POLS 4361/5330: 
THEORIES OF NONVIOLENCE

Course Description

Focusing on the political and social thought of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., this course will introduce students to a frequently neglected theme in the history of modern political theory: nonviolence & civil disobedience. Indeed, one of the central paradoxes of the “long” twentieth century of genocidal wars, concentration camps, urban riots, and ethnic strife, is the paucity of imaginative reflection on the conceptual meaning, causes and effects, and political implications of violence. Seeking to blend political, ethical, and sociocultural concerns, the course is designed to encourage students to embark on a personal examination of the connections between political power, violence, and ethically motivated forms of nonviolent resistance.

The course will be divided into four main parts. First, we will discuss the writings of three representative thinkers of the dominant “realist” discourse of Realpolitik. The next two sections will introduce the main ideas of Gandhi and King, and the last part will encourage you to investigate the pragmatic business of how nonviolent direct action “works.” As such an example, we will pick the remarkable story of the “Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” in Argentina who stood up to state power despite considerable risks to their lives. As the “mothers” have shown, the test of any political theory lies in how well it can inform the concrete realm of political practice.

Let me add an important caveat: I am not interested in “selling you” on nonviolence, or to force a certain kind of morality on you. Rather, I want to critically examine long-standing assumptions about the nature of violence and political power from a cross-cultural perspective. Therefore we’ll start the course by putting nonviolence on trial.

Here are the three main charges of the prosecution:

1) Violence is inevitable in politics, because all people harbor violent tendencies as part of their human nature.

2) Nonviolence does not work in the “real” world of economic self-interest and power politics. The proof of this failure of the nonviolent method is that its proponents do not achieve their desired political and social objectives.

3) Subscribing to a philosophy of nonviolence and creating nonviolent social and political structures make us more vulnerable to our violent neighbors/enemies. Thus, we cannot afford to neglect our social responsibility and risk the safety and survival of our community by remaining “nonviolent.”
After letting our “realist” political theorists make the case for the prosecution, we will listen to the arguments of the defense represented by Gandhi, King, and the “Mothers.” At the end of the course, you—the members of the jury—will deliberate on a verdict which you will present to the judge, the Honorable Prof. Wahlrab.

In addition, the course will raise themes such as: 1) *raison d'être*: why nonviolence? 2) what is power? 3) common philosophical and moral underpinnings of Gandhi & King’s respective projects; 4) religious aspects of nonviolent theories; 5) the relationship between politics and culture; 6) the influence of Gandhi and King on other intellectuals and political activists like the Mothers of the Plaza the Mayo, Aung San Suu Kyi, Vaclav Havel and Cesar Chavez; the Middle East and North African Uprisings7) the building and organization of non-violent political movements; 8) violence and gender 9) the *personal component*: what do nonviolence and civil disobedience mean to you and your own immediate context?

**Course Objectives**

It is important to me to encourage you to maintain an exploratory mind and create your own active learning environment—not solely interacting with me, but with each other as well. I will facilitate student discussions by creating a safe context that allows you to speak up freely. But I do not accept the equation of subjective experience with “truth.” You must be able to confront the questions I ask, regardless of your own preferences. Most of all, I am interested in preparing you for independent research which requires a tolerant, reflective mind, best summarized by Immanuel Kant’s dictum: “*Sapere aude*”—“Have the courage to use your own understanding!”

The course readings, assignments, and videos have been carefully selected to generate broad in-class discussions and oral presentations, ultimately guiding students to write informed essays. Responsible participation in class discussions will be based on weekly assignments.

In the second half of the course, students (group size will depend upon class size) will be responsible for a 30 minute in-class presentation on the readings (including leading class in the ensuing 45 minute discussion). Please clarify a suitable topic with me beforehand during my office hours. Please use supportive materials for your presentation (handouts, video clips, overhead, computer technology, etc.). Sign up for your presentation in the first three weeks of classes. You will be evaluated on four objective criteria: research, presentation, handout, discussion.

Moreover, you are required to write four (3) interpretive essays (five to six double-spaced, typed pages in length—approximately 1500 - 1750 words not including footnotes and/or bibliography). Each paper should address one well-formulated theme or problem taken from a) weeks 1-6; b) weeks 7-10; and, c) weeks 10-14. Graduate students must also select a topic of their choice for a research paper (25 double-spaced, typed pages, plus bibliography; topics must be clarified with me and approved by me in advance.

For the interpretive papers, you will pick your own theme/problem from the relevant readings of that particular section. In the paper, you should carefully explore the meaning of the theme/problem, and, with as much sophistication as possible, you should indicate how that theme/problem reveals something of political significance about the larger context from which it is taken. No book reports or plot summaries please! These short essays represent exercises in critical political thinking. No late papers will be accepted.

Research essay proposals (1-2 page abstract plus bibliography containing primary and secondary sources), will be due during the 11th week. I will supervise each student's progress,
as well as encourage you to consult with me during office hours to discuss one draft of your paper(s). The graduate research paper is due on Friday December 4 by end of day. No late papers will be accepted.

A Note on Grading

You must complete all assigned written and oral work in order to pass the course. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will fail the course.

Your in-class presentation will count for 15%, your four interpretive essays (and research paper if you are a graduate student) 70% (17.5% each (graduate students: 8.75% and 35% respectively), your attendance and participation 15%. Thus, your course grade will reflect your presentation, your willingness to participate in discussions, class attendance, and the overall quality of your written work. You are required to sign the circulating attendance sheet at the beginning of each class. Students who distinguish themselves during our class discussions will receive extra credit—meaning that if you find yourself between two grades at the end of the semester, you will receive the higher grade.

Please be advised that overparticipation and the monopolization of class discussion at the expense of your peers may count against you, especially if such actions consistently derail the course agenda. I reserve the right to cut off discussion at any point in order keep us on track and help all students to understand the relevant material. A significant element in the study of political theory is the ability to learn to listen to other voices.

For the purposes of this seminar, you should interpret the grades you receive in the following terms:

1) In-Class Presentations:
   An “A” will only be given to presentations that are clearly superior in form as well as content. Typically, such presentations are coherent, well-organized, and adhere to the given time frame. “A” students show their thorough and careful reading of the text(s), bring in outside materials for reference, and generate genuine interest and excitement for their topic. They lead discussions effortlessly, distribute speaking time fairly, and stay focused on their theme. Use Hand-outs which help students follow along and suggest further readings (reference list to books and journal articles that you used).
   If this grade is to mean something, just doing a “good job” is not good enough for an “A.” You must demonstrate your ability to go beyond the expected.

2) Interpretative Essays and Research Paper:
   Much of the above pertains to essays/papers as well. In addition to treating the subject in a sophisticated and creative manner, “A” papers exhibit elegant and clear prose. Such papers draw connections between nonobvious points; they are well organized and furnish adequate citations of primary and secondary sources without losing their own unique and distinct “voice.” An “A” term paper in an advanced undergraduate course should add a “new wrinkle” to the existing body of literature on this topic.

“A” paper—provides an original, insightful, and well argued thesis which is defended systematically using significant citation; demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the course material; is elegantly written and thoroughly proofread.

“B” paper—proves a coherent thesis which is defended; uses sufficient citations; demonstrates an understanding of the course material; is well written.

“C” paper—provides a more-or-less coherent thesis; uses adequate citations; demonstrates a basic understanding of the course material; is readable.

“D” paper—provides a basic argument; uses minimal or no citations; demonstrates minimal understanding of the course material; is poorly written.

“F” paper—Paper is turned in but does not meet basic requirements (too short, does not answer the question, etc.). Not turning in a paper results in a zero.

Office Hours:

I really enjoy meeting with students during office hours and encourage all students to stop by. I have traditional office hours from Tuesday/Thursdays 11-1pm CAS Room 224. In addition, anyone who cannot meet me during this time should contact me via email to schedule an appointment. I am also available by email and will respond to your emails within one working day.

Late paper policy

Papers will be marked down one third of a grade every (business) day they are late (i.e. 24 hours late turns a B+ into a B). If you do not turn in a paper you get zero points. If a paper is late two weeks or more you will automatically receive an F (59%). It is in your interest to turn all assignments in, even if they are late, since failing to turn in even one paper makes it almost mathematically impossible to pass the class.

NOTE: This fairly lenient late policy will be compensated for by the fact that there will be NO extensions given, except in case of an extreme emergency. If an emergency arises, documentation is required (police reports, obituaries, etc.) and I should be notified as soon as possible.

Turing in papers

All papers must be turned in through safeassign on blackboard. Late papers will receive grades only, no comments.

Academic Dishonesty

The UT Tyler community regards cheating as an extremely serious matter and deals severely with those who violate the standards of academic integrity.

Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Copying from another person’s test paper
- During a test, possession of materials not authorized by the person administering the test
- Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination or the divulging of examination contents to another when an instructor has allowed the exam to be kept by the student
- Working with others in taking tests or preparing academic assignments when not authorized by the course instructor
- Obtaining by any means another person’s work and submitting that work as one’s own. This included the downloading of academic papers or the purchase of papers written by others.
If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the classroom instructor may ask the student to meet with him or her to discuss the incident. A student may admit to allegations of academic dishonesty, waive the right to a hearing and accept penalties imposed by the instructor. The student may also deny all allegations and ask to see the Dean of Student Affairs. An accused student may accept the decision of the Dean of Student Affairs or ask for a hearing before an impartial hearing officer appointed by the university. Witnesses may be called and evidence presented. The hearing officer will consider all evidence and make a decision. The decision of the hearing officer may be appealed to the President by either the student or the Dean of Student Affairs. For a discussion of possible penalties, please see http://www.uttler.edu/mainsite/conduct.html.

University Policies

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at http://www.uttler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are
eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

**State-Mandated Course Drop Policy**

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

**Disability/Accessibility Services**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit [https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler](https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler) and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at [http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices), the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

**Student Absence due to Religious Observance**

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

**Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities**

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.
Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student’s test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
ii. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

iii. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

**UT Tyler Resources for Students**

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

**COURSE READINGS (REQUIRED):**

   - ISBN-10: 312221517

**RELEVANT SECONDARY SOURCES (SOME ARE IN LIBRARY):**

2) Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

**A SHORT SELECTION OF USEFUL SECONDARY SOURCES:**

**A) GANDHI**

**B) KING**
4) Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years: 1954-63* (Simon and Schuster, 1988)
5) Adam Fairclough, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (University of Georgia Press, 1995)
Course Schedule

WEEK 1: AUGUST 230

**Topic I:** Introduction

**Reading (After Class):**


**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Machiavelli, *The Prince* (pages for Penguin edition: pp.29-42; 47-53; 61-66; 71-73; 87-102; 130-138; Chicago Edition: 1-15; 20-25; 34-38; ch X; XIV-XIX; XXV-XXIV; Peter Constantine translation: 3-18; Ch 5-6; Ch 8; ch X; XIV-XIX; XXV-XXIV;
- Steger and Lind, *Violence and Its Alternatives*, Section 5, pp. 201-250.

WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 6

**Topic:** Career Success Conference

- All day event: be sure to register and attend: CONFERENCE WEBSITE: https://www.uttyler.edu/conference18/.

WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 13


**Readings (to be completed before class):**

WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 20


**Discussion of Arendt.**

**Readings (to be completed before class):**

WEEK 5: SEPTEMBER 27
**Topic:** Discussion of Arendt, cont. Summary of realist perspective. Second attempt to define our key concepts. Origins of Nonviolence and Civil Disobedience in Western Traditions.

**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Arendt, *On Violence* (excerpt);
- Steger and Lind, *Violence and Its Alternatives*, Section II, pp. 57-76; 89-92; Sect. VI, pp. 274-283.

**WEEK 6: OCTOBER 4**
**Topic:** 1st interpretive essay due. FILM: R. Attenborough’s “GANDHI.” We will use all the time for the movie this week, feel free to bring popcorn but expect to go long.

**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Parekh, *Gandhi* (pp. 1-50);
- Dalton, *Gandhi: Selected Political Writings* (pp. 3-25).

**WEEK 7: OCTOBER 11**

**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Dalton, *Gandhi: Selected Political Writings* (pp. 95-126);
- and Parekh, *Gandhi* (pp. 63-74).

**WEEK 8: OCTOBER 18**
**Topic:** *Student Presentations*. Truth and Nonviolence, *Satya, Ahimsa*, and *Satyagraha*. Political Power and Nonviolence.

**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Dalton, *Gandhi: Selected Political Writings* (pp.27-93);
- Parekh, *Gandhi* (pp. 51-62).

**WEEK 9: OCTOBER 25**

**Readings (to be completed before class):**
- Dalton, *Gandhi: Political Writings* (pp. 127-153);
- Parekh, *Gandhi* (pp. 75-104);
- And Steger, “Politician and Saint: Mahatma Gandhi’s Ethical Socialism” (Online).

**WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 1**
Topic: 2nd interpretive essay due. VIDEOS: “EYES ON THE PRIZE.”

Readings (to be completed before class):

! Washington, I Have a Dream, pp. vii-xxx.


Selected chapters from Oates, Let the Trumpet Sound (optional).

WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 8


Readings (to be completed before class):


❖ Bibliography and 1-page abstract for long research paper due (grad. students).

Happy Thanksgiving!

WEEK 12: NOVEMBER 15

Topic: Student Presentations. King, the Political Philosopher of Militant Non-Violence, Main Ideas and Concepts.

Readings (to be completed before class):


WEEK 13: NOVEMBER 29


Readings (to be completed before class):

! Guzman Bouvard, Revolutionizing Motherhood (all);

WEEK 14: DECEMBER 6

Topic: Student Presentations. Nonviolent Revolutions: Other Cases (Resistance to the Nazis in Denmark and Germany; Cesar Chavez in California; the Philippines Revolution; the 1989 Czech “Velvet Revolution,” East European “Color Revolutions”, the “Arab Revolts” and the “African Awakening”).

PBS VIDEO: “A FORCE MORE POWERFUL.”


Readings (to be completed before class):

! Steger and Lind, Violence and Its Alternatives, Section VII: pp. 308-350

**Week 15: December 13**