

Nonviolence in Twentieth Century America
C-92-25
Brad Simpson
Time: Mondays, 3-5pm

Course Description:

This Seminar will engage students with the history of nonviolent social protest in twentieth century America. Throughout the century Americans have employed nonviolent methods of social struggle to resist war and enlarge the scope of rights for fellow citizens. Many of the major movements for social change in this century were shaped by critiques of existing institutions and philosophies of nonviolent activism that were firmly rooted in social and religious traditions. This course will examine the roots of nonviolent activism in twentieth century America and the role that nonviolent activists have played in modern movements for peace and social justice -- from early antiwar activists to the civil rights, feminist and anti-nuclear movements. How have nonviolent activists defined their relationship to existing institutions? How and when have they succeeded in engaging popular support for mass political protest? Class materials will place these movements in their social and political context, to be supplemented by autobiographical essays and guest lectures from participants in such movements.

Prerequisites: None, B-10 helpful but not required.

Teaching Method: Discussion

Method of Evaluation: participation in weekly discussion, leading of one discussion with a 3-4pp. analytical paper, and a substantial research paper due at the end of the course.

Readings:

James Tracey, *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven*

James Farrell. *Spirit of the Sixties: the Making of Postwar Radicalism*

Staughton Lynd, *Nonviolence in America, a documentary history*

Rachel Goosen, *Women Against the Good War: Gender and Conscientious Objection on the American Home Front, 1941-1947*

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Cannot Wait*

Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983.*

Patricia McNeal, *Harder than War. Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth Century America.*

Plus selected other readings.

Assignments:

Class participation: Students will be encouraged to actively participate in classroom discussion on a weekly basis.

Weekly: Each week two of the class participants will have an opportunity to explore a set of readings in greater depth and introduce discussion to their peers. For that class the students introducing discussion will also prepare a 3-5pp essay analyzing themes raised by the weeks readings. The essay may take the form of a critical review of the week's texts or an analysis of a particular piece.

Course paper: Students will prepare a substantial research paper (12-15pp) over the course of the quarter on a topic of their choice (subject to instructor approval). You will be asked to begin working on this paper early in the quarter, so start thinking now! The literature on nonviolence in America is immense, so do not feel confined to the texts we use in class. You might focus on a theme (draft-resistance in wartime), a social movement (anti-war, civil rights), an important thinker or practitioner of nonviolence (Dorothy Day, A.J. Muste), or nonviolent traditions within particular institutions (religious denominations such as Quakers or Mennonites, labor unions). Or develop your own ideas. Be creative!

The emphasis in the paper will be on the process as well as the product. As you move from finding a topic to developing a bibliography, crafting a thesis, creating an outline, and writing and editing your paper, you will work with the instructor as well as your peers to get feedback.

Evaluation: Course evaluation will be based on classroom participation (20%), short essay (20%) and the final paper (60%)

Office Hours: office hours will be from 1-3pm every Tuesday at 1813 Hinman, or by appointment. I can always be reached by email.

Course Schedule

Sept. 28

Week 1: Thinking about Nonviolence in America: The Roots of Nonviolent Action

- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, A Documentary History. Read Intro, Essays by Garrison, Thoreau, and any three essays from Parts I-IV (5 total).

October 5

Week 2: Against the War to End All Wars: Pacifism before and after WWI

- Wittner, Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement 1933-1983. Chapter 1.
- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part V, "Conscientious Objectors, World War I."
- McNeal, Harder Than War: Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth Century America. Chapter 1-2 (Esp. Chapter on Dorothy Day).
- Reserve, A.J. Muste, "Pacifism and Class War."

October 12

Week 3: Against the Good War, the peace movement during wartime.

- Wittner, Rebels Against War, Chapter 3-4, pp. 62-125.
- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part VII, "Conscientious Objectors, World War II."
- Tracey, Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven, Chapter 1-2.
- McNeal, Harder Than War, Chapter 4, "World War II and the Just War Tradition."
- Reserve, David Dellinger, "Statement Upon Entering Prison," "Declaration of War."

October 19

Week 4: Against the Good War, women and the legal construction of nonviolent resistance

- Goossen, Women Against the Good War: Gender and Conscientious Objection on the American Home Front, 1941-1947, all.

October 26

Week 5: Postwar pacifism: reckoning with the bomb, rebuilding the peace movement

- Wittner, Rebels Against War, Chapter 5-9.
- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part VIII, "Direct Action for Peace, Post WWII."
- McNeal, Harder Than War, Chapter 4, "The Birth of Nonviolence."
- Guest Speaker: David Dellinger

November 2

Week 6: The Civil Rights Movement and the nonviolent revolution

- King, Why We Cannot Wait, all
- Lynd, Part IX, "Direct Action for Civil Rights, Post World War II."
- Note: "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is found in both books.

November 9

Week 7: The makings of 60's radicalism

- James Farrell, James Farrell. The Spirit of the Sixties: the Making of Postwar Radicalism, all.
- Wittner, Rebels Against War, Epilogue

November 16

Week 8: Radical Pacifism in the Postwar era

- McNeal, Harder Than War, Chapter 6-7
- James Tracey, Direct Action, Chapter 3-6.
- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part X, "The Vietnam War." (Documents 33-36), Plus Barbara Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium," (Document 45)

November 23

Week 9: Nonviolence in the post-Vietnam era

- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part XI, XII
- McNeal, Harder Than War, Chapter 8, "Catholic Peacemaking."
- Guest Speaker

November 30

Week 10: New Directions in nonviolence, the Gulf War and after

- Lynd, Nonviolence in America, Part XIII, XIV and XV

Guest Speaker, Kathy Kelly

December 5 Final Papers Due

ON RESERVE:

A.J. Muste, *The Essays of A.J. Muste*

David Dellinger, *Revolutionary Nonviolence*

Barbara Deming, *Prisons That Could Not Hold; We Are All Part of One Another*

The Power of the People: Nonviolent Action in Twentieth Century America

Pam McCallister, *Reweaving the Web of Life: Essays on Feminism and Nonviolence*