

## RCSSCI 354 Nonviolence In Action

Winter, 2012 Tu. Thurs. 10-12 28 Tyler

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**Office hours:** Please make individual appointments with me after class or by email so we can meet at our mutual convenience.

*RCSSCI 354 is a core course for the LSA Peace and Social Justice Minor  
It also fulfills the Advanced Writing in the Disciplines (AWD) Requirement*

### Required Reading:

1. C-Tools resources
2. Books: Chacham: *Breaking Ranks: Refusing to Serve in the West Bank and Gaza*  
[http://www.amazon.com/Breaking-Ranks-Refusing-Serve-Strip/dp/1590510992/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1320418630&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Breaking-Ranks-Refusing-Serve-Strip/dp/1590510992/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1320418630&sr=8-1)

### Required Videos

*We will view these videos in class on the dates below. If you're absent on a video-viewing day, please borrow it from the Askwith Media Library (second floor of the UGLI) and view it there or at home.*

1. Gandhi. 1982. (excerpts) (Feb. 2)
2. South Africa: Freedom in our Lifetime. From *A Force More Powerful*. 2000, 30 minutes. (Feb. 9)
3. South Africa: Amandla: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony. 2002, 108 minutes (Feb. 14)
4. Chile: Defeat of a Dictator. From *A Force More Powerful*. 2000, 30 minutes. (Feb. 16)
5. Struggle in the Fields. From *Chicano!* 1996, 57 minutes. (Feb. 21)
6. Pray the Devil Back to Hell, 2008, 72 minutes (Mar. 6)
7. Stonewall Uprising. 2010, 80 minutes. (Mar. 29)

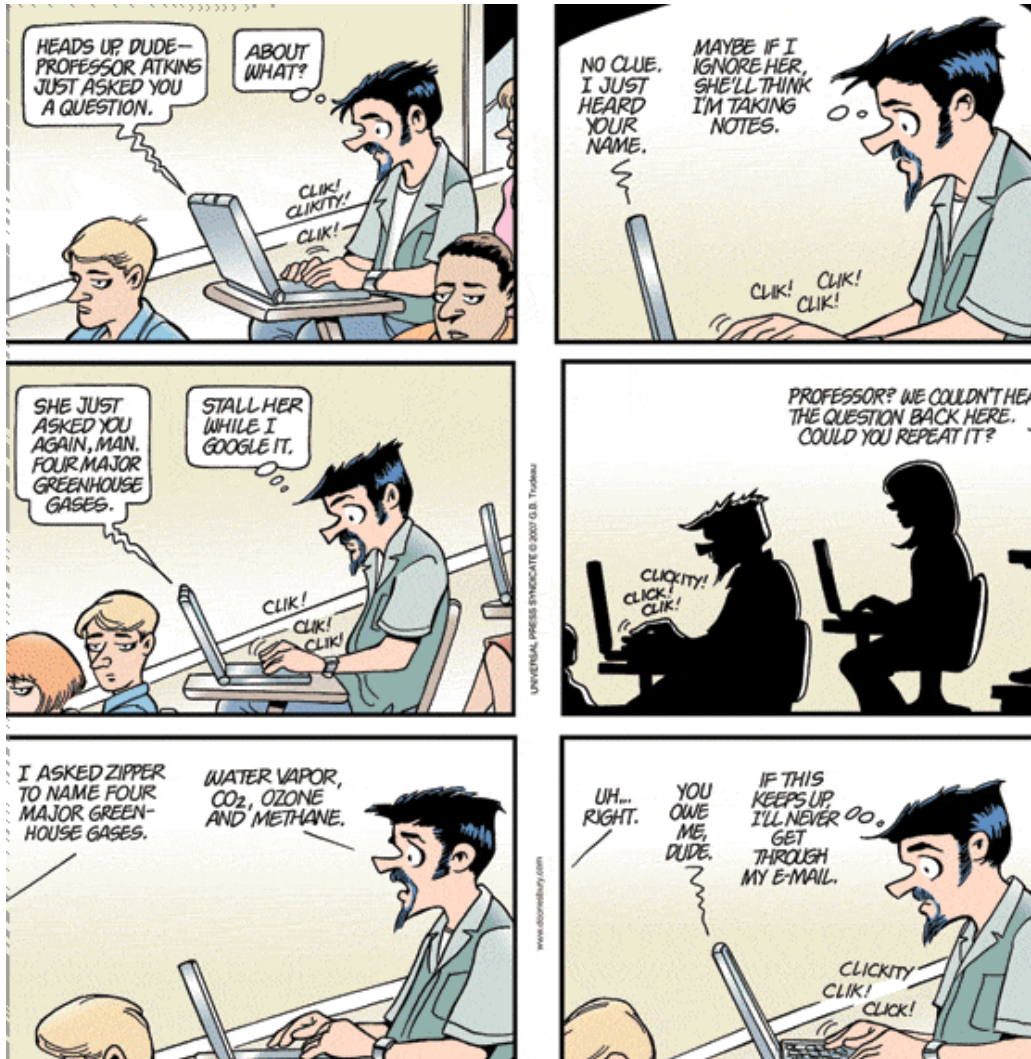
### Attendance Policy



Because all classes are discussion-intensive, attendance and active participation are a must. Arrival no later than ten minutes past the hour is expected. More than two absences (with the exception of religious holidays) and/or continual late arrival may result in a significant lowering of your grade. Please try to inform me by e-mail if you know you will be absent. I never require written excuses. If prolonged illness or family emergency significantly inhibits your participation, be sure to let me know what's happening. *It is your responsibility to find and sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of every class. This is my only record of your attendance.*

## Electronics Policy

All our readings are on C-Tools. You will need to bring each day's readings to class, either as print-outs or on your laptop. I encourage you to search the web during class for anything that will help us learn more about our topic, and to share that information with your peers. Any other electronic distractions (e-mail, Facebook, etc.) are considered unprofessional.



## Introduction to the Course

*Nonviolence in Action* focuses on alternatives to war and aggression. Our premise is that people around the world are intelligent and creative enough to find solutions to human problems without resorting to violence, and that they have done so more often than most of our history books let on. We will study a few outstanding examples in depth: Gandhi's independence movement in India; Nelson Mandela's freedom struggle in South Africa; Chile's defeat of Augusto Pinochet; the United Farm Workers Movement in the U.S.; a massive nonviolent movement in the Philippines; the nonviolent actions of the "Arab Spring;" the "Occupy Wall Street" protests in the U.S.; a powerful women's movement

in Liberia, and the historic Stonewall Uprising that sparked the movement for LGBTQ rights. Finally, we will look at how individual acts of conscience can spark a larger social movement.

*General, your tank is a powerful vehicle  
It tramples the forest, it crushes a hundred men.  
But it has one flaw:  
It requires a driver.  
General, your bomber is strong.  
It flies faster than the storm, it loads more than an  
elephant.  
But it has one flaw:  
It requires a mechanic.  
General, man is very useful.  
He knows how to fly, he knows how to murder.  
But he has one flaw:  
He knows how to think.*



- Bertolt Brecht

## Course Goals

- to understand the causes of inter-group violence
- to learn what nonviolent social movements have accomplished in communities around the world
- to understand how nonviolent methods work
- to understand and respond to arguments that justify war and violence
- to think creatively about how to move the world toward nonviolence

## Writing

### I) Short Essays:

In the first half of the course, I will assign several 2-3 page essays to help you think through specific questions or issues raised in the texts and class discussion and to let me know you've read and listened carefully. These essays should be typed, double-spaced, and edited carefully. Please refer to specific texts with titles and page numbers and/or quotes so I know which articles you've been thinking about. **The**

**style I'm looking for is personal, thoughtful, and intellectually interesting.** You can achieve this by discussing your ideas with classmates (or with yourself) before writing, making your ideas crystal clear, using a personal voice (“I think,” “I wonder,” “This makes me think about...” etc.) and taking the time to edit your finished text carefully.

## **II) Major Papers**

**Paper #1 Persuasive Paper: Convincing a Skeptical Peer of the Value of Nonviolence.** 7-10 pages. Using information from nonviolent theory and practical examples from the course, write a letter, a dialogue, or an academic argument about the value of nonviolence that speaks to the skepticism and objections of a friendly adversary of your own age. Whatever form you choose, the arguments and examples should be explained in detail and cited, when necessary, in footnotes; the friend's objections should be challenging; the language should be appropriate to the form (“academic” for the academic argument; informal for the dialogue or letter); and your overall argument should be convincing to an actual peer.

**Paper #2 Position Paper.** 7-10 pages. Using material from an in-class student presentation (not your own) write an academic argument that takes a position on one of the discussion questions raised by the student group. Include enough background material for readers to understand your argument, but concentrate most of your paper on the evidence for your position. Show that you understand common objections to your position, and respond to those objections somewhere within your argument.

**Paper #3 Final Reflection.** 4-5 pages. In your opinion, what are the best ideas, strategies, and methods we've studied that can help make war and violence obsolete? Why do you think so? This is an opportunity to review what we've studied in the course, choose the ideas that appeal to you most, and think creatively about a significant social problem. Papers will be graded on clarity, accuracy, ideas, rationale, and inventiveness. Write informally, thinking of me as your audience. No citations are necessary. I will see this paper for the first time in your portfolio at the end of the course.

## **Assessment of writing assignments**

### **Short Essays**

To ensure careful reading and thinking about the course texts and discussions, I will comment on and mark your essays with ++ (good work; solid ); + (okay, but some deeper thinking, more accurate editing, and/or more significant details would have improved it); or RW – a mandatory re-write after careful consideration of my comments and an individual writing conference if we both think it would be helpful. Many good writers get RWs, so don't be discouraged if you do. The short essays should be submitted within about a week of their assignment (though I'm flexible on this). Essays marked “+” may not be rewritten. If you're absent the day the essay is assigned, and if the topic is based on class activities or a discussion that you missed, please propose an alternative topic or question you would like to explore.

*Please understand that these marks only loosely correspond to letter grades. You might write a perfectly good paper and get a “++” yet someone else might turn in a truly original, beautifully written paper that also gets a “++” Someone might write a “+” paper that has really outstanding ideas but is somewhat confusingly written. An “RW” paper might be very well written but off the point of the assignment. Or it might have great ideas and poor attention to editing. It might have perfect grammar and style, but a serious misunderstanding of the reading. My comments on your papers and in conference should help you figure this all out.*

### Major Papers

Papers #1 and 2 typically will be written in two drafts. Your peers will comment on the first draft; I will comment on and grade the second draft. You may write a third draft of each major paper after a writing consultation with me or with faculty at the Sweetland Center for Writing (now in North Quad) if you want to try to raise your grade. Since rewriting does not automatically guarantee a higher grade, and occasionally results in a lower one, the highest of your two grades will be recorded. The fact that you’ve written three substantial drafts shows that you care about your writing and are willing to work out your ideas over time. Paper #3 (Final Reflection) will be written in one draft and included in your portfolio.

### Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio (a cardboard or three-ring binder) of all your drafts of all your papers and essays is due on Friday, April 20, three days after our last class. Please include all your “messy drafts” – the ones with my comments, your notes, etc. rather than “clean copies.” The purpose is for me (and you) to see your progress as you’ve worked through your ideas.

### Writing Conferences



*If you have any doubts or concerns about your writing, please be sure to make appointments with me to talk about how to improve it. You might also check out the Sweetland Writing Center [www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/) for help clarifying your ideas, organizing your text, achieving the tone and style I am looking for, etc. Writing consults are a free service– take advantage of them!*

### Student-Led Group Presentations

In early February you will form groups to plan in-class presentations on the topics described below. In preparation for each presentation, the group should meet frequently outside of class, find reading and discussion materials, and discuss the controversial questions I have posed about each topic (see below). You can add additional questions of your own design if you like. The purpose of your presentation is to help your fellow class

members make their own decisions about where they stand on the question/s that you present.

Each group presentation will take a two-hour class period and might involve a variety of teaching devices: mini-lectures or story-telling, skits, demonstrations, short film clips, guest speakers, experiential activities, discussion and debate -- whatever it takes to make the subject come alive and impart substantial, specific information as well as involve the class in critical analysis of your question/s. Each group should send one or two background readings to the class electronically two or three days before the presentation.

Each group will select a “point person” who will be responsible for contacting members about upcoming meetings, facilitating the group process, and communicating with me, if necessary. *Each student is expected to play an equal role in the preparation as well as in the presentation itself.*

The most successful presentations are carefully practiced and timed. *Please e-mail me with any technology requests (video projector, MAC adapter cord) as soon as you know what you'll need. The RC tech team will deliver and pick up the equipment.*

## **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

Group 1: WWII: Could nonviolence have stopped Hitler?





Group 2: OVERTHROWING LIBYA'S DICTATORSHIP: Was NATO bombing really necessary? Did the encouragement of violent resistance leave Libya with societal challenges that could have been avoided?



Group 3: EGYPT'S "FACEBOOK REVOLUTION." How did the "new media" used in Egypt's revolution of 2010 change nonviolent theory and practice? How central were these media to the movement's success?



Group 4: OCCUPY WALL STREET. How effective are the efforts of "the 99%" in challenging the structures of power? Or is that their purpose?

### Final Grades

Your course grade and/or RC evaluation will be based on the **quality and depth of your writing and thinking**, your **attendance and professional involvement** in class, the **quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussion**, and your **contributions to your group presentation**. *To receive an "A" your writing and attention to feedback must be outstanding; your frequent additions to class discussion must be inclusive of your peers and helpful in moving the conversation forward; your attendance must be stellar, and your role in your group presentation must be pro-active, cooperative, and intellectually sound. Please note that simply completing all the required work is expected of everyone, not grounds for an outstanding grade.*

## Plagiarism



This unusual “sin” is taken very seriously at U-M. In the grand scheme of things (murderous dictators, WWII) it is minor, but in fact, plagiarism can cause you to fail a class or even be dismissed from the university. Please don’t be tempted to cut and paste paragraphs from the Internet, or use ideas from others without crediting them. Plagiarism is surprisingly easy to detect without any special software. I’d rather see bad writing than suspicious passages.

**CALENDAR (Reading assignments and any changes to the schedule will be posted on the blackboard at the beginning of each class session)**

Thurs. Jan. 5	Introductions
Tues. Jan. 10	Definitions
Thurs. Jan. 12	Human nature
Tues. Jan. 17	Relationships between religion, violence, and nonviolence
Thurs. Jan. 19	Causes of war and terrorism
Tues. Jan. 24	Causes of war and terrorism, cont.
Thurs. Jan. 26	How nonviolence works
Tues. Jan. 31	How nonviolence works, cont.
Thurs. Feb. 2	<i>Satyagraha</i> : Gandhi’s “truth force”
	<b>Choose groups for presentations</b>
Tues. Feb. 7	Analyzing Gandhi’s movement
Thurs. Feb. 9	South Africa: Freedom in our Lifetime
Tues. Feb. 14	South Africa: The role of music in the movement
Thurs. Feb. 16	Chile: Defeat of a Dictator
Tues. Feb. 21	U.S. Grape Boycott: Struggle in the Fields
Thurs. Feb. 23	Philippines: People Power
	<b>Winter Recess</b>
Tues. Mar. 6	Liberia: Pray the Devil Back to Hell
Thurs. Mar. 8	<b>First Draft, Paper #1 Due. Peer Review.</b>
Tues. Mar. 13	Student Presentations: Group 1
Thurs. Mar. 15	Group 2
Tues. Mar. 20	Group 3
Thurs. Mar. 22	Group 4
Tues. Mar. 27	<b>First Draft, Paper #2 due. Peer Review.</b>
Thurs. Mar. 29	Stonewall Uprising: The protest that sparked the movement for LGBTQ rights
Tues. Apr. 3	Analyzing Stonewall and the LGBTQ movement
	<b>Second Draft, Paper #2 due.</b>
Thurs. Apr. 5	Conscientious Objection. Discussion: <i>Breaking Ranks</i>



Tues. Apr. 10  
Thurs. Apr. 12

Conscientious Objection (continued)  
Dismantling the war system



Tues. Apr. 17 Last class. Pot-luck breakfast at someone's house nearby.

Friday. Apr. 20

Portfolios due in the RC front office at 4:00PM