

**OVERCOMING VIOLENCE:  
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**Professors: M. Christian Green (HDS), Rodney Petersen (BTI), Thomas Massaro (WJST), Ed Rodman (EDS), Samuel Johnson (BUSTh), and Ann Riggs (NCCC)**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

The twentieth century has been described as the most violent century in history. The problem of violence has recurred anew in this century with the “War on Terror” and genocide in Darfur. Two international bodies, the World Council of Churches and the World Health Organization, began the new millennium by calling for renewed attention to violence and for theological and political solutions. Yet despite recent calls for apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation, our policies and theologies continue to waver between retributive and restorative approaches. This course will survey classic understandings of violence and its effects, along with contemporary writings in theology, law, politics, and public policy. In exploring various movements in political theology, restorative justice, and conflict resolution, we will examine violence as a problem of deep religious and spiritual significance for Christian churches and other religious traditions, and for the health of the human community in the 21st century.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to regular participation in class, students have three options for fulfilling course requirements. One of the following three options (or a combination thereof) should be chosen in consultation with and with the approval of a course instructor. There will be no final examination in this course.

**Option #1 Three Short Papers:**

- (1) Paper of 3-5 pages on your approach to violence as guided by Units I and II of this syllabus due on *Monday, March 5*.
- (2) Paper of 5-10 pages framed by Unit III. This paper may be a sermon, essay, or analysis of the relationship between individual effort and work to overcome violence. This may also be a case study of a specific encounter with violence and the effort to overcome it. This paper is due on *Wednesday, March 21*.
- (3) Paper of 10-15 pages applying your approach to issues suggested by Unit IV of this syllabus. This paper is due by the end of Reading Period, *Wednesday, May 16*.

**Option #2 Final Paper:**

A paper of 20-25 pages is due by the end of Reading Period. The topic of the paper is to be negotiated with one of the course instructors and initial bibliography submitted before the HDS Spring Break (March 25–31). This project may take a variety of print, audio, and visual forms.

**Option #3 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation & Statement**

Students may join together in groups of three (or more) to strategize and develop materials for an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. This should provide for a 2 hour mock assembly at which other students will be welcome to attend. A Statement to be defended should be developed, oral case made with appropriate précis developed for submission. (In 2011, the WCC will hold an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. All statements drawn up in theology schools and submitted for use will be used in the development of such a Statement in the summer of 2008 for

consideration by the churches.) Students electing this option should consult with faculty and prepare a proposal prior to Spring Break.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

### Week 1 – Introduction

January 31 – Introduction (Green, Petersen, Massaro, Rodman, Johnson, Riggs)

- Opening statements and introduction by the faculty members.

#### Suggestions for Practical Theology:

A class folder is available on line for resources and suggestions in practical theology. Initial suggestions are noted in this syllabus.

Ron Kraybill, *Transforming the Peacebuilder*, 2006 Version (See course instructors for copies).

Professor, Conflict Transformation Program, Eastern Mennonite University

## UNIT I – PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE

### Week 2 – The Phenomenon of Violence: Philosophy, Sociology, and Psychology

February 5 – Evolutionary Biological and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives (Green)

Readings:

- Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (1963), chs 3-5 (What Aggression Is Good For; The Spontaneity of Aggression; Habit, Ritual, and Magic)
- Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide*, chs. 1 (Homicide and Human Nature), 10 (Retaliation and Revenge), and 12 (On Cultural Variation)
- Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, pp. 25-43 (Dialogue with Jürgen Habermas) and 85-136 (Dialogue with Jacques Derrida)
- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, chs. 2 (Violence, Mourning, and Politics) and 5 (Precarious Life).

February 7 – Twentieth Century Classics (Petersen)

Readings:

- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chs. 5-8 (selections on aggressiveness, death instinct, civilization, guilt, instincts, repetition compulsion, religion, unconsciousness).
- Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (1908), chs. III (Prejudices Against Violence), VI (Ethics of Violence), and Appendix II (Apology for Violence)
- Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 35-106 (Concerning Violence).
- Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, ch. 1.
- Jacques Ellul, *Violence*, ch. 1.

### Week 3 – The Phenomenon of Violence: Theological Considerations

February 12 – Violence Portrayed in Religious Traditions (Petersen)

Readings:

- George Huntston Williams, “Four Modalities of Violence,” 16:1-2 *Journal of Church and State* (1974) Pt. 1 and Pts. 2-3, 1:14-30, 2:237-61.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, II, 5 (The Beatitudes).
- Marjorie Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, Chs. 2 (Rebellion Against Creation) and 5 (Sin Through Violence)
- Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, pp. 13-98, 99-165.
- Rodney Petersen, “Branding Identity: Church as Neighborhood Center for Forgiveness and Reconciliation and for Restorative Justice,” in Emmanuel Clapsis, ed., *Violence and Christian Spirituality*

February 14 –Rene Girard, Violence, and the Sacred (*Guest: Prof. Robert Daly, BC*)

*Readings:*

- Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, chs. 1 (The Sacrifice), 2 (The Sacrificial Crisis), 4 (The Origins of Myth and Ritual), 10 (The Gods, the Dead, the Sacred, and Sacrificial Substitution), and 11 (The Unity of All Rites).
- Mark Heim, *Saved from Sacrifice. A Theology of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006): 1-36.
- Fred Smith, “A Prophetic Religious Education for Y2K and Beyond: And Black Boys Shall See Visions,” in Rodney Petersen, ed., *Theological Literacy for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 292-310.

#### **Suggestions for Practical Theology**

*Why Violence? Why Not Peace?* A Study Guide to help individuals and groups in the churches to reflect and act in the Decade to overcome Violence (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002): 24 pp.

### **UNIT II – LEGAL AND STRUCTURAL REMEDIES TO VIOLENCE**

#### **Week 4 – Violence Viewed Within Broader Christian Theological Frameworks**

February 19 – **NO CLASS, PRESIDENTS’ DAY**

February 21 – The Functions of Law and Grace (Massaro, Riggs)

*Readings:*

- J. Denny Weaver, “Atonement and the Gospel of Peace,” in Enns, Holland and Riggs, eds., *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, pp.109-123.
- Deenabandhu Manchala, ed., *Nurturing Peace*
- John D. Rempel and Jeffrey Gros, eds., *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking*, chs. by Eric W. Gritsch, “Church Unity and Peacemaking: A Lutheran Perspective,” and John D. Rempel, “The Unity of the Church and the Christian Peace Witness: A Mennonite Perspective.”

*Korean Christianity is one of the most dynamic forms of Christianity alive in the world today. Korean Christians see themselves as “mediators” between the first and third worlds. Issues of relationship between North and South Korea are also shaping global politics. Our interest in violence needs to take into account a Korean perspective for religious and political reasons.*

### **2006-2007 Costas Consultation in Global Mission “Mission and Reconciliation in the Korean Church”**

Dates: 23 – 24 February (22 February advance KIATS Session)

Location: Schools of the Boston Theological Institute, including HDS (Thursday) and Andover Newton Theological School (Friday afternoon and Saturday morning).

Note: In association with the Korean Institute for Advanced Theological Studies the BTI is planning a workshop in Korea from May 27 – June 10. Watch the BTI Newsletter and website for updates on this possible venture for late May 2007.

#### **Week 5 –Law, Religion, and Restorative Justice**

February 26—Violence and the Law (Green)

*Readings:*

- Robert Cover, “Violence and the Word,” in *Narrative, Violence, and the Law*, pp. 203-38.
- Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, chs. 4 (Teleology on the Rocks) and 12 (On Being the Object of Property)
- Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, esp. chs. 2 (Vengeance and Forgiveness) and 6 (Facing History)
- Austin Sarat, ed., *Law, Violence, and the Possibility of Justice*, chs. 1 (Situating Law Between the Realities of Violence and the Claims of Justice), 2 (The Vicissitudes of Law’s Violence), and 6 (Why the Law is Also Nonviolent)

February 28—From Retributive to Restorative Justice (Petersen)

*Readings:*

- Michael Hadley, ed., *The Spiritual Roots of Restorative Justice*, pp.1-30, 119-142.
- Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, pp. 1-144.
- Daniel Van Ness and Karen Strong, *Restoring Justice*, pp. 1-30.
- Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be*, pp. 1-62.

#### **Suggestions for Practical Theology**

Restorative justice exercises: Begin with Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002). Additional exercises for use among small groups will be handed out in class.

### **UNIT III – MODELS, MOVEMENTS, AND MEANS**

#### **Week 6 – Models, Movements and Means to Overcoming Violence**

March 5 – Mahatma Gandhi, Howard Thurman, and the Centennial of Nonviolence (Petersen and Rodman)

*Readings:*

- Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 61-112, 305-334.
- Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*.
- Anthony da Silva, SJ, “Through Nonviolence to Truth: Gandhi’s Vision of Reconciliation,” in Helmick and Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, pp. 305-327.

March 7 – Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the American Civil Rights Movement (Rodman and Riggs)

*Readings:*

- Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, SA, eds., *Ending Racism in the Church*
- Martin Luther King, James M. Washington, ed., *Testament of Hope*, (readings to be announced)
- Malcolm X, George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks* (readings TBA)
- Michael Haynes, *Models for Ministry Series*, Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series, BTI, 2004.

#### **Week 7 – Models, Movements and Means to Overcoming Violence**

March 12 – The Democratic Tide and the Age of Apology (Petersen and Green)

*Readings:*

- Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, pp. 457-506.
- R.L. Brooks “The Age of Apology,” in R. L. Brooks, ed., *When Sorry Isn’t Enough*, pp. 3-11.
- Daniel Philpott, “Beyond Politics as Usual,” and Nicholas Wolterstorff, “The Place of Forgiveness in the Actions of the State,” in Philpott, ed., *The Politics of Past Evil*, pp. 11-44, 87-112.
- Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe’s Ghosts After Communism*, “Introduction” and “Haunted Lands.”

March 14 – No Justice, No Peace: Economic and Environmental Rights as Nonviolence (Green, Rodman and Riggs)

*Readings:*

- Mohammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, pp. 33-83, 191-212.
- Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed* (Knopf, 2006): 154-229, 277-295.
- Rigoberta Menchu, *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, ch. 7, 13, 17-19, 24, 27, 30, 33-34.
- Nicholas Hildyard, "Blood, Babies and the Social Roots of Conflict," in Mohammed Suliman, ed., *Ecology, Politics and Violent Conflict*, pp. 3-24.
- Wangari Maathai, "Planting the Future," (interview with Wangari Maathai) *Speaking of Faith*, December 21, 2006.
- Muhammad Yunus, "Nobel Lecture," December 10, 2006.

**Suggestions for Practical Theology**

*A Mennonite Statement and Study on Violence* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998); see also Dale W. Brown, *Biblical Pacifism* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 2003).

**UNIT IV – ISSUES****Week 8 – Personal and Domestic Violence**

March 19—Suicide, Martyrdom and Self-Destruction (Petersen)

*Readings:*

- Emil Durkheim, *Suicide*, pp. 57-144.
- James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*.

March 21—Sexual and Domestic Violence (Green)

*Readings:*

- Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*, Pt. III (Power, Status, and Hate).
- John Stoltenberg, *Refusing to Be a Man*, Part I (The Ethics of Male Sexual Identity).
- Catharine MacKinnon, *Are Women Human?*, 18 (Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights) and 22 (Genocide's Sexuality)
- Marie Fortune, *Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited*, Chs. 1-4 (can skim biblical material in first half of Ch. 3).

**NO CLASS MARCH 26 & 28, SPRING BREAK****Week 9 – Health and the Environment**

April 2 – Violence and Health (Green)

*Readings:*

- World Health Organization, *World Report on Violence and Health*, executive summary.
- Sandra Bloom, *Creating Sanctuary*, esp. ch. 1 (Trauma Theory: Deconstructing the Social) and 4 (Creating Sanctuary: Reconstructing the Social).
- Gary Gunderson, *Deeply Woven Roots*, Ch. 1.

April 4 – Spoiling the "Tent": Brown Fields in Urban Boston (Rodman and Massaro)

*Readings:*

- David Hollenbach, *Common Good and Christian Ethics*, pp. 32-61, 173-211.
- Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel, with United for a Fair Economy, ed., *Economic Apartheid In America* (readings TBA)

### Suggestions for Practical Theology

National Religious Partnership on the Environment website has links to accessible theological, faith-rooted practical resources, information on conferences and congregational/parish programs from the partners: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Evangelical Environmental Network, National Council of Churches and Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life <http://nrpe.org/> and <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/> (for some reason the link to the USCCB from nrep.org doesn't work correctly).

### Holy Week for Orthodox, Latin & Protestant Christians

#### Week 10 – Issues of Ethnicity and Race

April 9 – Destruction of Neighbor: Ethnicity and Identity (*Guest: Keelan Downton, NCC*)

*Readings:*

- Theo Tschuy, “Focal Points for Further Reflection,” in *Ethnic Conflict and Religion: Challenge to the Churches*, pp.135-156.
- Raymond Helmick, SJ, “Does Religion Fuel or Heal in Conflicts?” and Geraldine Smyth, OP, “Brokenness, Forgiveness, Healing and Peace in Ireland,” in Helmick and Petersen, eds., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, pp. 81-96, 329-360.

April 11 – Destruction of Neighbor: Race and Identity (Rodman)

*Readings:*

- Alvin F. Poussaint and Amy Alexander, *Lay My Burden Down* (readings TBA).
- Rodney Petersen, “Mission in the Context of Racism, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation,” in Jeyaraj, Pazmino and Petersen, *The Antioch Agenda*.

#### Week 11 – Just War, Terrorism and Peace

April 16 – Just War Theory in Evolution and Context (Massaro, Riggs and Simion)

*Readings:*

- Lisa Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, pp. 55-118.
- John H. Erickson, "An Orthodox Peace Witness?" in Rempel and Gros, eds., *The Fragmentation of the Church and its Unity in Peacemaking*, pp. 48-58
- Tom Massaro, *Catholic Perspectives on War and Peace*, 87-106, 107-121
- H.H. Pope Shenouda III, "Diabolic Wars," pp. 1-189 (skim).
- H.H. Pope Shenouda III, "Contemplations on the Ten Commandments: Vol 3. The Sixth Commandment."

April 18 – Terrorism and Humanitarian Relief (Guest Lecturers)

*Readings:*

- Mark Juergensmayer. *Terror in the Mind of God*, Ch. 1 (Terror and God) and 7-11 (The Logic of Religious Violence).
- David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action* (reading TBA).
- Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, Pt. I, esp. chs. 1 (Alienation) and 2 (Humiliation).
- Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell* (optional reading).

### Suggestions for Practical Theology

*Receive One Another. Hospitality in Ecumenical Perspective*, Diane Kessler, ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2005); see also: Richard Lischer, *The End of Words: The Language of Reconciliation in a Culture of Violence (The Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

## UNIT V – CONSTRUCTING A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

### Week 12 – Religion, Identity and Violence

## April 23—Self/Other Conflict and Personal Identity (Petersen)

## Readings:

- Marjorie Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, ch. 8 (Guilt and Freedom) and 9 (Forgiveness and Transformation).
- Donna Hicks, “The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation,” in Helmick and Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, pp.129-150.
- Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness*.

## April 25—Memory, Forgiveness, and Social Identity (Green)

## Readings:

- Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Pt. III, ch. 3 and Epilogue.
- Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory* (chapters of interest TBA).
- Flora Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories*, chs. 3 (“I Remember, It Happened”: Retrieving Voices and Reconstructing Histories), 4 (The Call to Remembrance and Witness in Contemporary Theology), and 5 (The Church as a Community of Remembrance and Witness).
- Flora Keshgegian, *Time for Hope*, chs. 2 (Outside the Lines: Contemporary Threats and Challenges) and 4 (Black Holes and Fractured Fairy Tales).

<b>Suggestions for Practical Theology</b>
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<p>Antonios Kireopoulos, ed. <i>For the Peace of the World: A Christian Curriculum on International Relations</i> (NY: National Council of Churches’ Friendship Press, 2005).</p>
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<p>Essays, Bible studies, prayers, litanies and other worship resources.</p>
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## TEXTS AND RESOURCES

**REQUIRED**

Davies, Susan, and Paul Teresa Hennessee, eds. *Ending Racism in the Church* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998).

Keshgegian, Flora. *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000).

Gilligan, James. *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

Juergensmayer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Manchala, Deenabandhu, ed. *Nurturing Peace: Theological Reflections on Overcoming Violence* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005).

Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Murder* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

Volf, Miroslav. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

**RECOMMENDED**

Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence* (Harvest Books, 1970).

- Girard, Rene. *Violence and the Sacred*, Patrick Gregory, trans. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
- Jeffrey Gros and John D. Rempel, eds., *The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).
- Fortune, Marie M. *Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005).
- Keshgegian, Flora. *Time for Hope: Practices for Living in Today's World* (New York: Continuum, 2006).
- Massaro, Thomas and Shannon, ThomasA. *Catholic Perspectives on War and Peace* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
- Muller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. *Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflections on Healing and Reconciliation* (WCC Publications, 1997).
- Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1995).
- Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).



### Week 3 – Discussion Questions

**(1) Aggressive by Nature or Culture** – What do you make of the evolutionary psychological and psychoanalytic arguments that we have seen in Lorenz, Wilson and Daly, Freud, and to a lesser extent in the brief evolutionary psychology discussion in Suchocki, to the effect that there exists a kernel of aggression that is fundamental to our animal/human nature? What does it mean to make universal claims about human nature at all? How does the “aggressive by nature” argument connect to theological notions of original sin, total human depravity, and the like, such as can be found in the Christian tradition? What is the relationship between nature and culture when it comes to aggression and violence?

**(2) Vulnerability and Precarious Lives** – Even as she eschews universals, Judith Butler invites us to consider vulnerability and our precariousness in the “face” of the other as issues of common and normative concern for all of us. This is a major challenge to ethics built on honor, shame, and respect or its lack. What do you see as the key sources or causes of our vulnerability to violence today at this pinnacle of progress and evolution known as the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**(3) Events and Effective History** – In Giovanna Borradori’s questions to Derrida and Habermas and in the classic 20<sup>th</sup> century treatments of violence that we have begun to consider, some events and some dates seem to correspond to violence more than others in our minds. Which dates/events do you take to be “major” in our thinking about violence, either historically or in the present day? Why do these dates/events loom so powerfully in our minds? What are the lessons we take from them?

**(4) Tolerance and Hospitality** – The notion of tolerance has often been well-received in classical liberal political and even religious theory. Think of Locke and Voltaire. Yet considerable questions have been raised about tolerance and toleration today. What do you think of the question of toleration as it was asked of Derrida and Habermas, particularly as contrasted with the notion of “hospitality”? What concepts seem especially valuable in mediating our relationships to others who are different from us, or who are our “others,” today?

**(5) Economics, Environment, and Expanding the Definition of Violence** – This course from the get-go, in some of the topics and readings included, and particularly as suggested in the Sorel and Fanon readings positing capitalist economics and colonialism as types or sources of violence, invites you to think about violence in broad terms. What are the major types or sources of violence that you see in the world today? (And ones on which you think we might profitably focus our attention in this course!) How do you define violence?

**Week 5 – Discussion Questions**

**(1) Modalities of Violence** – In his two-part article on modalities of violence in the Christian tradition, church historian George Hunston Williams outlines four modalities of violence: (1) violence eschatologically postponed, (2) religiously sanctioned violence actualized in martyrdom, (3) violence sublimated into spiritual warfare, and the reconciliation of religious and other forms of latent or overt violence. Which of these forms of violence seem especially relevant today, within or beyond Christianity?

**(2) Mimetic Violence** – Robert Daly summarized Rene Girard’s theory of mimetic violence as involving a human desire for the good that seeks to imitate, but which experiences conflict with others seeking to imitate the same model, such that violence comes to seem more natural than peace, leading us to scapegoat others in ways that create sacred victims, who are then ritually sacrificed. What is the import or what are some manifestations of this model of violence in the world today?

**(3) Atonement and the Cross** – In his article on atonement, J. Denny Weaver sets forth the three classic models of atonement on the cross: (1) Christus Victor atonement (in both ransom and cosmic battle versions), (2) substitution or satisfaction atonement, and (3) imitative or moral model atonement. What are some of the strengths or defects of these models of atonement for religious attempts to understand and, hopefully, to overcome violence? If approaching this from a religion other than Christianity, what are some examples of problematic sacrifice, atonement, or legitimation of violence in the tradition that you practice or study?

**(4) Violent and Sacrificial Images** – Following from the last comparative religion sub-question in the question above, what does it mean that images of violence permeate so many traditions? Are there symbols and support for nonviolence in religion? How do they address or reconcile the more violent symbols?

**(5) Law and Violence** – In what ways is the law violent? In what ways does law restrain violence or support violence? Can words, laws, and/or interpretations do violence through normalizing and legitimizing certain (power) relations? In our postmodern era of what some would deem morally relativistic, have we lost an appreciation for the universals and norms that law seeks to express?

**(6) “A Force More Powerful”** – Those in the class who were able to view the optional film last week saw six examples of nonviolent movements. Some questions emerged. Is nonviolence exclusive a tool of the (weak and) oppressed? What do we take from the fact that so many of the nonviolent movements use economic means to pursue political goals? Is economic nonviolence (boycotts etc.) a form of violence? In what ways does nonviolence have a powerful or forceful that may amount to its own sort of violence in the end, albeit to better ends?

**Week 7 – Discussion Questions**

- 1) Consider the reading that we did by Robert Cover and discuss the concept of the “violence” of the law in relation to various purposes of the law. Does the idea of the “violence” of the law go too far in assessing negatively the role of law in society and in the maintenance of social order? Draw into your reflection Austin Sarat’s situating law between the realities of violence and the claims of justice.
- 2) To what extent does social location play a role in shaping law? Consider the two articles by Patricia Williams as you discuss this question. Consider Williams’ argument about “being and property” in relation to other authors we have read in this course. How does her conception of race and rights relate to the narrative told by Professor Rodman and the emergence and evolution of the American Civil Rights movement?
- 3) Describe the various intermediary points between Minow’s concept of “between vengeance and forgiveness.” As you consider this question, relate her various positions to real political settings with which you are familiar.
- 4) Who or what are the three essential parties that make up the restorative justice relationship and what are the remedies envisioned for each? Compare and contrast your understanding of restorative justice with other conceptions of justice, distributive, retributive, etc. (See materials by Van Ness and Strong and by Zehr as you reflect on this question.)
- 5) Discuss the relationship between different perspectives on justice and their possible grounding in various spiritual world views. Describe, what in your opinion, is the contribution of different religions to restorative justice. What does Christianity offer to restorative justice with respect to its conception(s) of the atonement, ideas about forgiveness, reconciliation, and justice?
- 6) One of the most powerful voices in the Christian community for non-violence is that of Walter Wink. How does he discuss the conflict between violence and non-violence in the book, *The Powers That Be*? Do you see any analogies with the ways in which other authors we have read in the course understand this conflict (e.g., Arendt, Ellul, Bonhoeffer, etc.)?
- 7) The centennial of the global non-violent movement, paralleling a global human rights movement, has developed in relation to what observable spiritual, psychological and sociological changes in twentieth century intellectual thought and social organization? Who are some of the players and what are some of the institutions that reflect this development?
- 8) Relate the discussion of an “Age of Apology” with all that it implies and portends with respect to the emergence of global terrorism in the early years of the 21st century. Does the quest for human security trump global humanitarianism? Defend your answer.
- 9) Discuss the meaningfulness of social forgiveness in relation to political realism? Who are the players and what is the reality? The book, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (Desmond Tutu), is one that has influenced many people. Is this wishful thinking or does it have voice in public policy?

**Week 10 – Discussion Questions**

\* These questions are in partial response to questions 5, 7, 8, and 9 from week 7.

**(1) Restorative Justice** – What is the contemporary appeal of restorative justice across a number of disciplines and professions? What are the benefits? What are the risks?

**(2) Age of Apology** – Much of the contemporary interest in restorative justice, arguably, stems from the rise of the Age of Apology in the 1980's, which is situated between the human rights/civil rights movements of the 1940's-1960's and the genocide and terrorism of the 1980's-2000's. Was the Age of Apology a definitive period in our thinking about violence and nonviolence, or is it just one point in the historical cycle? How do we situate the Age of Apology between humanitarianism and terrorism?

**(3) Violence and Social and Spiritual (and maybe also Sexual) Health** – In what ways is violence a health issue? In particular, in what ways is it a matter of social and spiritual health? For how do we define social and spiritual health, and how does violence fit into or disrupt that definition?

**(4) Environment** – In what ways and toward whom is environmental degradation a form of violence? What ideas or concepts from the environmental movement lend themselves to project and movements of nonviolence? Does environment or ecology represent another language alongside criminal justice, public health, restorative justice, etc. for considering violence?

**(5) Race, Reparations, and Forgiveness** – Themes from the last two films on environmental racism and slavery raise questions of forgiveness and reparations that get to the heart of current discussions of trauma, memory, and forgiveness. Where do we stand initially, as we move into this material, on the validity or necessity of forgiveness as a tool of nonviolence?

**WEEKLY FILMS (Supplemental)****Week 1 – Introduction**

No film this week.

**Week 2 – Philosophical, Sociological, and Psychological Perspectives** (*February 5*)

No film this week.

**Week 3 – Decade of Violence, Century of Nonviolence, Part 1** (*Mon., February 12, Sperry*)

Part 1: “A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict” PBS (2000)

Website: <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/>

**Week 4 – Decade of Violence, Century of Nonviolence, Part 2** (*Wed., February 21, Sperry*)

Part 2: “A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict” PBS (2000)

Website: <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/>

**Week 5 – Violence: The Theological Challenge** (*Thurs., March 1, Andover 102*)

“Bonhoeffer” Dir. Martin Doblmeier (2003)

Website: <http://www.bonhoeffer.com/thefilm.htm>

**Week 6 – Restorative Justice** (*Thurs., March 8, Andover 102*)

“A Justice that Heals” Dir. Jay Shefsky (2000)

Website: [http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/jth\\_pn.htm](http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/jth_pn.htm)

**Week 7 – Models, Movements and Means: Malcolm and Martin** (*Thurs., March 15, And. 102*)

“Do the Right Thing” Dir. Spike Lee (1989)

**Week 8 – Models, Movements and Means: Enviro, Ecol, & Econ** (*Thurs., March 22, And.102*)

“Green” Dir. Laura Dunn (2000)

Website: <http://www.newenglandfilm.com/news/archives/03january/dunn.htm>

News/interview clips of Menchu, Maathai, and Yunus (*60 Minutes*)

**Week 9 – The Legacy of Slavery** (*Thurs., April 5, Andover 102*)

“Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North” Dir. Katrina Browne (2006)

Website: <http://www.tracesofthetrade.org/>

**Week 10 – War** (*Thurs, April 12, Andover 102*)

“Iraq in Fragments” Dir. James Longley (2006)

Website: <http://www.iraqinfragments.com/>

**Week 11 – Terrorism** (*Thurs., April 19, Andover 102*)

“Paradise Now” Dir. Hany Abu-Assad (2005)

Website: <http://wip.warnerbros.com/paradisenow/>

**Week 12 – Religion, Identity and Violence** (*Thurs., April 26, Andover 102*)

“Divided We Fall” Prod. Valarie Kaur and Sharat Raju (2006)

Website: <http://www.dwf-film.com/>