

PEAC 104: INTRODUCTION TO PEACE AND JUSTICE STUDIES

An interdisciplinary introduction to the study of conflict, justice, and peace

Ronald E. Osborn
Peace and Justice Studies Program
Wellesley College

Professor: Ronald E. Osborn
Contact: ronaldosborn@gmail.com
Credit Hours: 1

Location: Founders Hall 120
Time: Tues., Fri., 9:50-11am
Office Hours: Tues., Fri., 11am-12pm
or by appointment,
Africana Studies 24

I. Course Description

This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of conflict, justice, and peace. We will explore a wide range of analytical and theoretical frameworks for understanding dilemmas of violence and injustice. We will also examine different normative theories of justice as well as concrete strategies that have been used by individuals and groups struggling to achieve goals of peace and social justice.

The course is divided into three parts. In Part I, “Etiologies of Violence”, we will consider the causes and conditions of violence, from dramatic and obvious examples such as genocide and dirty wars to more subtle and pervasive everyday realities of symbolic and structural violence. In Part II, “Where’s the Justice—And What *is* Justice”, we will survey some of the many ways people have struggled to define and to enact visions of social justice, and to transform conflicts, in the face of violence and oppression. Finally, in Part III, “The Theory and Practice of Nonviolence (and its Discontents)”, we will pursue an in-depth study of the philosophy of pacifism with readings from Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr. to Cesar Chavez (among others). We will also wrestle with Malcolm X’s critique of the philosophy of nonviolence in the light of America’s history of racial oppression. This course includes an optional weekend field trip (on April 23) to the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, which has struggled to enact peace and social justice in concrete ways in the community of Roxbury since 1984.

Peace and Justice Studies is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses a wide range of approaches and methodologies. This course fulfills distribution requirements at Wellesley College in Social and Behavioral Analysis, Ethics and Moral Philosophy, and Religion. The three parts of the course might be seen as loosely corresponding with these broad areas of concern.

II. Grading Scale and Distribution

The grading scale for this course is as follows: A (93-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-90); B (83-87); B- (80-83); C+ (77-80); C (73-77); C- (70-73); D (60-69); F (< 60). As a general benchmark, to receive a solid A in this course you should do **exemplary** work in all areas. To receive a grade of A- you should do **strong to excellent** work in all areas.

To receive a grade in the B range you should do **strong** work in all areas. To receive a grade in the C range you should do **passable** work in all areas. You will be assessed based on the following distribution of points:

- 25% **Group Presentation and Class Leadership:** Together with several of your classmates, you will be responsible to help lead one day of class selected from Week 7 on. (For more on what class leadership entails, see section IV below.)
- 25% **Reading Journal:** As you read you should keep an ongoing typed reading journal or set of notes in which you jot down key terms and ideas, and perhaps some of your impressions and responses to the ideas you are encountering. Be concise and include page numbers for reference. These notes will be useful to you when it comes time to write your final paper. They will also be a valuable aid to discussion. You should bring your reading journal with you to class each week and also provide me with a copy of your most recent notes at the start of class each Friday (beginning from Week 2 on).
- 25% **Attendance (10%) and Participation (15%):** You are expected to attend all classes on time and to actively contribute to discussions through thoughtful dialogue and respectful (but hopefully also vigorous!) debate with others based upon your careful reading of all assigned texts. *Note: There are no excused absences apart from days of religious observance and serious medical or family emergencies. Three late attendance marks will count as one absence. However, out of consideration for the vicissitudes of college life, you are permitted two missed classes without question over the course of the semester without any grade reduction. Each additional missed class will result in a letter grade reduction from your final overall grade for the course.*
- 25% **Final Paper:** You will hand in a final paper by the final day of class (May 3) that addresses an important question or theme arising from our readings. Your paper should build on the readings, demonstrating that you have understood and critically engaged with the ideas presented in this course. **You are responsible to schedule an office appointment with me no later than April 8 to discuss your thesis and outline.** Papers should be approximately 1000 words in length and should be handed in on double-spaced, single-sided pages in 12-point Times New Roman font (no cover page is necessary). Use the standard citation method (MLA, Chicago, etc.) that you are most familiar with. In addition, you are required to email me an electronic Word version of your paper by the due date. *Note: there is a letter grade reduction for late papers and each additional day a paper is turned in late will result in an additional 10% deduction; papers more than three days late will not be accepted.* I will have more to say about the final paper later in the semester.

III. Group Presentations and Class Leadership

There is no one correct way to lead a class but on the day your leadership team presents your should perform at least four critical tasks:

- 1) Summarize: You should identify the key ideas, facts, theories, and/or evidence in the reading, calling attention to especially insightful passages or quotations. Make your summary succinct on the assumption that others have done the reading and do not need to have the entire assignment repeated back to them.
- 2) Engage: You should critically discuss the significance of the reading(s) and analyze possible strengths and weaknesses. In doing so, strive to be a sympathetic and open reader even when confronted by an author you may strongly disagree with.
- 3) Reflect: Raise several questions for reflection and further discussion with the entire class. Good questions might do one of several things. They might: a) seek to clarify a difficult concept or theory; b) invite vigorous debate over a controversial or contentious idea; or c) encourage “big picture” thinking by bringing one author/reading/theory into conversation (or collision!) with others.
- 4) Facilitate: Help draw the class into a discussion or even (civil) debate about the reading. There are a wide variety of ways this can be done. Use your creativity to design a class as you would like to experience it to gain the most from the material.

IV. Students with Special Needs

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability or special needs are required to contact the Director of Disability Services with the necessary documentation. The Director will then notify me of what specific accommodations should be granted. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early as possible. More information about school policies and procedures for students who need academic accommodations can be found on the College website.

V. Safe—and Academically Rigorous—Spaces

This course is a safe space for all students to express themselves without fear of being condemned, belittled, or marginalized. It is not a space in which you will only be exposed to comforting ideas, or in which you will be shielded from having your worldview challenged (whatever your worldview happens to be). Our reading list includes texts that grapple with difficult questions from perspectives you might decide you strongly disagree with—and find deeply unsettling or even offensive. While this course does not include particularly graphic reading material, it is also a course that explores disturbing realities of conflict, war, genocide, and violence. If you have any concerns after examining our reading list for yourself you should speak with me about possible alternative reading assignments.

V. Academic Integrity

Your work on all assignments should be your own. You should not use the words or ideas of others without giving full credit to them using proper citation methods. If you have any questions about how and when to cite other peoples' work you should come and speak with me. Students found to be copying or plagiarizing the work of others on any assignment will receive an automatic failing grade for the course.

Academic integrity means more, however, than simply not cheating or plagiarizing. It also means fulfilling assignments with the care and rigor of a serious scholar, showing basic respect and courtesy to others both in and out of the classroom (including being in class on time), and being honest and forthright in dialogue. While not all of these virtues are directly subject to grading, they will serve you well in this class and in your academic and professional lives in general.

VI. No Electronic Devices Policy

This course depends upon your active participation as an attentive listener and generous conversation partner with others. Texting devices, internet, and social media are grave impediments to conversation and are not permitted in class at any time. Their use at any time will result in an automatic absence mark for the day. Because this is a discussion-based class, there is no need for you to use a computer to type extensive notes, although you might periodically wish to jot some notes on paper for your future reference, or type notes when we have more formal lecture segments. It will be clear to you when we are in a lecture mode and when we are in a discussion mode.

VII. Required Books

You should purchase your own copies of the following books (which can be found used online for reasonable prices from a number of booksellers):

Capeheart, Loretta and Dragan Milovanovic, *Social Justice: Theories, Issues, and Movements* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

Gandhi, Mahatma, *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Dennis Dalton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1996).

Lederach, John Paul, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse: Good Books, 2003),

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Philippe Bourgeois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

Wink, Walter, ed., *Peace is the Way: Writings On Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

VIII. Course Outline and Weekly Reading Assignments

To encourage active reading and discussion, you are required to bring all assigned texts to class, preferably copiously marked. A typical week will require in the range of 100-120 pages of reading (which can, of course, be very manageably divided into approximately 20 pages of reading per day!). Readings marked with a star (*) are posted on Sakai as PDF documents. Note: Some adjustments might be made to this outline as our course progresses.

Part I: Etiologies of Violence

Wk.1: January 26: Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgeois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2004), pp.1-77.

*Andrew Bacevich and R. Scott Appleby, “Peace Activism: What is it Good For?,” *Commonweal Magazine*, September 2013, pp.18-21.

Wk.1: January 29: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.77-121.

Wk.2: February 2: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.121-169.

Wk.2: February 5: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.169-227.

Wk.3: February 9: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.227-267.

Wk.3: February 12: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.267-325.

Wk.4: February 16: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.325-365.

Wk.4: February 19: Gail Dines and Robert Jensen, “Pornography is a Left Issue,” (2005) on the web at: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/freelance/pornographyisaleftissue.htm>

Wk.5: February 23: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.389-435.

Wk.5: February 26: Hughes and Bourgeois, *Violence in War and Peace*, pp.435-478.

Part II: Where is the Justice?—And What is Justice?

Wk.6: March 1: Loretta Capeheart and Dragan Milovanovic, *Social Justice: Theories, Issues, and Movements* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), pp.29-45.

*Peter Singer, “The Singer Solution to World Poverty,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 5, 1999, pp.60-63.

*Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”, in *The Wind’s Twelve Quartets: Short Stories* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1975), pp.275-285.

Wk.6: March 4: Capeheart and Milovanovic, *Social Justice*, pp.45-77.

*David Foster Wallace, “Consider the Lobster,” *Gourmet*, Aug. 2004, pp.50-64.

Wk.7: March 8: Capeheart and Milovanovic, *Social Justice*, pp.77-108.

*Matthew Scully, “Pro-Life, Pro-Animal: The Conscience of a Pro-Life, Vegan Conservative”, *The National Review*, October 7, 2013.

Wk.7: March 11: Capeheart and Milovanovic, *Social Justice*, pp.108-143.

Wk.8: March 15: Capeheart and Milovanovic, *Social Justice*, pp.143-179.

Wk.8: March 18: Capeheart and Milovanovic, *Social Justice*, pp.179-205.

*****WK.9: MARCH 21-25: SPRING BREAK*****

Part III: The Theory and Practice of Nonviolence (and its Discontents)

Wk.10: March 29: Mahatma Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Dennis Dalton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1996), pp.3-50.

*Jonathan Schell, “Satyagraha”, *The Unconquerable World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), pp.103-145.

Wk.10: April 1: Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*, pp.50-95.

John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Good Books, 2003).

Wk.11: April 5: Walter Wink, ed., *Peace is the Way: Writings On Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), pp.1-60.

*George Orwell, “Reflections on Gandhi,” *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume IV* (London: Martin Seeker & Warburg, 1968), pp.463-470.

Wk.11: April 8: Wink, *Peace is the Way*, pp.60-118.

Wk.12: April 12: Wink, *Peace is the Way*, pp.118-164.

Wk.12: April 15: Wink, *Peace is the Way*, pp.164-210.

*Malcolm X, “The Ballet or the Bullet”, *Malcolm X Speaks*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1994), pp.23-45.

Wk.13: April 19: **NO CLASS**: follow your Monday schedule and watch the following films:

*Video: “The Weather Underground” (93 minutes) online at:
http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/the_weather_underground

*Video: “Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative”

Wk.13: April 22: Wink, *Peace is the Way*, pp.210-295.

*****WK.13: APRIL 23: FIELD TRIP: DUDLEY STREET INITIATIVE*****

Part IV: Criminal Justice: A Case Study

Wk.14: April 26: Narrative: **“Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation Into the Shooting Death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson,”* March 4, 2015.

Wk.14: April 29: Ethnography: **“Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department: United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division,”* March 4, 2015.

Wk.15: May 3: History: *Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2014.