

DRAFT Syllabus
Spring 2023 CE elective



UNMAKING VIOLENCE (3 credits)

Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate | Leave every hope, ye that enter

Course Information

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm, Hyflex (synchronous online and in-person)

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Course Description

This seminar invites collaborative inquiry and action research on the questions, themes, and issues that define a phenomenon that vexes the human condition: the pervasive and insidious forms of *violence* in contemporary societies. Gleaning from literature from the fields of practical theology, cultural studies, sociology, and critical pedagogy, the course introduces participants to frameworks that guide structural analyses of violence in its varied forms that transverse bio, psycho, social, cultural, political, spiritual, and ecological dimensions. Specific topics for exploration include religious education in the aftermath of racialized violence; personal and corporate bullying; social trauma and mass shootings; the slow violence of environmental racism; moral inquiry. The conceptual premise is that deeper understanding of violence's *making* (how it is taught and learned) would yield generative clues for its *unmaking* (through practical theological strategies).

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will gain exposure to a selection of literature from multiple disciplines (viz., practical theology, sociology, cultural anthropology, critical pedagogy and public policy) that have made significant contributions to the theoretical study of violence. (*MDiv goal #5*¹)
2. Participants will be able to identify, compare, and contrast the foundational tenets of *critical pedagogy* and *practical theology* that contribute to educational and theological analysis of violence, focusing on a specific issue that is of ministerial relevance and interest. (*MDiv goal #2*²)

¹ MDiv goal #5: Engage in critically informed analyses of gender, race, culture, social and economic structures that shape human beings.

² MDiv goal #2: Interpret Scripture and tradition critically and constructively in the varying contexts of contemporary life.

3. Participants will develop an action research proposal that addresses a specific form of violence (framed within a specific setting or context), which demonstrate practical and educational responses informed by a clear practical theological hermeneutic and framework. (MDiv goal #4³)
4. Participants will appraise their self-awareness and spiritual grounding for responsible religious and educational leadership toward the unmaking of violence. (MDiv goal #3⁴)

Texts

1. Bieler, Andrea, Bingel, Christian, and Hans-Martin Gutmann, eds. *After Violence: Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation*. Leipzig, Germany: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011. ISBN: 9783374029198
2. Boudreau, Tyler E. *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of a Marine*. Port Townsend: Feral House, 2008. ISBN: 9781932595
3. Cram, Ronald Hecker. *Bullying: A Spiritual Crisis*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003. (may be out of print – need to check)
4. Giroux, Henry. *The Violence of Organized Forgetting: Thinking Beyond America's Disimagination Machine*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2014. ISBN: 9780872866195
5. Tran, Mai-Anh Le. *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781501832468

Supplemental selections from the following (subject to modification according to class interest):

1. Brock, Rita Nakashima, and Gabriella Lettini. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012.
2. Eller, Jack David. *Cruel Creeds, Virtuous Violence: Religious Violence across Culture and History*. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2010.
3. Greider, Kathleen J. *Reckoning with Aggression: Theology, Violence, and Vitality*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
4. hooks, bell. *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, 1-30. New York: H. Holt and Co., 1995.
5. Jennings, Willie James. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
6. Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. *Misbegotten Anguish: A Theology and Ethics of Violence*. St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2001.
7. Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." Translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15(1): 11–40.
8. Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
9. Poling, James N. *Deliver Us from Evil: Resisting Racial and Gender Oppression*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
10. Waller, James. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

³ MDiv goal #4: Promote prophetic inquiry and witness for the sake of justice.

⁴ MDiv goal #3: Demonstrate a growing depth of understanding and practice in personal and corporate spiritual discipline(s).

Course Requirements | Assignments

Attendance, Participation, Discussion Facilitation = 15%
6 Marginalia Entries = 30% (5 points each)
(Un)Making Violence Project = 55%
 A. (Individual) Research Synthesis Paper = 25%
 B. (Group) Teaching/Learning Simulation = 30%

Discussion Facilitation

Each participant will sign up for a session for which they will serve as conversation starter. Come prepared with 3-4 pre-written questions or themes to jumpstart discussion on the day which you select. Sign-ups on the first day of class.

6 Marginalia Entries (1-2 pages each, single-spaced, due on dates indicated on course schedule) “Marginalia” are notes on the margins, an indication of a reader’s intense interaction with the text and its ideas. In the spirit of advancing creativity and integrative thinking, you will write six (6) “marginalia” entries of critical responses to and analyses of insights gleaned from class readings and discussions. Use this medium to break down key themes, raise questions, respond in with lamentation, praise, or prayer, connect the dots, write imaginative dialogues, etc., in response to or as inspired by the readings. As a group, we may construct specific prompts together in class. Marginalia should reflect participants’ growing self-awareness and spiritual grounding for religious and educational leadership in response to violence.

(Un)Making Violence Project

This is to be an articulation of your working constructive practical theological (PT) framework for analyzing and responding to an issue of violence. The PT framework synthesizes theological reflection, structural social analysis, and ministerial/pedagogical response to a concrete issue or situation defined by violence. At base, the project should address how communities of faith can work toward unlearning violence through participation in public “conscientization” and demonstration of “public faith.” The goals of the project should mirror the tenets of “Participatory Action Research” (PAR): (a) foster consciousness-raising and theological reflection upon an important issue framed by violence, (b) facilitate collaborative knowing and learning, and (c) mobilize communal action for hope and change.

The Project has 2 parts:

- A. *(Individual) Research Synthesis Paper:* Select an issue/topic framed by tropes of violence. Based on readings and additional research, provide an integrative analysis of the issue selected, incorporating theological reflections, systemic social analysis, and implications for ethical decision-making. You should also conduct an informal interview with someone who has experience and expertise on the subject matter (through their scholarship, teaching, and/or activism). This informal “interview” may be done in person, by phone, or over email. Incorporate learnings from that conversation into your paper.
- B. *(Group) Teaching/Learning Simulation:* Working with 3-4 student peers of your choice, design a teaching/learning activity to be taught in class in the last weeks of the semester (dates indicated on course schedule). This is to be a teaching/learning simulation built

around your research issue/theme. The activity can be varied: a memorial service; a church retreat session; a mini video documentary; an op-ed blog; a public forum; an advocacy campaign; a Bible study....

Whatever the activity may be, it should reflect your creative attempt at innovating pedagogies that facilitate the unlearning/unmaking of violence. Keep in mind the basic tenets of PAR: (a) foster consciousness-raising, (b) encourage collaborative knowing and learning, and (c) mobilize communal action for hope and change. More clarification will be provided in class.

Imagine your topic within concrete settings/situations/contexts:

prisons, schools, rehabilitation centers, hospitals, nursing homes, social service, agencies, community clubs, movie theaters, concert halls, places of worship, coffee shops, mega-malls, the Wal-marts and the farmer's markets, public parks and landfills, city "shelters" and financial districts, rehabbed neighborhoods and city refuse sites...

Examples of weaving issue + biblical/theological themes + specific context:

bullying + county juvenile detention center + anti-violence "safe sanctuary" policy for the church
"PTSD" in returning veterans + VA hospital + adult study series on "moral injury"
racism + theological reflections on "evil" + analysis of structural racism in the church

Course Expectations⁵

The topics of this seminar require hard-talk, and as such each participant is expected nothing short of courage, curiosity, and accountability. By your participation, you commit to creating "an environment where it is safe to know and to not know, where it is safe to explore, make mistakes, be uncertain, where it is possible to see things in new ways."⁶ In essence, you covenant to observe the following practices:

- ✦ Honor the **RIGHT** of each participant to engage with divergent opinions, positions, allegiances, apprehensions—be they cultural, political, or theological.
- ✦ Accept **RESPONSIBILITY** for engaging with courage, curiosity, accountability, and hospitality—to each other and to the subject matter.
- ✦ Hold in deep **RESPECT** the identity and integrity of each person, in our knowing and unknowing, to hear before we speak, and to "hear each other into speech."

⁵ The articulations in this section are influenced by the ideas and expressions of Dr. Judith Berling of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

⁶ Marie McCarthy, "Empathy Amid Diversity: Problems and Possibilities," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 3 (1993): 21. Cited in Ronald Hecker Cram, *Bullying: A Spiritual Crisis* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2003), 62.

Basic Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the [Academic Handbook](#) for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework.

Writing

Academic integrity and [plagiarism](#): (See 20-21 Handbook, 12, 76-82) All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.

Writing and citations: The *Turabian Manual for Writers* and the *Chicago Manual of Style* footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online [here](#). In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)

Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed.... All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 20-21 Handbook, 9)

Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (20-21 Handbook, 20)

Academic Accommodations

Student accommodations for documented conditions should be developed and requested before the beginning of the semester. See the *Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities* policy and process set out in the Academic Handbook (20-21 Handbook, 12) and the Academic Accommodations section on <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services>.

Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (20-21 Handbook, 20)

Grades

All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

The Letter Grade Option

Five grades will be possible with plus (+) designation for B, C and D, and minus (-) designation for A, B, C and D:

A -- for exceptional work at a graduate level; demonstration of comprehensive knowledge of the field; work of near publishable quality; fully integrative.

B -- for solid work at a graduate level; a sound grasp of the field; articulate communication of ideas; evidence of good integration.

C -- for average work at a graduate level; adequate knowledge of the field; comprehensible expression of ideas; acceptable integration.

D -- for inferior work at a graduate level; some basic knowledge of major ideas; marginal communication of ideas; minimal integration.

F -- for inadequate work at a graduate level; little evidence of a grasp of the field; unclear expression of ideas; little evidence of integration.

The Pass/Fail Option

This option will allow for two conclusions:

1. Pass: indicates that the student has done satisfactory work at a graduate level; would be at least a grade of "C" on a letter grade basis;
2. Fail: indicates unsatisfactory work at a graduate level; little evidence that the student has accomplished the class goals.

The following are desirable values for written work:

1. The paper addresses the given assignment.
2. The paper demonstrates:
 - a. Critical analytical/interpretive/integrative skills;
 - b. Broad and deep grasp of the readings and class materials;
 - c. Thoughtful and conscientious engagement with contexts (depending upon the assignment).
3. The paper coheres in form/style and content.
4. The paper reflects creativity in analysis and articulation.

COURSE SCHEDULE – TBD

Note: This syllabus is subject to change according to instructional need.

For further reading: A starting point for crowdsourcing

- Arendt, H. 1970. *On Violence*. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc.
- Boudreau, Tyler E. *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of a Marine*. Port Townsend: Feral House, 2008.
- Brock, Rita Nakashima, and Rebecca Ann Parker. *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.
- Brown, Robert McAfee. 1987. *Religion and Violence*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- . *Religion and Violence: A Primer for White Americans*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*. New ed. Cambridge: South End Press, 2002.
- Clapsis, Emmanuel, ed. *Violence and Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Conversation*. Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press.
- Dear, John. *Put Down Your Sword: Answering the Gospel Call to Creative Nonviolence*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008.
- Erickson, Victoria Lee, and Michelle Lim Jones. *Surviving Terror: Hope and Justice in a World of Violence*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Translated by Patrick Clarke, *Critical Perspectives Series*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998.
- hooks, bell. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Kelsey, David H. *Imagining Redemption*. 1st ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
- Little, Sara. 1983. *To Set One's Heart: Belief and Teaching in the Church*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.
- Macedo, Donald P., and Panayota Gounari, eds. *The Globalization of Racism*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006.
- Moran, Gabriel. 2011. *Living Nonviolently: Language for Resisting Violence*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Marshall, Ellen Ott. *Choosing Peace through Daily Practices*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005.
- Salomon, Gavriel, and Ed Cairns, eds. *Handbook on Peace Education*. New York: Psychology Press, 2010.
- Staub, Ervin. *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict, and Terrorism*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. 1994. *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*. New York: Continuum.
- Timpson, William M. *Teaching & Learning Peace*. Madison: Atwood Publishing, 2002.
- Townes, Emilie Maureen. *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering*. Mayknoll: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Waller, James. 2002. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Wink, Walter. *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- . *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003.

Digital | Web Resources (open to crowdsourcing)

- Center for Anti-Oppressive Education: <http://antioppressiveeducation.org/>
- JustFaith Ministries: <http://www.justfaith.org/>
- Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace: <http://www.religionconflictpeace.org/>
- Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence:
<http://www.clarku.edu/peacepsychology/>
- Journal of Peace Research: <http://www.publicconversations.org/>
- *REJ*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2010 (REA peace and justice forum)
- Fellowship of Reconciliation: <http://forusa.org/>
- “Moral Injury and Spiritual Care in a Time of War,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):
<http://www.disciples.org/GeneralAssembly/Business/1119/tabid/861/Default.aspx>
- Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice: <http://www.multifaithpeace.org/index.php>
- Faces of peace: <http://www.salsa.net/peace/faces/index.html>
- Author of *Packing Inferno*: <http://www.tylerboudreau.com/>
- Ervin Staub: <http://overcomingevil.wordpress.com>
- Prevent bullying & harassment resources, National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME): <http://nameorg.org/resources/bullying/>
- Network of Spiritual Progressives: www.spiritualprogressives.org