

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS  
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

**Voyage: Spring 2016**

**Discipline: Religious Studies**

**RELG 3559-101: Nonviolence, Global Citizenship, and Contemplative Activism**

**Division: Upper Division**

**Faculty Name: Thomas B. Coburn**

**Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38**

**Course meets A days 13:15-14:35**

**Prerequisites:**

One or more courses in the academic study of religion (Religious Studies)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores a central paradox that runs through religious life. On the one hand, one of the distinguishing features of contemplative life is the aspiration to live timelessly, in the present moment. On the other hand, contemplatives have often been deeply involved in activist struggles to improve the social and political conditions of their time and place. How can this be? We will seek answers to this question through the conceptual lenses of nonviolence and global citizenship, as well as reflection on the contemplative life. Examples of how these issues converge will be drawn from around the globe, with particular attention to the different cultural settings of this semester's voyage.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To familiarize students with the rationale for nonviolence in public and private life, and critiques of that rationale.
2. To introduce students to notable figures and movements, past and present, of contemplative nonviolence.
3. To explore the implications of nonviolence for those aspiring to global citizenship.
4. To appreciate the creative tension in contemplative life between withdrawal from the world and immersion in it, between the reclusive and the active life.
5. To flourish in a classroom learning environment that does not include laptops, cell phones, and related media.
6. To cultivate the liberal arts skills of reading, writing, speaking—and listening.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

AUTHOR: Gerzon, Mark  
TITLE: American Citizen, Global Citizen  
PUBLISHER: Spirit Scope  
ISBN #: 978-0-9840930-1-4  
DATE/EDITION: 2010

AUTHOR: Holmes, Robert and Barry Gan  
TITLE: Nonviolence in Theory and Practice  
PUBLISHER: Waveland  
ISBN #: 978-157667605  
DATE/EDITION: 2012

AUTHOR: Nhat Hanh, Thich  
TITLE: The Miracle of Mindfulness  
PUBLISHER: Beacon Press  
ISBN #: 978-080701239-0  
DATE/EDITION: Most recent

AUTHOR: Smith-Christopher, Daniel (ed.)  
TITLE: Subverting Hatred  
PUBLISHER: Orbis Books  
ISBN #-13: 978-1-57075-7474  
DATE/EDITION: 2007 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

AUTHOR: Basho, Matsuo  
TITLE: Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches  
PUBLISHER: Penguin  
ISBN #: 0-14-044185-9  
DATE/EDITION: Most recent

AUTHOR: Takeyama, Michio  
TITLE: Harp of Burma  
PUBLISHER: Charles Tuttle/UNESCO  
ISBN #: 0-8048-0232-7

## **TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE**

Depart Ensenada- January 5

1. Introduction to the intersection of nonviolence, global citizenship, and contemplation, and to each other

## **A1-January 7**

Brief ungraded writing assignment

## **A2- January 9**

### 1a: Global Citizenship

Gerzon, American Citizen, Global Citizen, 11-46

## **A3- January 11**

Gerzon, 47-109

Honolulu: January 12

## **A4- January 14**

Gerzon, 111-181; begin Basho, The Narrow Road to the Deep North

## **A5- January 17**

Gerzon, 183-203; continue Basho

Study Day: January 19

## **A6- January 20**

### 1b: Contemplation

Tony Schwartz, “Addicted to Distraction,” (pdf), New York Times 11/29/15

Nhat Hanh, The Miracle of Mindfulness, vii-xiii, 1-31; continue Basho

Spend half an hour exploring this diagram and prepare to discuss some of the links it offers:

“Tree of Contemplative Practices” ([www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree](http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree))

## **A7- January 22**

Nhat Hanh, 33-76; finish Basho

Long Search video: Japan—Land of the Disappearing Buddha

Pre-Japan in-class essay/exam

Yokohama: January 24-25

In-Transit: January 26

Kobe: January 27-28

**A8- January 29**

Nhat Hanh, 79-98

M. K. Gandhi (pdf), Selections from his autobiography (6 pp.)

Long Search video: Footprint of the Buddha

Begin Takeyama, Harp of Burma

Shanghai: January 31-February 1

In-Transit: February 2-3

Hong Kong: February 4-5

1c: Nonviolence

**A9- February 6**

Research your discussion group's links in the "Tree of Contemplative Practices" and prepare for sharing in class

Continue Takeyama

Ho Chi Minh: February 8-12

**A10- February 13**

Michael Nagler (pdf), "What is nonviolence? Five principles of nonviolence. Nonviolence FAQ. Thoughts on the history of nonviolence"

Holmes and Gan, Nonviolence in Theory and Practice (NTP) xiii-xxiii, 255-275

Continue Takeyama

Study Day: February 15

**A11-February 16**

Finish Takeyama

Movie: "Burmese Harp"

Yangon: February 18-22

**A12- February 23: Midterm exam/paper**

2.Nonviolence, Global Citizenship, and Contemplation in Different Settings

**A13- February 25**

2a. India: A key text (the Bhagavad Gita), two key figures (Gandhi and King), and Jains

NTP 1-3, 18-22, 71-74, 83-87, 98-103, 104-116, 317-321  
Daniel Smith-Christopher (ed.), Subverting Hatred (SH), vii-xxvi, 1-13  
Movie: “Gandhi”  
Video and text: Martin Luther King, “Beyond Vietnam—A Time to Break Silence” (pdf)

Cochin: February 27-March 3

#### **A14- March 4**

SH 57- 74  
Debriefing on India field experiences

Study Day: March 6

#### **A15- March 7**

##### 2b. Africa

NTP 350-353  
Lester Kurtz (pdf), “The Anti-Apartheid Struggle in South Africa 1912-1992 (pdf) from [www.nonviolent.org](http://www.nonviolent.org)  
Selections from Desmond Tutu, The Rainbow People of God (pdf)

Port Louis: March 9

#### **A16- March 10**

NTP 33-41; SH 171-196  
Further selections from Tutu, The Rainbow People of God (pdf)  
Islam and Nonviolence: NTP 42-51, SH 128-143  
Long Search video: Zulu Zion

Study Day: March 12

#### **A17- March 13**

Judaism and Nonviolence: NTP 23-32, 194-203, SH 144-170  
Long Search video: Judaism—The Chosen People  
Preparing for our field lab—Three Faiths Pilgrimage—which will take place on March 15. See below under Field Work and Field Lab for details. In addition, please note that South Africa is an extraordinarily rich venue for deepening your understanding of the topics in our course. Time spent in some of the other field experiences—ISE/SAS and faculty-led—will be richly repaid.

Cape Town: March 15-20

## **A18- March 21**

Video: “Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North” (PBS 2008)  
Debriefing on our field lab and other South Africa field experiences

2c: The Challenge of Dictators: Hitler, Charles Taylor

## **A19- March 23:**

Wikipedia article (pdf) on Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee  
Video: “Pray the Devil Back to Hell” (Leymah Gbowee)  
Work on field lab report

## **A20- March 25**

2d: A Christian Response to the Nazis— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### **Field lab report due**

“The Sermon on the Mount” (pdf) “The Gospel according to Matthew,” chapters 5-7 in J. Fieser and J. Powers, Scriptures of the World’s Religions.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (pdf), Selections from A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 2-4, 9-12, 21-27, 130-133, 303-306, 319-320

PBS video: “Bonhoeffer”

Bonhoeffer quotations (pdf) from “Bonhoeffer” video

Takoradi: March 27-28

Tema: March 29-31

## **A21- April 1**

### **Fieldwork essay due**

Oral reports on fieldwork essays

## **A22- April 3**

Oral reports on fieldwork essays continued

## **A23- April 5**

Reflections on Nonviolence and Religion

SH 197-208

Casablanca: April 7-11

Study Day: April 12

### **A24- A Day Finals, April 13**

April 16: Disembarkation Day

### **FIELD WORK**

Experiential course work on Semester at Sea is comprised of the required field lab led by the instructor and additional field assignments that span multiple ports. I strongly urge you to begin keeping a field journal and to carry it with you wherever you go during our voyage. These journal notes can apply not just to this course, but to the entire trip. They are for your eyes only. They are not formal writing, but quickly written phrases or images that come upon you in your travels in ports—verbal snapshots, memorable insights and exchanges that you don't want to lose in the rush of events. These notes, in addition to recording memorable moments, can provide seeds that you later nurture into the formal writings for this and other courses. Anthropologists and other social scientists keep field journals. So should you.

**FIELD LAB** (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

The field lab for this course takes place on Tuesday, March 15 (day #1 in South Africa)

*Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of our field lab. Failure to attend our field trip will result in a grade of zero for this portion of the course.*

Our field lab—Three Faiths Pilgrimage—will take place in Cape Town. Cape Town is a multiracial city that includes vibrant Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities. Islam was introduced by slaves brought over 300 years ago from Indonesia. The Jewish community traces its history to religious persecution in Europe. An estimated 80 percent of South Africans are Christians, and St. George's Anglican Cathedral was the site of much interfaith protest during the struggle against apartheid. Guided by South African peace activist Terry Crawford-Browne (a former SAS professor, who will also be a wonderful resource for further inquiry), the walking tour of downtown Cape Town will include a mosque in Bo-Kaap, the Jewish Center, the Slave Lodge and St. George's Cathedral, where Archbishop Desmond Tutu was based. The visit to the Cathedral also includes an opportunity to walk the labyrinth (praying with your feet) to meditate upon the experiences. Please note: modest dress is required for the mosque. No shorts, short skirts, or exposed midriffs permitted. Women should bring a scarf to wear as a head-covering. We will eat lunch in a local restaurant. Students will be provided with one or more questions to address in their field lab reports, which should be 3-5 pages (750-1250 words) in length.

### **FIELD ASSIGNMENTS**

Students should select and participate in at least three field programs explicitly for this course, with at least one of them occurring before the midterm exam and at least one after that exam. These

programs may be ISE/SAS or faculty-led field programs or independent studies. I will indicate field programs that are particularly promising for this course. On the basis of your field experiences, write an essay of 3-5 pages (750-1250 words) in which you identify specific ways in which those experiences have affected your understanding of religious life. Has it been expanded? reinforced? complicated? exploded? enriched? something else? You decide what the impact of these experiences has been on you. Do not simply describe what you did or what the experience was. Instead, identify the three field work assignments you attended and reflect on what the impact of field work has been on your understanding of the issues in this course. You are strongly urged to keep a field journal throughout the semester (not just on formal field experiences), in order to plant seeds for completing the “field work essay,” which is due on A21 and will be graded.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC**

- 20%--Class attendance and participation. We will divide the class into small groups which, on a rotating basis, will give a 15 minute presentation to summarize and focus the day’s reading for class discussion. Unannounced quizzes may be used to encourage currency with the reading and video-viewing.
- 20%--Field lab report on our Cape Town experience(s)
- 20%--Field work essay
  - 5%--Pre-Japan in-class essay/exam
- 15%--Mid-term exam
- 20%--Final exam

Please note attendance and participation is required on Semester at Sea. Absences are only excused when accompanied by a note from the clinic.

## **RESERVE BOOKS AND FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY**

AUTHOR: Tutu, Desmond  
TITLE: The Rainbow People of God  
PUBLISHER: Doubleday  
ISBN #: 0-385-47546-2  
DATE/EDITION: 1994

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIAL**

Video: “Pray the Devil Back to Hell”  
Video: PBS “Bonhoeffer”  
Assorted pdf files  
Video: “My Stroke of Insight” (Jill Bolte Taylor TED presentation, available on the web)  
Video: “Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North” (PBS 2008)  
Video: Long Search—Zulu Zion  
Video: Long Search—Footprint of the Buddha  
Video: Long Search—Japan: Land of the Disappearing Buddha  
Video: Long Search—Judaism: The Chosen People  
Film: “Gandhi”

Video: Martin Luther King, "Beyond Vietnam—A Time to Break Silence"  
Film: "Burmese Harp"

### **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."