Syllabus: PACS 3870-581 Nonviolent Civil Resistance

See all 3 tabs for all syllabus information

Instructor and About the Course

Contact Information

Name: Dr. Derek Sweetman

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Virtual Office Hours: by appointment, online

Instructor Bio

Dr. Sweetman has taught courses in nonviolence, conflict resolution, and activism for the past 12 years at CU, George Mason University, and American University. His research has focused on American antiwar movements, systemic conflict, and systemic change.

Communication Policies

If you have specific questions about other course matters or a personal issue, please email me through Canvas or at derek.sweetman@colorado.edu. I typically respond to emails in less than 24 hours. If I have not responded to you and it's been more than 36 hours, send me a reminder. If we need to schedule an online call to discuss your concerns, I can do that.

Course Description

In this course we will examine a number of historical and contemporary cases, theories, and perspectives on the use of nonviolent civil resistance. We will consider the strengths and weaknesses of this method of social change, particularly in the context of achieved outcomes, as well as its effects on those committed to this method of struggle. The past two decades have witness a number of nonviolent revolutions, some ending in triumph, as demonstrated in Serbia and Czechoslovakia, some petering out as with the global Occupy movement, while still others, such as those in Egypt and Syria, ending in renewed tyranny and bloodshed. People have always tried to make positive changes in their communities and societies, but they have only been organizing into recognizable social movements for about three-hundred years. Most of the time, attention is paid to those actors that prioritized the place of violence as key to their struggles.

Nevertheless, there is a long tradition of peace and nonviolent movements that have also worked for change resulting in innovations in both strategies and tactics of nonviolent civil resistance, as well as the development of a significant body of scholarship on social movements and activism.

Prerequisite

It is recommended that students have completed PACS 2500 before taking this course.

Course Objectives

1. Define nonviolence and related terms
2. Explain the importance of events the history of nonviolence
3. Apply and evaluate nonviolence theory in the context of historical cases
4. Examine and apply lessons and concepts from cases of nonviolent campaigns to the contemporary world
5. Evaluate, apply and assess nonviolence tactics to develop a plan for a nonviolent campaign

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Course Outline

This course is divided into three major sections, each of which contains multiple modules.

- Unit One (Weeks 1-4): Definitions and theories of nonviolence
- Unit Two (Weeks 5-10): Cases
- Unit Three (Weeks 11-14): Strategy, Tactics, and Planning

See the Schedule for a more detailed outline.

Required Texts

All readings, websites, and videos are available in the modules. You do not need to purchase a text for this course.

Method of Instruction

This course is offered online through the University of Colorado Boulder's Continuing Education program in conjunction with the Peace, Conflict, and Security Program (PACS). Students will complete all work in Canvas over the course of the Spring 2021 term, from January 25th through April 30th. Students must keep up with the reading and assignment load. Given the nature of the course, I cannot grant exceptions for due dates without prior arrangement.

Student Responsibilities and Class Expectations

In this course, you will complete 14 weekly modules with assignments that come due on Thursdays and Fridays each week. You must complete each module in order to advance to the next one. However, this is not a self-paced course. While you can read ahead, you are not able post discussions or take quizzes until the assigned day. We will all be working together to build a learning community, so it is important that you participate and stay up-to-date, both to help develop this community as well as giving yourself the best chance to excel in the course.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments

Exams: There will be three exams during the semester. These will be available for 24 hours and you will have one hour to complete the exam. Exams are open-book and open-note.

Discussions: You will participate in online discussions (with responses to your fellow students) each week, except for the two weeks that contain Wellness Days.

Videos: You will record three short videos in response to prompts that will be provided and do two peer reviews for each.

Final Project: Design a nonviolent intervention in response to a context prompt provided near the end of the semester. More details will be provided as this gets closer.

Submission Policies and Grading

Students will submit assignments through the assignment tool in Canvas. Discussions will also be posted directly to Canvas. Given the nature of the course, I cannot grant exceptions for due dates without prior arrangement. I will endeavor to get your work back to you within a week of its due date.

Grading Criteria and Points Breakdown

Your grade will be calculated out of 1000 points.

Table: Points Breakdown

Activity	Points
Total	1,000
Exams (3 @ 100 pts. each)	300
Weekly Discussion Posts & Responses (12 @ 16 pts each) (No discussions on the two weeks with Wellness Days)	196
Videos (3 @ 50 pts each and 3 peer reviews @50 pts each)	300
Final Project - Nonviolent Campaign Design	204

Grading Scale

Grades will be assigned as follows

Table - Grading Scale

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percentage Grade	94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

Course Policies and University Policies

Course Policies

Please complete the required assignments and readings by the due dates listed on Canvas. All work must be submitted electronically through Canvas as a watchable video, Word document, or discussion post unless otherwise noted. **Due to the structure of this course, late work will receive half credit.** All due dates and exam dates are available to you in advance for planning purposes. Students should contact me prior to the due date if they have a concern regarding an assignment and are seeking an extension. Exceptions for extended due dates and make-up exams are considered on a case by case basis, which requires a discussion with me.

Accommodations for students with disabilities must be handled by the office of Disability Services, which determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Please contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. More information on accommodations is listed below under the Accommodations Statement section. When your accommodations are approved, please schedule an appointment with me to present your letter(s) and to discuss how we can make sure your needs are met.

Inclusivity

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently and may occasionally need assistance. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

I encourage you to visit Disability Services if you have a documented disability. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center and Tutoring and Academic Support Services.

Similarly, I see our class as an intentionally inclusive community where we will work together and respect each other to create the best learning environment. This respect extends to refraining from plagiarism and other behavior that is prohibited by the CU Honor Code. If you have any questions about whether something constitutes plagiarism or another violation, reach out to me before you turn in the assignment.

Netiquette

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember.

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of nonverbals with your message, your message can be misinterpreted. So please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. There are places to chat and post for fun everyday stuff. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Never use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world. It is not fun to read. Only use capital letters when appropriate.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, I don't want to see anyone writing "R U" instead of "are you". There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile ☺ is welcome, anything offensive is not.
5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face. In other words, it is easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.
6. Respect the time of others. This class is going to require you to work in groups. Learn to respect the time of others in your group and your experience will be much better. Always remember that you are not the only person with a busy schedule, be flexible. Do not procrastinate! You may be one that works best with the pressures of the deadline looming on you, but others may not be that way. The same is true for the reverse. The key to a

successful group is organization, communication and a willingness to do what it takes to get it done.

Website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

Compiled by Melissa Landin, Instructor, Dept. of Communication, Inver Hills Community College, mlandin@inverhills.edu

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University Policies

You can find a copy of the University Policies on the CU Resources page.

Canvas Privacy Policy

You can find a copy of the Canvas Privacy Policy on the Instructure Product Privacy Policy page.

Canvas Accessibility Statement

You can find a copy of the Canvas Accessibility Statement on the Accessibility within Canvas page.