

## Philosophy 3980: Nonviolence

Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m., Fall, 2014, GLC 104E

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### I Course Description and Objectives

This course is focused on understanding the concepts, principles, and practices of nonviolence. We will study important theorists and practitioners of nonviolent direct action including Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh, and others, attentive to the contexts in which they emerge. Our objectives: 1) to understand selected important philosophies of nonviolence; 2) to recognize, engage, and critically examine important perspectives including war realism, the just war tradition, and varieties of pacifism; 3) to philosophize about nonviolence by attempting clear articulations of our own assumptions, concepts, and reasons; and 4) to read events, historical and current, through the perspectives of the views studied.

Participants in the course will pursue independent research on nonviolence for presentation to the seminar. This course is designated “speaking intensive” on the Hamline Plan.

### II Required Books

Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence: a Third Way*  
Richard L. Johnson, ed., *Gandhi's Experiments with Truth*  
Martin Luther King, Jr. *A Testament of Hope* (ed., Washington)  
Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*  
Duane Cady, *From Warism to Pacifism: A Moral Continuum*, 2nd ed.  
Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*  
James Gilligan, *Violence: Discussions on an American Epidemic*

### III Conduct of the Course

This course will be conducted as a seminar. Students will attend class prepared to discuss issues, raise questions, apply concepts, and formulate arguments in small group and full class settings. Our goal is informed, intelligent conversation about ethical, social, and political dimensions of violence and nonviolence.

My role is to explain, amplify and defend the readings under examination; yours is to raise interpretive and evaluative questions of the readings to deepen our consideration of issues. Seminar members are expected to attend all sessions having read and reflected upon the assignments prior to class.

In addition to regular participation in large and small group discussions, each student will write a missive to each author, write four critiques, and make a topical project presentation to the seminar between December 2 and 16. Topical outlines/notes are due at noon, December 17, in lieu of a final exam.

#### IV Coursework and Grades

Required coursework: four critiques (1/3), class attendance, missives, preparation and discussion (1/3), and a topical project and presentation (1/3). Generally, work moves up the scale of evaluation in direct proportion to the thought and effort that goes into it. Grading is based on consistency, clarity, accuracy, depth, and the extent to which you raise significant and interesting philosophical issues and questions. Seminar members do *not* compete against one another for grades (i.e., grading is *not* based on a curve); it is possible in principle for every member of the seminar to achieve the same grade, though it may be unlikely in practice.

**Missive:** a 1 page "letter" to each author of our texts, on an issue that arises in reading or discussion, due on the last discussion session for the author (ungraded but required).

**Critique:** a short (3-4 page) critical essay on an issue from our reading in which you explain the position taken on the issue by the author in question, consider the argument offered supporting the view, and offer your reasoned reaction. Critique #1 (Gandhi) is due September 23, #2 (King) October 7, #3 (Arendt or Cady) Oct. 21, and #4 (Hanh or Gilligan) November 18.

**Class Participation:** attending class regularly, prepared by reading and thinking about the assignments before class, attentive to what is said, engaged actively in discussion.

**Topical Project:** an exploration and presentation on an issue of the student's choice (cleared with the professor). Your independent work will include at least one thinker **not** among the required readings for the seminar. One-third of the project will be a development and defense of your own thesis. Your focus may be on a particular theorist (Plato, Tolstoy, Addams, Fanon, Buber, Engels, Sharp, Ruddick, etc.), a particular issue (Nonviolence against Nazis in WWII, Iraq War violations of the Geneva Accords, the international response to massacre in Rwanda, feminism and the anti-war movement, U.S. Drone Policy, the role of music in the civil rights or anti war movements, etc.), the practice of nonviolence by a specific organization (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Voices in the Wilderness, CORE, the Nonviolent Peace Force, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, etc.). Whatever your topic, it should be something you want to understand more deeply. Each student will confer with me on a topic no later than November 11 (earlier is better) and submit a prospectus and bibliography by November 18.

V Academic Integrity - Each student is responsible for reviewing and complying with University policies on academic integrity as stated in the **Student Handbook**.

#### VI Incompletes and Late Work

Incompletes and assignment deadline extensions are granted for medical and family emergencies only and must be arranged prior to the deadline in question. Unexcused late papers are accepted but are downgraded out of fairness to those meeting deadlines.

VII Office: Klas Café Hamline History Lounge, Wednesday, 1:30-3:00 p.m., and by



9 Presentations: 1) 2) 3) 4)

15 Presentations: 1) 2) 3) 4)

NOTE: Our session on **Monday**, Dec. 15 will be held 2:45-4:45 p.m. (our final exam time).