OVERCOMING VIOLENCE:
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

HDS 2829, Spring 2007
Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30 (plus film series & hour to be arranged)
Harvard Divinity School, Andover Hall, Room 102

Professors: M. Christian Green (HDS), Rodney Petersen (BTI), Thomas Massaro (WJST),
Ed Rodman (EDS), Samuel Johnson (BUSTh), and Ann Riggs (NCCC)

COURSE SYLLABUS

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

M. CHRISTIAN GREEN, HDS Faculty: Generally on campus and in office (Andover 308)
Monday through Wednesday. Official office hour time slots will be available Monday and
Tuesday afternoons from 1:00 to 5:00 P. M. Generally, meetings should be arranged by e-mailing
me directly to arrange a time within those hours for you to stop by. Meetings outside of those
times may be scheduled on a case-by-case basis, as necessary. You may reach me by e-mail at
cgreen@hds.harvard.edu or by phone at 617-384-7872. In the event that you need to reach me
and do not find me in my office, you may contact my faculty assistant, Katherine Lou, by phone
at 617-495-4265 or by e-mail at: klou@hds.harvard.edu for further assistance. Her office and my
mailbox are in Andover 302. And in general, should you walk by and find my office door open,
feel free to drop in.

RODNEY L. PETERSEN, BTI Director: Available by appointment through the BTI Office
(617-527-4880 x2) and through email: petersen@bostontheological.org.

THOMAS MASSARO, SJ, WJST Faculty: email: tmassaro@wjst.edu; Office phone: 617-492-
1960, ext 182 Home phone: 617-876-1233; Office hours: Mondays, 1:30-4:00, Thursdays,
10:15-11:45. Please consult appointment book at Weston reception desk to make appointments.

ED RODMAN, EDS Faculty: By appointment: 617-8683450; email: erodman@eds.edu.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, BUSTh Field Education Director: By appointment: 617-353-9699;
email: sjohnsn@bu.edu

ANN RIGGS, Director, Faith and Order, NCCUSA: Available by appointment through
the National Council of Churches Faith and Order Office (202-544-2350 x203) and through
email: ariggs@nccusa.org.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The twentieth century has been described as the most violent century in history. The problem of
violence has recurred anew in this century with the “War on Terror” and genocide in Darfur.
Two international bodies, the World Council of Churches and the World Health Organization,
began the new millennium by calling for renewed attention to violence and for theological and
political solutions. Yet, despite recent calls for apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation, our
policies and theologies continue to waver between retributive and restorative approaches. This
course will survey classic understandings of violence and its effects, along with contemporary
writings in theology, law, politics, and public policy. In exploring various movements in political theology, restorative justice, and conflict resolution, we will examine violence as a problem of deep religious and spiritual significance for Christian churches and other religious traditions, and for the health of the human community in the 21st century.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to regular participation in class, students have three options for fulfilling course requirements. One of the following three options (or a combination thereof) should be chosen in consultation with and with the approval of a course instructor. There will be no final examination in this course.

Option #1 Three Short Papers:
   (1) Paper of 3-5 pp. on your approach to violence as guided by Units I and II of this syllabus due on Monday, March 5.

   (2) Paper of 5-10 pp. framed by Unit III. This paper may be a sermon, essay, or analysis of the relationship between individual effort and work to overcome violence. This may also be a case study of a specific encounter with violence and the effort to overcome it. This paper is due on Wednesday, March 21.

   (3) Paper of 10-15 pp. applying your approach to issues suggested by Unit IV of this syllabus. This paper is due by the end of Reading Period, Wednesday May 16.

Option #2 Final Paper:
   A paper of 20-25 pages is due by the end of Reading Period. The topic of the paper is to be negotiated with one of the course instructors and initial bibliography submitted before the HDS Spring Break (March 25–31). This project may take a variety of print, audio and visual forms.

Option #3 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation & Statement
   Students may join together in groups of three (or more) to strategize and develop materials for an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. This should provide for a 2 hour mock assembly at which other students will be welcome to attend. A Statement to be defended should be developed, oral case made with appropriate précis developed for submission. (In 2011 the WCC will hold an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. All statements drawn up in theology schools and submitted for use will be used in the development of such a Statement in the summer of 2008 for consideration by the churches.) Students electing this option should consult with faculty and prepare a proposal prior to Spring Break.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK VIA E-MAIL IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED.

Electronic instead of hard-copy submission prevents you from having to decipher your professor’s love it-or-hate it handwriting and allows you to receive extensive written comments in an attractive red font in an electronic version that will be returned to you. Most students find this to be of great value, though there have been some debates over the appropriate font color. Normally the process works smoothly and you will receive e-mail confirmation that your paper has been received. In the rare case in which there is a software incompatibility, you may be asked
to submit your document in another electronic format or to make alternative arrangements for its delivery.

OTHER PROCEDURAL ISSUES

(1) Attendance—If you are registered as a full-time student, it is expected that you have arranged your work, family, and other responsibilities in such a way that you can attend class sessions and scheduled discussion sections. Regular attendance and participation at all classes, discussion sections, and required film events is thus essential. We will not be taking attendance, as I believe this should not be necessary at the graduate stages of education where regular attendance is presumed. Infrequent attendance does not go unnoticed and should, ideally, be accounted for in an e-mail message to one of the course faculty accounting for your absence. While no particular percentage of your course grade is being specified for classroom participation, students who participate fully as citizens of the classroom may, at the instructors’ discretion, expect to receive an additional third to half grade for their final course grade. Further, written work for the class should reflect your thoughtful engagement with and analysis of course themes, which is difficult to achieve if you have not been a regular participant in the class.

(2) Auditing—The HDS regulations are very flexible with respect to auditors. We are prepared to be similarly flexible with the following provisos. First, informal auditors (who will not be listing this course on their study cards) are welcome, but should clarify their status with me at the beginning of the course. Second, formal auditors (who will be listing the course on their study cards) should plan to attend the vast majority of the classes. (Attendance of less that 50% of the classes should, for example, be deemed insufficient.) The thinking here is that someone who audits the course formally should not have to make up an answer out of whole cloth if a hypothetical job interviewer looking at that student’s transcript posed the question: What did you learn in the course “Overcoming Violence”? Small discussion sections, if course enrollment justifies their existence, are open to but optional for both kinds of auditors.

(3) Papers in Fulfillment of the Requirements of This Class and Another—Occasionally, students will take classes whose subject matter overlaps to such a degree that they would like to write a final paper that fulfills the requirements of both. I am not opposed to this, but the Student Handbook indicates that the formal guideline at HDS is that students should clear this with the professors in both classes. My own guideline here is that the paper submitted for my class should clearly address themes of this class. In some cases, extra length may be advisable for a paper submitted for two classes, so as to adequately address the themes of both classes.

(4) Plagiarism—Instances of plagiarism in written work for this course will be taken very seriously. Students who plagiarize the thoughts or of others without sufficient acknowledgment or citation can expect penalties up to and including a failing grade for the course and a report to the relevant administrators and disciplinary bodies in their home institutions in the BTI.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

General Note on Readings:  
**R** = reading available at Andover-Harvard Library reserve desk  
**W** = reading available on course website on “Course” page, filed in folders by Week
Highlighted Author/Title=Required or recommended book available at the Harvard Divinity School Bookstore (first floor of Divinity Hall) and on reserve at the Andover-Harvard Library (first floor of Andover Hall)

Week 1—Introduction

January 31—Introduction (Green, Petersen, Massaro, Rodman, Johnson, Riggs)
• Opening statements and introduction by the faculty members.

Suggestions for Practical Theology:

A class folder is available on line for resources and suggestions in practical theology. Initial suggestions are noted in this syllabus.

Ron Kraybill, *Transforming the Peacebuilder*, 2006 Version (See course instructors for copies).
Professor, Conflict Transformation Program, Eastern Mennonite University

UNIT I – PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE

Week 2—The Phenomenon of Violence: Philosophy, Sociology, and Psychology

February 5 – Evolutionary Biological and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives (Green)

*Readings:*

- **R** Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (1963), chs 3-5 (What Aggression Is Good For; The Spontaneity of Aggression; Habit, Ritual, and Magic)
- **R** Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide*, chs. 1 (Homicide and Human Nature), 10 (Retaliation and Revenge), and 12 (On Cultural Variation)
- **R** Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, pp. 25-43 (Dialogue with Jürgen Habermas) and 85-136 (Dialogue with Jacques Derrida)

February 7 – Twentieth Century Classics (Petersen)

*Readings:*

- **R** Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chs. 5-8 (selections on aggressiveness, death instinct, civilization, guilt, instincts, repetition compulsion, religion, unconscio

ness).
- **R** Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (1908), chs. III (Prejudices Against Violence), VI (Ethics of Violence), and Appendix II (Apology for Violence)
- **R** Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 35-106 (Concerning Violence).
- **Hannah Arendt, On Violence**, ch.1.
Week 3 – The Phenomenon of Violence: Theological Considerations

February 12 – Violence Portrayed in Religious Traditions (Petersen)

Readings:

- Marjorie Suchocki, The Fall to Violence, Chs. 2 (Rebellion Against Creation) and 5 (Sin Through Violence)

February 14 – Rene Girard, Violence, and the Sacred (Guest: Prof. Robert Daly, BC)

Readings:

- Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred, chs. 1 (The Sacrifice), 2 (The Sacrificial Crisis), 4 (The Origins of Myth and Ritual), 10 (The Gods, the Dead, the Sacred, and Sacrificial Substitution), and 11 (The Unity of All Rites).

Suggestions for Practical Theology


UNIT II – LEGAL AND STRUCTURAL REMEDIES TO VIOLENCE

Week 4 – Violence Viewed Within Broader Christian Theological Frameworks

February 19—NO CLASS—PRESIDENTS’ DAY

February 21 – The Functions of Law and Grace (Massaro, Riggs)

Readings:

- Deenabandhu Manchala, ed. Nurturing Peace
Korean Christianity is one of the most dynamic forms of Christianity alive in the world today. Korean Christians see themselves as “mediators” between the first and third worlds. Issues of relationship between North and South Korea are also shaping global politics. Our interest in violence needs to take into account a Korean perspective for religious and political reasons.

**2006-2007 Costas Consultation in Global Mission**

**“Mission and Reconciliation in the Korean Church”**

**Dates:** 23 – 24 February (22 February advance KIATS Session)

**Location:** Schools of the Boston Theological Institute, including HDS (Thursday) and Andover Newton Theological School (Friday afternoon and Saturday morning).

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**Week 5 – Law, Religion, and Restorative Justice**

February 26—Violence and the Law (Green)

**Readings:**

- **R** Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, chs. 4 (Teleology on the Rocks) and 12 (On Being the Object of Property)
- **Martha Minow, Between Vengeance and Forgiveness**, esp. chs. 2 (Vengeance and Forgiveness) and 6 (Facing History)
- **R** Austin Sarat, ed. *Law, Violence, and the Possibility of Justice*, chs. 1 (Situating Law Between the Realities of Violence and the Claims of Justice), 2 (The Vicissitudes of Law’s Violence), and 6 (Why the Law is Also Nonviolent)

February 28—From Retributive to Restorative Justice (Petersen)

**Readings:**

- **R** Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, pp. 1-144.

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**Suggestions for Practical Theology**

UNIT III – MODELS, MOVEMENTS, AND MEANS

Week 6 – Models, Movements and Means to Overcoming Violence

March 5 – Mahatma Gandhi, Howard Thurman, and the Centennial of Nonviolence (Petersen and Rodman)
Readings:
- Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*

March 7 – Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the American Civil Rights Movement (Rodman and Riggs)
Readings:
- Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, SA, eds., *Ending Racism in the Church*
- Martin Luther King, James M. Washington, ed., *Testament of Hope*, (readings to be announced)
- Malcolm X, George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks* (readings TBA)

Week 7 – Models, Movements and Means to Overcoming Violence

March 12 – The Democratic Tide and the Age of Apology (Petersen and Green)
Readings:

March 14 – No Justice, No Peace: Economic and Environmental Rights as Nonviolence (Green, Rodman and Riggs)
Readings:
- Mohammad Yunus. *Banker to the Poor*, pp. 33-83, 191-212.
Suggestions for Practical Theology


UNIT IV – ISSUES

Week 8 – Personal and Domestic Violence

March 19—Suicide, Martyrdom and Self-Destruction (Petersen)
Readings:
• R Emil Durkheim, Suicide, pp. 57-144.
• James Gilligan, Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic

March 21—Sexual and Domestic Violence (Green)
Readings:
• R Andrea Dworkin, Intercourse, Pt. III (Power, Status, and Hate)
• R John Stoltenberg, Refusing to Be a Man, Part I (The Ethics of Male Sexual Identity)
• R Catharine MacKinnon, Are Women Human?, 18 (Rape, Genocide, and Women’s Human Rights) 22 (Genocide’s Sexuality)
• R Marie Fortune, Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited, Chs. 1-4 (can skim biblical material in first half of Ch. 3)

NO CLASS MARCH 26 & 28—HDS SPRING BREAK

Week 9 – Health and the Environment

April 2 – Violence and Health (Green)
Readings:
• W World Health Organization, World Report on Violence and Health, executive summary
• R Sandra Bloom, Creating Sanctuary, esp. ch. 1 (Trauma Theory: Deconstructing the Social) and 4 (Creating Sanctuary: Reconstructing the Social)
• R Gary Gunderson, Deeply Woven Roots, Ch. 1

April 4 – Spoiling the “Tent”: Brown Fields in Urban Boston (Rodman and Massaro)
Readings:
• R David Hollenbach, Common Good and Christian Ethics, pp. 32-61, 173-211.
• R Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel, with United for a Fair Economy, ed., Economic Apartheid In America (readings TBA)
Suggestions for Practical Theology

National Religious Partnership on the Environment website has links to accessible theological, faith-rooted practical resources, information on conferences and congregational/parish programs from the partners: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Evangelical Environmental Network, National Council of Churches and Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life http://nrpe.org/ and http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/ (for some reason the link to the USCCB from nrep.org doesn’t work correctly).

Holy Week for Orthodox, Latin & Protestant Christians

Week 10 — Issues of Ethnicity and Race

April 9 – Destruction of Neighbor: Ethnicity and Identity (Guest: Keelan Downton, NCC)
Readings:

April 11 – Destruction of Neighbor: Race and Identity (Rodman)
Readings:
- **R** Alvin F. Poussaint and Amy Alexander, *Lay My Burden Down* (readings TBA)

Week 11 – Just War, Terrorism and Peace

April 16 – Just War Theory in Evolution and Context (Massaro, Riggs and Simion)
Readings:
- **R** Tom Massaro, *Catholic Perspectives on War and Peace*, 87-106, 107-121.
- **W** H.H. Pope Shenouda III "Diabolic Wars, " pp. 1-189 (skim)

April 18 – Terrorism and Humanitarian Relief (Guest Lecturers)
Readings:
- **R** Mark Juergensmayer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, Ch. 1 (Terror and God) and 7-11 (The Logic of Religious Violence)
- **R** David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action* (reading TBA)
• **Jessica Stern,** *Terror in the Name of God,* Pt. I, esp. chs. 1 (Alienation) and 2 (Humiliation)
• **Samantha Power,** *A Problem from Hell* (optional reading)

**Suggestions for Practical Theology**


**UNIT V – CONSTRUCTING A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**

**Week 12 – Religion, Identity and Violence**

April 23—Self/Other Conflict and Personal Identity (Petersen)

*Readings:*

• **Marjorie Suchocki,** *The Fall to Violence,* ch. 8 (Guilt and Freedom) and 9 (Forgiveness and Transformation)
• **Donna Hicks,** “The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation,” in Helmick and Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation,* pp. 129-150.
• **Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz,** *The Art of Forgiveness.*

April 25—Memory, Forgiveness, and Social Identity (Green)

*Readings:*

• Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* Pt. III, ch. 3 and Epilogue
• Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory* (chapters of interest TBA)
• **Flora Keshgegian,** *Redeeming Memories,* chs. 3 (“I Remember, It Happened”: Retrieving Voices and Reconstructing Histories), 4 (The Call to Remembrance and Witness in Contemporary Theology), and 5 (The Church as a Community of Remembrance and Witness)
• **Flora Keshgegian,** *Time for Hope,* chs. 2 (Outside the Lines: Contemporary Threats and Challenges) and 4 (Black Holes and Fractured Fairy Tales)

**Suggestions for Practical Theology**


*Essays, Bible studies, prayers, litanies and other worship resources.*

**NO CLASSES AFTER THIS TIME**
TEXTS AND RESOURCES

Books Available at the Bookstore for Purchase (“REQUIRED”)


Volf, Miroslav. The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)

Books Available at the Bookstore for Purchase (“RECOMMENDED”)


Jeffrey Gros and John D. Rempel, eds., The Fragmentation of the Church and Its Unity in Peacemaking (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).


Muller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflections on Healing and Reconciliation (WCC Publications, 1997)

Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology (New York: Continuum, 1995)

Volf, Miroslav. Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation (Abingdon, 1996)