

EXCO111

Changing the World: Perspectives on Nonviolent Movements

Fall 2008 – 1 credit
Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 PM
King Building room 341

Instructors:
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THIS COURSE IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO COST

Students in this course will study the history of nonviolence as a means of social change by focusing on several specific nonviolent movements – Serbia, desegregation, Gandhi, apartheid, Denmark, Chile, Poland, religion, conscientious objection, and Plowshares – as well as the theories Tolstoy and Sharp. Most classes will consist of preparatory readings, a video about a movement, and a discussion led by a guest expert familiar with the topic. Along with regularly attending class, students will be responsible for writing two one-page papers: one on the class session that was found to be the most thought provoking and rewarding, and another on a nonviolent movement or topic not studied in class.

Besides providing an opportunity to coherently study nonviolent movements, this course serves to support the effort to add a Peace and Conflict Studies program to the Oberlin College curriculum.

* These readings are provided for counterpoint, comparison, or general enlightenment.

September 4th: Introduction / Leo Tolstoy – The Father of Modern Nonviolence

Video: *none*

Guest Expert: none

Readings: *Axioms of Nonviolence, Nonviolence and Moral Courage, Personal Responsibility, Public Opinion, Carthago Delenda Est*

Discussion Questions: What is your interest in nonviolence? What were Tolstoy's main points?

September 11th: Religious Perspectives on Violence and Nonviolence

Video: *The Imam and The Pastor*

Guest Expert: Prof. Joyce Babyak

Readings: *Ahimsa, Loving Your Enemies, Islam and Nonviolence, Just War Criteria, The War Prayer**

Discussion Questions: How is nonviolence a part of your own religious background?

September 18th: Pinochet and Democracy in Chile

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 6*

Guest Expert: Prof. Steve Volk

Readings: *Augusto Pinochet, The Nonviolent Revolution That Surprised the World**

Discussion Questions: Did Pinochet successfully evade responsibility for his crimes?

September 23rd: SPECIAL EVENT – Mr. Bernie Meyer, “The American Gandhi”

September 25th: The Otpor Movement in Serbia

Video: *Bringing Down a Dictator*

Guest Expert: Prof. Kristina Mani

Readings: *Nonviolent Action in Serbia, Nonviolent Struggle in China**

Discussion Questions: Compare Otpor's and the Chinese methods. Which methods worked, and why?

October 2nd: The Plowshares Movement

Video: *Conviction*

Guest Expert: Ms. Kate Berrigan

Readings: *Daniel Berrigan – Forty Years After Catonsville, An Introduction to Plowshares, Uncommon Martyrs, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience**

Discussion Questions: Are extreme tactics really effective? How far should a person go?

October 16th: Apartheid in South Africa

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 3*

Guest Expert: Prof. Clovis White

Readings: *Campaign Against Apartheid, Hotel des Mille Collines*, Humanitarian Intervention**

Discussion Questions: How were the struggles in South Africa and India alike and different?

October 30th: Gandhi's Salt March

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 2*

Guest Expert: Prof. Paula Richman

Readings: *My Faith in Nonviolence, The Doctrine of the Sword, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, The Peshawar Disturbances*

Discussion Questions: Were the British 'easy' opponents? How successful were Gandhi and Khan?

November 6th: Desegregation in Nashville

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 1*

Guest Expert: Prof. A. G. Miller

Readings: *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence, Letter from Birmingham Jail*

Discussion Questions: How did the public, government, and clergy react to civil disobedience?

November 13th: Anti-Communist Movements in Eastern Europe

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 5*

Guest Expert: Prof. Annemarie Sammartino

Readings: *Poland's Self-Liberation, Eastern Europe – Democracy Seized*

Discussion Questions: Have the democratic movements in Eastern Europe gained or lost ground?

November 20th: Conscientious Objection

Video: *The Good War and Those Who Refused To Fight It*

Guest Expert: Mr. Ken Roose

Readings: *Persecution in the Land of the Free, Conscientious Objection Law, Patriotism or Peace*, The Quaker Peace Testimony, Three Cheers for Grandma**

Discussion Questions: Does patriotism have a positive or negative influence on society?

December 4th: Resistance to the Nazis in Denmark and Germany

Video: *A Force More Powerful – part 4*

Guest Expert: Prof. Shulamit Magnus

Readings: *The Danish Resistance, The Dutch Resistance*, Saving Konrad Latte**

Discussion Questions: Why was the Danish resistance more successful than that of the Dutch?

December 11th: Gene Sharp and Nonviolent Strategy / Conclusion

Video: *none*

Guest Expert: none

Readings: *Why People Obey, Basic Elements of Nonviolent Strategy, Exercising Nonviolent Power, Planning Nonviolent Strategy, Withdrawing Sources of Power*

Discussion Questions: What are Gene Sharp's main points? How has nonviolence shaped history? Is it a viable alternative to war? Have your views changed because of this course?