

The Religious Studies Department Presents

"The Politics of War in Early Christianity"

Thursday, September 29, 2011

5:00 p.m.

Westhampton Deanery Living Room



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According to many twentieth-century historians of early Christianity, the movement was decidedly pacifist in its earliest days. Ultimately, that pacifism gave way to political expediency when the first Roman emperor converted to Christianity in the early fourth century. That conversion (and the implications it held for subsequent Christian history) has been a lightning rod for modern commentators who often justify contemporary attitudes about war and peace through one-sided narratives of fourth-century events. This paper seeks to complicate those studies by showing that Christian attitudes toward war were far more complex than generally understood both before and after the fourth century.