

**SIS 319-011 & SIS 619-011**  
**Theories and Methods of Nonviolence**  
**Spring 2010**  
**Wednesday, 8:10-10:40 pm**  
**SIS 17**

**TEACHING STAFF:**

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**PROFESSORS' AVAILABILITY:**

Instructors will be available by appointment on campus immediately before or following class. Students are also welcome to meet them at their offices by appointment.

**COURSE PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES:**

In conflicts that are not amenable to solution merely through negotiation, mediation, or dialogue, participants are left with a choice of using either violent or nonviolent efforts to reach a solution. We are exposed to the nature of violent resolution of conflict every time we listen to the news or read a newspaper. But the history, strategy, and tactics of nonviolent direct action are far less familiar to most people. This course will focus on nonviolent direct action as a strategy to balance power, raise awareness, and move toward a transformation or resolution of social conflict. The course will place the use of nonviolent direct action within a variety of larger contexts: the cultural and historical setting of specific campaigns, the nature of social conflict, and the nature of social change and conflict transformation.

While we can and do identify objectives for the course, we find that the greatest value of exploring nonviolent direct action is the "unexpected learnings." This type of learning, which is beyond the planning of either professors or students, occurs because our explorations challenge so many assumptions about the nature of our collective existence and actions and the possibilities for societal change. So the "objectives" listed below are more "emphases" in the course than controlled goals subject to easy measure and evaluation. The course objectives include:

- Learning about the history and philosophy of nonviolent direct action
- Learning about the strategy and tactics available to practitioners of nonviolence
- Learning about nonviolent direct action through meeting activists, practitioners, and strategists.
- Learning through case studies to create nonviolent power, to identify appropriate strategies and tactics for specific campaigns, and to develop plans for nonviolent direct action
- Learning to identify nonviolent action and critique strategy and tactics in major conflict
- The course will provide very limited training in nonviolent direct action. Students who would like to become trained nonviolent practitioners should consult with the

instructors regarding training programs available at Nonviolence International and elsewhere.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE:**

The **Course Schedule** at the end of this syllabus is very brief and without specific readings for each class. That is because the schedule is very flexible. It will change to accommodate guest speakers and the professors' travel schedules. We will have several guest speakers because it is important to introduce you to people who are or have been engaged in nonviolent struggles. Some of these speakers will be available only at the last minute. Both Professor Awad and Professor Groves have to travel for business purposes during the semester, sometimes on short notice, so only one of them is available for many classes.

The **Class Structure** is also flexible and variable. Professors Awad and Groves will sometimes give interactive lectures on topics related to nonviolence. Guest speakers may present for all or part of a class. We will also use small group discussions, exercises, and media presentations for some classes. We expect students to be actively engaged in all classes—asking questions during lectures, noting questions to be asked later, engaging in discussion and exercises, actively participating in debriefings and report backs. Where possible, the 2 ½ hour class will be broken into two segments, usually with related themes, but sometimes acting as separate classes.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **Reading Assignments:**

Students are required to prepare for each class by reading assigned articles or chapters prior to the class in which they will be discussed. In addition to the books for the course, we may ask students to read pieces on reserve in the library, articles posted on BlackBoard, or class handouts. We further expect each student stay up to date on course-related news each week, as class discussions may be modified to address timely issues.

#### **Mid-Term Evaluation:**

The Mid-Term Exam will be a take-home exam, due at the beginning of class on March 3. We will give you questions related to the readings and our discussions and ask you to write critical essays. The essays should demonstrate familiarity with the readings and discussions, integration of knowledge gained in the classroom and through readings, and application to current events.

#### **Nonviolent Strategy Paper and Presentation:**

The final assignment for the course is a group oral and written presentation studying a current international or domestic conflict and the use of nonviolence in the context of the conflict. We will provide you with a list of conflicts from which each group must select one conflict as the subject of its project. We will ask you to form groups of 4-6 students to work on the same conflict, in which you will choose a leader/liaison to coordinate with

the teaching staff. Each group is responsible for fairly assigning work on different aspects of the conflict that can be combined for a final paper and oral presentation.

- **Paper:** The paper will be a corporate 20-40 page research paper, double-spaced, typed analysis of the conflict that you have chosen. It should include:
  - An analysis of the actors in the conflict and their objectives
  - An analysis of the nonviolent methods used
  - The result and prognosis for developing a successful nonviolent campaign in the conflict
  - Students will be responsible for thorough outside research on the conflict as well as drawing from class resources.
  - The group of students working on a conflict will be responsible for dividing up the research and writing in an equitable fashion. We will ask for individual evaluations of the group process and factor the evaluations into the final grade for the course.
  - The paper will be due one week before your oral presentation. The group will print two copies of the paper for the professors and email it in \*.doc format to the teaching assistant, as well as to the other members of the class.
  
- **Presentation:**
  - Each group will make an oral presentation during one of the last two classes.
  - The length of the presentation will depend on the number of groups, but will be at least 1 hour.
  - The group will provide a 1-page summary of the presentation for all class members.
  - The group will assume that the class and professors have read their paper. So the presentation should be neither a summary of the paper nor a reading of the paper. The group must know its subject well enough to talk extemporaneously about it. It should draw on your findings and expand on them. We encourage creativity in the presentations, including demonstration, art, video, PowerPoint, etc.
  - We encourage you to invite people from outside the class to attend the presentations. The presentation will include the opportunity for questions from the audience.
  
- **Preparation:** The work on the paper and the oral presentation will require a significant amount of independent work in your small group of presenters. Be prepared to meet several times outside of class to select a leader/liaison, divide up responsibilities for research and writing, decide on the structure of the paper and presentation, and assign responsibilities for the presentation. If you want to consult the professors about the paper and presentation, we prefer to meet with either the liaison or the whole group before or after class. We regard this group preparation as part of the “learning” in the course. Nonviolent resistance requires the ability to work collaboratively, take initiative, cultivate independence, and show responsibility.

### **Final Reflections on Nonviolence:**

Throughout the semester, we will ask you to be developing your personal stance toward nonviolence. The final assignment for the semester will be a paper that discusses your personal stance on nonviolence. The paper will be due April 28, at the final class gathering for dinner at Professor Awad's house.

**Final Evaluation:** We will assess your work in class and give a final grade based on six factors.

- **Preparation and Attendance:** Attendance at every class (absences with instructors' permission); assignments handed in on time; evidence of preparation through discussions of assigned reading and any other class assignments. **10%**
- **Participation:** Active participation in discussion and engaged participation in exercises, activities, and role plays. **10%**
- **Midterm Exam:** Emphasis on clarity, originality, style and grammar. **20%**
- **Paper:** Focus on analysis, insight, creativity, style and grammar. **25%**
- **Presentation:** Focus on analysis, insight, creativity, effectiveness, engagement, clarity, and adhering to time limits. **25%**
- **Individual Evaluation of Group Work:** Focus on equitable sharing of work load, promptness with assigned tasks, collaborative, supportive effort. **10%**

### **COURSE READINGS:**

In addition to the books listed below, we may place reading on reserve, post to BlackBoard, or give handouts in class. We will announce the specific readings as the class proceeds.

- **Required Reading (subject to change):**
  - Michael Nagler, Is There No Other Way? The Search for a Nonviolent Future
  - Peter Ackerman & Jack Duvall, A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict.
  - Gene Sharp, Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Practice and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Potential
  - Stephen Zunes, Lester Kurtz, and Sarah Beth Asher, editors, Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective, Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
  - **All required readings will be posted on BlackBoard or distributed in class.**
- **Recommended Reading:**
  - Abdul Aziz Said, et al, Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam
  - Sally Avery Bermanzohn, Through Survivors' Eyes: From the Sixties to the Greensboro Massacre, Vanderbilt University Press, 2003.
  - Mohandas Gandhi, An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth
- **Additional Fundamental Reading:**

The course expects a familiarity with some fundamental readings in the theory and practice of nonviolence. We hope you have encountered this in your previous course work. We recommend that you read three fundamental sources if you have not already done so, although they are not in our required readings for the course.

We base much of our discussion on them and they provide important critical perspectives and research models in Peace Studies.

- **Joan Bondurant, Conquest of Violence**, chapters 1-3 in particular. This book is not only a seminal study of Gandhi's work, but has provided one of the best analyses of the basic vocabulary of nonviolence (satyagraha, ahimsa, etc.). Chapter 3 provides one of the best critical models available for an analysis of a struggle, which will be invaluable for your paper.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait**. This brief book is not only some of King's best writing, but a case study in the analysis of a nonviolent campaign from the inside. Read the book itself, not the excerpts in Testimony of Hope, which eliminates all the analysis of struggle and focuses on the religiosity.
- **Gene Sharp, The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Parts 1, 2 & 3, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action**. Sharp is one of the finest analysts of nonviolent methods and his thoroughly pragmatic approach balances the religiously-based perspective of Gandhi and King. We will read Sharp's newest book as part of the course, but his original, seminal work is more detailed and provides an additional models and methods of research that are of value for your paper.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE:**

1. Jan. 13 Introduction
2. Jan. 20 Frameworks: “Principled” Nonviolence
3. Jan 27 Frameworks: Pragmatic Nonviolence
4. Feb. 3 Frameworks: Women and Nonviolence
5. Feb. 10 Frameworks: Strategic Analysis  
1-page description of Project due
6. Feb. 17 Frameworks: Case Studies
7. Feb. 24 Applications: Protest & Persuasion
8. Mar. 3 Applications: Third Party Intervention  
Take-Home Mid-Term due
- Mar. 10 Spring Break—No Class
9. Mar. 17 Organizing: Starting from Zero
10. Mar. 24 Organizing: Organizing a Community  
Rough drafts of final papers due (optional)
11. Mar. 31 Organizing: Mobilization  
Papers due for April 7 presentations
12. Apr. 7 Organizing:  
Papers due for April 14 presentations
13. Apr. 14 Final Project Presentations  
Papers due for April 21 presentations
14. Apr. 21 Final Project Presentations
15. Apr. 28 Class Dinner and Final Summation  
Final Reflections paper due