

Teachers of Peace: Educating for Peace and Social Change
Course Description for Peace Studies at The Meeting School

- **Teacher – Sheila Garrett**

- **This course is designed for**
Peace Studies (a course in communication skills, peace and justice. It is required for graduation)
Age of students – 10th –12th grades (usually 11th and 12th)
Class size 6- 10 students (10 to 12 is ideal, but we rarely have classes that large)

- **Brief overview of course**
Timeline - This course is for one trimester, in this case Winter term 2006, approximately 35 class periods, 75 min. each., plus one day-long field trip.
Theme – communication skills, nonviolent response to conflict, peace and social justice
General content – communication and listening exercises, dialogue, clearness process, mediation skills, individual projects, field trips and guest visitors.

- **Academic and/or technical standards addressed** Students are expected to gain skills in communicating clearly and effectively, learn to express feelings accurately and appropriately, become familiar with the Quaker clearness process and the Meeting School mediation process (based on clearness), research, write and present a project of their choice (with teacher's approval), journal and address issues of school community interest.

- **Expected student outcome**
Students will know the difference between feelings and judgements. They will be familiar with the clearness process, traditional Quaker process and the process used at The Meeting School.

They will be able to mediate a conflict. They will research, write and present on a topic of their own interest related to Peace Studies.

Students will believe what they choose to believe and, in my opinion, what their experience tells them. Their beliefs will be respected but may also be challenged by others. They are expected to articulate their beliefs and respect the beliefs of others as well as disagree respectfully if that is the case.

- **Specific daily activities** – Class activities include a variety of experiential exercises, many from the HIPP (Help Increase the Peace Project) curriculum. Some examples are: brainstorming the 'roots and fruits' of violence and non-violence; non-competitive games like 'Pattern Ball' and 'the Clapping Game'; 'Changes 1-2-3-4'; 'Concentric Circles,' (students sit with a partner, share one-on-one then change partners answering several questions and practicing listening skills). Students are asked to 'interview' other students outside of class about various issues and report back their findings (eg. 'What does your roommate think about tobacco use on campus?'). They are also asked to practice 'non-violent communication' and report back on their success and/or the challenges. Some classes include outdoor activities as weather permits, occasionally viewing films, journaling about a topic they are studying or that is an issue on campus. Students are required to visit and report back on various specific websites including AFSC, FCNL, and CPT. They will practice the clearness process in and out of class, taking turns in the various roles of clerk, focus person and support.

- **Assessments**

Each student has two opportunities to self-evaluate and to evaluate the course. We also have on-going discussions about the work we are doing. There are three formal written assignments – two one-page book reviews and one written research project of the student’s choice. Each student reports on her/his project, either to the class or to the school community. S/he receives a written evaluation at the end of the term and a mid-term evaluation if the student seems to be having difficulty doing the work. Because they classes are so small and interactive, there are no quizzes or tests. Students are all asked to participate fully in all class activities and discussions.

- **Teaching materials (as appendices if written)**

E.g. handouts, vocabulary, research guides, rubrics, games, short texts. See attachments.

- **Partnerships**

Contact information for national or regional organizations - Various organizations are researched, either on line or through direct contacts (field trip or guest visitors) e.g. AFSCNH, AFSCNERO, School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT, FUM, FWCC, FCNL, CPT, FOR.

Types of local businesses or organizations that are supportive: Monadnock Monthly Meeting, Mariposa Museum, Camilot (a home for mentally disabled veterans), Franklin Pierce College, Hannaford Supermarket and Marketbasket

- **Follow-up, extension, or adapted activities as applicable**

This class is structured to allow students to participate on a variety of levels as they are able. Some students are capable of high quality academic work and will write excellent papers as well as contributing thoughtful, articulate dialogue. Others may struggle with writing and class discussion but find creative ways to learn the material and/or excel in the experiential exercises. All efforts are made to provide opportunities and challenges for various learning styles and abilities.

- **Resources**

Texts listed

Bibliography of other helpful information

(see attachments)

PEACE STUDIES

Syllabus

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore what peace and social justice mean to us as individuals, as a community and in the world. We will practice and discuss a variety of processes and skills with particular focus on those used and developed here at TMS and by the Society of Friends (Quakers). We will also study peace and social justice as practiced elsewhere in the US and in other cultures. The goal will be for each student to come to an understanding of peace and justice for her/himself, to define that and express it in a project during the term.

Expectations/minimum guidelines for passing:

- attend all class periods, inc. field trips; inform teacher of any necessary absence (no more than 4 absences, inc. sick days, exceptions, Bartlett Days)
- come on time or early
- complete all assignments by due date; take responsibility for all make-up work
- participate in class discussions and activities
- find and complete a project (alone or with others) that you are fired up about

Option: You may discuss getting special recognition in this course by doing exceptional or additional work. This will be discussed in the goal-setting phase of class work.

This course has three main components:

1. **basic communications/listening skills**
2. **the clearness process**
3. **individual or collaborative projects**

1. basic communications/listening skills – experiential exercises, reading and discussion of Marshall Rosenberg's *Non-violent Communication*

2. the clearness process – traditional Quaker process, reading and discussion of Jan Hoffman's pamphlet; TMS mediation model, reading and discussion of handbook and other materials; practice of both processes

3. individual or collaborative projects – discerning focus topic, research, writing or writing and creating the work; presenting to class or larger group

Projects and other assignments:

Homework

- 2 one-page book reviews – one on a book of your own choice (approved by teacher), the other on *Nonviolent Communication*, the first due in the 3rd week from beginning of course, the second due in the 4th week.
- a paper or paper/project with an *outline due the week of mid term* and *first draft due two weeks later. Final draft and presentation due one week before the end of term.*
- a variety of short exercises, processes

Clearness Process

Each student is expected to come out of this class with a good knowledge of and some experience in our TMS clearness process, including mediating.

You are asked to organize and have a clearness for yourself, outside of or in class (your choice) – one that provides you with an opportunity to explore a topic, issue or conflict that is of particular concern or interest to you. Examples: What do I plan to do when I leave TMS? Should I shop at Walmart? What support do I need to keep from smoking? You will also participate in at least one real clearness in class, taking the role of mediator and/or clarifier and discussing all roles and techniques for helping the process work well.

Depending on your level of ability, you may be asked to mediate or clarify clearness meetings as they arise in the community.

Community Life

We explore a variety of issues and dynamics present in the school with the intention of trying to understand why things are happening, what positive ways we might respond and what the strengths of the community and our particular class lead us to do. Some assignments might include: dialoguing with community members on a particular topic and reporting back; doing a random act of kindness and journaling on how it went; preparing a proposal for student or community meeting

World Issues

We consider issues of particular concern to the class and respond according to our particular leadings as time allows. This may include studying, watching videos/movies, letter writing, hosting an outside visitor, helping organize an event, attending vigils or protests (individually or together). The latter are always done voluntarily and on one's own, not in the care of the school. Parent permission is necessary.

Individual/Group Projects

Each student is expected to work on a project or paper of her/his own choosing and present to the class. Students work alone or together. Your topic is due at the end of the first two weeks of class and you are expected to stay with it unless the teacher approves a change. All topics should relate to Peace Studies and be approved by the teacher. First draft of paper or outline for a project is due halfway through the term, final draft *before* the last week of term.

Non-violent Communication

We read and work with Marshall Rosenberg's book on NVC and discuss it in class.

Assignments observing and practicing communication skills outside of class relate to the reading. Reading itself is done out of class as homework with discussion and practice in class. Students who miss a class are asked to do make up work by reading and speaking with fellow students outside of class. A one-page report/review of this book is also assigned for homework.

Week 1- In class - Intros, begin setting individual and class goals, begin communications skills

(good and not so good listening),

Assignment #1 – write goals and initial ideas for course as a whole

Assignment #2 – find and write down examples of conflicts that directly effect TMS – interview at least one TMS person not in class

Assignment #3 – find and describe *in writing* at least two examples of good and not so good listening

Assignment #4 – describe *in writing* at least two examples of your own listening skills

Week 2 – In class – (small groups) work on individual and class timelines, begin discerning focus topics for projects, how not to read a book, discuss reading and community examples

Assignment #1 – write goals and initial ideas for project focus

Assignment #2 – first reading in *Non-violent Communication* (NVC)

Assignment #3 – 2nd reading “ “

Assignment #4 – find and write down examples in TMS community related to reading (at least one per student in class)

Week 3 - In class – check in about projects, discuss reading and community examples

Assignment #1 – final ideas due for project focus, brief description in writing (1/2 page)

Assignment #2 – 3rd reading in *Non-violent Communication* (NVC)

Assignment #3 – 4th reading “ “

Assignment #4 – NVC BOOK REPORT DUE

Week 4 - In class – Reading/research day for projects (FPC Library?), report back on research, meet individually with Sheila to discuss progress.

Assignments – find, document initial resources for projects, 2nd BOOK REPORT DUE; begin note-taking and outline for project

Week 5 – In class – clearness process, read and discuss Jan Hoffman’s pamphlet; arrange and hold personal clearness meetings; report back. Work with TMS materials, hold in-class clearness meetings and, if appropriate, outside class for other community members.

OUTLINES DUE

Week 6 – In class – continue clearness if nec. Check in on projects.

Week 7 – In class – review drafts of written project work

Week 8 – *Presentations*. ALL OUTSTANDING WRITTEN WORK DUE.

Week 9 – *Presentations*, evaluation and celebration.

Field Trip – to Cambridge and Boston, MA – visit AFSCNERO (New England Regional Office), meet with various staff to hear about programs; visit members of the Boston Dance Collective to discuss dance as peace building.

**The Meeting School PEACE STUDIES
Bibliography**

Anderson, Margaret, editor, 2nd Edition, Mundy, Lisa and Eric Wissa, Editors, 1st edition
Help Increase the Peace (HIPP) Program Manual
(Baltimore, American Friends Service Committee, Mid Atlantic Region, 1999)

Diamond, Louise *The Peace Book* (Berkley, CA, Conari Press, 2000)

Donnelly, Kate et al *Handbook for Nonviolent Action*
(New York, War Resisters League and Donnelly/Colt Graphix, 1999)

Hoffman, Jan 'Clearness Committees and Their Use in Personal Discernment'
(Philadelphia, twelfth month press, 1996) (pamphlet)

Rosenberg, Marshall *Non-violent Communication: A Language of Life*
(Encinitas, CA; Puddle Dancer Press, 2003)

Waterman, Elizabeth and Frederick Martin, (revised by)

The Meeting School Community Handbook

(Rindge, NH, TMS, Sept. 2005)

Note: This is a basic bibliography that serves as a jumping-off point for the course. Students then consult a variety of texts, including books, periodicals and websites applicable to their individual projects and interests.