

Lesson 6:

Just War Theory in the History Classroom I: What Leaders Have Said

Using hindsight and, usually, a particular perspective, our classroom history texts offer one narrative version of the reasons why different wars have taken place. But how did different people involved at the time think about and justify engaging in war? What role did the principles of just war play in the reasons that leaders offered to their followers when seeking their support for a decision to go to war? How valid were those justifications? What role, if any, did religion play in supporting the justifications for war?

In Lesson 6, students read speeches and declarations given by a variety of leaders throughout history to garner support for a war effort. They analyze the speeches for the degree to which, and the ways in which just war principles were reference in rallying support for a war, and whether and in what ways religion was also used to support the war.

Examples used include the speech by Pope Urban II urging participation in the First Crusade; the sermon by Samuel Davies urging colonist to support the French-Indian War; a Declaration by Representatives of the United Colonies at the outset of the American War for Independence; and President Johnson' Message to Congress following the Tonkin Gulf incident in Vietnam, but the same procedures can be applied to other examples.

Objectives:

- Using primary source materials, students will analyze what past leaders have said about the reasons for going to war, and determine whether they used any of the Just War principles to support their case.
- Students will consider to what extent, and in what ways, religious beliefs were referenced in support of the war effort.

Grade Level/Subject: 7th- 11th grade World and American History

Prior Knowledge:

- Students should have spent some time exploring the meanings of “war” and “peace.”
- Students should be familiar with the history, and basic principles of Just War Theory.

Materials:

Student Handout #1 – Just War Principles, one per student

Student Handout #2 – Justification of War – What Leaders Have Said

One of more of the following, to be selected by teacher:

Student Handout #3A or #3B - Pope Urban II - Speech at Council of Clermont, 1066

Student Handout #4 – Samuel Davies, French-Indian War, 1755

Student Handout #5 – Declaration by Representatives of the United Colonies, July 6, 1775

Student Handout #6 – President Johnson’s Message to Congress, August 5, 1964

Procedure:

1. Have students read the textbook section dealing with the war this exercise focuses on.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the speech to be studied. (Brief background on each speech is provided below.) If necessary, cover vocabulary with which students may not be familiar beforehand.
3. Instruct students to highlight or underline words and/or phrases used by the speaker to justify why the war should be supported. For example:

To protect your Brethren from the most bloody Barbarities--to defend the territories of the best of Kings against the Oppression and Tyranny of Arbitrary Power to secure the inestimable Blessings of Liberty, British Liberty, from the Chains of French slavery--to preserve your estates, for which you have sweat and toiled, from falling prey to greedy Vultures, Indians, Priests, French, and hungry Gallic Slaves, or not-more-devouring Flames--to guard your Religion, the pure Religion of Jesus, streaming uncorrupted from the sacred fountain of the Scriptures; the most excellent, rational and divine religion that ever was made known to the sons of Men; to guard such a precious Religion (my heart grows warm while I mention it) against Ignorance, Superstition, Idolatry, Tyranny over Conscience, Massacre, Fire, and Sword, and all the Mischiefs, beyond Expression, with which Popery is Pregnant--to keep from the cruel Hands of Barbarians and Papists your Wives, your Children, your Parents, your Friends--to secure the Liberties conveyed to you by your brave Fore-Fathers, and bought with their blood, that you may transmit them uncurtailed to your Posterity--these are the Blessings you contend for; all these will be torn from your eager Grasp, if this Colony [Virginia] should become a province of France. And Virginians! Britons! Christians! Protestants! if these Names have any import or Energy, will you not strike home in such a Cause?...

4. Give each student a copy of Handout #1 (Just War Principles) and Handout #2 (Justification of War – What Leaders Have Said). Have them match their highlighted phrases with the appropriate just war principle.
5. Pair students, and have them compare, discuss and modify (if they wish) their results.
6. With the whole class, work through the Just War Principles, identifying and discussing the words and phrases students felt gave support to each principle. It is quite probably that the speaker will not rely on all of the principles. E.g., in the example above, no reference is made to proper authority, last resort or probability of success.

Optional: Have students analyze the speech to identify different *rhetorical devices* used. Discuss the differences between use of rhetorical devices (which have no *inherent* reference to specific facts, opinions or ethical/moral principles) and reliance on concrete reasons in making an argument. An argument may sound terrific, but does it make any sense?

7. Conduct a Socratic Seminar (see below):

Socratic Seminar

1. Are there any just war principles the speaker did not use? Why do you think that might be?
2. Does the speaker refer to religion in the speech? What role does religion play? Does it provide a basis for arguing just cause (our religious beliefs are threatened)? right intention (we are doing this for religious reasons)? proper authority (God/our religion requires it)? probability of success (God is on our side)?
3. Do you think the people listening at the time found the speaker's argument convincing? How do you think people on the other side might justify this war?
4. Are the reasons given by the textbook for this war the same as the reasons given by the speaker? Why do you think they differ?

Speeches provided in this lesson:

Pope Urban II - Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095. Excerpts from the versions by Fulcher of Chartres and Robert the Monk.

In 1094 or 1095, Alexios I Komnenos, the Byzantine emperor, sent a message to the pope, Urban II, asking for help in the war against the Seljuq Turks, who taken nearly all of Asia Minor from him. At the council of Clermont in November, 1095, attended by approximately 300 clerics and nobility, Urban urged all to go to the aid of the Greeks and to recover Palestine from the rule of the Muslims.

There are six main sources of information about this portion of the council: 1. the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* ("The Deeds of the Franks" dated c. 1102), which influenced all versions of the speech except that by Fulcher; Fulcher of Chartres, who was present at the council; Robert the Monk, who may have been present; Baldric, the archbishop of Dol and Guibert de Nogent, who were not present at the council. All of these accounts were written down quite a bit later than the council, and all differ widely from one another. Finally, there is a short "letter of instruction" written by Urban II himself to members of the church in Flanders. are used in this lesson.

References:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Clermont;

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>

Samuel Davies, Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier - Sermon on the French-Indian War, 1755. excerpts.

Samuel Davies was a Presbyterian preacher and president of the College at Princeton. In this excerpt from a sermon preached in Virginia, Davies rallies his listeners to arms against the French in the Ohio country. His suggestion that Virginia may have come under control of France was characteristic of Davies' rhetoric. One of Davies' most fond disciples was Patrick Henry, who stated that he learned his oratory skills from listening to Davies. Excerpts are used here.

Reference: <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/davies.html>

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia, Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms, July 6, 1775. excerpts

Primarily the work of Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson.p.168 Morison, Samuel Eliot and Henry Steele Commager, William E. Leuchtenburg. *The Growth of the American Republic : Volume 1.* Seventh Edition. New York : Oxford University Press; 1980.

Reference: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/arms.asp

President Johnson's Message to Congress August 5, 1964. excerpts.

The day after the Gulf of Tonkin incident off the coast of (North) Vietnam, President Lyndon Johnson informed the public of his reasons for seeking a Joint Resolution from Congress supporting U.S. military interventions in the Vietnam civil war.

Reference: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/tonkin-g.asp

President Obama's Noble Peace Prize Acceptance Speech December 10, 2009.

In accepting the Noble Peace Prize, President Obama discusses the concept of just war, and his views on when war is justified. The speech is not reproduced here, but a full transcript is available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/world/europe/11prexy.text.html>

JUST WAR PRINCIPLES

Today, the principles most often used for determining whether going to war is justified (*jus ad bellum*) are:

1. **Just cause/right intention:** A just war must be fought only for purposes of self-defense against armed attack or to right a serious wrong.
2. **Proper authority:** A war is just only if waged by a legitimate authority.
3. **Last resort:** A just war must be the last resort; all peaceful options must be exhausted before the use of force can be justified.
4. **Probability of success:** There must be a reasonable chance of success; deaths and injury that result from a hopeless cause cannot be morally justified.
5. **Beneficial outcome:** The outcome of the war must be better than the situation that would exist had the war not taken place.
6. **Proportionality:** The violence and destruction must be proportional to the injury suffered.

NAME:

JUSTIFICATION OF WAR – WHAT LEADERS HAVE SAID

- Instructions:* 1. As you read the assigned speech, highlight or underline words and phrases used by the speaker to demonstrate reasons why the war should be supported.
2. Fill out the table by matching your highlighted words and phrases with a just war principle. It is possible that some of the rows may remain blank. If you have highlighted phrases that don't match a just war principle, record it under "Other reason."

NAME OF LEADER & WAR:

Principle	Words and Phrases Used
1. Just cause/right intention:	
2. Proper authority:	
3. Last resort:	
4. Probability of success:	
5. Beneficial outcome:	
6. Proportionality:	
7. Other reason:	

Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095

From the Version by Fulcher of Chartres

This is part of the speech as recorded by Fulcher of Chartres, who was at Clermont.

"...you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it...

"All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ!... Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago.

Source: Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 382 f., trans in Oliver J. Thatcher, and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds., *A Source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905), 513-17

Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095

From the version by Robert the Monk

This is part of the speech, as recorded by Robert the Monk, who may have been present at the council, but did not write until 25 years later.

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion.... The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it can not be traversed in a march of two months. On whom therefore is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above other nations God has conferred remarkable glory in arms, great courage, bodily activity, and strength to humble the hairy scalp of those who resist you.

... Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. ... This royal city, therefore, situated at the centre of the world, is now held captive by His enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens. She seeks therefore and desires to be liberated, and does not cease to implore you to come to her aid.

...Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!

Source: Dana C. Munro, "Urban and the Crusaders", *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, Vol 1:2, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1895), 5-8

Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier

Sermon given by Samuel Davies to rally Virginia colonists to fight on the side of the British in the French-Indian War. (1755)

To protect your Brethren from the most bloody Barbarities--to defend the territories of the best of Kings against the Oppression and Tyranny of Arbitrary Power to secure the inestimable Blessings of Liberty, British Liberty, from the Chains of French slavery--to preserve your estates, for which you have sweat and toiled, from falling prey to greedy Vultures, Indians, Priests, French, and hungry Gallic Slaves, or not-more-devouring Flames--to guard your Religion, the pure Religion of Jesus, streaming uncorrupted from the sacred fountain of the Scriptures; the most excellent, rational and divine religion that ever was made known to the sons of Men; to guard such a precious Religion (my heart grows warm while I mention it) against Ignorance, Superstition, Idolatry, Tyranny, over Conscience, Massacre, Fire, and Sword, and all the Mischiefs, beyond Expression, with which Popery is Pregnant--to keep from the cruel Hands of Barbarians and Papists your Wives, your Children, your Parents, your Friends--to secure the Liberties conveyed to you by your brave Fore-Fathers, and bought with their blood, that you may transmit them uncurtailed to you Posterity--these are the Blessings you contend for; all these will be torn from your eager Grasp, if this Colony [Virginia] should become a province of France. And Virginians! Britons! Christians! Protestants! if these Names have any import or Energy, will you not strike home is such a Cause?...

<http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/davies.html>

**A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America,
Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia,
Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms, July 6, 1775**

... By one statute it is declared, that parliament can "*of right make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever.*" What is to defend us against so enormous, so unlimited a power? Not a single man of those who assume it, is chosen by us; or is subject to our control or influence;... We for ten years incessantly and ineffectually besieged the throne as supplicants; we reasoned, we remonstrated with parliament, in the most mild and decent language.

... Soon after, the commercial intercourse of whole colonies, with foreign countries, and with each other, was cut off by an act of parliament; by another several of them were entirely prohibited from the fisheries in the seas near their coasts, on which they always depended for their sustenance; ...

Parliament adopted... a perpetual auction of taxations where colony should bid against colony,... and thus to extort from us, at the point of the bayonet, the unknown sums...

Soon after... general Gage,... sent out from that place [Boston] a large detachment of his army, who made an unprovoked assault on the inhabitants of the said province, at the town of Lexington,... murdered eight of the inhabitants, and wounded many others. From thence the troops proceeded in warlike array to the town of Concord, where they set upon another party of the inhabitants of the same province, killing several and wounding more, until compelled to retreat by the country people suddenly assembled to repel this cruel aggression. Hostilities, thus commenced by the British troops, have been since prosecuted by them without regard to faith or reputation...

... We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force. -- The latter is our choice. -- We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery....

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable. -- We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favor towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength,... and possessed of the means of defending ourselves. With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that, ...the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will,... employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves....

Primarily the work of Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson.p.168 Morison, Samuel Eliot and Henry Steele Commager, William E. Leuchtenburg. *The Growth of the American Republic : Volume 1*. Seventh Edition. New York : Oxford University Press; 1980.

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/arms.asp

President Johnson's Message to Congress August 5, 1964

Last night I announced to the American people that the North Vietnamese regime had conducted further deliberate attacks against U.S. naval vessels operating in international waters, and I had therefore directed air action against gunboats and supporting facilities used in these hostile operations. This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action.

After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a decision to ask the Congress for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in southeast Asia.

These latest actions of the North Vietnamese regime has given a new and grave turn to the already serious situation in southeast Asia. Our commitments in that area are well known to the Congress. They were first made in 1954 by President Eisenhower. They were further defined in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty approved by the Senate in February 1955.

This treaty with its accompanying protocol obligates the United States and other members to act in accordance with their constitutional processes to meet Communist aggression against any of the parties or protocol states.

Our policy in southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954. I summarized it on June 2 in four simple propositions:

America keeps her word. Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments.

The issue is the future of southeast Asia as a whole. A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us.

Our purpose is peace. We have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area.

This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. Our military and economic assistance to South Vietnam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

The threat to the free nations of southeast Asia has long been clear. The North Vietnamese regime has constantly sought to take over South Vietnam and Laos. This Communist regime has violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam. It has systematically conducted a campaign of subversion, which includes the direction, training, and supply of personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnamese territory. In Laos, the North Vietnamese regime has maintained military forces, used Laotian territory for infiltration into South Vietnam, and most recently carried out combat operations - all in direct violation of the Geneva Agreements of 1962.

In recent months, the actions of the North Vietnamese regime have become steadily more threatening...

As President of the United States I have concluded that I should now ask the Congress, on its part, to join in affirming the national determination that all such attacks will be met, and that the United States will continue in its basic policy of assisting the free nations of the area to defend their freedom.

As I have repeatedly made clear, the United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war. We must make it clear to all that the United States is united in its determination to bring about the end of Communist subversion and aggression in the area. We seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Vietnam, and again in Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos...

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/tonkin-g.asp