

**Stanford University**  
**Urban Studies 126/Religious Studies 162**  
**Spirituality and Nonviolent Social Transformation**

Winter Quarter, 2006  
Tuesdays/ Thursdays  
9:30-10:45 a.m.  
Building 60, Room 62J  
5 Units

**Instructors: Patricia Karlin-Neumann, Scotty McLennan, Joanne Sanders**  
Office Hours by appointment

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## **Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

A life of engagement in social transformation is often built on a foundation of spiritual and religious commitments. Using case studies of several nonviolent social change agents--Rosa Parks in the civil rights movement, Cesar Chavez in the labor movement and William Sloane Coffin in the peace movement, we will examine the theory and principles of nonviolence as well as the religious and spiritual underpinnings of their commitments. The class, offered by the Deans for Religious Life, will address social change, spirituality and religious traditions through films and texts. The class will consider the religious and spiritual underpinnings of nonviolence, the streams that fed major nonviolent activists and the philosophers and theologians who influenced them. Additionally, we will address how social change happens, how to stay buoyant over time while engaged in social transformation, and how some communities and organizations are living out nonviolent social transformation. There will be a service-learning component included, with placements in organizations engaged in social transformation.

### **Course Readings:**

The following texts are required and are available for purchase at the Stanford Bookstore. They are also on reserve in Green Library.

Course Reader

Daniel Berrigan, The Trial of the Catonsville Nine

Douglas Brinkley, Rosa Parks

Colman McCarthy, I'd Rather Teach Peace

Daniel Smith-Christopher, Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions

The following text is required, but out of print: Copies should be available on reserve in Green Library and several copies will be available for loan from the Office for Religious Life.

Martin Luther King Jr., Stride Toward Freedom

Other materials will be available on Stanford CourseWork.

**Course Films:**

Films related to the course must be screened as preparation for the seminar discussions. Room 84 in Meyer Library has been reserved for class screenings, which will take place at 9 p.m. on the night before the film will be discussed in class. They will also be available in the library for those unable to come to the class screenings.

*India: Defying the Crown: A Force More Powerful (Gandhi) (Screened on Jan. 11)*

*This Far By Faith: Freedom Faith (Screened on Jan. 18)*

*We Were Warriors: A Force More Powerful (Screened on Jan. 25)*

*Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin (Also screened on Jan. 25)*

*The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It (Screened on Feb. 6)*

*William Sloane Coffin: An American Prophet (Screened on Feb. 13)*

*Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Struggle (Screened on Feb. 20)*

**Requirements:**

A. Regular class participation

Classes will generally be conducted in a "Socratic" discussion-based style, requiring active participation of all students in each session. Everyone must read and screen films critically and carefully. All students are expected to have completed assignments before each meeting and to take an active part in discussion.

B. Written Assignments

1) Weekly response paper. Once per week, you are responsible for writing a response paper (approximately 250 words, which translates to one page, double-spaced) discussing and raising questions about the week's reading and films. These papers are informal. You can use them to give personal reactions to the readings and films,

synthesize and compare sources or to raise questions to discuss in class. These response papers are due via email on the evening prior to Thursday's class.

Weekly response papers should be emailed to the three instructors' addresses on the first page of the syllabus. For any reason, you may miss turning in one response paper, without penalty.

2) A research presentation and paper, 8 pages long (approximately 2000 words)-- on a topic of your choice, offering creative thinking on themes related to the course-- is due at the end of the quarter. This research can be an elaboration of ideas we have surveyed in class or an exploration of material that we were unable to cover (i.e. other movements that have incorporated nonviolence, how nonviolence is understood in a particular religious tradition, the role of religion in current social change issues). The preparation should involve reading beyond the syllabus itself; it may include interviews or use of other media such as film. The instructors are available to meet individually to help formulate topics.

- Be prepared to discuss your research ideas in class on Tuesday, Feb. 14.
- A written proposal of your research is due in class on Thursday, Feb. 16.
- A non-graded first draft is due in class on Thursday, March 9.
- In-class presentations will take place on March 14 and March 16.
- Papers are due by 5 p.m. on Friday March 17.

3) Two journal entries, 3-4 pages long, double-spaced (750-1000 words), based on your experiences with your organization. We ask that you be in your service learning placement in the second week of the quarter and that you are prepared to discuss the service learning questions in class upon turning in your entries. (See the service-learning supplement for further direction).

- The first journal entry is due on Tuesday, Feb. 7.
- The second journal entry is due on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

### C. Service Learning Community Placement

Students are expected to spend 24 hours during the quarter on the service-learning component of the course. This averages out to 3 hours a week at the placement (not including transportation). You are expected to be in your placement by the end of the second week of the quarter.

Grading will be based on:

30%-- Class participation

20%-- Response papers

25%-- 8 page double-spaced (2000 words) paper and presentation

(Please provide a word count at the end of your paper)

25%-- Service learning participation and reflection

## **Class Sessions:**

(Syllabus is subject to change during the course. Please check CourseWork regularly).

### **Tuesday, January 10—Introduction and Course Overview**

In-Class Screening: *Weapons of the Spirit* (ZVC 3375) –The story of a village in France, Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, that took in and sheltered 5000 Jews from Nazis. Told by Jewish filmmaker, Pierre Sauvage, who was himself born and protected in that defiantly peaceful community.

### **Thursday, January 12—Introduction: Spirituality, Nonviolence and Social Transformation**

Course Reader:

"Mahatma Gandhi: Nationalist India's 'Great Soul'" in Stephen Hay (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, Second Edition, 1988), Vol. 2, pp. 243-274.

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Wed. Jan. 11:

*India: Defying the Crown, A Force More Powerful*  
ZDVD 4365

In-Class Screening: Excerpts from Columbia Pictures feature film, “*Gandhi*” Starring Ben Kingsley and produced and directed by Richard Attenborough.

Decide upon Service Learning placement

*Study Questions:*

- Define “violence” and “nonviolence”
- Can Gandhi's nonviolent methods to promote social change be separated from his spirituality?
- What made Gandhi so effective as a political organizer?
- What sense is there in Gandhi's claim that there is a law of love that will work when extended to those who hate us, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or not?

### **Tuesday, January 17—Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Reading: Douglas Brinkley, Rosa Parks, pp. 1-175; 226-231

Course Reader:

Bayard Rustin, Time On Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin, pp. 2-5

*Study Questions:*

- *What in Rosa Parks' life enabled her to begin the modern civil rights movement?*
- *What inspired her not to give up her seat on December 1, 1955?*
- *How grounded was Rosa Parks' nonviolence in her religious life? In her work for the NAACP?*

**Thursday, January 19—Faith and Resistance in the Civil Rights Struggle**

Course Reader:

Juan Williams and Quinton Dixie, This Far by Faith: Stories from the African American Religious Experience, pp. 199-216, 223-229, notes 308-309

Vincent Harding, Hope and History, "Fighting for Freedom with Church Fans", pp. 75-90

William Damon and Anne Colby, Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment, "Virginia Durr: Champion of Justice", pp.90-133, 335-336.

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Wed. Jan. 18:

*This Far By Faith: Freedom Faith*

*Study Questions:*

- *In what ways did religious faith sustain the civil rights movement?*
- *How was Christianity interpreted through the lens of different communities?*
- *What is the role of art (music and film) in social transformation?*
- *What grounded and secured Virginia Durr's commitment to justice?*

**Tuesday, January 24—Nonviolence in the Civil Rights Struggle**

Reading: Martin Luther King Jr. Stride Toward Freedom, pp.17-21, 28-42; 49-52, 60-64, 79-80, 84-107, 134-138, 149-150, 160-174, 205-224

*Study Questions:*

- *How did Martin Luther King, Jr. become a leader? Did his training prepare him for it?*
- *What was King's understanding of nonviolence? Was it a tactic or a way of life? How did it differ from Gandhi's nonviolence?*

**Thursday, January 26—Nonviolence in the Civil Rights Struggle**

Course Reader: Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life, "Divided No More: Teaching from a Heart of Hope", pp. 163-183, 188-189

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Wed. Jan. 25:  
*A Force More Powerful: We Were Warriors* ZDVD4362  
*Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* ZVC17310

*Study Questions:*

- *How can you develop the habit of courageous action?*
- *If it were today, what role would Bayard Rustin have played in the civil rights movement? What could Bayard Rustin have taught Martin Luther King Jr.?*
- *How is the civil disobedience manifested in the civil rights movement different from that manifested in Le Chambon, France, during the Second World War? (If you have not seen the Le Chambon film in class, it is available in the Media Center of Green Library under the title, "Weapons of the Spirit." Look for the abridged ADL "classroom version," 38 minutes long. The call number is ZVC 3375.)*

**Tuesday, January 31-- Politics and Religion**

Course Reader:

Michael Nagler, *Is There No Other Way?*, pp. 204-215  
Roger Gottlieb, *Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change*, pp. XI, 6-15, 41-42, 56-60, 65-71, 78-87;

*Study Questions:*

- *What are the opportunities and pitfalls in mixing religion and politics?*
- *Critique Nagler's thermodynamic model of community.*
- *What is the relationship between individual nonviolence conversions and political nonviolence?*

**Thursday, February 2—Politics and Religion in Our Time**

Course Reader:

Martin Marty, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good: Advancing a Distinctly American Conversation about Religion's Role in our Shared Life*, pp. 1-54

E.J. Dionne, Jr., Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Kayla M. Drogosz, editors  
*One Electorate under God? : A Dialogue on Religion and American Politics*, pp.1-38, 228-233

*Study Questions:*

- *Should religion shape politics?*
- *What is unique about religion and politics in America?*
- *What are Cuomo's and Souder's distinctly religious motivations?*

## **Tuesday, February 7—Conscientious Objection to War; Service Learning Discussion**

Discussion of Service Learning Placements  
Service-Learning Journal Entry #1 Due

Course Reader:

David Dellinger: From Yale to Jail, pp. 24-98; 259-289; 446-450; 455-466

Norman Mailer: The Armies of the Night, pp. 220-221; 230-236

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Mon. Feb.6:  
*The Good War and Those who Refused to Fight it*

*Study Questions:*

- *To what extent can conscientious objection to serving in the military be considered effective nonviolent social transformation?*
- *Why do conscientious objectors to war engender so much anger and hatred?*
- *Why does David Dellinger make so much of the connection between building a nonviolent antiwar movement, union organizing and anti-racism work?*

## **Thursday, February 9— Religious Opposition to the Vietnam War**

Course Reader:

Mitchell K. Hall, Because of Their Faith, pp.1-25

William Sloane Coffin, Once to Every Man, pp. 216-229

Norman Mailer, The Armies of the Night, pp. 59-60, 66-79

Warren Goldstein, William Sloane Coffin, Jr. pp. 183-224

*Study Questions:*

- *What were William Sloane Coffin's uniquely religious reasons for opposing the war in Vietnam?*
- *To what extent did William Sloane Coffin effectively lead a movement, or to what extent was he simply a charismatic figure promoting himself and his personal vision?*
- *Did Coffin lack moral courage in pleading "not guilty" to the charge of conspiracy to violate draft laws, after claiming to stand with draft resisters by going to jail alongside them?*

## **Tuesday, February 14—The Formation of a Religious Conscience; Research Proposal Discussion**

Discussion of Research Proposals

Course Reader:

Warren Goldstein, William Sloane Coffin Jr., pp. 64-85, 122-128  
William Sloane Coffin, A Passion for the Possible, pp. 15-25  
William Sloane Coffin, The Heart is a Little to the Left, pp. 59-67

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Mon. Feb. 13:  
*William Sloane Coffin: An American Prophet*

*Study Questions:*

- *To what extent was William Sloane Coffin's development and success as an American prophet tied to his Yale education and to his institutional home there as University Chaplain?*
- *Can William Sloane Coffin, army officer and CIA cold warrior, properly be considered spiritually committed to nonviolent social transformation?*
- *What would William Sloane Coffin say to pacifist Martin Luther King's claim that with nuclear weapons "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind...It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence."*

**Thursday, February 16—The Individual Conscience and the State**

Research Proposals Due

Daniel Berrigan, The Trial of the Catonsville Nine

*Study Questions:*

- *Should the defendants' religious motivations and desire to promote peace and social justice be irrelevant in their criminal trial for burning draft files? Why (not)?*
- *What would you have done as the judge in this case? As a member of the jury?*
- *What is the logic of antiwar activist Daniel Berrigan's saying that "Our intention in appearing here [in court] after Catonsville was to be useful to the poor of the world, to the Black people of the world and of our country, and to those in our prisons who have no voice"? (p. 119)*
- *In what sense were the actions of the Catonsville Nine effective as nonviolent social transformation?*

**Tuesday, February 21— Cesar Chavez and the Labor Movement: A Vision of Liberation**

Course Reader:

Frederick John Dalton: The Moral Vision of Cesar Chavez, pp. 117-147, 180-182  
John Hammerback, The Rhetorical Career of Cesar Chavez, "Chavez Conception of Rhetorical Communication, pp. 24-43

Richard Jensen and John Hammerback, The Words of Cesar Chavez, pp. 1-45, 168-173, 191

Film Screening in Room 84 at Meyer on Mon. Feb. 20:

*The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Struggle*

*Study Questions:*

- *How is the film "Fight in the Fields" a convincing portrayal of spirituality and social transformation?*
- *What role did rhetorical discourse play in Cesar Chavez' effectiveness as the organizer and leader of "la causa"?*
- *What enabled Cesar Chavez to model such a stark contrast to the American way of life, the "American dream," where seizing opportunity and accumulating wealth is considered a worthy goal?*

### **Thursday, February 23—Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement**

Course Reader:

Rosalie G. Riegle, *Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those who Knew Her*, p. 5-42. 77-107

June O'Connor, The Moral Vision of Dorothy Day, pp. 1-9; 67-86

Dorothy Day, On Pilgrimage, pp. 247-256

*Study Questions:*

- *What in Dorothy Day's life enabled her to begin the Catholic Worker movement?*
- *What role did feminism or feminist religious ethics potentially play in shaping Dorothy Day's thought and effectiveness?*
- *How did Dorothy Day understand and practice the use of "spiritual weapons" in her life of activism?*

### **Tuesday, February 28— Service Learning Reflections**

Service Learning Journal Entry #2 is due

Discussion of Service Learning placements

### **Thursday, March 2— Nonviolence in Eastern Religious Traditions**

Reading: Daniel Smith-Christopher Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions pp. 9-48, 67-84, 167-177

Course Reader:

Thich Nhat Hanh, Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community and Your World, pp 1-10, 182-206

*Study Questions:*

- *How do Eastern traditions' (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism) approach to nonviolence compare to Christianity's?*
- *Can nonviolence be meaningfully translated into politics in all religious traditions?*
- *What is the role of symbols and stories in religiously based nonviolence?*

**Tuesday, March 7— Jewish and Muslim Perspectives on Nonviolence**

Reading: Daniel Smith-Christopher Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions, pp. 95-139

Course Reader:

James L. Heft, ed. Beyond Violence, Religious Sources of Social Transformation in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, pp. 57-112

*Study Questions:*

- *In what ways can jihad be considered nonviolence?*
- *What scriptural support for nonviolence seems compelling in Judaism?*
- *What commonalities do you see between Jewish and Muslim perspectives on nonviolence?*

**Thursday, March 9--Spiritual Teachers**

First draft of research paper due

Readings: Colman McCarthy, I'd Rather Teach Peace

*Study Questions:*

- *To what extent can education be a force for social transformation?*
- *Who are your spiritual teachers and why?*

**Tuesday, March 14—Student Presentations**

**Thursday, March 16—Student Presentations**

**Friday, March 17—Research Paper Due by 5 p.m.**