SOCI 535 - Current Issues in Political Sociology: Violence and Nonviolence – 12949 – A01

Fall 2019, Political Sociology: Violence and Nonviolence - 12949 - SOCI 535 - A01
Wednesday 10:00 AM - 12:50 PM Cornett A317

Instructor: Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3:30 PM Cornett A375

We acknowledge that we meet one another and hold our learning experience on the ancestral lands of the Songhee Speaking peoples. We convene on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Coast and Strait Salish peoples. We are grateful for this unique experience. We pray that our thoughts and deliberations will contribute to the process through which past and present injustices are rectified. We stand in solidarity with all the misplaced, human or nonhuman. We honour this land and its spirits, and we hope to see the time when every being will have a place uniquely proper to it, a place otherwise called home.

Course Description:
This course critically and phenomenologically probes one of the deepest assumptions about violence and nonviolence: that they are mutually exclusive, and that there are modes of action that can be purely one or the other. Through the interpretive work of the instructor in a recent publication, based on a close reading of key and foundational figures of both revolutionary violence and advocates and theorists of nonviolence, the course will show that these are in fact braided concepts, and the relationship between them, far from being opposites, is concentric. The instructor’s recent book on the subject is assigned for this course, but supplementary readings are also listed for further studies. The students will be asked to choose a topic or theme from the course content and focus on the supplementary materials pertaining to their topic or theme for class discussion and their papers. My approach is phenomenological, and thus, the course will entail teaching phenomenology at the conceptual and applied levels. The approach of the course is primarily theoretical.

The topics to be explored and discussed include: violence, revolutionary violence, nonviolence, human action, tripartite theory of violence, world (welt) emancipation, violence of life against life, liberation, utility, peace, politics of nonviolence, colonialism.

Course Outcomes/Objectives:
The course is intended to cultivate a critical and phenomenological probing into the widely accepted mutual exclusivity of violence and nonviolence. It is also a course about human action. The topic is sensitive and controversial, and the class is inclusive and welcoming. We will learn to speak of, and critically engage with, the topics that may not usually be discussed in academia.

Course Pre/Co-requisites:
N/A
Required Resources:

Supplementary readings are also suggested for in-depth engagement with the themes of the course.

Course Evaluation:
Participation (attendance is mandatory) 10%
Presentation and Discussion Leadership 20%
Critical Reflection Papers 4 pp., dbl space, font size 12, due November 6 20%
Term Paper, 12 pp., dbl space, font size 12, due December 4 50%

Further instructions about the exams and paper will be provided during the term.

NOTE: the above dates are non-negotiable!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociology 535</th>
<th>Violence and Nonviolence</th>
<th>Fall 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READING LIST</td>
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**Week 1 (September 4): What Is at Issue?**
Vahabzadeh, *Violence and Nonviolence*, Introduction

**Week 2 (September 11): Radical Phenomenology of (Non)Violence**
Vahabzadeh, *Violence and Nonviolence*, Chapter 1

Supplementary:

**Week 3 (September 18): Welt and (Non)Violence**
Vahabzadeh, *Violence and Nonviolence*, Chapter 2

**Week 4 (September 25): Liberation-1**
Vahabzadeh, *Violence and Nonviolence*, Chapter 3

Supplementary:

**Week 5 (October 2): Liberation-2**

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 4

Supplementary:  

**Week 6 (October 9): Pausing and Reflecting**

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Interregnum

**Week 7 (October 16): Pragmatic Nonviolence**

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 5

Supplementary:  

**NOTE:** Critical Reflection Paper Due in Class!

**Week 8 (October 23): Nonviolence and Justice**

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 6

Supplementary:  

**Week 9 (October 30): Ethics of Nonviolence**

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 7

Supplementary:  
Week 10 (November 6): Politics of Nonviolence-1

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 8

Supplementary:

NOTE: November 13 Reading Break! No Class! Enjoy!

Week 11 (November 20): Politics of Nonviolence-2

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Chapter 8

Supplementary:

Week 12 (November 27): The Concentrics...

Vahabzadeh, Violence and Nonviolence, Conclusion

Week 13 (December 4): Summary and Conclusions

No readings!

NOTE: Term Paper Due in Class!

The Assignments:

1. Participation
   This is a graduate course. I won’t have to emphasize the importance of regular attendance. Attendance is worth 10% toward the final grade.

2. Presentation and Discussion Leadership
   At the beginning of the class and for 50 minutes, on Weeks 2-5 and 7-11, each student in our class is required to offer insights about the reading of the week and pose critical questions to the class and lead class discussion. In the first class a sign-up sheet will be circulated among the students to choose their week of preference. Please take this assignment seriously as it prepares you for the way you will need to write your subsequent papers. I will grade the presentations based on its critical engagement and success in engaging with
the class. The supplementary readings are meant to provide solid grounds for the presenter in leading discussions. The presentation is worth 20% toward your final grade.

3. **Critical Response Papers**
   Critical Reflection is a short, 4-page paper, font size 12, double-space, 1-inch margins, and it includes a cover page and a Reference page. ASA format for citation. The task is to engage with an aspect of our readings up to and including Week 6. A good paper refuses to take moral stances or counter-pose an argument. The task is to have an “immanent critique,” a form of critique that probes and engages its topic from the “inside out,” that is, using the logic and trajectory of the topic/argument in question and show its limitations and merits. Immanent critique is rooted in Marxist philosophy. An example will be provided in class. The Critical Reflection Paper is worth 20% of your final grade.

4. **Term Paper**
   This is a 12-page, font size 12, double-space, 1-inch margins, and it includes a cover page and a Reference page. ASA format for citation. The term paper is based on your choice of the topic or theme related to the course content, but in the Term Paper you will have to conduct a “research” about a specific issue. In other words, you will be required to take a certain theme or topic from the course and research it further, either theoretically or empirically/historically. All papers will be judged based on their critical and analytical approach.

   Here is how I generally grade any paper:

   1. An ‘A’ paper contains an outstanding work that gestures toward making a contribution to the field. It offers precise elaboration of the issue and why it is problematic, as well as a formidable and well discussed critical engagement with it as explained above.
   2. A ‘B’ paper contains a very good work that captures with relative success the issue to be discussed. It is clear about the issue and its problematic, and its critique is also acceptable.
   3. A ‘C’ paper contains references to the issue that still needs to be clarified and developed. It offers a glimpse of what the issue is and it contain a critique that still needs of further elaboration.

   The citation format for all written assignments is ASA. Please visit:  
   [https://libguides.sjsu.edu/ASAguide](https://libguides.sjsu.edu/ASAguide) and  

5. **Instructor's Office Hours**
   I strongly encourage students to come and speak to me during my office hours about their presentation strategy, critical reflection paper, and term paper. Please remember that I am here to help and will dedicate time to address your concerns and questions.
Legal Blurb:

Examination and Assignment Policy
As per university policy, absence is only permitted in cases of illness, accident, family affliction, or religious obligations. Missing an exam for other reasons will result in an “F.” Students are responsible for providing official documentation to justify their absence, e.g., a doctor’s note. In cases of justified absences, the student has the right to request a make-up exam. Please note that exams will not be rescheduled to accommodate students’ personal circumstances, including travelling plans. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Grading
In accordance with Senate Regulations, grading on the curve is not permitted. The grades students receive in this course reflect their performance in relation to specified academic expectations. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standings. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. All exams remain the property of the University of Victoria.

Official Grading Standards of University of Victoria is available for your viewing at: https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html

Attendance
As per university policy, attendance to all classes is mandatory. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness, accident or family affliction should report to the instructor as soon as possible. Absences that cannot be justified in accordance with university policies will be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. If you are absent for reasons other than those specified under university policies, then it is not the responsibility of the instructor or the TA to help you catch up with missed lecture material.

Academic Integrity
The Department of Sociology fully and rigorously enforces the Senate Policy on Academic integrity. It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation. Students caught cheating in the course will be expelled and reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the Dean of Social Sciences for disciplinary action.

Accessibility Statement
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Plagiarism and Cheating
Students must note the statement on “Plagiarism” in the UVic Calendar, and all regulations under the “Policy on Academic Integrity.” Quotes and citations must be used for any material longer than 5 words in succession that is not the student’s original work.
Harassment
The Department of Sociology supports the University's policies on harassment, and is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty are able to exercise fully their rights to participate in activities at the University without fear of harassment.

Classroom Etiquette
Distractions can easily hinder the difficult process of conveying knowledge. Please observe standard classroom etiquette. Entering the classroom after the instructor’s presentation has started can be distracting both to the instructor as well as to other students. While occasional lateness may be unavoidable, your dedication to being on time is greatly appreciated. The use of electronic communication devices is also a distraction to both the instructor and classmates. This includes texting and surfing the Internet. Please turn off your electronic communication devices before entering the classroom and refrain from using them during class. If there is a justifiable reason for using your device during class (e.g., expecting an urgent call related to health or illness), please notify the instructor ahead of time, keep the device on vibrate, and exit the room if you must receive a message.

Departmental Equity Policy Statement
The Department of Sociology is committed to inclusiveness and to a welcoming, friendly learning and working environment where members of all genders, races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, and structurally disadvantaged groups are treated fairly. We will not tolerate sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and discrimination based on religious beliefs or any other form of prejudice which undermines people’s rights to fairness.

Bringing in the Bystander – Bystander Intervention Training at UVic
Offered by the Office of Student Life, "Bringing in the Bystander" is a free in-person workshop on campus that teaches students how to overcome resistance to checking in and intervening when they observe harmful situations and the potential for sexualized violence to occur. By empowering students to become active bystanders, we hope to create a compassionate community response to preventing sexualized violence and fostering a safer environment on campus.

Email: svptraining@uvic.ca
Web: www.uvic.ca/bystander

Course Experience Survey (CES)
Your feedback on this course is valued. Towards the end of the term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback regarding the course and the instructor’s teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an e-mail inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an e-mail invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca. You will need to use your UVic Netlink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. Please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.
Grading
A primary purpose of evaluation and grading is to further effective teaching and learning. Any practices which assign a predetermined percentage of students a specific grade, that is, a certain percentage get A, another percentage get B and so on, without regard to individual achievement are prohibited.
The table on the next page shows the official grading system used by instructors in arriving at final assessments of student performance. For letter grades authorized for use in the Faculty of Law, see the entry under that faculty.

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concession from a student. This registration status is excluded from the calculation of all grade point averages; it will appear on the official transcript.

*The grading scale for the evaluation of course achievement at the University of Victoria is a percentage scale that translates to a 9 point GPA/letter grade system. The 9 point GPA system is the sole basis for the calculation of grade point averages and academic standing. Standardized percentage ranges have been established as the basis for the assignment of letter grades. The percentage grades are displayed on the official and administrative transcripts in order to provide fine grained course assessment which will be useful to students particularly in their application to graduate studies and for external scholarships and funding. Comparative grading information (average grade [mean] for the class), along with the number of students in the class, is displayed for each course section for which percentage grades are assigned.