

Peace Movements in American History

Description: This course examines peace movements and peacemakers in American history, with an emphasis on the period since World War I.

Required texts:

PMAH reader

Grading: Your grade will be composed of four components:

- mid-term essay: 25%
- final essay: 25%
- weekly assignment notes: 25%
- research paper: 25%

Regular attendance is required. Chronic absences will result in a grade penalty.

Weekly Assignments: This class requires that you write 500-750 words of comment, summary, criticism and/or analysis in response to each week's reading assignment. Make two copies of your assignment: one to hand in at class on Monday and one to keep in a separate folder and bring to class daily. Assignments will be collected and graded along with the final paper.

Proposed Method: The course proposes to be a mutual exploration of the history of American peace movements via a dialogue between the students, the teacher, the historical sources we examine, and the World Outside the Walls. After absorbing a range of perspectives on the American peace movement, each student is expected to articulate his or her own interpretation of the subject matter.

Informal Pre-requisite: All that you have learned until now. You must apply this prior knowledge in order to do well in this class.

Underlying Assumption on which Everything Else is Based: That human beings can, by diligent study, make tentative sense of the sum total of human experience (known as History) and understand its relationship to the present and future, at least enough to make the whole thing worth doing. This is the secular faith of the Historian.

Classroom decorum: As civil society is a necessary pre-condition for true freedom, so is a civil classroom a necessary pre-condition for learning. Accordingly, please adopt a civil attitude while in class. Please refrain from chatting, sleeping, eating, doing work from other classes, or anything not directly related to our class. Such activities are disrespectful of the class, your classmates, and your professor. Leaving during class (except for restroom emergencies) without notifying me in advance is highly disruptive and therefore prohibited. Electronic devices of any sort (phones, pagers, ipods, laptops, etc.) must be turned off for the duration of the class. Thanks you!

Course Outline (subject to change):

Week 1: Introduction to the American Peace Movement

Readings: Emerson (for Wednesday); Thoreau (for Friday)

- a. Course Introduction: Peace, the Big Picture
- b. The Politics of the Upright Person
- c. The Long Reach of "Civil Disobedience"

Week 2: Beginnings of the 20th Century Peace Movement

Readings: selections by Gandhi, Jane Addams, Randolph Bourne

- a. Gandhi: Guru of the American Peace Movement
- b. World War I and the Perils of Peace Activism
- c. World War I and the Perils of Peace Activism (II)

Week 3: State-Centered Approaches to Peace

Readings: Woodrow Wilson selection; Kant, “Perpetual Peace”; League of Nations charter; Kellogg-Briand Pact; UN charter

- a. MLK Holiday
- b. Wilson and the League: Blueprint for World Federalism
- c. Disarmament and the Outlawry of War

Week 4: The Peace Movement During the Interwar Years and Beyond

Readings: “Speak Truth to Power”;

- a. The Lessons of World War I
- b. Dorothy Day and Catholic Peace Activism
- c. Better Red than Dead: SANE or Insane? (mid-term paper due in class)

Week 5: Martin Luther King and Non-Violence

Readings: MLK selection;

- a. The Philosophy of Non-Violent Direct Action
- b. The Freedom Riders
- c. King’s Legacy

Week 6: Vietnam and the Politics of Peace

Readings: Deming selection;

(research proposals due Monday)

- a. Roots of Opposition
- b. COINTELPRO and the Peace Movement
- c. Is Peace Patriotic?

Week 7: The Fight in the Fields

Readings: Chavez selection;

- a. President’s Day Holiday
- b. Cesar Chavez and La Huelga
- c. The Fight in the Fields

Week 8: Peace Activism in the 80s

Readings: TBA

- a. Ending Apartheid, Peacefully
- b. The Struggle for Peace in Central America
- c. Blowback: MS-13 and the Long Arm of Violence

Week 9: The Nuclear Freeze Movement and the End of the Cold War

Readings: Catholic Bishop’s Letter;

- a. Freeze Now!
- b. Freezers or Appeasers?
- c. The Nuclear Freeze Movement and the End of the Cold War

Week 10: Peace in an Age of Terror

Readings: TBA

- a. Peace Activism and the Gulf War
- b. A Muffled Voice: Peace Activism and the Iraq War
- c. Review (research papers due today)

Final papers due in class at time of final examination.