

# Alternatives to Violence

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## Course Description

A study of some of the origins of societal violence and successful alternatives to violence. This course includes an introduction to negotiation and conflict resolution techniques. It also includes several field trips to area agencies concerned with violence reduction.

Please note that altogether a hundred possible points are accounted for in the accumulated scores mentioned. All major papers will lose 10% in value for each school day they are late. Small papers (6 points and less) will lose one point for each school day they are late. It is hoped that none will be late.

The object of this course is explained in the course description. Thus it is planned that on completion of the course you will have developed an appreciation of many problems and solutions in relation to threats of violence to individuals; gained an awareness of the theories and techniques for nonviolent conflict resolution as expounded by Fisher, Ury and others; and had an opportunity to internalize the information presented through your writing and class activities.

Video tapes and other teaching devices will sometimes be employed in classroom sessions. Class discussion and creative interactions, plus field trips, are of major importance to the success of the course.

**ATTENDANCE:** As a mainstay of this course will be sharing our visions, insights, understandings, and enthusiasm in class discussions, you will be expected to attend every class (including field trips). The success of this course depends as much on you and the quality of your input as on the instructor and materials. Though *no "cuts" are acceptable*, it is understood by the instructor that you may have a serious illness, court appearance, death or sickness in your family, etc., that necessitates your missing a class. For such reasons, you may miss as many hours of classes as the course bears credit hours, (two classes) without penalty, *if you notify the instructor of the reason for your absence, in writing, on the day of your return to class. (Being late to class twice counts as one absence.)* Should you miss an additional class, for any reason whatsoever, *you must present written documentation of your reason to the instructor prior to the time of your next class.* He will then either accept your explanation and readmit you to the class or withdraw you from the course with a WP or WF. If you are accepted back into class, you must arrange to make up any work you missed. You may only be so excused by the instructor on two occasions. Should you miss any more classes, you will most likely be withdrawn from the class by the instructor. This is not designed to be punitive, but rather to help insure your success in the course. Should you object to these requirements, please drop the course at the outset and attempt to select a course that is perhaps better able to tolerate more absences. BCC wishes that each student have a successful experience in every class and encourages all students to balance the number and type of courses they select during a given semester with a realistic assessment of outside work and family responsibilities. If you "bite off more than you can chew" it is not BCC's obligation to compensate you with lowered standards which would be unfair to you, to the other students, and to the instructor. Therefore, it is important to carefully discuss the number and kind of courses you can plan to effectively manage with your advisor at the time of registration. Good luck!

Required textbooks for the course are: *Safe Passages on City Streets* OTB/Liberty; *Violence - Reflections on a National Epidemic* by James Gilligan Vintage; and *Getting to Yes* - Houghton Mifflin Company.

FINAL NOTE: All your assignments are to be turned in on plain paper, if typed, or on lined paper if extremely carefully and legibly hand-written. However, *PAPER WITH RAGGED EDGES from ring binders*

WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

## Course Schedule

### Jan. 20: Introduction

*ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES - SOME FORMS OF ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE*

#### **22: Violence, Fear- and Personal Experience**

*Safe Passage on City Streets* by Dorothy T. Samuel (1975 & 1991) (pp 1 - 60)

Upon completion of your reading, write (typing preferred) a minimum of one full page on an event in your personal life, or that you have observed elsewhere, that has some similarity to a confrontation described in your reading. Was the outcome similar to that in the reading? Was the approach used similar to that in the reading? Evaluate any differences or similarities in approaches and results. (Note: If you have no experience to write about, find an illustrative example in a newspaper or periodical.) This one page assignment is worth up to *five* points toward your final grade.

#### **27: Possibilities for Safety in Dangerous Surroundings**

*Safe Passage on City Streets* (pp 61 - End)

Turn in a minimum of a one page assignment as described above.

#### **29: A visit with Debora Cole-Duffy at the Elizabeth Freeman Center,** 150 First St., for a discussion on gender-related issues of violence.

*THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE AND OTHER REFLECTIONS*

### Feb. 3: On the Nature of Violence

*Violence - Reflecons on a National Epidemic* by James Gilligan, Pgs.1-55

#### **5: Violence, Symbolism and Shame**

*Violence - Reflections on a National Epidemic.* Pgs. 57 - 136

#### **10: Violence: Punishment, Poverty and Increasing the Rate of Violent Activity**

*Violence - Reflections on a National Epidemic.* Pgs. 139 - 190

#### **Feb. 12: Violence: Biology, Culture and Gender**

*Violence - Reflections on a National Epidemic.* Pgs. 191 - 239

#### **17: A visit with School Resource Officer Tricerri at Police Headquarters,**

39 Allen St., for a discussion of the primary forms of violence occurring in Pittsfield, their likely causes, and potential actions for reducing their frequency.

#### **19: A visit to the Berkshire County House of Correction,**

264 Second St., for a tour and discussion with Lt. Steven Como about local incarceration practices and lessons that can be learned of relevance to the ongoing violence in our area.

#### **24: Civilization and its Malcontents**

*Violence - Reflections on a National Epidemic.* Pgs. 241 - 267

Assignment: Compose two and a half to four pages of reflections on the theories of Dr. Gilligan as they relate to someone of a violent nature that you know or that you know of as a public figure. Attempt to describe the origins of his/her violent nature and suggest a number of things which might be done so that comparably violent behavior is not fostered in others. This paper is worth up to *twenty points* toward your final grade.

*ON NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS WITHOUT GIVING IN*

## **26: Don't Bargain Over Positions**

*Getting to Yes* - by Roger Fisher and William Ury - 1981 (Preface, Introduction & pp. 3-14)

Your assignment for this reading is to be replicated for each of the following readings through March 12, 1997. It is to extract the main ideas from the reading and write a page and a half in which you relate those ideas to a real life experience of your own or a current local problem. Before you start your writing you should skim the assignments for the rest of this book, along with their subtitles, as they are laid out by your authors between pages 189 and 195. You should then pick the topic you choose to write about as one that you can continue on with for all seven assignments. *Each one* of these seven assignments, if submitted on time, will earn up to three points toward your final grade.

## **Mar. 3: Separate The People From The Problem**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 17 - 39)

## **5: Focus On Interests, Not Positions**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 40- 55)

## **10: Invent Options For Mutual Gain**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 56-80)

## **Mar. 12: Insist On Objective Criteria / What If They Are More Powerful?**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 81-94 & 95-106)

## **24: What If They Won't Play?**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 107-128)

## **26: What If They Use Dirty Tricks? / Conclusion**

*Getting to Yes* (pp. 129-143 & 147-148)

## **31: Test on the materials assigned in Fisher and Ury's book and on**

class activities to this date (including Mr. Burbank's presentation). This test will be worth *20 percent* of your final grade.

## **Apr. 2: Turned Around**

a paper sharing the experiences of three BCC students as they struggled against severe drug and alcohol abuse.

## **7: A visit with Cheryl Nolan,**

director of the West Side Neighborhood Resource Center, and James T. Williamson, director of the Pittsfield Enterprise Collaborative, for a discussion of ways in which violence impacts the area minority community, particularly in so far as it has roots in historical discrimination. Suggestions for producing a less violent society will also be addressed. The Center is located at Christopher Arms, 12 John St.

## **9: A visit with Francesca Speicher**

at Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services of the Berkshires, 131 Bradford St., for a discussion on violence as it relates to substance abuse. Assignment: A short paper by Walter Wink.

## **16: Discussion of reflections on the last three classes.**

Assignment due: A one page letter to the editor or to a state, federal, or local official highlighting a suggestion for the reduction of violence in our society or our area is due. For credit, the letter should be of good quality and one you believe in. It should not mention that you are doing it in relation to your class. You should "own" its contents. It should also be accompanied by an addressed and stamped envelope for mailing by the instructor if it is grammatically correct and not of 'crank' content. This is worth *six points* toward your final grade when mailed.

## **21: A visit to Salvation Army Headquarters,**

at 300 West St., for a discussion with Capt. Thomas Perks about local aspects of poverty (a form of economic violence) and its effects on those suffering from it.

**23: Discussion of the previous class visit.**

Your assignment for today is a one page letter to the editor or to a state, local or federal official in relation to what you feel should be done about poverty or drugs, particularly in relation to violence in our society. The letter should be to a different location than the previous one and accompanied by an addressed and stamped envelope. It will be credited for *six points* toward your final grade when mailed, under the same qualifications as mentioned above.

*SOME HISTORY AND THEORY OF ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE*

**28: Gandhi (The video - starting at 12:15)**

Assignment Begin reading a biography of a major nonviolent peacemaker such as Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bertrand Russell, Henry David Thoreau! Leo Tolstoy! Jane Addams, Dorothy Day, Jim Peck, A.J. Muste, Peace Pilgrim, Albert Bigelow, Daniel or Philip Berrigan, Stephen Biko, Cesar Chavez, Thomas Merton, Badshah Khan, etc. Alternately read *The Power of the People* by Cooney & Michalowski or similar compilations of the achievements of nonviolent activists, such as those by Michael True, or stories of Peace Brigade volunteers, etc. (Reading to be completed by our final class when a report is due.)

**30: Discuss the life and impact of Mohandas K. Gandhi.**

Assignment *Peacemaking* by Barbara Stanford - 1976 (pp. 101 -110)

**May 5: Video on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. + discussion.**

Assignment: two short papers by Dr. King.

Final Due at this time is a three-page (typed - double spaced) summary Class of highlights from the biography or history of nonviolence that you have read. Of particular importance in your writing is that you note points that would be of special relevance to current issues surrounding violence and comment on that relevance. In addition to submitting your paper, you are to share your insights with the class in several minutes of commentary (preferably not just reading your paper). Your paper is worth a maximum of *seventeen points* toward your final grade and is an indication of your having read the entire book.