Sociology of Peace   410/510   Dr. Frank Fromherz   frankfromherz@gmail.com   503-662-4210

Winter Term   January – March, 2013   Tuesdays and Thursdays   12 Noon – 1:50 PM

Regular attendance and active participation are essential to this large group/small group seminar in the sociology of peace.

Our focus: Peace can be looked at from so many points of view, and in our journey this term it will be explored with an eye both for detail and the big picture, pondering the inner self and the vast reaches of the cosmos. Yet we stay grounded with a clear attention to the real world of peace in relation to war, injustice, and insecurity. There are so many pressures and stresses which threaten social and ecological peace. We will consider peace in relation to society, social change, social power, revolution, conscience, spirituality, ecology, and what the philosopher Hannah Arendt describes as “the human condition”. One sociological concept, coined by C.Wright Mills, provides the central organizing principle for our course together these ten weeks: the sociological imagination. We will endeavor to engage our sociological imaginations. I will challenge each of you to grow in your capacity to make connections and I am sure you will likewise challenge me to grow; actually, as a community of learning we will invite one another, doing so in large group and small group processes throughout the term.

Our reads: Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential, by Gene Sharp, offers rich examples of people (social) power and helps us explore the practice of nonviolent direct action for social justice as a key dimension of peacemaking. The Voice of Hope, Aung San Suu Kyi, Conversations with Alan Clements, is just simply a quality read and will give you a good sense of the vision and character of Burma’s Nobel Peace voice of hope and political change, Aung San Suu Kyi. These two books are required reading for the course. I will assign selected pages ahead of each week when we are going to be engaging key ideas and concepts from these books, so be ready to focus your reading accordingly.

Our assignments and basis of grading: 1) Do the readings as assigned, ahead of the sessions when these selected pages will be the focus of discussion. 2) Develop a high quality research & reflection paper, ten pages; guidelines to be provided to you during class Week Three. 3) Work with members of your team—teams will be formed during Week Four—to develop a thoughtful, creative, and educational mini-theatre (a short dramatic enactment) on peace and society; again, guidelines to be provided in a timely fashion. 4) Regular attendance and thoughtful participation—active listening is a huge gift we can all share😊 and learn together.

I will be sharing some good humor and perhaps a couple of “diverse ways of knowing” surprises along the way—in the spirit of sociological jazz😊! So let’s get into it. Here ahead see the week by week focus:
Week One     January 8 and 10     Sociological Imagination and Our Formative Understandings of Peace

Week Two     January 15 and 17     Aung San Suu Kyi and Revolution of the Spirit     Please read ahead as assigned in preparation for our discussions this week and next; The Voice of Hope

Week Three     January 22 and 24     Aung San Suu Kyi and More Insights from The Voice of Hope

Week Four     January 29 and 31     Waging Nonviolent Struggle: The Meaning of Social Power     Please read ahead as assigned in prep this week and next; Waging Nonviolent Struggle

Week Five     February 5 and 7     Waging Nonviolent Struggle – Selected Examples of People Power

Week Six     February 12 and 14     Other Dimensions of Peace in Relation to Personal, Communal, Societal, Global, and Planetary Complexities

Week Seven     February 19 and 21     Teams Take the Stage     Your Theatre Productions Begin!

Week Eight     February 26 and 28     Teams Continue

Week Nine     March 5 and 7     Round of Reports from your quality research/reflection papers, which are due as edited, polished works, to be handed in (not email in) as print copies on Tuesday, March 12 at the beginning of class.

Week Ten     March 12 and 14     We will bring the currents of the course together this week. I will ask each of you to write a brief reflection on what you have discovered—especially in relation to a critical and hopeful examination of the challenges facing peace in our world. We will do this as part of the closing week experience.

I would like to meet each of you in a one-with-one conversation. This is a classic model in community organizing, and community organizing is a classic aspect of building social power for peace and justice in society. So, plan on scheduling to meet with me for a 20 minute session. My regular meeting place is at a café, “juice bar, smoothies, fresh baked pastries, all natural and delicious” little spot called The Energy Bar, located at 1431 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97201. Book your meet with me by speaking with me briefly after class just as soon in the term as you can do so, thank you mucho😊!

There are dozens of good books and web sites, of course, but rather than throw a list at you here I will just bring various sources and leads to your attention throughout the course. Watch and take note! And, to be sure, recommend some of your own good reads and leads as well, so that we can all learn from one another.