

COURSE TITLE: Building Cultures of Peace: Nonviolent Strategies and Conflict Resolution

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This multi-disciplinary course focuses on efforts to establish deeply rooted networks and communities of peace by upholding human rights and the dignity of all persons, resisting inequality, injustice, or war. Students will study theories of power, struggle, peacemaking, and the nonviolent transformation of conflict from personal, collective/communal, and institutional perspectives. A continuum of philosophies and methods practiced in different societies to build communities of peace will be featured, such as nonviolent direct action campaigns, civil disobedience, mediation, negotiation, reconciliation, third-party interventions, and peace education. Students will be expected to work with a group actively working on building cultures of peace as their project for the course.

Professor Sharon Toffey Shepela (and a multidisciplinary team named below)

Course Methodology

- This course will use case studies, skills exercises, discussion, research, theoretical and research presentations, films, role simulations, and service learning participatory action research in organizations, primarily but not restricted to local organizations, working towards building cultures of peace and justice.
- We will assume that there are many points of view surrounding a conflict. The course will not provide absolute solutions to conflicts, but will try to develop perspective, create insights and generate alternative solutions.
- The class will be experiential, participatory, and interactive.

Course Objectives:

- To learn how to analyze conflicts.
- To study a range of intentional, strategic responses to conflict on individual, communal/collective and institutional levels, and provide a global survey of nonviolent campaigns or movements and their efforts to resist injustice and humiliation, resolve conflicts, and bring about change without torture, bloodshed or killing.
- To undertake research on a specific case study of peacemaking with the aim of learning practical skills of peacemaking, applying methods studied in class and spreading the lessons learned to other opportunities and to other individuals, collectives, and institutions.
- To inspire and motivate students to have a sense of global responsibility for building peaceful cultures and to teach them skills that they can apply to peacemaking and resolving conflict with nonviolent strategies.

Proposed Texts:

Ho-Won Jeong. (2001). *Peace and Conflict Studies*.

Gene Sharp (1973). *The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Part One: Power and Struggle*. Boston, MA. Porter Sargent Publishers, Extending Horizon books.

John Dear (Ed) (2002). *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings*. Maryknoll, NY. Orbis Books.

Michael Prokosh, Lara Raymond and Naomi Klein. (2001) *Change the World! An Activist's Guide to the Globalization Movement*. New York: Avalon books.

Myron Glazer, Penina Glazer, Paula O'Loughlin, Sharon Toffey Shepela, Nathan Stolfus, Kristina Thalhammer. *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage: Courageous Resistance to Human Rights Abuses*. Manuscript as of Oct. 2005.

A bound packet of articles and essays specific to building cultures of peace and to the series of guest lecturers will be prepared by the instructor and the guest lecturers and reproduced by the Copy Shoppe for student purchase. Material will also be available on electronic reserve.

#### Films:

A Force More Powerful Than War—a film documenting and chronicling nonviolent movements around the world since the 1930s

Fury Across the Sound—a film about Canadian women's struggles to save their old growth forests in Vancouver, BC

Oasis of Peace—film about the Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, an Arab-Jewish village in Israel, an intentional community of equal numbers of Jewish and Palestinian Arab families who live together and run a School for Peace and do outreach educational work for peace.

#### Proposed Guest speakers:

Gene Sharp, Harvard University, Peace Studies

Michael True, Assumption College, Nonviolence

Cynthia Enloe, Clark University, Women and the military

Jackie and Chris Ducot, Hartford Catholic Worker House, peace activists

#### Evaluation:

25% Class participation including weekly Blackboard assignments

10% Discussion co-leadership

30% (15% each) Two short response papers, one must report progress on student's service learning/ participation in a peacemaking organization.

25% Major Paper about a local, national, or international current conflict, that each student investigated. Students will answer the question: How did the participants or organization create and build peace and/or resolve their differences? Students will also be challenged to suggest in their paper other creative, alternative approaches for resolving the conflict.

10% Presentation of the major paper topic

#### Topics:

Most of the topics listed below overlap and are interwoven. I have not listed them here as they necessarily will appear on the final working syllabus. That plan will result from a cooperative effort of all the additional participating faculty, coordinated by Sharon Shepela. Professor Shepela will be responsible for helping students to integrate the topics of the course and engage in comprehensive critical reflection on the various contributions

made by the team of instructors. Some of that will happen with discussions begun on Blackboard and continued in class, with applications to the conflicts the students are studying for their major paper and to the activist groups with which they are working, with simulations and their debriefings.

#### Power, Inequality and Conflict

What is power? Are there different types of power? What are the roles of power and inequality on conflict? Cross cultural sources of conflict and peacemaking.

Psychological supports for building cultures of peace.

The relationship between the “psychology of the self” and how that psychology plays out in interpersonal dynamics that either support peacemaking or conflict.  
Paula Alderette, Psychology/Hillyer

Factors that influence individuals to decide to take risks to wage peace.

Sharon Toffey Shepela, Psychology/Hillyer

The philosophy of non-violence, and communitarianism—Erasmus, Mohandis Ghandi, and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Marcia Moen, Philosophy

Social inequality and social cohesion.

Income inequality is associated with crimes and conflict between groups, as is low levels of “social capital” or community cohesion. After 9/11 there was a NYC blackout without the looting that occurred during a pre-9/11 blackout. What can we learn from these kinds of events to inform our understanding of the underlying bases for communities of peace?

Jay Stewart, Sociology

Programs that specifically address inequality as a way to build peace.

Buck.denOuden, Philosophy

Nonviolent social movements for peace—what is their historical context, what gives rise to them, what strategies have they used, and what have they achieved?

Steve Markson, Sociology

Women in war, peace, and social conflict--a feminist analysis. Women in the UN Decade for Peace.

Helen Raisz, AUC, peace activist

#### Mass Media and Communication

The role of mass media and communication in fostering peace and conflict resolution--or fostering conflict and war.

Jack Banks, Communication

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict serves as a case study for the discussion of communication approaches to the resolution of intractable ethnopolitical conflict.

Being inextricably entangled in communication that feeds conflict is part of the dilemma. The transformative task is to rehumanize the Other, to respect the Other and ascribe co-humanity to those who have harmed us. It must and can be learned.

Don Ellis, Communication

The theory and practice of conflict resolution, mediation, and alternative dispute resolution for individuals and communities.

Charlsye Diaz, Rhetoric, Language, and Culture

The role of transnational issues networks, international laws and courts in fostering peace and conflict resolution.

Examples of transnational issues networks are Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. International laws and conventions to be studied are the Geneva Convention on Torture and Treatment of Prisoners of War, and the Genocide Convention. The International Criminal Court began its first investigations in the Fall of 2005--into the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.