

Spring 2011

SPRS4024 Spirituality and Nonviolent Social Transformation: Gandhi, King, Day, and Chavez

2:10 – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday

Dorsey Blake

This course will explore quests for social transformation through the methodology of nonviolence as exemplified in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, and Cesar Chavez. Critical to the course will be an emphasis on the connection between spirituality and social action. What were the influences that shaped the zeitgeist of the times in which they lived? How were strategies determined and employed? What is essential to an effective nonviolent campaign? What were the faith foundations of these extraordinary leaders? What were their relationships to their communities? How did they manage to keep their resolve in times of disappointment? These are some of the questions the course will explore.

Learning Outcomes

The student will:

- 1) better understand contexts for ministry/ social transformation
- 2) develop greater appreciation for personality as an agent of change
- 3) comprehend ways commonplace indignities can be woven into tapestries of freedom
- 4) become familiar with the dynamics between leadership and community
- 5) comprehend the sacredness of the work of social transformation
- 6) learn how to develop effective strategies of social transformation
- 7) get a glimpse of how to sustain the self during times of disappointment and failure

Learning Activities

- 1) Discussion/ mini lecture
- 2) Sharing of written reflections
- 3) Experiential engagement
- 4) Audio/visual presentations
- 5) Guest presentations

Requirements

- 1) Weekly reflection papers (2-3) pages
- 2) Weekly news article dealing with spirituality, violence/nonviolence, social transformation/social degeneration
- 3) Participation in class discussions
- 4) Final paper (5-7 pages) utilizing the legacies of Gandhi, King, Day, and Chavez to posit how you plan to serve as religious leader to create just sustainable communities through countering oppressions

Option B

Address one of the eight themes of the World Council of Churches' Just Peace statement for the Decade to Overcome Violence:

- (1) Violence in Theology and Theology Against Violence
- (2) Peace at Heart
- (3) Peace Begins at Home
- (4) Peace in the Virtual World
- (5) Peace to the Streets
- (6) Peace on Earth is Peace with the Earth
- (7) Peace in the Market Places
- (8) Make Peace, not War

Class Attendance

The student may be asked to withdraw from the course after two unexcused absences.

Required Reading

Dalton, Frederick John, *The Moral Vision of Cesar Chavez*

Day, Dorothy, *Loaves and Fishes*

DuBois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk*

Gandhi/Fischer, Louis, ed., *The Essential Gandhi*

Thoreau, Henry David, *On Civil Disobedience*

Washington, James, *A Testament of Hope*

Class Schedule

Week 1

What brought you to this place? Why are you here? This is a session for becoming acquainted through matters of the head and heart.

Week 2

What brought you to this place? Why are you here? This is a session for becoming acquainted through matters of the head and heart.

Week 3

Film: *Gandhi*

Reading Assignment: *The Essential Gandhi*, Part One: The Man, pp. ix – 98

Week 4

Gandhi

Reading Assignment: *The Essential Gandhi*, Part Two: The Mahatma, pp. 99 -- 172

Week 5

Gandhi

Reading Assignment: *The Essential Gandhi*, Part Two: The Mahatma, pp.173 -- 206

Week 6

Dorothy Day

Beginnings Are Always Exciting; Poverty and Precarity

Loaves and Fishes, pp. 3-92

Week 7

Those Who Work Together; Things That Happen; Love in Practice

Loaves and Fishes, pp. 93-end

Guest: J. C. Orton – Dorothy Day House of Hospitality

March 21-25

READING WEEK – NO CLASS

Week 8

Film: The Fight in The Fields

A Vision of Liberation, Homespun Religion, Human Dignity

Reading Assignment: The Moral Vision of Cesar Chavez, Introduction –Chapter 3, pp.1-90

Week 9

The Virtues of La Causa, The Truth of Nonviolence, Simple Deeds for Justice

Reading Assignment: The Moral Vision of Cesar Chavez, pp. 91-170

Week 10

Prologue to the Civil Rights Movement

Reading Assignment: The Souls of Black Folk, first three chapters plus the chapter, The Passing of the First Born. You select at least four additional chapters

Week 11

Stride Toward Freedom; Religious Nonviolence

A Testament of Hope: pp. 417-490; 5-63

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Week 12

The Strength to Love; Why We Can't Wait; Letter from Birmingham Jail

Reading Assignment: A Testament of Hope: pp. 491-554, 289-302;

Week 13

Showdown for Nonviolence; Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community; A

Testament of Hope, The Trumpet of Conscience

A Testament of Hope: pp. 64-72; 555-653

Week 14

Documentary Film: At the River I Stand

A Time to Break Silence; Where Do We Go From Here? A Christmas Sermon on Peace;

The Drum Major Instinct; Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution; The Trumpet of Conscience: A Testament of Hope I See the Promised Land

Reading Assignment: A Testament of Hope, pp. 231-278; 313-328; 279-286