

**Canadian School of Peacebuilding
Canadian Mennonite University**
Syllabus for
Youth Voices and Peace Activism
PCTS 2950
Course Syllabus

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TIMES: Monday – Friday, 9-5, Session I, June 15-19, 2015

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL DATE

July 15, 2015 is the final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore the critical role that youth have played in social movements across history and today, focusing on the Canadian context. Participants will also gain activist skills including in personal storytelling, media, and creative non-violent direct action.

REQUIRED TEXTS

To make this course as accessible as possible, all reading for this course will be publically available through on-line sources. Students are responsible for consulting with the library or other support channels to access readings. We will send put further links to readings closer to the time of the course.

TEACHING METHODS & ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

Peace and justice is nothing if it is not experienced in the lives of real people. People – their needs, context, relationships, experiences and intuitive knowledge – must be central. For conflicts to be transformed into a justpeace, people must be empowered, take responsibility and work out of their identity while discovering a path of just peace that respects all people and all creation.

For teaching to begin to approach this high goal, learners – not teachers – must be central. Teaching and evaluation methods will therefore be less prescriptive (lecture, regurgitation exam) and more elicitive (drawing out knowledge and theories from students and the community). This will require active class participation. We will seek to engage not just the intellect but also the heart, the spirit, the gut and the feet.

Interactive exercises, role plays, exploring case studies, small group activities, carefully listening, and personal sharing will be important teaching methods. Lectures will also be used but will not be the primary resource. Students will be expected to keep up with readings and actively engage in class activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- to raise awareness about challenges facing social movements today and historically,
- to better understand how social change works,

- to explore activist theory and practice,
- to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills,
- to hone activist skills including effective use of social media, crafting and conveying personal stories, and direct non-violent action skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Value	Date Due
1. Participation	10%	Assigned at end of class
2. Personal Narrative Assignment	10%	June 15th
3. Colonialism Assignment	10%	July 6th
4. Op-ed/letter to the editor assignment	10%	June 19th
5. Applied Activist project	30%	August 3rd
6. Journal/Reflection	30%	August 7th

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Note – Digital submission of assignments must be in a PDF format.

1. Participation

Tutorial marks are based on your **preparation and contribution to the tutorial sessions**. Attendance alone will not give you a good participation grade. Students are expected to **complete the assigned readings** each week and to make regular contributions to tutorial discussions.

2. Personal Story Assignment

Each student will have the chance to tell their own personal story. Through this, they will communicate their story of me, us, and now. Through their “me” story, they will share why they come to this work, what motivates them, and an issue they are concerned about. Through their “us” story, they will communicate the community they are a part of, what values this community shares, and how this community is or can make change. Through their story of “now” they will practice calling others to join them in a specific action to take now.

Length: 3 double-spaced pages

3. Colonialism assignment

Before we can act in the service of others through activism, we must understand where we come from. Each student will have the chance to answer the question “What is your family’s relationship to colonialism?”. This will give each student the chance to reflect on the Indigenous lands on which we are living and how this relates to their life and family’s lives.

Length: 3 double-spaced pages

4. Op-ed/letter to the editor

Students will have the chance to practice media trainings by writing an op-ed piece or letter to the editor on an issue they care about. This assignment should be one single-spaced page in length, using accepted formatting for professional correspondence.

Length: 1 single-spaced page

5. Applied activist project

Each student will choose an issue that they would like to address through direct forms of action. Students will design a campaign to make positive social change on this issue. This project will require students to identify goals and tactics, to identify allies and opposition, and to develop plans to help move these actors towards greater justice and peace. If the project is suitable for it, a non-violent creative action may be a part of this campaign. Once completed, students will present their plans to the class. The demonstration could include: printed informational materials, visual/audio informational material, web page & feedback, audio &/or visual, props/story boards, petitions, press releases, etc. Twenty per cent of the mark for this assignment is allocated to the written portion; ten per cent is allocated to the public presentation of it.

Length: 6 double-spaced pages for the written portion

6. Journal reflection

An integral part of the learning process will be a self-analysis of how students interact and grow through the experience of the class, working with colleagues, and with the instructors. The means to help give expression to this learning will be through a journal that students will maintain over the week-long course. At the end of the course we will collect the journals, and assess them both on the depth of the engagement with the course content and the breadth of understanding of how this course has interacted with their life. The journal should reflect what we have learnt in class, and how it applies to activism in the field. In the end, we are keen to see how this work makes us more effective social change agents.

Length: 9 double-spaced pages

STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS

CMU as adopted the following as its standard guide for all academic writing:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

Students should acquire this handbook (available at the CMU bookstore) and an up to date dictionary as reference tools for all written assignments. See “Guidelines for Academic Writing at CMU” in the *CMU Student Handbook* for more information.

- *I expect students to use University of Chicago Style with in text citation in all papers.*
- Please put a title page on all papers, and include your mailbox number please
- Number the pages of your paper.
- 12-point font, Times New Roman, Double space all papers.
- Staple the paper together. Please do not use plastic folders.
- Type the papers and check for spelling and grammar before you turn them in.
- See guide on student portal shared documents for this class

EVALUATION

Good communication skills are essential for conflict transformation studies. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented. Further information regarding expectations for written assignments will be provided in class as required.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale

below.

Letter Grade/Percentage Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	95-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	88-94	4	Excellent
B+	81-87	3.5	Very Good
B	74-80	3	Good
C+	67-73	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-67	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49		Failure

	A - Excellent	B - Competent	C - Below Expectations
CONTENT (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
STRUCTURE (logical order or sequence of the writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions
CONVENTIONS (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has virtually no errors of conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has minimal errors of conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is understandable <u>but</u> has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation

<p>STYLE (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)</p>	<p>- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective -has nicely varied sentence structure -is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read</p>	<p>- displays concern for careful expression -has some variation in sentence structure -is generally enjoyable to read</p>	<p>- has some personality but lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés -has little variation in sentence structure -is not very interesting to read</p>
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NOTE: The *CMU Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean’s Office.

Policy Regarding late submissions

Late assignments will be penalized one grade per day (B+ to B), including weekends (unless a written request for an extension is approved by the instructor well ahead of time). No assignments will be accepted 2 weeks after the due date. Extensions will be considered only for documented medical illness or extraordinary issues.

Students with disabilities:

CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. The University will seek ways to develop and provide services that support students with disabilities. The Accessibility Services office coordinates with the Academic Office to provide academic accommodations to eligible students. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loeppky, Coordinator of Accessibility Programs at sloppky@cmu.ca or 204.487.3300 x.340.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following outline will serve as a guide to readings and conversation topics. These topics are subject to change based on student interaction and instructor observations about how the course is unfolding. These do, however, give indication of the course direction as we begin to explore together.

SECTION 1 - WHAT IS ACTIVISM? WHY DO WE DO IT?

June 15 - Why do we come to activism? What is activism? What are the challenges of our time?

SECTION 2 - HOW DO WE ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM?

June 16-17 - How do we make the change we wish to see? What are the opportunities to take action? How can we learn from successes and failures of past social movements? What is the role of young people in making change?

SECTION 3 - WHAT CAN WE DO AS ACTIVISTS?

June 18-19 - What concrete things can we do to make change? What are tactics we can use to take action?

LECTURES AND READINGS

SECTION 1 - WHAT IS ACTIVISM? WHY DO WE DO IT?

June 15 Introduction: What is activism? Why do we do activism? What motivates us?

- Marshall Ganz. 2007. "Telling your public story: self, us, now." (Kennedy School of Government, available online).
- bell hooks. 2001. "Clarity: Give Love Words". in *All About Love*. 3-14.

What are the challenges of our time?

- Naomi Klein. 2014. "The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change". in *This Changes Everything*. 31-63.

What are the challenges of our time? Part II

- Simpson, Leanne. "Chapter 4" in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*.
- Todd Gordon. 2011. "Empire at Home". in *Imperialist Canada*. 66-123.
- Winona Laduke. 2006. "The People Belong to the Land" in *Paradigm Wars: Indigenous Peoples Resistance to Globalization*. 25-27 -TBC.

SECTION 2 - HOW DO WE ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM?

June 16 What is the role of youth in making change?

- Brigette DePape. 2012. "Introduction". In Erika Shaker and Brigette DePape. *Power of Youth*. (electronic resource)
What has been the role of youth in making change historically? Case study of the civil rights movement.
- David Halberstam. "Freedom Rides". In *The Children*. 237-266.

June 17 How do social movements make change?

- George Lakey. 2002. "Globalize Liberation: 5 Stages for Social Movements" (Training for Change, available online.)

What makes social movements successful?

- Bill Moyer. 1987. "The Movement Action Plan: A strategic framework describing The Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements." (The Movement for a New Society, available online.)

SECTION 3 - WHAT CAN WE DO AS ACTIVISTS?

June 18 How do we communicate our message effectively: media skills

- Simon Sinek. 2011. "Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action". (Ted Talk, available online.)

June 19 What can we do? What tactics do we have at our disposal?

- Andrew Boyd & Dave Mitchell Oswald Mitchell. "Introduction". In *Beautiful Trouble*. 1-5.
- Marshall Ganz. "Campaigns". In *Organizing, People, Power and Change*. (Harvard Kennedy School, available online.) 90-97.

- Assignment 4 given: Applied activist project: design a campaign for an issue you care about

What can we do? How do we execute campaigns and get organized?

CSOP closing 3 p.m.

Coffee breaks are normally 10:30-11 and 3:30-4

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