

PJCS 210: Transforming Conflict and Violence
Goshen College
Spring 2006

Course Info

Instructor:	Carolyn Schrock-Shenk
Office:	Wyse 303
Phone:	7016
Email:	Carolynss
Office hours:	Mon/Wed pm (generally)
Class Time/Location:	T,Th 11:00-12:15; Wyse 319
Teaching Assistant:	Rachel Eisenstat (rachel@goshen.edu)

Q. Why are we violent but not illiterate?
A. Because we were taught to read.
-- David Allan

Course Description

Conflict is a natural result of human interaction. When conflict turns violent, it is a powerfully negative force, wrecking havoc and destruction on those it touches. When conflict is embraced and handled with care, it can be an equally powerful source for positive change, within and between individuals as well as within and between systems. Violence, the negative response to conflict, is endemic in our culture.

This course will explore conflict and, more minimally, violence. It will explore the relationship between the two and examine some of the roots of the violence in our culture. It will look briefly at practical nonviolence and then examine communication and conflict patterns and what is needed for positive transformation. Students will reflect on their own conflict styles, examine their personal temptations for violence, and build personal skills and capacity for peacemaking.

College Outcomes

The Goshen College faculty has committed itself to a process of learning outcomes. The following outcomes are relevant for this class. Throughout this course, students will work towards developing:

1. Faith that is active and reflective;
2. Intercultural openness with the ability to function effectively with people of other world views;
3. The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of sign systems;
4. The ability to think actively and strategically;
5. Personal integrity that fosters ability to resolve conflict and to promote justice;
6. A healthy understanding of self and of others that is reflected in social relationships of interdependence and mutual accountability.

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. Explore various frameworks for understanding interpersonal conflict and violence and the relationship between them;
2. Begin to understand the nature and roots of violence and explore ways of addressing that violence;
3. Engage in a process of self-reflection that will increase awareness about their own conflict style, beliefs about conflict and violence, personal strengths and assets in managing their relationships, personal challenges and temptations for violence, personal sources of power, and the nature of their own cultural context;
4. Analyze and understand constructive and destructive conflict and the elements of each;
5. Understand the components of healthy, non-reactive communication, especially speaking and listening;
6. Increase personal skills of peacemaking including listening, speaking, negotiating, and problem-solving;
7. Examine their own assumptions, values, and commitments in relation to violence and nonviolence and examine ways in which nonviolence can be a practical lifestyle choice.

Course Texts/ Readings

Gilmore, S.K. and P.W. Fraleigh. *Style Profile for Communication at Work*. Eugene, OR: Friendly Press, 1992.

Schrock-Shenk, C., and L. Ressler (Eds.). *Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999.

Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2006.

Handouts, Web readings

Chasin, Laura. “**How to Break the Argument Habit.**” *Christian Science Monitor*. October 26, 2004.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1026/p08s01-coop.html>.

Classen, Ron. “**Restorative Justice Challenges ‘Myth of Redemptive Violence.’**” *Fresno Pacific University*. 1996. <http://www.fresno.edu/pacs/docs/restj3.html>.

Dear, John. “**Forgetting Who We Are.**” In *Violence to Wholeness: A Ten Part Process in the Spirituality and Practice of Active Nonviolence*, ed. Ken Butigen. From Las Vegas: Peace e Bene Nonviolence Service, 2002. 31-34.

Fisher, Roger & Ury, William. “**Getting To Yes.**” In *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*, ed. David Barash. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 70-76.

Gandhi, Mohandas. “**Ahimsa, or the Way of Nonviolence.**” In *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*, ed. David Barash. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 184-191.

Grossman, David. “**Trained to Kill.**” *Christianity Today*. August 10, 1998.

Kelly, Michael. “**Doves Taking Immoral Stance.**” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 2, 2001

King, Jr., Martin Luther. “**Letter from a Birmingham Jail.**” In *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*, ed. David Barash. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 144-148.

http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/popular_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf.

King, Jr., Martin Luther. “**Martin Luther King, Jr. on War and Peace.**” *A dramatic reading compiled by Clayborne Carson based on King’s writings and public statements.*

http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/popular_requests/ (August 17, 2005).

Koontz, Ted. “**An Open Letter on a Hard Question to a Jewish Friend.**” *The Conrad Grebel Review*.

Provenzo, Eugene F. and Jack Thompson. “**A Political Odd Couple’s Advice on Finding Common Ground.**” *Christian Science Monitor*. October 19, 2004. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1019/p09s01-coop.html>.

Miller, Melissa A. “**Forgiveness and Reconciliation.**” In *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations for Constructive Conflict Transformation* (4th Edition), ed. C. Schrock-Shenk. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS), 2000.

Reimer, Kristin, ed. “**Blessed are the Angry.**” *Conciliation Quarterly* 19, no.4 (2000).

Samuel, Dorothy. “**The Violence in Ourselves.**” In *Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation*, ed. Walter Wink. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

Scelfo, Julie. “**Bad Girls Go Wild.**” *Newsweek*, June 13, 2005.

Seaquist, Carla. “**At Heart of Good Political Discussion: The Idea.**” *Christian Science Monitor*. October 20, 2004. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1020/p09s01-coop.htm>.

Ueland, Brenda. “**Tell Me More: On the Fine Art of Listening.**” *Utne Reader*, November/December 1992.

http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/ctahr2001/rrii/downloads/Tell_Me_More_Euland.pdf

Yankelovich, Daniel. “**What Makes Dialogue Unique?**” In *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation*. Touchstone, September 2001. <http://www.previewforum.com/learningcenter/units/print2.html>.

Learning Activities/Course Requirements (See activity description for each requirement)

- A. Attendance, participation, homework
- B. Self-reflection papers (2)
- C. Film & book critique/reflections
- D. Blackboard journaling
- E. Group Presentation
- F. Two exams (one mid-term and one final), at least one quiz

Grading

1) Evaluation and final course grade will be based on the following learning experiences:

- 15% – Activity A: Attendance, participation, and reading notes/homework
- 15% – Activity B: Self-reflection papers
- 15% – Activity C: Critique/Reflections
- 10% – Activity D: Blackboard journaling
- 15% – Activity E: Group Presentation
- 30% – Activity F: Two exams, one quiz

2) Grading scale

90-100%	A
80-90%	B
70-80%	C
65-70%	D
64% and below	F

3) All work is due at the beginning of the class period for which it is assigned. Late work will decrease your grade unless it has been pre-arranged with me. No work will be accepted after the last day of class (April 13).

4) Writing assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and using Times New Roman font, 11 pt, with 1" margins.

Disability Accommodations

Goshen College wants to help all students be as academically successful as possible. If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor or the Director of the Academic Support Center, Lois Martin, early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. In order to receive accommodations, documentation concerning your disability must be on file with the Academic Support Center, KU004, x7576, lmartin@goshen.edu. All information will be held in the strictest confidence. The Academic Support Center offers tutoring and writing assistance for all students. For further information please see www.goshen.edu/studentlife/asc.php.

Activity A – Attendance, participation, and Reading Notes (15%)

Attendance: Because much of the learning in this class is the interactive process in the classroom, each **unexcused** absence and “**tardy**” reduces your final grade. For an absence or late arrival to be excused, you must contact me by phone or email **before** class.

Participation: Part of your 15% will be based on your actual participation in class. This does not necessarily mean the number of times you speak up in class (**though I will expect you to do so**), but also on the thoughtfulness of your contributions, your participation in small group work and class exercises, your body language and general attentiveness, etc. (If you sleep in class, I will count you absent.)

Reading Notes: The background readings are fundamental to understanding the topics and our work in class. We will not attempt to discuss all the readings in class, but you are responsible for all the assigned material. Toward that end, you are to turn in short reading notes for each day (where reading is assigned). These notes can be new learnings, things particularly relevant to you, things you disagree with, unanswered questions, etc. What I am looking for is evidence that you have read the assignment and taken it seriously. **1-2 paragraphs (or 3-6 comments/questions) is all I need. When there is more than one assigned reading, please comment on each. (Reading notes will not be returned to you.)** In general, you will be given a check for each submission. If I am not convinced you have read the assignment, you will be given a check minus. A particularly thoughtful response may merit a check-plus (though rarely).

There may be occasional short homework assignments that will be part of your Activity A grade as well.

Activity B – Reflecting on the Mirror (Self Reflection Papers) (15%)

Rationale: One's ability to positively transform begins with self awareness: an honest appraisal of all that one is and brings to the transformation process. What are our strengths, weaknesses, challenges, temptations, areas of needed growth, areas of maturity, etc.? A goal of this class is to nurture self-reflection and introspection, a time when you can look into your conflict and relational mirror honestly and clearly and apply the readings and class discussions to that mirror reflection.

Content: These papers are intended to provide a vehicle for this reflection and to allow me to get a glimpse into that reflection. I will treat them confidentially. Apply course readings and class content to your own personal reflections.

Please see # 3 and #4 under “grading” on page 2 for paper writing requirements.

Part I – Conflict and Me - due Tuesday, January 24 (4-6 pages; 4 full pages minimum) (9%)

Experience

- What have been my experiences with conflict?
- What effect have these experiences had on my life and my relationships?

Assumption/beliefs, values, faith

- What are my assumptions or beliefs about conflict?
- What are my related values?
- What is the relationship of my faith to these beliefs and values?

Conflict Style (Provide G-F scores in this section)

- What is my style, general approach, or typical pattern in responding to conflict?
- In what ways do I agree and/or disagree with my G-F scores?
- What are my strengths in conflict and communication?
- What are my challenges?
- In what areas would I like to grow? How will I work on these things?

Other's perception:

- How does a significant other describe your conflict style? (For this please ask the other person for their perspective on a conflictive interaction the two of you have had **OR** get someone to write several paragraphs about you on this topic that you can then include in your paper. Then add your own comments about their reflections. Identify the other person in this section and do some comparative work.)
- How does this person see you similarly to how you see yourself?
- Differently? How might you account for the differences?

Part II – Power, Conflict and Me - due on Thursday, March 30 (3-5 pages; 3 full pages minimum) (6%)

- What are your sources of power here in the United States and here at GC?
- How have these sources of power (or lack of them) defined or affected your various relationships?
- In what ways have you (or those you relate to) used well and/or abused power in relationships?
- Is the way you use power consistent with cultural norms or is it counter-cultural? Explain.
- Provide specific examples as much as possible in responding to these questions.**

Grading for each paper:

- 85%** - for thoroughness in addressing the topics, willingness to engage in honest self-reflection, and connection/applicability to readings/class discussions
- 15%** – writing logistics (clarity, grammar, punctuation)

Activity C – Critique/Reflections (15%)

While we will do a significant amount of in-class work on practical nonviolent skills and processes, this course also intends to have you reflect on and critique a film and a book to sharpen critical thinking skills related to themes raised in this class.

1) Reflections on a feature film (5%): Film is a powerful medium in our society, and many high quality movies have been made concerning topics and issues relevant to this class. If at all possible, I would like you to view and reflect on a film from the list below that you have not already seen. Also, I recommend you view the film with other classmates (both because this makes obtaining the film easier and because the post-viewing conversation can be enlightening). You are responsible for getting a hold of one of these films – again, don't wait until the last minute.

You may watch and reflect on one of the following feature films or get a film approved by me. I will provide a set of reflection questions for the film. **Reflections due by Thursday, April 6.**

- American History X (R)
- Bowling for Columbine
- Boyz n the Hood (R)
- Dead Man Walking (R)
- Do the Right Thing (R)
- Gandhi(PG)
- Good Will Hunting (R)
- Malcolm X (PG-13)
- Romero (PG-13)
- Smoke Signals (PG-13)
- Crash (R)

2) Privilege, Power and Difference reflection questions (5% each): You will be given two sets of questions to answer and reflect on as you read this text. Not only will this assignment help you be accountable for this reading, but it will also provide you with a sense of what I want you to focus on and learn. Your responses to chapters 1-4 are due on **February 14** and responses to chapters 5-9 are due on **March 23**.

Activity D – Blackboard Journaling – 5 Entries (10%)

Blackboard Journaling (2% each): On some days you will be given a topic or question to which you must **respond on blackboard by the time indicated (usually Friday noon of that week)**. Sometimes the question may be around your own relationships and conflicts such as, “Describe a communication or relationship challenge that you encountered in the last week.” It may also be more macro, such as “What do you think Gandhi would say about the situation in Iraq and what do you believe about it?” Your post should be thoughtful and at least **150-200 words**.

When the assignment is meant for the **Blackboard “Discussion Board”**, I expect you to read each other's entries. You are welcome and invited to respond to each other's entries, either in your initial post or you can feel free to post twice. You are expected to follow the commitments we will make to each other in class – that of constructive, nonjudgmental dialogue and respecting each person's right to their own perspective. You are also expected to refrain from sharing anything posted on blackboard with people outside of this class.

When the assignment is meant to be posted on the **Blackboard “Assignments”**, only I will read it. Grading will be based on your thoughtfulness – whether or not you took it seriously and spent appropriate time with it.

Activity E – Group projects/application exercise (15 %)

Content Rationale: To explore an area of interest under the broader topic of "transforming conflict and violence" that we have not examined in depth in the course and to educate the rest of the class about the topic.

Process rationale: To work together as a team, observing and practicing collaborative skills and processes; to grow in the skills of effective communication with an audience.

Description: In groups of three (which I will form), you will choose a topic to explore together. You may want to pursue a topic that you have encountered in your readings or that has emerged in class that interests you. Or you may choose a topic that is relevant to the course but hasn't been covered at all—perhaps one that connects with your major or with experiences you have had. Be creative and come up with something of real interest to you. There are many options here. To think of possible topics, you may find it helpful to scan the titles of new books, etc. acquired through Plowshares Grant acquisitions [<http://www.goshen.edu/library/monthly%20acquisitions%20lists.htm>],

especially (but not only) those under the “Conflict Resolution” heading. Other topics that have been researched include:

- the role of anger in conflict transformation
- emotional intelligence and violence
- connection of child abuse to teen violence
- Just War doctrine
- group decision making
- teen violence patterns
- use of nonviolence in a specific context
- efficacy of the peace movement
- enneagram and personality types
- restorative discipline in schools
- bullying
- violence reduction initiatives
- gender differences in conflict
- forms of voting, group decision-making
- killology; violent video games
- violence against women
- future or meaning of war
- classism, racism, etc. and conflict

Project steps/Due dates

- a. Submit the topic you’ve selected and a paragraph about your rationale for choosing that topic on **Feb. 21**.
- b. Research your topic. Your group’s research needs to include information from at least five sources, three of which must be non-internet sources. Sources can include books, journals, videos, interviews with experts or anyone else with insight into the issue, internet sources, visits to a site, etc.
- c. Prepare a **15-20 minute** presentation. Time will be kept strictly in order to allow for some class discussion with each group. Your class presentation should be informative, *creative*, interesting and involve equal participation from all three of you. You are both helping the class learn about an important topic or initiative and you are learning about teamwork, public speaking, time management, and engaging an audience. **Don’t try to throw as much information as possible at the listeners; rather, discern what is most helpful given your time parameters and present it in a way your listeners can digest.** Presentations will happen **March 30, April 4, 6, and 11**.
- d. On the day of your presentation, your group should submit to me:
 - A complete **outline** of your presentation, including sources used
 - A printout of PowerPoint slides, if you are using PowerPoint
- e. On your presentation day or by the following class, each individual should submit to me:
 - A **2-3 page reflection** summarizing
 - a) what you learned about the topic/initiative/conflict;
 - b) your honest reflections and learnings regarding the group process and your own role in it;
 - c) the **list of resources** you individually used and read, in accurate bibliographic format.

Grading. Your presentation will be evaluated in the following way:

- 70% - Quality of your group’s content, presentation style, and outline (including evidence of research preparation, creativity, flow as a unified presentation, engagement of audience, shared leadership, time management)
- 15% - Your individual presentation: organization, voice projection, eye contact, confidence, etc.
- 15% - Your individual summary paper & bibliography

Be aware that class may go overtime on days of presentations.

Activity F– Exams/Quiz (30%)

There will be two exams and one or two unannounced quizzes. The mid-term exam will be on **Thursday, February 23**. The final exam will cover the entire semester and be given on **Wednesday, April 19**. Sorry, no early exams will be given except for extraordinary reasons (wanting to begin your vacation early is **not** extraordinary).

Tentative Course Schedule with Reading/Project Assignments

MPWC = Making Peace With Conflict

PPD = Privilege, Power, and Difference

GF = Gilmore Fraleigh Style Profile Booklet

Class/ Date	Topic	Readings (Finish before Class)	Assignments Due
1 - Thurs, Jan 5			
2 - Tues, Jan 10	Syllabus Overview Conflict and faith	Syllabus; MPWC Intro, ch 1&17	“Getting to Know You” Paper Reading notes
3 - Thurs, Jan12	Basic conflict theory	MPWC pp 23-24, 35-37	
4 - Tues, Jan 17	Conflict Styles	Entire GF Booklet	Reading Notes Complete and bring GF scores
5 - Thurs, Jan 19	Cont.	PPD Intro & Ch. 1	
6 - Tues, Jan 24	Goals in Conflict	PPD 2	Reflecting on the Mirror, Part I
7 - Thurs, Jan 26	Communication skills: Listening	MPWC 4 Ueland (See URL)	Reading Notes
8 – Tues, Jan 31	Cont.	MPWC 6 PPD 3	Reading Notes
9 – Thurs, Feb 2	Skills: Speaking	MPWC 5 Seaquist	Reading Notes
10 – Tues, Feb 7	Skills: Managing anger and other emotions	PPD 4 Samuel CQ articles	Reading Notes
11 - Thurs, Feb 9	Skills: Negotiation	Fisher & Ury	Reading Notes; (Groups for projects announced)
12 – Tues, Feb 14	Skills: Confrontation, problem-solving, triangling	MPWC 7 & 8	Reading Notes PPD Reflection Questions I
13 – Thurs, Feb 16	Enemy-making and the “other”; Dialogue	Chasin; Provenzo & Thompson; Yankelovich (see URL)	Reading Notes
14 – Tues, Feb 21	Identity, culture and conflict	MPWC 2 & 3 PPD 5 & 6	Reading Notes Project proposals due
15 – Thurs, Feb 23	Mid-term Exam		Mid-term Exam
Feb 27- March 3	SPRING BREAK	A novel ☺	Have Fun!
16 – Tues, Mar 7	Violence & Non-violence	MPWC 9 Dear, Grossman	
17 – Thurs, Mar 9	Cont.	Koontz, Kelly, Classen (see URL); PPD 7	
18 – Tues, Mar 14	Cont.	King X2, Ghandi PPD 8	
19 - Thurs, Mar 16	Power and conflict	MPWC 11 PPD 9	
20 - Tues, Mar 21	Race and conflict	MPWC 12	
21 - Thurs, Mar 23	Gender and conflict Video – “Tough Guise”	MPWC 13,	PPD Reflection Questions 2

22 - Tues, Mar 28	Gender and conflict; Video- "It's a Girl's World"	Scelfo, (Newsweek article)	
23 - Thurs, Mar 30	Presentations X 2		Self Reflection Paper 2 (Power)
24 - Tues, Apr 4	Presentations X 2		
25 - Thurs, Apr 6	Presentations X 2		Film Reflection Questions
26 - Tues, Apr 11	Presentations X 2		
27 - Thurs, Apr 13	Forgiveness Group Process	Miller, (MCS Manual) MPWC 14, 15, 16	Complete On-line Course Evaluation
28 - Wed, Apr 19	Final exam		