

STMA 593-03: SPIRITUALITY OF PEACEMAKING

School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
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Hunthausen, Room 100
Weekend Format:
April 1, 2 May 19-21
Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Rather than examine spirituality in a merely general way, this course will analyze it in terms of the practice of liberation and non-violent action. Influenced by Latin American liberation theology, this course will look at spirituality in the concrete actualization of faith, hope and charity. The spirituality described and explored in this course poses to the human spirit the questions that rise from reality itself.

“Does hope really have meaning for humanity? Is it true that love is our most profound human truth? Is it true that the bottom most stratum of reality is composed of good and truth?”¹ Jon Sobrino argues that “there is no spiritual life without actual, historical life. It is impossible to live with spirit unless that spirit becomes flesh” (4, Sobrino)

There are many metaphors to speak of spirituality. In this course the spirituality of peacemaking, will articulate a spirituality that is made possible by encountering God in history. In particular, we will be looking at spirituality foundational to peacemakers and their practice of nonviolent action. Sobrino identifies in historical terms peacemakers as those “who even in a time of struggle and warfare seek to humanize conflicts. They seek to conduct armed conflicts as humanly as possible. They foster peaceful means for the resolution of conflicts even amid the violence of struggle. In biblical language, he writes Peacemakers are those who long to beat their swords into plowshares.” (37, Sobrino)

This notion of non-violent resistance is key and broadly defined. Key, however, is an embodiment of social change that actively and persistently challenges violent and unjust conditions. In this course we will be exploring the spirituality of peacemaking as a spiritual journey of Christian non-violence resistance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Identify presuppositions and foundations of spirituality
- Understand the social and theological components imbedded in the struggle for human rights and justice
- Explore the sources of spirituality and in particular, martyrdom and Christian non-violent resistance
- Learn the skills of non-violent action

¹ Page 178 The Spirituality of Liberation, Jon Sobrino

TEXTS

Required Reading:

- Wink, Walter. *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millenium*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998
- Sobrino, Jon. *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1998
- Fritz, Mary and Keeler, Robert. *Just Peace: A Revolution in Progress*. Pax Christi USA
- Kownacki, Mary Lou. *The Nonviolent Movement/Spirituality for the 21st Century*. National Catholic Peace Movement

Recommended Texts: *

- de Gruchy, John W. *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press
- Slattery, Laura. *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living*. Pace e Bene Press
- Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Abingdon Press, 1996
- Baum, Gregory and Wells, Harold. *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1997
- Garcia-Rivera, Alex. *A Wounded Innocence*
- Wink, Walter. *Naming the Powers*. Fortress Press

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation 20 pts

The nature of the course makes it particularly important for students to attend each class session. Please note that much of what determines the grade is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Students are required to demonstrate effective group skills by actively contributing to group discussions and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect. It also includes lively discussion and timely reading of the assigned texts and viewing of the films that reflect *critical* theological and cultural assessment.

Written Works 50 pts total

1. **Journal Reflections** (10 pts each)

All students are expected to keep a journal as a way of recording and reflecting on initial affective responses as well as cognitive challenges that surface throughout the course readings and/or class discussions. This is an attempt for you to reflect at a deeper level on these very complex issues that we will address in class. I will not be collecting the journal but I will ask you to submit a reflection paper as a

* Students may choose to do a book review/presentation to the class on one of the recommended texts. This can be done as a team. Please see instructor for further directions.

- discernment of the themes that emerge in your journal. The first journal reflection paper is due on the start of the second weekend, which is **Friday, May 19th**. The second journal reflection paper will be due on **Wednesday, May 31st**. These are to be no more than 3 pages and will be further discussed in class.
2. **Reflection Papers** (15 pts each; 30 pts total)
The second written work will be two reflection papers, 3-5 pages each, typed and double-spaced. They are to identify the central themes of the required text *The Powers that Be* and *Just Peace*. You are to demonstrate an understanding of a key point of the text and respond to that theme. The first reflection paper on *The Powers that Be* is due **Tuesday, May 2nd** and the second reflection paper on *Just Peace* is due **Sunday, May 21st**.
 3. **PowerPoint Presentation** (25 pts)
Students are encouraged to look into their own tradition as well as the more public prophets (i.e. Monsignor Romero, Martin Luther King Jr, Dorothy Day, etc.) and present to the class a 10-15 minute PowerPoint on who they were, what their context was, the source of conflict, and their spiritual and/or nonviolent actions. I invite you to be as creative as possible. Examples of this will be shown in class.
 4. **Homework Assignment** (15 pts)
All students will be required to lead a class discussion on one of the chapters from Jon Sobrino's book *Spirituality of Liberation*. There are twelve chapters in his book and at the first day of class students will be asked to choose a chapter to present in class. Students have the option of presenting the chapter in a PowerPoint or a two-four page outline (please include page numbers next to any bullets citing material from the chapter). The purpose is not to present orally the whole chapter (that can be done in the written outline) but to choose one or two key points from that chapter and lead a meaningful discussion. Students can do this individually or as a team of two or three (no more than three students to a chapter).

GRADING

Class Participation/Group Skills

Students are graded on:

- 1) Use of effective communication skills in class (rely on learnings from Pastoral Helping)
- 2) Punctual attendance
- 3) Active participation in the healthy development of the class that includes discussion of text and displaying attitudes of mutual respect and openness to transformation.

Scholastic Performance

Students are graded on:

- 1) Demonstrated ability to think in a rigorously critical and theological manner about the course material
- 2) Demonstrated ability to write (assigned papers) and speak (class discussion and presentation) in a way that shows they have engaged the material.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Date	In-Class Overview	Assignments
April 1 st Saturday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review syllabus; personal introductions ▪ Examine key principles of nonviolence as articulated by Mahatma Gandhi ▪ <i>Jesus and Nonviolence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>The Non-violent Movement/Spirituality for the 21st Century</u>
April 1 st Saturday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring nonviolent power ▪ Structural violence & non-violent power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Powers That Be</u>
April 2 nd Sunday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View: <u>A Force More Powerful</u> ▪ The Power of Action 	
April 2 nd Sunday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Necessity of Liberation Practice for Spirituality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Spirituality of Liberation: Intro, Ch. 1-3</u> ▪ Please view film <u>Romero</u> in time for next weekend
May 19 th Friday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View: <u>A Force More Powerful Part II</u> ▪ Student-led discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Holiness & Politics</u> (ch.4) ▪ <u>Spirituality of Persecution & Martyrdom</u> (ch.5) ▪ <u>The Divine Elements</u> (ch.6)
May 20 th Saturday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (cont.) Spirituality of Liberation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Reign of God</u> (ch.7) ▪ <u>Conflict in the Church</u> (ch.9)
May 20 th Saturday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discipleship and nonviolent love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Martyrdom</u> (ch.10) ▪ <u>Hope of the Poor</u> (ch.11) ▪ <u>Toward a New Spirituality</u> (ch.12)
May 21 st Sunday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Journey of Transformation ▪ Dismantling structural violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Just Peace: A Revolution in Progress</u>
May 21 st Sunday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stages of community making ▪ Principles of nonviolence ▪ Nonviolent activity guidelines ▪ Nonviolent action checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student-led closing prayer service