

Spring 2014

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

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* (Orbis Books)

ISBN 1-57075-458-6 \$24.00

Day, Dorothy, *Loaves and Fishes* (Orbis Books)

ISBN 1-57075-156-0 \$20.00

DuBois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk* (Bantam Classics)

ISBN 9781461180289 \$8.99

Fischer, Louis, ed., *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas, by Mahatma Gandhi* (Vintage Books)

ISBN 1-4000-3050-1 \$15.00

Thoreau, Henry David, *On Civil Disobedience* (Applewood Books)

ISBN 1-55709-417-9 \$9.99

Washington, James, *A Testament of Hope* (HarperSanFrancisco)

ISBN-13: 978-0-06-064691-2

ISBN-10: 0-06-064691-8 \$23.99

Class Schedule

February 4

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

February 11

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

February 18

Film: Gandhi

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

February 25

Gandhi

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

March 4

Gandhi

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

March 11

Dorothy Day

Beginnings Are Always Exciting; Poverty and Precarity

Loaves and Fishes, pp. 3-92

March 18

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 24-28
READING WEEK – NO CLASS

April 1

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

April 8

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

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

April 15

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

April 22

Stride Toward Freedom; Religious Nonviolence

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

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April 29

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

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

May 6

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

May 13

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

May 20

Sharing of final papers

