Class Project: "Peaceable Power" A Student-Facilitated Nonviolence Training Workshop

Notes

This project was originally conceived as part of a mid-level university course on the philosophy and history of the American Civil Rights Movement. I have left the assignment dates in place to show how the timeframe of the assignment plays out over the course of a 15-week semester. I am in the process of documenting the various pieces of this project, as well as revising it further as I continue to teach the course. Please feel free to contact me with questions or requests. Finally, I am deeply indebted to colleagues who helped to develop the format of the course out of which this project grew as well as to all the scholars and activists whose work is cited in the assignment.

For more background on the project, you can visit: http://www.justiceislove.org/nonviolence-training-workshop/

Prof. Andrew Blom
Department of Philosophy and Religion
Central Michigan University
andrew.blom@cmich.edu
http://www.justiceislove.org

Overview

Project Objective

We, as a class, will offer a public workshop that will train participants in nonviolent action. In preparation, we will work in teams to research, design, organize and practice the segments of this training event. On Friday, April 17 (1:30-4:30 PM), each team will facilitate a segment of the nonviolence training event on campus. We will also make our materials available publically on the web as a resource for other organizers. Your grade for this project will be based on your Project Portfolio.

Teams

You will be assigned to a team (of 3-5 people) that will be responsible for designing and facilitating a segment of the nonviolence training session. The team effort will require working individually, together in face-to-face work sessions, and collectively through online communication.

Project Components

Each student will complete the following components in order to contribute to the class project.

- 1. **Project Portfolio:** You will individually to complete a number of written assignments as part of your team preparations. You will submit an individual portfolio containing all of these written assignments at the end of the semester.
- Practice Facilitation: As a team, you will practice facilitating your assigned segment of the nonviolence training during a class period. The class will serve as your participants and will provide feedback on refining your segment.
- 3. **Nonviolence Training Session:** All of the teams in the class will facilitate their assigned segments of a public nonviolence training session to take place Friday, April 17 (1:30-4:30 PM).

Participation in all of these components is required. (See participation policy on the syllabus.)

Training Segments

Each segment will go 20 minutes and should include some presentation and some participatory exercise.

- A Community of Purpose
- 2. History of Nonviolent Action
- 3. Target Issue: Mass Incarceration
- 4. Methods of Action
- 5. Personal Preparation
- 6. Action Planning

Designing Your Segment: Team Work

Basic Elements

- 1. **Purpose:** Clearly explain the point of your segment and its role in training.
- 2. **Presentation:** At least half of your segment time should consist in verbal explanations or guidance by members of your team.
- 3. **Participatory exercise:** plan to have at least 5 minutes of your segment involve the participants in a hands-on exercise.
- 4. **Multimedia elements:** identify various forms of media (text, images, videos, charts, etc.) that will illustrate your topic and focus the participants' attention.

Prezi

We will compile visual aids from each team's segment into presentation that will be projected at the training session (using the web-based *Prezi* software). Dr. Blom will create the Prezi. You will need to identify what text, images, videos, etc. you want to include in your portion of the Prezi and provide these materials to Dr. Blom no later than Friday, Apr. 10.

Project Portfolio: Individual Work

Overview

Your project portfolio will include the following seven writing assignments, each separately stapled and labeled accordingly (A, B1, B2, B3, B4, C, D). You will need to submit these items together in a folder, clearly labeled with your name and team name, by the scheduled Final Exam period. Your portfolio items will be evaluated both on their content and for the quality of their contribution to your team's effort (which may include peer assessment from classmates).

- A. Research brief (100)
- B. Meeting assessments (100)
 - 1. Preliminary meeting
 - 2. Consultation with Dr. Blom
 - 3. Plan segment
 - 4. Refine segment
- C. Practice facilitation and feedback (50)
- D. Essay (150)

Participation in the practice facilitation and training session are also required elements of the project. (Missing practice facilitation: -100 points. Missing training session: -200 points.)

Assignments

A. Research Brief

Conduct individual research of the topic listed in the "Preparation" section of your team's segment. This research is intended to inform the content of your team's presentation.

- Review the "Suggested Resources" as a starting point for your research.
- You may be required (see "Suggested Resources") to locate sources through independent research in order to complete the brief.

Write a two-page (double-spaced) research brief.

- Identify your source, providing a full citation (author, title, publisher, location, date).
- Summarize the main idea of the text.
- Explain the relevance of the text to your team's objectives.
- Propose and describe some ways that your team could use this source in its segment.

B. Meeting Assessments

After each meeting, write one-page (double-spaced) addressing the following questions.

- What preparation did you do for the meeting?
- What did you accomplish at the meeting?
- Do you think your team's work process was effective?
- What will be your next task based on decisions made at the meeting?

C. Practice Facilitation and Feedback

After your in-class practice facilitation, you will receive a packet of feedback from your classmates and Dr. Blom. You will discuss this feedback and use it to improve your segment at your next team meeting. Before the "Refine Segment" meeting, read the feedback and write one page (double-spaced) on the following:

- What do you think was most effective about your team's practice facilitation?
- What do you think needs the most improvement?
- What was the most helpful feedback you received from the class?

D. Essay

Write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) essay on the following topic.

Part A (1-2 pages): Identify and explain, drawing on at least four different initiatives, the various forms of nonviolent action employed in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Part B (2 pages): Reflect on your experience in organizing a nonviolence training session on campus. Making specific reference to (1) lessons you learned from this process and (2) one of the initiatives from part A, take and support a position on the following questions:

- What kind of organizing and preparation must have been necessary to carry out this initiative?
- Was the initiative a success? (What did it accomplish? What did it leave unaccomplished?
 What were its failures?)

Training Segment 1: A Community of Purpose

Team

Team Ella Baker

Purpose

Effective nonviolent campaigns rely on concerted group action. This segment serves two functions: shared sense of purpose and mutual reliability. When a group plans its actions, it is important to have a shared understanding of the purpose and vision of the campaign. Since group action also requires people to rely on each other, this segment begins the process of building trust and connection within the group.

Objectives

- To guide the group of participants through a process of identifying a shared vision of the value of equal protection of civil rights.
- To connect participants with each other in a way that promotes validation of each other's experiences and values.

Participatory Exercise

The exercise should function as an "ice breaker" to get people acquainted and talking to each other. The content of the exercise should focus participants on the objectives.

- Ives, Susan, *Facilitator's Manual for the Class of Nonviolence*. San Antonio, TX: peaceCENTER, 2007. [available on Blackboard]
- You must locate at least one source beyond the suggested resources. You may use the library, the web, or one of our course texts (if relevant) to find this source. You may need to browse several potential sources before finding one that is relevant and useful to your objectives.

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	In the history of American society, what groups have been denied full civil rights? Pick one group to research, and write a short summary of the ways in which rights were denied to that group. Portfolio A.	Feb. 19
Meeting: Preliminary planning	(In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.)	Feb. 26
	 Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Identify the participatory exercise you will use. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. 	
	Portfolio B1.	
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Describe your participatory exercise. Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. 	Mar. 12
	Portfolio B2.	
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). 	Mar. 26
	Portfolio B3.	
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Apr. 2
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Apr. 9
Training Session	(In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12.)	Apr. 17
	Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus.	
	Portfolio D.	

Training Segment 2: History of Nonviolent Action

Team

Team Fannie Lou Hamer

Purpose

As with any form of political action, those engaged in nonviolent campaigns look to the lessons of previous struggles for their strategies, tactics and inspirations. Focusing on the American Civil Rights Movement, this segment will explain the role of nonviolent action in bringing about the changes we have seen in American society.

Objectives

- To provide an overview of the role of nonviolent action in producing social change.
- To focus the participants on sources of knowledge and inspiration in previous movements.

Participatory Exercise

Think creatively about how to make an impression on the participants about the kinds of action that produced the changes we have seen in American society. One possibility is to design a "roleplay" exercise in which (at least some of) the participants will act out an episode form the Civil Rights struggle.

- Ackerman, Peter and Duvall, Jack. "The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights" (ch. 8) from A Force More Powerful. New York: Palgrave, 2000. [available on Blackboard]
- You must locate at least one source beyond the suggested resources. You may use the library, the web, or one of our course texts (if relevant) to find this source. You may need to browse several potential sources before finding one that is relevant and useful to your objectives.

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	Focusing on one individual who participated in one of the nonviolent campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement, identify and describe their preparation, role and experiences in the campaign.	Feb. 12
	Portfolio A.	
Meeting: Preliminary planning	 (In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.) Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Identify the participatory exercise you will use. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. Portfolio B1.	Feb. 19
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Describe your participatory exercise. Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. Portfolio B2.	Feb. 26
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). Portfolio B3.	Mar. 19
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Mar. 26
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Apr. 9
Training Session	 (In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12.) Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus. Portfolio D. 	Apr. 17

Training Segment 3: Target Issue (Mass Incarceration)

Team

Team Stokely Carmichael

Purpose

Since training in nonviolence is practically-oriented, we will focus our attention on a current-day civil rights issue that might be addressed with nonviolent action: mass incarceration. It is crucial for this segment to provide a clear, concise summary of the dynamics of mass incarceration and its impact on civil rights.

Objectives

- To provide an overview of the features of the present-day American criminal justice system that limit the civil rights of the individuals and communities it affects.
- To enable the participants to see the relationship between mass incarceration and the issues that American Civil Rights Movement confronted: segregation, voting rights, discrimination, and vulnerability to violence.

Participatory Exercise

Think creatively about how to dramatize the interconnected features of the American criminal justice system that limit the civil rights of the individuals and communities it affects. One possibility is a 'game' or activity that involves participants in making these connections.

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*, chapter 5. The New Press, 2012. You should review this chapter early in the semester, even though we will read it for class in April.
- You must locate at least one source beyond the suggested resources. You may use the library, the web, or one of our course texts (if relevant) to find this source. You may need to browse several potential sources before finding one that is relevant and useful to your objectives.

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	Pick one of the key issues that the Civil Rights Movement confronted (segregation, voting rights, discrimination, vulnerability to violence) and examine how the present-day dynamics of mass incarceration relate to this issue.	Feb. 26
	Portfolio A.	
Meeting: Preliminary planning	 (In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.) Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Identify the participatory exercise you will use. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. Portfolio B1.	Mar. 12
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Describe your participatory exercise. Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. Portfolio B2.	Mar. 19
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). Portfolio B3.	Mar. 26
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Apr. 9
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Apr. 14
Training Session	 (In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12) Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus. Portfolio D. 	Apr. 17

Training Segment 4: Methods of Action

Team

Team Bayard Rustin

Purpose

Nonviolent action draws on a wide variety of strategies and tactics. This segment will introduce the audience to the variety of methods available to those planning nonviolent campaigns.

Objectives

- To provide an overview the variety of methods of nonviolent action.
- To stimulate the imaginations of the participants about methods that could address the dynamics of mass incarceration.

Participatory Exercise

Think creatively about how to engage the participants' imaginations. One possibility is to guide them through a 'brainstorming' session where they have to formulate a nonviolent tactic to address a specific problem.

Special note: Since your practice facilitation comes early in the semester, I recommend that you refine your exercise once we have reached the material on mass incarceration at the beginning of April. You may want to focus your participatory exercise on this issue. You can come up with a preliminary exercise for your practice (on Feb. 19) and make adjustments to it in April.

- Sharp, Gene. "198 Methods of Nonviolent Action." [available on Blackboard]
- Sharp, Gene. *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973. [at the Park Library reserve desk]
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*, chapter 5. The New Press, 2012.

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	Pick one of the methods described in Gene Sharp's <i>The Methods of Nonviolent Action</i> . Identify a group that has actually employed this method for social change. Explain the issue at stake, and describe their activities in detail.	Jan. 22
	Portfolio A.	
Meeting: Preliminary planning	 (In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.) Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Identify the participatory exercise you will use. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. Portfolio B1.	Jan. 29
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Describe your participatory exercise. Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. Portfolio B2.	Feb. 5
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). Portfolio B3.	Feb. 19
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Feb. 26
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Mar. 12
Training Session	 (In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12) Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus. Portfolio D. 	Apr. 17

Training Segment 5: Personal Preparation

Team

Team John Lewis

Purpose

As with other forms of deliberate action that carry risks, nonviolent action requires self-discipline, strength of character and responsible thinking. This segment will introduce participants to the kind of preparation needed to offer effective nonviolence and guide them through some of the steps to personally prepare themselves for action.

Objectives

- To provide an overview of the personal preparation needed to engage in effective nonviolence.
- To guide participants through some of this preparation.

Participatory Exercise

There are many exercises that nonviolent activists have developed to prepare people for what they might encounter in the field. One common exercise is the "hassle line." Since your practice facilitation comes early in the semester, I will ask you to use the "hassle line" and design your segment around this exercise. Because your segment is the most participatory, you may use most of your 20 minutes for the exercise and focus the "verbal" component on the explanation of the exercise and your advice to participants.

- War Resisters International. "Hassle Parallel Line." *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns*. 2014. http://wri-irg.org/node/5217
- Bloch, Nadine. "Ten Reasons to Love the Hassle Line." Waging Nonviolence. http://wagingnonviolence.org/2012/04/ten-reasons-to-love-hassle-lines/

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	Look on the web for videos, descriptions and resources for the "Hassle Line" exercise, taking note of the setup and the advice that facilitators offer to participants. Provide a detailed summary of the lessons that participants can learn from a hassle line exercise.	Jan. 22
	Portfolio A.	
Meeting: Preliminary planning	 (In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.) Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Identify the participatory exercise you will use. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. Portfolio B1.	Jan. 25
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Describe your participatory exercise. Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. Portfolio B2.	Jan. 29
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). Portfolio B3.	Feb. 5
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Feb. 19
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Mar. 12
Training Session	 (In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12) Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus. Portfolio D. 	Apr. 17

Training Segment 6: Action Planning

Team

Team Diane Nash

Purpose

Effective nonviolent campaigns require smart and thoughtful planning. This segment will focus the participants on the elements of strategy that go into orchestrating nonviolent actions.

Objectives

- To introduce the participants to basic concepts of strategic thinking and the role each plays in designing nonviolent campaigns.
- To enable participants to practice strategic thinking to address the issue of mass incarceration.

Participatory Exercise

Your segment will set up an exercise that will lead into our final (longer) segment in which groups will carry out your instructions. You will design a "scenario roleplay" that will give participants an objective and task them with planning an action to achieve the objective. One of the groups will take then "roleplay" their action while other watch and learn. Since this is a longer segment, I will help you with the exercise. We'll discuss it at our meeting.

- "Non-Violent Direct Action: Vision, Goals, Strategy, Tactics." The 99% Spring Participant Guide.
 [available on Blackboard]
- "Occupy Tactic Star." *Beyond the Choir*. http://www.beyondthechoir.org/diary/106/occupy-tactic-star [Oct. 19, 2011]
- The Ruckus Society. "Action Strategy: A How-To Guide." http://ruckus.org/downloads/RuckusActionStrategyGuide.pdf
- "Resources for Organizers." Praxis Makes Perfect.
 http://joshuakahnrussell.wordpress.com/resources-for-activists-and-organizers/
- War Resisters International. "Role Playing" in Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns. 2014. http://wri-irg.org/node/5234

Step	Details	Complete by
Individual research	Review the suggested resources, including the "Occupy Tactic Star." Explain the difference between vision, goals, strategy and tactics. Explain the purpose of the star and in what ways someone using the star to design a tactic will need to think about strategy, goals and vision.	Feb. 5
	Portfolio A.	
Meeting: Preliminary planning	 (In advance: contact team members to set a meeting place and time.) Share ideas from your individual research. Make an outline of the points you will cover in your segment. Decide what roles you need in the team and who will take them on. Come up with a plan for what needs to be done next, who will do it, and how you will communicate. Portfolio B1.	Feb. 12
Meeting: Consultation with Dr. Blom	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom to schedule a meeting.) Present an outline of your segment. Develop your participatory exercise (in collaboration with Dr. Blom) Obtain feedback on your plans. Raise specific questions about your segment. Portfolio B2.	Feb. 19
Meeting: Plan segment	 Finalize the content of your segment. Determine who will perform various roles in the facilitation. Rehearse parts of the segment if needed. Determine who you will display multimedia elements (presentation software, handouts, whiteboard, etc.). Portfolio B3.	Mar. 5
Practice facilitation	 (In advance: contact Dr. Blom if you need materials, e.g., copies, whiteboard markers, etc.) Facilitate your segment of the training during the class period, with the class serving as your participants. Portfolio C. 	Mar. 19
Meeting: Refine segment	 Draw out the main lessons from the feedback you received from the class. Revise your segment to make it more effective. Determine what materials you will give to Dr. Blom for the Prezi. Portfolio B4.	Apr. 9
Training Session	 (In advance: provide materials to Dr. Blom for the Prezi by Apr. 12) Facilitate your segment of the training at the public nonviolence training session on campus. Portfolio D. 	Apr. 17