

# ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

8 Credits

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Schedule & Classrooms:

Mondays 6-10pm Library 1612

Wednesdays 6-10pm Library 2127

Office Hours: by appointment

Remembering ourselves and our power can lead to revolution, but it requires more than recalling new facts. *Re-membering* involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives. When we forget who we are we do not merely drop some data. We *dis-member* ourselves, with unhappy consequences for our politics, our work, our hearts.

--Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*

## I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

While most people deplore violence, we nevertheless live in a very violent society. Violence permeates American culture and society, spilling over from Hollywood and the corporate media to our homes, schools, streets and political arena. In this program, we will examine the origins and manifestations of physical, social, economic and political violence in different settings and contexts. Against this backdrop, we will explore creative projects and strategies designed to address both the roots of violence and its symptoms. The program will be taught in a dynamic workshop format and include basic skill training, guest presentations and films. It would also incorporate art, music, poetry, and other forms of creative expression.

## II. IS THIS THE RIGHT PROGRAM FOR YOU?

If you are reading this syllabus, you have some interest in the subject matter of this class. Still, I would like to invite you to reflect, if only briefly, on whether this is the right class for you at this point in your life and in your education.

- **Are you willing to make yourself vulnerable and reflect on your PERSONAL journey?**

This class is first and foremost about us and the violent culture and relationships that shape our lives. Notwithstanding your intellectual and political interests in the themes this class promises to cover, there are most likely personal reasons that prompted your interest in alternatives to violence. If you are ready to reflect on the ways in which violence and non-violence shaped your own life, this is the right class for you!

- **Are you open to non-traditional/critical pedagogy?**

This class will be taught in a non-traditional style, even by Evergreen standards. Rather than assuming that I as the teacher have the knowledge and my primary task is to share it with you, I view the class as a learning community, as a context wherein we all learn and teach. As we read, meet with various people and participate in class activities, we will experience a range of emotions, generate an enormous amount of insights and identify many questions. Throughout this process, you will be encouraged to think critically and independently and to question taken for granted assumptions. While most students find this approach to teaching and learning more stimulating than the traditional formats of lectures or seminars, the practice of critical pedagogy can be painful and unsettling to some. If you are open to a new experience that may be challenging and uncomfortable at times, this is the right class for you!

- **Are you willing to be an ACTIVE and COLLABORATIVE participant in a learning community?**

We will devote considerable time, effort, and thought to creating a “safe space” in the classroom and to building and nurturing a vibrant learning community. This approach to learning and living is highly relevant to the subject-matter of this program; it views learning as a developmental process and emphasizes the value of building connections, power-sharing collaborative team work. To be an active member of such a community, you should be able to make a commitment to attend ALL classes, to actively in all class activities and to contribute as much as you can to enhance your classmates learning and to help establish a collaborative culture in our learning community.

### **III. REQUIRED TEXTS (in order of use)**

- Toni Morrison, *Love* (week 2)
- Hendrix, Harville and Helen Hunt, *Giving the Love that Heals: A Guide for Parents* (week 4)
- Guilloud, Stephanie, (ed) *Through the Eyes of the Judged* (week 5)
- Alice Sebold, *Lucky* (week 6)
- Aronson, Elliot, *Nobody Left to Hate: Teaching Compassion After Columbine* (week 7)
- Hamill, Sam, *Poets Against the War Anthology* (week 8)
- Ursula LeGuin, *The Telling* (week 9)

#### **IV. WEEK-BY-WEEK OUTLINE:**

- Week 1: Community as an Alternative to Violence: Program overview and group building
- Week 2: Theories of Violence and Nonviolence
- Week 3: The Role of the Media in Promoting Violence and Nonviolence
- Week 4: Uprooting Violence in the Home: Parenting and Nonviolent Communication
- Week 5: Transforming the Injustice System
- Week 6: Confronting Violence Against Women
- Week 7: Responding to School Violence
- Week 8: Alternatives to War
- Week 9: Healing the Planet
- Week 10: Where Do We Go From Here? Integration, Reflection & Action

#### **V. ASSIGNMENTS:**

The following assignments are designed to help deepen your understanding of class themes and maximize your learning. They will help you integrate theoretical concepts and reading material with your life experiences. In addition to prompting you to think about certain issues and questions in preparation for class, assignments were designed to improve your critical thinking and writing and research skills (both library and web-based). Because of the volume of material covered, it is very important that you don't fall behind and submit ALL your assignments on time.

You will have the option to re-write ALL your assignments and re-submit them with your final portfolio.

##### **1. Regular Attendance**

Because this class involves experiential learning in the classroom, which cannot be reproduced if missed, students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, arrive on-time and leave when class ends. Students are expected to notify the faculty or a classmate in advance of an avoidable absence. While every absence will require make-up work, unaddressed absences may result in loss of credit.

##### **2. Keeping a Program Journal**

Because one of the key objectives of this program is to enhance your self-awareness and social consciousness, you would need to keep a journal to reflect on your personal and intellectual journey. You should bring your journal to class every day as it will be the basis for both your seminar participation and our group discussions of media representations of program themes.

**You are expected to submit your journal with your final portfolio.**

Your journal will include two major sections: one with your response to the readings and the other with your media analysis but occasionally you will be asked to use it during class for free writes and other activities.

**Reading Responses:** You should have an entry for each class text consisting of  
a. 1-2 paragraphs you wrote on how does this particular text contribute to our exploration of alternatives to violence  
b. A lingering question you are left with after reading the text  
c. 2-3 memorable quotes with 1-2 sentence explaining your choice.

**Media & popular culture analysis:** our program journal should include at least one entry per week, examining conventional and alternative media items as well as music and other aspects of popular culture related to the week's theme. You should keep your journal up to date as we will make an attempt to integrate your journals into our seminar discussions

### **3. Autobiographical Collage**

On a large page of newsprint, illustrate your relationship with the program's themes, using popular magazines, drawing and some writing

**Due Wednesday, January 7**

### **4. Autobiographical Essay (2-4 double-spaced)**

Describe and analyze turning points in your life and in the social, political and economic context around you, which shaped your experience of and relationship to violence and prompted you to explore alternatives to violence.

**Due Monday, January 12**

### **5. Film Review (2-3 double-spaced pages)**

Choose a film (documentary or feature film) that addresses at least two central themes we explored in this class and critically examine it in relation to these themes. You should watch the film prior to completing this assignment even if you've seen it before. The review should contain a brief description of the film's content and a major section featuring your analysis of how the film deals with different forms of violence and of any alternatives to violence explored in the film.

**Due Monday, January 26**

### **6. Lesson Plan (2-3 double-spaced pages)**

Create an outline for a lesson plan dealing with a theme addressed in this class. You will receive more instructions for this assignment in class.

**Due Monday March 1**

### **7. Analytical Essay (4-6 double-spaced)**

The primary goal of this assignment is to integrate insights generated from readings, speakers, films and class discussions with some original research on a particular form of violence and

creative ways to confront it. At the minimum, you should have 3 references to readings, including several concise direct quotes.

**Outline due no later than Monday, February 9; Essay due Wednesday, February 19**

**8. Group Project and presentation**

In groups of 3-4 students, you will have to compile an annotated bibliography and resource list on one of topics explored weeks 3-9.

Your written reports are due Monday, March 8

You should also prepare a brief class presentation of your project for week 10.

**VI. WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1 COMMUNITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE:  
PROGRAM OVERVIEW & GROUP BUILDING**

	<b>Monday, Jan. 5</b>	<b>Wednesday, Jan. 7</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Introduction Film clip & discussion: “Bowling for Columbine”	Autobiographical Collage presentations
<b>Reading Due</b>		
<b>Assignments Due</b>		Autobiographical collage

**WEEK 2 THEORIES OF VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE:  
WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?**

	<b>Monday, Jan. 12</b>	<b>Wednesday, Jan. 14</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Facilitation workshop Lecture & Discussion: theories of violence and its alternatives Video clip: Toni Morrison	Media Journals Seminar on Toni Morrison’s novel, <i>Love</i>
<b>Reading Due</b>		Toni Morrison, <i>Love</i>
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Autobiographical essay	

**WEEK 3 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMPTING VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE**

	<b>Monday, Jan. 19</b>	<b>Wednesday, Jan. 21</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Campus Holiday – MLK Jr. Day	Media Journal Media & conflict workshop
<b>Reading Due</b>		Article TBA
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Participation at MLK event Journal entry on MLK’s birthday	

**WEEK 4 UPROOTING VIOLENCE IN THE HOME: PARENTING AND NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION**

	<b>Monday, Jan. 26</b>	<b>Wednesday, Jan. 28</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Seminar on <i>Giving the Love that Heals</i> Conflict styles exercise	Media Journal Nonviolent communication workshop
<b>Reading due</b>	Hendrix & Hunt, <i>Giving the Love that Heals</i>	
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Film Review	

**WEEK 5 TRANSFORMING THE (IN)JUSTICE SYSTEM**

	<b>Monday, Feb. 2</b>	<b>Wednesday, Feb. 4</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Guest speaker(s) TBA Seminar on <i>Through the Eyes of the Judged</i>	Media journal Diversity workshop/ Day of Presence forum
<b>Reading Due</b>	<i>Through the Eyes of the Judged</i>	
<b>Assignments Due</b>		

**WEEK 6 CONFRONTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

	<b>Monday, Feb. 9</b>	<b>Wednesday, Feb. 11</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Seminar on <i>Lucky</i> Film TBA	Media Journal Guest speaker(s) TBA
<b>Reading Due</b>	Sebold, <i>Lucky</i>	Portions of The Vagina Monologues
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Outline of analytical essay	

**WEEK 7 RESPONDING TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

	<b>Monday, Feb. 16</b>	<b>Wednesday, Feb. 18</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	CAMPUS HOLIDAY— PRESIDENTS’ DAY	Seminar on <i>Nobody Left to Hate</i> Curriculum Development workshop
<b>Reading Due</b>		Aronson, <i>Nobody Left to Hate</i>
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Watch “Bowling for Columbine” and Teacher Guide on DVD	

**WEEK 8 ALTERNATIVES TO WAR**

	<b>Monday, Feb. 23</b>	<b>Wednesday, Feb. 25</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Lecture or Guest Speaker Seminar on <i>Poets Against the War</i>	Media Journal Cultures of Peace Workshop
<b>Reading Due</b>	Hamill, <i>Poets Against the War</i>	
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Analytical Essay	

**WEEK 9 HEALING THE PLANET**

	<b>Monday, March 1</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 3</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Media Journal Seminar on <i>The Telling</i> Video clip on the Procession	<i>The Procession of the Species Celebration</i> Guest presentation: Eli Sterling at the Community Art Studio downtown
<b>Reading Due</b>	LeGuin, <i>The Telling</i>	
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Lesson Plan	

**WEEK 10 WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?  
INTEGRATION, REFLECTION & ACTION**

	<b>Monday, March 8 Int. Women's Day</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 10</b>
<b>Topics/Activities</b>	Group Presentations	Summary & Integration Potluck
<b>Reading Due</b>		
<b>Assignments Due</b>	Resource List Group project presentations	Final portfolio, program worksheet and self-evaluation