PAX 300: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND CONFLICT STUDIES
SENIOR SEMINAR

Dr. Scott R. Paeth
Office: 2333 N. Racine Ave., Rm. 207
Phone: 773-325-4447
Email: Spaeth@depaul.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from Noon to 12:45 PM and by appointment

General Description: This course is the senior seminar for DePaul University’s Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies major. As such, it will deal in depth with the subject matter of peace and justice making in the context of domestic and international conflict, specifically through a close reading and critical analysis of Gene Sharp’s seminal *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* and other selected texts. Through this text, we will question the philosophy and methods of nonviolent action, asking about their effectiveness and desirability in the context of real-world conflict situations, and analyzing their tactics as resources for thinking creatively about the practice of nonviolent action in the context of struggles for social change in the contemporary world.

Course Objectives:
1. To analyze the methods and arguments of Gene Sharp’s *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*.
2. To consider the role of nonviolent action as a strategic option in conflicts in the contemporary world.
3. To understand the philosophical underpinnings of nonviolent action in the context of domestic and international conflicts.
4. To consider criticisms and the possible limits of nonviolent action in resolving political disputes.
5. To examine the role that religion plays in both the creation of and the resolution of situation of conflicts, and resources within religious traditions to aid in the development of strategies of nonviolent action.
Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate fully in class discussions. *Students who miss more than two class sessions will automatically fail the course.* Grades for class participation will be based on several criteria, including one’s actual presence at class meetings, the degree of one’s constructive participation in discussions, and the submission of class discussion questions. *This is worth 20% of your grade.*

2. Conversation Starters: For each class session, students will prepare 3-5 substantive questions about the reading that he or she would like to discuss during the class session. These questions should be rooted in the student’s reading of the text, and focus on issues that the student thinks warrant further discussion among the class. These questions can deal with issues that the student finds provocative, areas that they do not fully understand, areas that the students disagree with, or anything else that the student thinks will provoke a good conversation with his or her classmates. *This is worth 10% of your grade.*

3. Seminar Papers: Students will participate in the leadership of a number of class sessions over the course of the quarter. This participation will take the form of a seminar paper of approximately 4-5 pages that they will summarize the reading for the session and raise issues for conversation with the class. Students will be expected to offer an analysis of the reading based upon their understanding its main themes and its relationship to Sharp’s general argument and its particular applications. The precise number of sessions students will be responsible for will ultimately depend on the number of students enrolled in the class and the time available for presentations. *This is worth 20% of your grade.*

4. Final Project: This assignment will be a research paper on a topic related to the project theme. Utilizing substantial outside research, this paper will advance an argument about the selected topic, utilizing evidence in order to demonstrate its thesis. Possible paper topics will be discussed in class, though students are free to examine any area of interest to them that is related to the course topic. Students are expected to devote substantial time outside of class collecting research, reading sources, and developing their argument in order to persuade the reader of the validity of his or her conclusions.

*The use of the DePaul University library is essential for this project.* This paper will be 10-12 pages. On the final day of class, students will present a summary of their projects, their research and their tentative conclusions. The actual paper will be due on the date assigned to the class for its final exam. *This is worth 50% of your grade.*

**Texts:**
Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*
Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*

**SCHEDULE**

**WEEK ONE**
1/8 Introduction to class, overview of syllabus, and introductory conversation.


**WEEK TWO**
1/15 Sharp, *Power and Struggle (PNV)*, Chapter 1.


**WEEK THREE**

*Recommended Reading:* Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (excerpt); David Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail* (excerpt); Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham City Jail”; Michael Nagler, *Hope or Terror: Gandhi and the Other 9/11*; James Cone, Malcolm and Martin on Nonviolence.”

**WEEK FOUR**


**WEEK FIVE**

WEEK SIX
2/12 Sharp, The Methods of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 7.
2/14 Alinsky, Rules for Radicals, Chapters 6-10.


WEEK SEVEN
2/19 Sharp, The Methods of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 8.

Recommended Reading: David Lochhead, “Monotheistic Violence”; Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the Mind of God (Excerpt); Williams, The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred (Excerpt); Tabor, Why Waco?; Michael Jerryson & Mark Juergensmeyer, Buddhist Warfare.

WEEK EIGHT
2/26 Sharp, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 10.
2/28 Sharp, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 11.

Recommended Reading: Karen Beckwith, “Women, Gender and Nonviolence in Political Movements”; Douglas Sturm, “Reformed Liberalism and the Principle of Nonviolence”;

WEEK NINE
3/5 Sharp, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 12
3/7 Sharp, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 13


WEEK TEN
3/12 Sharp, The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (PNV), Chapter 14.
3/14 Final Class, Student Presentations, and Concluding Discussion.

COURSE POLICIES

Making Arguments in Papers: A number of assignments in this class require you to construct and defend an argument. When constructing your argument, use as a guideline Stephen Toulmin’s system for identifying the elements of an argument (which can be found in the St. Martin’s Handbook, pp. 243 and following, which you all should have). In other words, your paper should include the following elements:

- Claims: “statements of fact, opinion, or belief that form the backbone of arguments.”
- Reasons: Statements that support the main claim of the essay.
- Evidence: Facts that support your claims.
- Qualifiers: Means of narrowing your claims.

Look at the St. Martin’s Handbook for more details on these elements. Remember in writing to have a clearly stated thesis, and organize your paper around the goal of defending that thesis with arguments and evidence.

Proper Citation: It is imperative that all papers utilize proper standards for citation when quoting material or using ideas that come from any external source. Students may elect to use Chicago/Turabian, MLA, APA, or any other style of citation they prefer, as long as they adhere to that style, use it consistently, and most importantly accurately convey the source information. Failure to do so will make students subject to the DePaul plagiarism policy, and may count as a violation of DePaul’s Academic Integrity Policy (see below).

Paper Submissions: All papers for this class must be handed in, by the due date, both in class in hard-copy form, and electronically using the Dropbox function in Desire2Learn. Papers will be due by midnight on the day they are due. Papers not submitted by that time will be locked out and you will have to consult with the instructor in order to be able to post. Papers will not be accepted via email except in extraordinary circumstances. Consult with the professor before sending your papers via email.

DePaul’s Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas without acknowledging the source, i.e., passing them off as your own. It is a form of theft and will not be tolerated in any written work submitted in this course. Penalties for plagiarism range from an F on the particular paper to an F for the course, depending on the extent of the violation. The appropriate penalty is at the instructor’s discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university. You may find the entire plagiarism from the DePaul Student Handbook. Please note that failure to cite sources
appropriately also constitutes plagiarism. If in doubt, play it safe and acknowledge the source, or consult in advance with the instructor.

**Inclusive Language Standards:** In both oral and written communication within this course, you are expected to use inclusive, non-sexist languages where that most clearly expresses what you mean. For example, if you are referring to people in general, rather than just to adult human males, use a term more appropriate than “man” or “mankind”. Exclusive use of the masculine pronouns “he,” “his” or “him” when referring to people in general should likewise be avoided. Inclusive language can be written in an elegant, concise way. You are expected to do so.

**DePaul Policy on Incompletes:** Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to “F” grades. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification. This is university policy, and not at the discretion of the instructor to alter or modify in any way. Please consult DePaul University’s official policies for more details.

**Grading Policy**
The following list explains the meaning of grades assigned in my courses. This usage is not official DePaul University policy, but is meant to help you evaluate your performance.

**“A” Outstanding Work**
An “A” means that the author has not only mastered the basic contours of the question but is able to exercise an imaginative approach to the subject. The author creatively synthesizes materials and displays a depth of critical analysis and insight into the complexities of the matters under discussion. “A” papers have a strong thesis, which is well-defended and well-supported with evidence. When appropriate, it demonstrates original and quality research. The author has constructed a clear and cogent argument that does not neglect significant contrasting points of view. An “A” is the highest evaluation.

**“A-” Excellent Work**
An “A-” displays the same strong mastery of the subject and effectiveness of presentation but has not worked out a critical analysis and constructive argument to the same depth as the “A”.

*Nota Bene:* As per the descriptions for Analysis and Research papers above, only those papers which utilize at least three sources from the recommended reading list will be
eligible for an A-level grade. Using these sources is by no means a guarantee of an A grade, but it will be taken into account when assigning your grade.

“B+” Very Good Work
The work is well written and organized. Material is sensibly arranged and the author has clearly comprehended the basic materials as well as the contrasting approaches to its meaning and significance. A “B+” differs from an “A” largely in lacking the same level of originality and/or argumentation, having a weaker thesis, or not representing as great a mastery of the material.

“B” Good Work
The work shows mastery of the basic elements of the subject. It is clearly written and organized, with adequate footnotes where appropriate. A “B” paper does not possess the same quality of argument or evidence as a “B+” or “A” paper. It may have a weaker thesis or display insufficient mastery of content.

“B-” Competent Work
The work shows a basic comprehension of the subject, but shows some flaws in presentation, difficulties in grasping alternative positions and in understanding their significance to the questions at hand. It may have a weaker thesis than a more highly evaluated paper, posses flaws in research or argumentation, misuse or misunderstand important evidence, or be poorly written, with some minor grammar or spelling errors.

Nota Bene: As per the description for Analysis and Research papers above, only those papers which utilize at least one source from the recommended reading list will be eligible for a B-level grade. Using these sources is by no means a guarantee of a B grade, but it will be taken into account when assigning your grade.

“C+” Flawed Work
Has a weak thesis, supported by little or no evidence, or it misuses or misunderstands important elements of material. The writing may also exhibit problems in grammar, spelling and composition. The bibliography and footnoting are minimal.

“C” Minimal Work
Significant misunderstandings, omissions, and unclarities impair the reader’s capacity to understand and agree with the work. The work also suffers from marked problems in presentation and support. Nevertheless, it displays a minimal entry-level understanding of the questions at hand.

“C-” Barely Adequate Work
While this work is still passing, it displays only the most minimal grasp of the materials. It suffers from much unclarity, illogicality, or inadequate support.
“D” Inadequate Work
This work does not demonstrate a basic understanding of either the assignment or the principles of proper academic writing, but does demonstrate a sincere attempt to execute the assignment, albeit in an unsatisfactory way.

“F” Failing Work
This work demonstrates neither a basic understanding of the assignment nor an understanding of the principles of proper academic writing, and does not demonstrate the minimum effort required to earn a passing grade.

Late Assignments will be reduced in grade by a full grade for each day late (e.g., B to a C) except in situations of extreme emergency. However, it is always in your interest to turn in an assignment, even if it is late; missing papers get a zero, whereas an F on a submitted paper gets 50%.