



Philosophies of Nonviolence

Philosophy Department
PHI 330, Fall, 2008
Section 001: Old Main G24, 11:30-12:20, MWF

3 Credit Hours
Facilitator: Dr. Andrew Fitz-Gibbon

Course Description

(C) Examination of a variety of philosophies, theories and practices of nonviolence from both western and eastern perspectives. (3 cr. hr.)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- a) Understand a variety of philosophies of nonviolence.
- b) Conduct a thoughtful and respectful dialogue on important philosophical aspects of nonviolence.
- c) Synthesize and reflect upon primary sources and secondary texts in written and verbal form.
- d) Construct a reasoned philosophical argument.
- e) Challenge assumptions and unquestioned beliefs.
- f) Think more critically and reflectively about the nature of human violence.
- g) Apply the concepts and theories covered in the course to areas of contemporary importance.

Required Texts

Hannah Arendt *On Violence* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Co, 1970).

Robert L. Holmes and Barry L. Gant *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice* (Long Grove IL: Waveland press, 2005).

Immanuel Kant *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983).

Michael N. Nagler *The Search for a Nonviolent Future: A Promise of Peace for Ourselves, Our Families, and Our World* (Maui, HI: Inner Ocean Publishing, 2004).

If you need to get in touch with the instructor:

E-mail: Andrew.Fitz-Gibbon@cortland.edu

Phone: 753-2016 (office) Cell: 229-3133 (emergencies)

Office Hours: Old Main 140-B, MW 1:30-2:45

Course Requirements

The course has a large discussion requirement, based on the required texts. Set reading and class participation are essential. Classes missed without prearrangement or a medical excuse will have negative consequences on final grade.

Each student will be required to write two 3-4 page take home papers, take part in a group presentation in class with a 3-4 page paper and write a 7-8 page final paper.

Final grade will be based on the following:

Class participation/attendance	10%
Class presentation and paper	18%
One 3-4 Page paper	18%
One 3-4 Page paper	18%
One 7-8 Page paper, final take home	36%

Grade Distribution:

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	
A = 94-96	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	E = 0-59

Papers are due on

Presentation paper is due on the day of your presentation
September 22 (3-4 page)
November 3 (3-4 page)
Final paper (7-8 pages) due last day of class, December 5

Two 3-4 Page Papers

1. In a violent world it is sometimes necessary to resort to violence. Discuss.
2. Gandhi's methods would not have worked in Hitler's Germany. Discuss.
3. What is nonviolence?
4. Nonviolent resistance, as coercion, is a form of violence. Discuss.
5. Analyze Kant's *Perpetual Peace*.
6. Is pacifism passive-ism?
7. How would a nation committed to nonviolence respond to an aggressor?

8. What is the relevance of nonviolence to nonhuman animals, plants, the earth itself?
9. What is the contribution of feminism to nonviolent philosophy?
10. Present a critical argument for *ahimsa*.
11. In what sense is nonviolence a way of life?

Presentation Paper

Using the work of Ackerman and DuVall, Analyze a world situation where nonviolence was used as an effective means of social change. What were the philosophical underpinnings of the movement? How successful was it? What problems did it face? How might it have been more successful? In your presentation be as creative as possible. You may use power point, video/DVD clips.

Final Paper 7-8 pages, choose a subject in consultation with Dr. Fitz-Gibbon

The Syllabus

Discussions in class are based on the readings. The readings are essential and must be read before class.

Week One

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| Aug 25 | General introduction and Expectations |
| Aug 27 | Violence and Nonviolence, personal narratives about violence and nonviolence, nonviolent practices |
| Aug 29 | Definitions of violence, definitions of nonviolence |

Week Two

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| Sep 1 | No Class Labor Day |
| Sep 3 | The logic of violence: Film <i>The Fog of War</i> (excerpts and discussion) |
| Sep 5 | The logic of violence: Film <i>The Fog of War</i> (excerpts and discussion) |

Week Three

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| Sep 8 | Hannah Arendt On Violence: Analysis and discussion pp 1-56
Background, Cold War, 9/11 aftermath, WHO Report on Violence 2002 |
| Sep 10 | Hannah Arendt On Violence: Analysis and discussion pp 59-87
Why do people turn to violence? Violence and politics, understanding power and violence, the Iraq war in the light of Arendt |

Sep 12	Arendt Concluded
Week Four	
Sep 15	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part One “Origins”
Sep 17	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part Two “Three Modern Philosophers” Tolstoy, Gandhi and King, basic principles of nonviolence
Sep 19	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part Three “Women and Nonviolence” analysis of the place of women in various nonviolent movements
Week Five	
Sep 22	Film: Bringing Down A Dictator.
Sep 24	Discussion of Bringing Down A Dictator
Sep 26	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part Four “Pacifism” analysis of movements in opposition to war and various understandings of the word “pacifism”
Week Six	
Sep 29	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part Five “The Practice of Nonviolence” The <i>intifada</i> in Palestine, violence versus nonviolence, violence and the criminal justice system
Oct 1	Nonviolence in Theory and Practice: Part Six “Examples of Nonviolence” case studies
Oct 3	No Class: Fall Break
Week Seven	
Oct 6	Student Presentations #1
Oct 8	Gene Sharp and Nonviolent Action
Oct 10	Gene Sharp and Nonviolent Action Continued
Week Eight	
Oct 13	Nagler chap 1 Nagler’s definition, integrative power, does nonviolence work?
Oct 15	Nagler chap 2 Three lenses for looking at nonviolence: moral, medical and educational models
Oct 17	Nagler chap 3 Nonviolence as peak experience, developing nonviolent strategies, nonviolent training

Week Nine

Oct 20 Student Presentations #2

Oct 22 Nagler chap 4 case studies in nonviolent work

Oct 24 Nagler chap 5 Religious perspectives and nonviolence

Week Ten

Oct 27 Nagler chap 6 Constructive program, models of community

Oct 29 Nagler chap 7 Body mind and spirit perspectives on peacemaking

Oct 31 Concerned Philosophers for Peace Conference

Week Eleven

Nov 3 Debrief Concerned Philosophers for Peace Conference

Nov 5 Student Presentations #3

Nov 7 Nagler chap 8 Body mind and spirit perspectives on peacemaking continued

Week Twelve

Nov 10 Nagler chap 9 The metaphysics of compassion

Nov 12 René Girard, Mimetic Violence and Scapegoating

Nov 14 René Girard, Mimetic Violence and Scapegoating Continued

Week Thirteen

Nov 17 Student Presentations #4

Nov 19 Group Discussion of Kant's Perpetual Peace Group Discussion

Nov 21 Vegetarianism and Violence

Week Fourteen

Nov 24 Film: Orange Revolution

Nov 26 No Class Thanksgiving

Nov 28 No Class Thanksgiving

Week Fifteen

Dec 1 Film: Orange Revolution Continued

Dec 3 Writing final papers and loose ends

Dec 5 Last Class

Policies and Information

1. SUNY Cortland is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act 1973.

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the office of Disability Services located in B-40 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any request for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

2. Absolutely no late work will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Such arrangements will be made only under unusual circumstances.

3. Plagiarism. All work submitted must be your own. Ideas borrowed from others, either directly, or through paraphrase, must be well documented through endnotes or footnotes. If plagiarism is suspected the student will be reported to the Provost and can either accept the charge or defend her or himself in the Grievance Tribunal.

4. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what went on in class, whether any assignments were given, and for keeping up with your work.

SUNY Cortland Conceptual Framework

The mission of teacher education at SUNY Cortland is to build upon the foundation of liberal learning in the development of teachers who have exceptional pedagogical knowledge and skills. The foundation of liberal learning informs the professional education strand in an innovative thematic approach that emphasizes personal responsibility, global understanding and social justice. Graduates of SUNY Cortland's teacher education program will be prepared to think critically, utilize technology, communicate effectively, understand and value diversity, contribute to their communities, and make a difference in the lives of their students.