

Sample Syllabus :

**Communication for Harmony:  
An Introduction to Peace Studies**

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**Course Description:**

On the basis of core values of peace studies such as nonviolence, cooperation, global citizenship, ecological interdependence, and appreciation of diversity, this course is designed to provide an overview of the contemporary scholarships in the field. It also examines the role of communication in various modes of peacekeeping efforts including participatory decision-making and conflict management. The class, meeting two hours a week, combines lectures, case studies, and in-class activities. Students will be asked to sharpen their communication skills in order to respond creatively and responsibly to problems and opportunities encountered in attending to differences and conflicts in a variety of real life situations with a commitment to live in peace and to influence with integrity.

**Text:**

- 1) Keefe, T., & Robberts, R. E. (1991). Realizing peace: An introduction to peace studies. Ames, IA: Iowa University Press. (Reserved in Main Library)
- 2) A course packet will be prepared by the instructor, which includes essays, articles, short poems, and assignment descriptions.

**Assignments & Grading: (Subject to Change)**

		<b>DUE DATE (as in 2000)</b>
Exam(s):	20%	6-2
Small Group Assignments		
Peace(making) as	15%	3-31
Group Research Project		
Chapter Briefing	10%	
Bibliography	10%	5-19
Written Report	15%	6-9
Oral Report	10%	5-5,12,19
Individual Reaction Paper	10%	5-26
Class Participation:	10%	

Bi-Weekly Themes: (as in 2000)

**Part I. Personal Effectiveness in Action:**

- 1) Basic Concepts --  $\ni$  *Definitions, History of Peace Studies, Theoretical Approaches*  $\leq$   
2-25 (Ch. 1, 2) 1. What is peace? How is it defined in Chinese culture?  
3-3 2. How can peace be studied?  
3. What is violence, the opposite of peace?
- 2) Personal Peace --  $\ni$  *Perceptions, stereotyping, Empathy, Egocentricism*  $\leq$   
3-10 (Ch. 3, 5) 1. What is the relationship between perception and action?  
3-17 2. How do stereotypes affect communication, and vice versa?  
3. How can we become less egocentric via self-reflection?
- 3) Interpersonal Peace --  $\ni$  *Self Assessment, Assertive vs. Aggressive Communication*  $\leq$   
3-24 (Ch. 13) 1. What is conflict? How is it defined in Chinese culture?  
3-31 2. How can we cope with conflict situations?  
3. What is the "win-win" approach?
- 4) Peace in Small Groups --  $\ni$  *Consensus Building, Participatory Decision-Making*  $\leq$   
4-14 (Ch. 14) 1. How can we conduct meetings effectively?  
4-21 2. How do we negotiate toward our favored position?  
3. What is Groupthink?

**Part II. Concerns and Responsibilities in Larger Contexts:**

- 5) Peace in Society --  $\ni$  *Nonviolent Social Engagement, Minority Communication*  $\leq$   
4-28 (Ch. 4, 7) 1. What are the techniques of nonviolent resistance?  
5-5 2. How do religious perspectives impact our communication?  
3. How do minority groups obtain a voice in the society?
  - 6) Peace in International Arena --  $\ni$  *Intercultural Competence, War and Arms Race*  $\leq$   
5-12 (Ch. 8, 9) 1. How do we communicate with people from different  
cultures?  
5-19 2. How does communication play a role in international  
affairs?  
3. What are the ramifications of wars?
  - 7) Peace in Nature --  $\ni$  *Ecological Sensibility, Misanthropy vs. Anthropocentricism*  $\leq$   
5-26 (Ch. 11) 1. How do we live peacefully with the environment?  
6-2 2. Which do we choose, development or conservation?  
3. Is it possible for us to avoid a human-centered perspective?
  - 8) Conclusion --  $\ni$  *Stepping Into the Real World*  $\leq$   
6-9 (Ch. 15) **Discovery, Change, Transformation.**
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Assignments:

### I. Research Group Project:

Each student will join a group on the basis of their preferences during the second week of class. There will be 7 - 8 members in a group. Groups will perform various in-class as well as out-of-class activities as required, including group discussions, interviews, and mini-surveys. Along the progress of the course, each group will be responsible for designing discussion questions (to elicit brisk and earnest discussion in class) and providing a resource list (**Bibliography**) specifying resources available in the library, in the community, or on the Internet that are relevant to the topic assigned to the group. During the **Group Briefing**, the group will present an outline of the chapter to the class. At the end of the briefing, the group will provide at least 3 questions for the class to engage in small group discussion.

Yet most of all, each group will submit a collective **written report**, which must be a coherent and cohesive research paper with a bibliography, and present an **oral presentation** on the result of their research project (usually 20-25 minutes long). The group members will start with selecting a topic related to the concerns of this course and then narrow it down so you could produce a more comprehensive research analysis on it. (Your group topic needs to be approved by the instructor.) For example, you might consider women ' s contribution to peace in the world as your topic; then you might decide to confine it within the ecological dimension including nature-preserving, recycling and sustainable living.

After you thumb through pages after pages in libraries, you might want to interview people or give out questionnaires to obtain some first-hand information. Please note that the paper should contain a thesis statement summarizing your group position on the issue, with well-documented evidences from your research.

Each group is to hand in their project **proposal** on the due date. The questionnaire or the interview protocol, if any, shall be included. The proposal is to be signed by all members of the group.

Each paper needs to be typed and at least single-spaced in 12-14 point font on A4 or letter size paper. The paper should be no less than 10 pages long (transcripts or data sheets not included). Stapling is a must. Each group should keep a copy for their own reference.

The paper will be graded in accordance with the following criteria:

- (1) 40%: acuteness and genuity in relation to the course content;
- (2) 40%: analysis and interpretation of the observed interactions or collected data (Students are not graded on what their opinion is, or whether they got it " right, " but on the seriousness of the attempt as well as the thoughtfulness and the logic of the analysis);
- (3) 20%: Mechanism including spelling, punctuation, layout, and format.

Sample Topics From the Past:

Conflict Resolution Skills for Couples

War Images Portrayed in Three Movies

Ultimately Peaceful Living: Becoming a Vegetarian

## II. Small Group Assignment: Peace(making) as

In a group of three or four, find a Nobel Peace Prize laureate that you are interested in\* and do some library and web research on the person/organization. Write a 3-4 page\*\* paper addressing issues including

- 1) What is the contribution the person/organization made/has made to peace?
- 2) Why is the contribution worth a Nobel Prize?
- 3) Why did you become interested in the person/organization?
- 4) How does it relate to what we are doing in this course?
- 5) What is the implication of this person/organization for us in Taiwan at this moment?

\* Option: Any person or organization you think would definite merit a Nobel Prize, but is never awarded one.

Sample Topics From the Past:

- Peace as Social Change (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- Peace as Non-violence (The Dalai Lama)
- Peace as Idealistic Activism (Bertha von Suttner)
- Peace as Mitigating War (Doctors Without Borders)

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### Small Group Assignment (Option): Analysis of Conflict in Movies\*

In a group of three or four, pick up a feature film in which a substantial conflict happens through some courses of time in the film. Write a 3 – 4 page paper\*\* analyzing the respective goals, power, and styles of the parties in the conflict, and their relationships (before and after) and the outcome of the conflict.

You might want to start with a brief description of the conflict, and the goals of each party and their initial relationship in the beginning of the conflict. Then focus on the dynamic interaction among the parties and how they juggle with each other 's conflict styles and the power issue during the conflict process. Make sure your personal evaluation of their behaviors is included here. At the end, comment on the outcome of the conflict and how the parties involved can improve it by changing their attitudes or conflict management skills, followed by your expert how-to advice for them.

\* Adapted from Joyce L. Hocker and William W. Wilmot, *Interpersonal Conflict* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995).

Sample Topics From the Past:

- Dangerous Minds
- 悲情城市

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### Individual Assignment: Reaction Paper:

This is the opportunity to verbalize your personal comments and feelings, reacting to the class discussions and the reading. Your paper\*\* should make a point and refer to the texts for evidence. You also need to demonstrate an interpretation of your response in relations to the course. Paper

will be evaluated according to standard academic criteria: 1) originality of argument and insight, 2) use of evidence, 3) reasoning process, 4) clarity, 5) coherence 6) mechanism (grammar, spelling, etc).

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**Extra Credit Opportunity: Act for Peace**

Participating in peace-building efforts in Taiwan during the semester, such as going to a peace-related movie with people not in our class, joining a peace-related book study group, or taking part in an environmental campaign.

Write down your experiences, together with tangible proof of the situation you are involved with. Turn in the paper\*\* at the first week of May and the instructor will arrange a date for you to share what you experience with the class.

\*\* Paper must be typed, stapled, with footnotes indicating your sources for any quotations or important factual materials, and with a bibliography (sources you use for writing this paper)