

# Violence and Nonviolence

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## Course Objectives

What is violence? While the answer may seem self-evident, think again. Much of what counts as “violent” depends on who is doing the defining, and whose interests they serve. Even if we can agree on a definition of violence, can we agree that violence is always evil, or do some circumstances make it necessary? Can a modern state exist without violence? What is involved for an individual trying to avoid a violent situation, or guard against one’s own violent responses? In this course, I hope to work with students to create a safe learning environment in which we feel comfortable asking such questions, and probing for ways to address them.

It is essential that you *wrestle* with the readings for each week, and *mull over* how they apply to your own experience. I hope to open new perspectives to you, and what transforms information into a perspective that opens up new ways of thinking is wrestling with what you encounter. For each reading, I hope that you work to understand not just *what* the author is saying, but *why*. What received wisdom is she or he trying to challenge? With what ideas might they be competing? What is their evidence? I hope that you will enhance for yourself the value of what you read through the paired (and perhaps literally opposed) habits of mind of skepticism (A Ought I really believe that?@) and suspended disbelief (A What if it were true?@).

The idea is to foster an intense, searching class discussion. A great deal of learning happens in discussion, when one’s new ideas, guesses, hunches, ideological convictions, and moral persuasions rub unexpectedly up against others’. I will assist this process through my questioning in class, and want you to have challenged each reading so that you, in turn, can be challenged by others in class.

Please feel free to discuss topics further with me after class, or before class by appointment. Be sure to exchange phone numbers with two or three other students and form study groups.

## Required Readings

Barak, Gregg. 2003. Violence and Nonviolence: Pathways to Understanding.  
Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Steger, Manfred B. and Nancy S. Lind. 1999. Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

A number of readings will also be available on the course’s Blackboard website under Course Documents.

Be sure to complete each week's readings prior to coming to class. Additional background readings are available for students who wish to read further on the week's topic. Also, be sure to check the class website frequently for announcements.

### **Grading Policy**

You will not be graded on a competitive basis, so in theory everyone can do well in the class. However, in order to receive a top grade, students will be expected to achieve standards of excellence. If you are dissatisfied with any grade you receive, you must submit a written request for a review of the grade, including a defense, no later than one week after the work is handed back to the class. By requesting a review of the grade you receive, you invite the possibility that the new grade will be lower than the original grade, as well as the possibility that it will be higher. Points will be distributed as follows:

Exams (4): 15% points each

Final Paper: 20%

Paper Presentation: 10%

Participation: 10%

A+ 98-100	B+ 88-89	C+ 78-79	D+ 65-69
A 93-97	B 83-87	C 73-77	D 55-64
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 50-54

### **Requirements**

Four take-home exams will be offered. On Monday of the week of the exam, a list of questions will be posted on Blackboard under Assignments. By Friday you will select two of these questions, and address each question in an essay of no less than 2 and no more than 5 pages. The following rubric will apply to the exams:

15: Develops an original, logical, well-organized argument based on a demonstrated firm grasp of the readings.

14: Provides logical, sound, well-written responses with a solid basis in the readings.

13: Responses show some problems in organization and grasp of the readings. Despite some organizational and grammatical errors, the responses make sense.

12: Problems in organization, writing, and knowledge of the readings begin to interfere with the comprehensibility of responses.

11: Responses show that the student needs assistance in understanding the readings, and in organizing and writing a well-structured essay.

10 and below: Responses appear rushed and haphazard, demonstrating little to no knowledge of the readings.

The final paper will be a 10 to 15 page thoughtful analysis of what the student considers a central problem of violence, or type of violence, in light of Barak's theory of reciprocal violence. The paper may grapple with one of the topics addressed in this course, or a separate topic of the student's choice. Potential topics could be racism, nationalism, rape, terrorism, sexism, self-defense, bureaucratic violence, etc. The paper should address how the topic may or may not be considered violence, describe instances of the topic *found outside of the class readings*, apply Barak's theory to the topic, and discuss pathways toward nonviolence. The paper should demonstrate a thorough knowledge of Barak's theory, and point out the theory's strengths and weaknesses. A student may choose to discuss a type of violence in light of another theory from

the course, such as Arendt's or Wolff's, provided they discuss it with me in advance. The presentations during the final week will provide an opportunity for you to share your work and receive constructive criticism.

### The Oberlin Code of Honor

The Oberlin Code of Honor applies for this course and all its assignments and exams. Be sure to write, "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment," and sign it, or I have the option of withholding your grade.

### Weekly Topics and Readings

Please note that the following schedule, including project and exam dates, is tentative, and may change based on how quickly we cover the material.

<b>Week</b>	<b><u>Violence and Its Alternatives</u></b>	<b><u>Violence and Nonviolence or Blackboard</u></b>
<b>Part I: Introductions and Definitions</b>		
<b>1: Violence and Subjectivity</b> Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>	#18: David Nicholson #30: Mahatma Gandhi	NA
<b>2: Definitions and Concepts</b> Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup>	#1: Hannah Arendt #2: Robert Paul Wolff #3: C.A.J. Coady #4: Johan Galtung	NA
<b>3: Reciprocal Violence</b> Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup>	NA	Barak: Introduction, Chapter 1 Blackboard: Rosemarie Ashamalla
EXAM #1: Due Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>		
<b>Part II: Types of Violence</b>		
<b>4: Interpersonal Violence</b> Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>	NA	Barak: Chapter 2 Blackboard: Katz, "Righteous Slaughter"
<b>5: Institutional Violence</b> March 7 <sup>th</sup>	22: Kaldor 24: Appadurai	Barak: Chapter 3 Blackboard: Foucault, <u>Madness and Civilization</u> , pp. 42-43. <u>The History of Sexuality</u> , pp. 41-49.
<b>6: Structural Violence</b> March 14 <sup>th</sup>	16: Fanon 21: Barsh	Barak: Chapter 4 Blackboard: Taussig, pp. 3-36
EXAM #2 Due March 21 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Part III: Explanations of Violence</b>		
<b>7: Overview of Explanations</b> March 21 <sup>st</sup>	35: Turpin and Kurtz	Barak: Chapter 5
~ S P R I N G B R E A K ~		
<b>9: Media and Violence</b> April 4 <sup>th</sup>	13: Dworkin 14: Jenefsky	Barak: Chapter 6

<b>10: Sexuality and Violence</b> April 11 <sup>th</sup>	10: Hartsock 15: Seifert	Barak: Chapter 7
EXAM #3 Due April 18 <sup>th</sup> <b>Part IV: Nonviolence</b>		
<b>11: Recovery from Violence</b> April 18 <sup>th</sup>	32: hooks	Barak: Chapter 8
<b>12: Models of Nonviolence</b> April 25 <sup>th</sup>	31: King 33: San Suu Kyi 34: Sharp	Barak: Chapter 9
<b>13: Policies of Nonviolence</b> May 2 <sup>nd</sup>		Barak: Chapter 10
<b>14: Student Presentations</b>		

**Final Exam: Thursday, May 19, 7:00 PM**

**General Writing Guidelines\***

**Format and Presentation**

Do not skip lines between paragraphs (like I'm doing here). Use an easily legible font, 12-point size works in most types. Papers should be typewritten, double-spaced with approximately 1" margins. Number all pages. Papers should be stapled. This means no plastic binders, no folding the edges together and no paper clips. The following information should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the first page: name, student ID#, date, paper topic number, and title. A bibliography is a necessary part of a research paper (see Citation, below), and should be attached at the end.

**General Organization**

You should make sure that you read the paper assignment instructions and follow them closely. The most important feature of your paper is that you have answered the question you have chosen. No matter how good your ideas are, if can't demonstrate your understanding of the question, and give an answer to it in your paper, then you will not do very well.

Academic papers have introductions, bodies, and conclusions. An introduction should be simple and explicit, and describe what you are going to do, and in what order. It should provide a complete "road map" for the rest of the paper. Tell your reader something about the study you are conducting, what you will focus on in the paper, what points you will be making, what you will argue, and what you will conclude. It is perfectly acceptable to use the first person voice and say, "I will focus on ...", after all who is writing this paper, anyway?

The body of the paper must be well organized. You must use paragraphs to divide your thoughts. A paragraph is a set of sentences with one common idea. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence and make one main point. Your argument should flow logically from one paragraph to the next. Please use subheadings if they are appropriate or help the reader navigate through different sections of the paper. I should be able to make sense of your paper, in a general way, by reading the introduction, the first sentence of each paragraph, and the conclusion.

In your analysis, you will need to make explicit links between your "data" and the relevant course material. You will need to organize your paper around a description of the data you are analyzing and a review of the course material that helps to make your points. You should address all of the analytical issues I have proposed in the question. You may find that these do not exhaust the points you need to make, and answering your own additional questions may help further your analysis. Don't overlook a review of the course material (even though you know that I already know it). That way I can determine how fluent you are with the concepts, and how well you are able to apply them to your subject matter. There are various strategies for integrating the course material with an analysis of your data, but these are indispensable.

For your conclusion, restate the paper's highlights and take the opportunity to tie things up neatly. You may restate ideas from your opening paragraph. Repeat your thesis and briefly summarize the main evidence you have included. After reviewing your main points, you may speculate, include personal reactions, pose additional questions or suggest avenues for future research, and the like. If you have some doubts about whether your format will work effectively for the assignment, please feel free to consult with me about it first.

### **Citation**

This is sometimes tricky, but by this point in your academic career, it is essential that you do it correctly. It is expected that you will use material from the texts and lecture to analyze your subject. Thus, whether you use direct quotes or paraphrases, you must give credit to the authors of those words, when they are not your own.

If you cite a lecture, do it this way: (Lecture, 9/9/02). However, relying solely on lecture citations for material that is also in the readings reveals to me that your familiarity with the readings is inadequate. So you should be sure to prioritize. Where appropriate, always cite the original source and not my delivery of it in lecture.

Directly quoted course materials from the reader should be cited in one of the following ways.

"Self-absorption is consistent with the emphasis on self-satisfaction fostered by capitalism in general and advertising in particular" (Karp, 1996:176).

Or alternately:

David A. Karp (1996:176) suggests that, "self-absorption is consistent with the emphasis on self-satisfaction fostered by capitalism in general and advertising in particular."

Also, be sure to cite any ideas that you borrow, not just quoted text. For instance:

Many analysts have noted how self-absorption may be fostered by capitalism (Karp, 1996:176).

Any direct quotation that is longer than three lines needs to be set off from the body of the paper by indenting and single-spacing. Since your papers will be double-spaced and indented only to begin paragraphs, you will see the contrast. Be careful to differentiate between what the textbook authors are saying themselves, and the other authors that they may in turn quote. Cite accordingly. Do not string quotes together without putting them in context with your own prose. When you use a direct quote, place it in the context of a sentence that includes an explanation of what the quote means and why it is useful in service of the point you are making.

A full reference, including the author's name, book or article title, publishing information and page numbers will appear in a separate, alphabetically organized bibliography at the end of the paper, under the heading, "References." Refer to your syllabus and/or the reference sections of our articles as examples.

## Style

In general, write as simply as possible. Never use a big word, when a little one will do. Big words don't necessarily convey intellectual prowess – especially when they are awkwardly used. Your word choice should be appropriate to formal writing: no slang, and no contractions ("can't", "don't"), unless you are quoting others or it somehow better helps you to make your point. You must use words that actually exist, and words must be used correctly. Look up definitions and spellings if you are unsure. Spell check often misses words.

Avoid using the indefinite "you". You will notice that I am addressing these instructions to you; that is, I am using the second person. That is because I am giving these instructions to a definite person or set of persons. In your papers, unless you mean to address the reader directly, do not use "you" when you mean to use "one" or "we." Refer to yourself as "I" instead of the royal "we." It is perfectly acceptable to use the first person singular in papers – it is not too informal. Use "we" for the author and the reader together: "We have seen how breaching experiments disturb our taken-for-granted notions about reality." Never refer to "society" as an active agent (that's my pet peeve), as in, "Society requires that people follow norms."

Avoid "a lot" (and by the way it's not spelled "alot"), and "very". Hemingway and Morrison do not need them, and neither do you. Don't confuse "their/there/they're" or "it's/its", or "to/two/too", or "were/we're/where", etc. Also please differentiate between "suppose" and "supposed" – these are not interchangeable, and are almost always improperly applied. These are sets of words that give students trouble, so please be careful.

Try to avoid using "he", "his", or "mankind" to mean anyone or all in general. If for some reason you have a strong ideological commitment to using "he" as the generic, you may do so, but it is not accurate, and there are other options available.

Make sure that nouns and verbs agree in number. Avoid sentence fragments. Make sure that the sentences you write have subjects and predicates. Verbs are also necessary. Do not leave a clause hanging without these necessary components. Avoid run-on sentences. Make sure that if you link things together in a sentence that you do so by using the proper connective words or punctuation

marks. These kinds of mistakes can often be caught by reading your paper aloud. If it sounds wrong, it probably is.

Always follow the parsimony principle. That is, use as few words as possible to make your point.

## **Process**

One way to start is by saying your ideas out loud, and writing them down. Just get the words out of your head and onto the page where you will be able to work with them more easily. I strongly suggest that you write more than one draft of your paper. Most successful papers are begun well in advance of the night before the assignment is due. The best way to start is to just spew out a messy first draft, getting all of your ideas and facts down on paper (if you write long-hand) or your computer screen (if you prefer to word process). Then, a second draft will help you to organize the sections, focus your argument, and refine the content and style.

You must be at this point before you come to see me about your paper. Although we will be unable to read entire drafts, we may be able to discuss with you specific parts of your thesis or analysis, and/or help you with difficulties in transitions between ideas or sections of your argument. A final draft is useful for correcting spelling and grammatical errors, and for formatting the paper. You must proofread your own paper. It is not acceptable to turn in a paper with typographical errors, misspellings, nouns and verbs that do not agree, misused words, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, etc. You may want to rewrite the beginning or end of your paper in the last draft. Often in composing your paper, you will have changed your focus or ideas somewhat by the time you finish. You will want to make sure that these changes are reflected in a new version of your introduction or conclusion.

Finally, re-read your own paper and imagine that someone else wrote it. Does it make sense? Fix it, if it doesn't. You may also want to get someone else to read your paper and give you comments. It is often hard to be objective when you are so close in the writing process. If you have trouble with your writing, get help. For further suggestions on writing, I suggest:

Richlin-Klonsky, Judith and Ellen Strenski (Eds.). 1994. A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Becker, Howard S. 1986. Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Also, please feel free to visit during office hours for personal assistance.

Good luck, and start writing now!

\*This document adapted with thanks from Dr. Kerry Ferris' Case Study Essay Guidelines.