a professional development exercise (to practice writing short, pithy, and elegant essays is a requirement for conference presentation applications, book reviews, and comprehensive exams). These brief essays will present the student’s considered views on the material by (very briefly) summarizing the week’s readings and (more importantly) analytically responding to and critiquing their arguments and/or linking their ideas to those of others we have studied. Students are also responsible, at the end of their Response Papers, for posing thought-provoking questions for discussion during the Forum. Students must send their paper to the professor by the Monday before the class at noon, by email, so that she can post them to the course website, thus making them available to the week’s Forum Leader and the rest of the class. Please note that Monday noon should be considered a **strict deadline** for Response Papers. Students are responsible for producing **ten (10)** Response papers during the term, meaning that each student can take one week “off” sometime during the semester. Which two of the twelve weeks you skip is up to you but do let me know that week so I (and the Forum Leader) are aware.

*** Leadership of “The Forum” and Forum Participation (20%)**

In addition to the lecture, each week students will engage in a Forum, in which they will discuss the assigned readings for the week. Leadership of the Forum will rotate between students. Leaders will present their own analysis of the topic under consideration and utilize their review of student Response Papers (turned in each Monday) to lead debate and discussion of the pertinent questions raised by the readings. Even when they are not leading the Forum, it is expected that each student will come to class sessions fully prepared to engage in informed discussion of the course materials.

*** Research Paper Proposal (5%)**

Students are required to prepare a formal 1-2 page research proposal (with a provisional bibliography) due in class on January 31, 2018.

*** “Take Home” Final Examination (e.g. Research Paper) (30%)**

Throughout the term, students will research their own projects for their fifteen-page formal research paper, which will be passed in, as a “take home” final examination, on Wednesday, April 25th, by 5 pm sharp, in hard copy format, at my office. Students are encouraged to start thinking about possible topics, be they thematic, historical, or biographical, very early in the course.

* **Presentation of your Research (15%)**

Students are also required to present their evolving research projects to the class once during the course of the semester. Ideally, students will present their research during the section of the course which most closely corresponds to the historical time frame or topic of their own research. This way, presenting students will not only benefit from their peers' and professor's suggestions for improvement of their work, but the class will receive valuable additional information on specialized topics which complement the course readings and theme for that week. Grading of Research Presentations will of course be sensitive to the fact that the presentations made earlier in the semester will, of necessity, reflect more preliminary stages of research.

Course Map:

January 10, 2018: **Introduction to Christian Martyrdom/Organizational Class**

During this opening class we will reflect on some defining features of Christian martyrdom and consider the outline, aspirations, and requirements of the course, answer session student questions, and start the sign-up procedure for presentations, Forum leadership, etc.

Section I. The Foundation: Martyrdom and the Early Church

January 17, 2018: **Theological and Historical Dimensions of Early Christian Martyrdom**

The initial formulations of Christian martyrdom in the Roman world had multiple and complex theological and cultural roots. The nascent concept inherited important elements of Jewish and classical thought about "the noble death" and the necessity of resisting tyranny. The emergent theory and practice of Christian martyrdom, moreover, was shaped by a very particular type of dialogue between "victim" and "persecutor" in which the identity and moral coloration of these actors depended very much upon the perspective and group affiliation of the observer. Early Christians often saw themselves as a holy, beleaguered minority forced to choose, by a tyrannical state, between death and religious dishonor. Roman authorities, however, saw Christians as dangerous "atheists" bent on denying the people of the Empire the spiritual security of a religiously and politically unified state. Despite the centrality of the early experience of Christian martyrdom to the faith, recently respected scholar of early Christianity, Candida Moss, has raised the perennial issue of whether persecution of Christians was really as widespread and as severe as is conventionally understood.

Forum Leader: Mac Nason

Required Readings:

- 1) Middleton, Paul. *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T & T Clark, 2011, "Following Jesus the Martyr," p. 65-76.
- 2) Shepardson, Nikki. *Burning Zeal: The Rhetoric of Martyrdom and the Protestant Community in Reformation France, 1520-1570*. Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2007, p. 14-23.
- 3) Gaddis, Michael. *There is No Crime for Those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, selections: p. 29-45 (**available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 4) Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: Harper Collins, 2013, "Inventing Martyrs in Early Christianity," p. 83-125.

January 24, 2018: **A Range of Christian Attitudes Towards Martyrdom**

Even in what was arguably the most famous and formative period of Christian martyrdom, considerable controversy existed in Christian circles regarding a central question: who should be considered a legitimate martyr, and how should that person act? The emergent orthodox definition of a Christian martyr was an individual who, having been discovered by the persecuting state, was forced to decide between persisting in their faith and living or recanting it and dying, chose the latter. However, competing understandings of martyrdom also existed in the early Church. Gnostics openly questioned the value of martyrdom and saw it as a menace to the survival of Christianity itself. But, on the other side, "radicals" insisted upon a much more confrontational ethic of martyrdom, suggesting that Christians should, rather than awaiting discovery by the

authorities, should actively seek out death at their hands. The existence and the passion of these alternative perceptions and definitions of martyrdom give us a much richer sense of the variety of Christian views on this fundamental issue in the Church's first few centuries.

Forum Leader: Colin Law

Required Readings:

- 1) Hyldahl, Jesper. "Gnostic Critique of Martyrdom," in *Contextualizing Early Christian Martyrdom*. Engbert, Jakob, et al., eds. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2011, p. 119-138.
- 2) Middleton, Paul. *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity*. London: T&T Clark, 2006, *Introduction: Making Martyrs*, selection, p. 1-14, Chapter 1, *Radical Martyrdom*, p. 16-39.
- 3) Gaddis, Michael. *There is No Crime for Those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, selections: p. 14-25 (**available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 4) Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: Harper Collins, 2013, "Myths about Martyrs" p. 189-213.

January 31, 2018: **Early Christian Martyrdom as Spectacle: Continuity with Roman Culture**

One of the near-constants of martyrdom across time and space is that it is dramatic and it is public. From the stadiums of Rome, to the public burnings of early modern Europe, to the torture stakes of the New World, martyrdoms have often involved dramatic speech-acts or ritual gestures on the part of the condemned, and the equally dramatic rhetorical and artistic re-enactment in the textual and visual depictions of their suffering and triumph over the centuries. This section will explore the "spectacular" aspects of early Christian martyrdom in particular, seeking to better understand the relationship of such drama to the majority-pagan Roman culture of the time. To what extent did Christians succeed in turning Roman ideas about spectacle, bravery, masculinity, and even victory on their heads? **Reminder: Your Research Paper Proposals are due today in class.**

Forum Leader: Heather Penner

Research Presentation: Jashong King

Required Readings:

- 1) Middleton, Paul. *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: T & T Clark, 2011, "The Theology of Martyrdom in Early Christianity: Martyrdom as Spectacle," 57-65.
- 2) Castelli, Elizabeth. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, Chapter 4, "Martyrdom and the Spectacle of Suffering," p. 104- 133.
- 3) Grig, Lucy. *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity*. London: Duckworth, 2004. Chapter 4, "Courtroom Dramas: Judicial Narrative and Judicial Violence in Late Antique Martyrology," p. 59-78.

February 7, 2018: **Martyrdom and Gender**

One of the most interesting areas of current scholarship on early Christianity is gender and martyrdom. An inescapable theme in early Christian literature is that of the (often unsuccessful, miraculously defied) sexualized persecution of female martyrs. Often, the deaths of female martyrs are recounted and visually depicted so as to deliberately blur the line between a woman's martyrdom for her faith and her defense of her virginity or physical integrity. Such constructions of female martyrdom conflate the rejection of sexuality and the rejection of violence, and associate physical intactness with spiritual fidelity. Others refocus language of sexual longing and fulfillment on the female martyrs' desire for union with Christ and even cast her death as the violent realization of this wish. Our examination of gender in early Christianity will serve as a valuable resource as we keep an eye on variations in gender, suffering, and martyrdom throughout Christian history.

Forum Leader: Stephanie Jarison

Research Presentations: Caelen Salisbury-White, Asmaa Shehata

Required Readings:

- 1) Smith, Lacey Baldwin. *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, "The Early Christian Martyrs: 'My Lady' Perpetua," p. 89-115

- 2) Hartney, Aileen. *Gruesome Deaths and Celibate Lives: Christian Martyrs and Ascetics*. Exeter, UK: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2005, “The Language of Suffering and Death,” p. 33-50 (**available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 3) Baert, Barbara. “More than an Image, Agnes of Rome: Virginitly and Visual Memory,” in Leemans, Johan. *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of a Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*. Leuven: Peeters, 2005, p. 139-164.
- 4) Streete, Gail. *Redeemed Bodies: Women Martyrs in Early Christianity*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, “The Nakedness of Thecla,” p. 73-89.

February 14, 2018: **From Enduring Martyrdom to Inflicting Asceticism: Turning the Violence Inwards**

Christianity was a religion doubly baptized in blood: firstly, because its central religious narrative celebrated the salvation of the world through salvific death, and secondly because its earliest history was marked by periods of active persecution, which fostered the Christian enshrinement of death over religious dishonor as a crucial marker of their emergent collective identity. As persecution faded, however, Christianity faced something of an identity crisis. Christian asceticism, with its hermetic isolation and “mortification of the flesh” became, for the professionally religious, an acceptable substitute for martyrdom. With the waning of martyrdom, the larger and more inclusive category of the “saint” began to emerge for the first time. With these changes, attitudes to martyrs began to shift from a desire actively to imitate martyrs to a desire to venerate them. Accordingly, martyrs’ tales became more and more heroic and inimitable.

Forum Leader: Caelen Salisbury-White

Research Presentation: Mac Nason, Heather Penner

Required Readings:

- 1) Hartney, Aileen. *Gruesome Deaths and Celibate Lives: Christian Martyrs and Ascetics*. Exeter, UK: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2005, “The Rise of the Holy Person in Late Antiquity,” p. 59-77 (**available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 2) Gregory, Brad. *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, Chapter 2, “The Late Medieval Inheritance,” p. 30-62.
- 3) Winstead, Karen, “Fear in Late Medieval English Martyr Legends,” in *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of a Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*. Leuven, Peeters, 2005, p. 201-211.

February 28, 2018: **Retaliatory Violence: Turning the Violence Outwards**

Michael Gaddis argues that even in the early centuries of Christianity, Christians were not only recipients of religiously-motivated violence, but its active instigators. He draws our attention to how some early Christians broadened the term “martyrdom” to include iconoclasm and retaliatory violence against persecutors. In the Middle Ages, the dearth of martyrdom opportunities in medieval Europe inspired the invention of one of the darkest (and most enduring) contributions of medieval imagination - the “blood libel” myth. Medieval Christians, now socially and politically dominant, turned to the small Jewish communities in their search for a religious “persecutor” who could serve as modern-day “martyr-makers.” Specious claims that medieval Jews murdered and ate Christian children inspired the cults of wonderworking child-martyrs in medieval Europe.

Forum Leader: Asmaa Shehata

Research Presentations: Jesse Toufexis, Stephanie Jarison

Required Readings:

- 1) Gaddis, Michael. *There is No Crime for Those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p. 88-97, 162-181 (**available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 2) Healy Wasyliv, Patricia. *Martyrdom, Murder, and Magic: Child Saints and their Cults in Medieval Europe*. Peter Lang: New York, 2008, Chapter 7, “Sacred Passions: William of Norwich and the Origins of the Ritual Murder Association,” p. 107-120 (**this reading is available online on the Morisset Library website**).

March 7, 2018: **Joan of Arc – From Heretic to Martyr**

Few Christian lives, deaths, and saintly “afterlives” are as tumultuous, or as fascinating, as that of Joan of Arc. Condemned and burnt alive as a heretic, Joan was “reincarnated” in many different guises (as patriot, amazon, etc.) before receiving the ultimate imprimatur of the Catholic Church in the early 20th century: canonization. Debates about the meaning of her death and her status as a martyr continue, even as Joan’s image is embraced by forces to the far right and by feminists alike.

Forum Leader: Caelen Salisbury-White

Required Readings:

- 1) Flower, John. *Joan of Arc: Icon of Modern Culture*. Hastings, UK: Helm, 2008, Chapter One, “Her Story, Their Story, Whose Version,” p. 5-51.
- 2) Warner, Marina. *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981, “Saint or Patriot?” p. 255-275.

March 14, 2018: **A New Age of Martyrdom: Christian-on-Christian Violence in a Religiously Divided Europe**

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe witnessed the most devastating period of Christian persecution since the early Church. Martyrdom, rendered largely abstract during the medieval period, became again a real possibility in the lives of countless ordinary Christians. Yet there was a critical difference between the travails of the early church and the deadly religious violence sweeping Europe in the early modern period – the Christian identity of ALL its participants – persecuted and persecutors alike. Catholics and Protestants both claimed the disputed mantle of the True Church and saw its rivals as dangerous heretics who, for their own soul’s sake, required (often violent) confrontation. The tenacity with which both the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant splinter movements (including the Anabaptists, who were persecuted by both Protestants and Catholics) defended their respective theological positions made the possibility of new “golden age” of martyrdom virtually inevitable. Predictably, all Christian groups during this era claimed their own victims of religious persecution were true martyrs dying for the true faith. And yet the competing claims posed by multiple martyrs from different confessional backgrounds and the fact that men and women of all Christian creeds often faced horrifying deaths with equally commendable courage was disorientating for many onlookers. Yet, even though all confessions claimed their martyrs in this period, the religious role and function of martyrs had confessional differences. During the Reformation and the subsequent period of Catholic Reform in Europe, linkage of confessional identity with political loyalty in many European countries led a dangerous new political edge to the requirements of religious conformity, leading to “religio-political” martyrs such as Thomas More.

Forum Leader: Sana Patel

Required Readings:

- 1) Freeman, Thomas. “Imitatio Christi with a Vengeance:” The Politicisation of Martyrdom in Early Modern England,” in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400-1700*. Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2007, p. 35-69.
- 2) Gregory, Brad. *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, “A Complex of Martyrs,” p. 6-15, “The Willingness to Kill,” p. 74-90, “The Willingness to Die,” p. 97-111.
- 3) Smith, Lacey Baldwin. *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, “Sir Thomas More: A Hero of Selfhood,” p. 149-153, 168-183.
- 4) King, John, ed. *Voices of the English Reformation: A Source Book*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, “Anne Askew, from the Latter Examination,” p. 231-241.

March 21, 2018: **Colonial Martyrdom: Dying for God in the New World**

Coincident with the traumatic division of Christianity in the Old World was its global expansion of well outside the original boundaries of the “known world.” During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was something of a religious “arms race” to discover, exploit, and convert heretofore unknown sections of the globe. Confessional rivalries were deeply complicit in such agendas of “discovery” and conversion, as both Protestants and Catholics looked to purify and reinforce their own numbers with indigenous converts, and to re-construct,

in a new milieu, some approximation of the religious hegemony and unity they so craved. In many cases, contact with the aboriginal peoples of the New World meant, as in Europe, new opportunities to “die for Christ” in the confusion and violence which often accompanies cultural and religious contact. The Jesuit missionaries of New France, some of whom died during the intra-aboriginal wars of the late 1640s, are a particularly fascinating example of how integral tropes and motifs of martyrdom were not only crucial for the individual and collective identity of the Jesuits, but also became central to the guiding ethos and mission of the entire colony. Grave questions can be raised, however, as to the accuracy of Catholic contentions that these deaths were, like those of the ancient Church, in fact motivated by aboriginal “hatred of the faith.” To understand the complexity of early modern martyrdom in colonial settings we must examine (as we did in our section on the early church) the beliefs and motivations of all parties participating in “making martyrs” in the colonial Americas.

Forum Leader: Kaveh Najafzadeh

Research Presentation: Kierra Beaument, Colin Law

Required Readings:

- 1) Anderson, Emma. *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, “A Spectacle for Men and For Angels,” p. 14-53. **(This book is available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website).**
- 2) Pearson, Timothy. *Becoming Holy in Early Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014, “Evangelism: Indigenous Holiness,” p. 63-83 **(This book is available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website).**
- 3) Greer, Allan. “Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France,” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57, no. 2, April 2000, p. 323-348. **Please access this article through J-STOR, through the University of Ottawa Library Website.**
- 4) In addition to doing the readings, please watch the film “Silence”

March 28, 2018: **“White Martyrdom:” The Deepening Gender Divide in Christian Martyrdom**

As we have seen, Christian history is rich with martyrs of both genders. However, during times and places when opportunities for physical, literal martyrdom become thin on the ground, incredible theological and ritual creativity has been used by the Christian faithful vicariously to participate in this ancient equation between sanctity and suffering (as we saw with the transition from martyrdom to asceticism in late antiquity and the medieval period, and with the casting of vulnerable Jewish communities as “persecutors” of their Christian overlords with blood libel). In some cases, in both the European and North American context, clausturation (being confined within the walls of their convents) meant that Roman Catholic nuns were significantly more sheltered from occasions for martyrdom than their male counterparts, prompting the development of elaborate theological conceptions drawing on similar ideas about the value of physical suffering, such as the concept of “white” or “spiritual” martyrdom or that of the self as a vicarious oblation or “Victim Soul.” This latter concept posits that such a Soul’s suffering may spiritually benefit those around her.

Forum Leader: Jesse Toufexis

Research Presentation: Sana Patel

Required Readings:

- 1) Anderson, Emma. *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, “The Blood of Martyrs is the Seed of Christians,” p. 54-97 **(this book is available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website).**
- 2) Shoemaker, Nancy. “Kateri Tekakwitha’s Tortuous Path to Sainthood” in *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*. New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 49-67 **(this book is available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website).**
- 3) Orsi, Robert. *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religions Worlds People Make and the Scholars who Study Them*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, “Two Aspects of One Life: Saint Gemma Galgani and My Grandmother in the Wound between Devotion and History, and Natural and the Supernatural,” p. 110-145.
- 4) Homan, Helen Walker. *Letters to the Martyrs*. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1951, Chapter Two, “Letter to Saint Maria Goretti, Child-Martyr of Italy,” p. 25-47.

April 4, 2018: **Split Class**

Part One: The Revolutionary as Martyr

Ironically, even during the highly anticlerical French Revolution, rebels against both crown and altar nonetheless commonly perceived their own fallen as martyrs and celebrated them as such in images and words replete with many of the Catholic concepts they were so forcefully rejecting. Royalist and pro-Catholic forces, less surprisingly, responded in kind, positing that the slain king, Louis XVI was the real martyr of their brutal violence. This week will examine revolutionaries (and their opponents) as martyrs, both in 18th century France, and in 19th century Canada, with the fascinating case of Louis Riel, the prophet-revolutionary.

Forum Leader: Kierra Beaument

Research Presentation: Kaveh Najafzadeh

Required Readings:

- 1) Souboul, Albert. "Religious Feeling and Popular Cults During the French Revolution: "Patriot Saints" and Martyrs for Liberty" in *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 217-229 (**this book is available as an e-book on the Morisset Library website**).
- 2) Johnson, Alison. *Louis XVI and the French Revolution*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2013, "Final Hours and Execution," p. 196-200.
- 3) Dunn, Susan. *The Deaths of Louis XVI: Regicide and the French Political Imagination*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, "Louis XVI and Joan of Arc," p. 38-46.
- 4) Reid, Jennifer. *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2008, "Riel and the Canadian State," p. 187-201.

Part Two: Modern and Contemporary Martyrdom

In the holocaust of violence that engulfed the world during the twentieth century, martyrdom became a frequently-utilized rubric to celebrate, variously, opponents of the Nazi regime, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the non-violent crusades of figures such as Mahatma Gandhi (in the 1940s) and Martin Luther King Jr (in the 1960s), whose careers both ended in assassination. At the dawn of the 21st century, the definitional issues of martyrdom first raised in the early centuries of the Church continue to be of urgent interest. The Columbine high school shootings in 1999 have led to the unlikely, unofficial popular "canonization" of two of its young female victims, both Protestants, whose apparent final statements of belief in God have been constructed as evidence of their "martyrdom" by their families, churches, and communities. In this, our final class, we will explore modern and contemporary manifestations of Christian martyrdom, and their legacy for the future.

Forum Leader: JaShong King

Required Readings:

- 1) Slane, Craig J. *Bonhoeffer as Martyr: Social Responsibility and Modern Christian Commitment*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004, selections, Chapter 1, p. 27-34, p. 68-75.
- 2) Smith's *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997, "Mahatma Gandhi: School for Martyrs," p. 263-274.
- 3) Castelli, Elizabeth. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, Chapter 6, "Religion as a Chain of Memory: Cassie Bernall of Columbine High and the American Legacy of Early Modern Christian Martyrdom," p. 172-196.
- 4) Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: Harper Collins, 2013, "The Dangerous Legacy of a Martyrdom Complex," p. 247-261.