

# Pedagogy and Violence: Teaching Values in the Process of Understanding the Spectrum of Violence

Lucien X. Lombardo  
Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice,  
Coordinator, Individualized Integrative Studies,  
and General Education Interdisciplinary Clusters  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA 23529  
Llombard@odu.edu

Prepared for Presentation at the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Fellows Meeting  
The Society for Values in Higher Education  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
August 3-9, 2000

I have taught the course “Understanding Violence” for the past fifteen years. This paper describes the development of the course, its various perspectives, some of its activities and what we learn from this course about *our values and behaviors related to those values*. The relationship between violent behavior and values is complex, for many, indeed most, who use violence do so in the name of what they believe are positive personal, social or political values.

Whether we are survivors of violence or those who perpetrate violence, the infliction of pain and the harm such pain brings to our conceptions of human dignity (both ours and the other’s), directly confronts many basic human values. Teaching students to understand the process of violence in a myriad of often seemingly unrelated contexts leads them to understand how violent behavior reflects basic values in themselves, their social roles, their social groups, the political arena and their culture. Forms of violence studied in this course include the following: teenage suicides, violence against and by children, violence against women (continuum from harassment to rape), hate violence (racial, homophobic, ethnic, religious), collective violence, and institutional violence (torture, war, and genocide). *These various forms of violence constitute the “spectrum of violence”. That is, these violent forms emerge when the forces that are part of the violence process are transformed through the prism of human meaning making processes into the spectrum of violent possibilities defined by time, place and circumstance.*

## **Pedagogical Perspectives and Understanding Violence**

The pedagogy of Understanding Violence is a highly personal one. In attempting to counter cultural forces of dehumanization it is important to model ‘humanized options’ for students. In order to show that it is possible to counter all the forces that push people in the direction of engaging in actions harmful to others, I need as an instructor, to relate to students in ways that run counter to many of their academic and personal expectations’.

As a teacher, understanding violence forces me to confront values often implicit in the structure of the educational process. Primary among these are: 1) ‘objective distance’ from the subject of study, 2) social distance from students and 3) the nature of power in the position of professor in relation to students. When teaching understanding violence it is necessary both to take care not to model behaviors and attitudes that are part of the violence process and to model those characteristics that undermine the violence process.

Thus I must be sure to demonstrate my own subjective connection to the subject. Violence is after all personal and I must demonstrate my own connection and interest in the topic. Discussion of events and my personal experiences related to the topic are important to put on the table at the outset. This then makes the personal involvement I request of the students more legitimate. We hear over and over that ours is a violent society. Indeed, if the experiences of my students are any indication, it is clear that many have experienced (and often are experiencing at the time of the class) many forms of violence and that they themselves are suffering the effects of trauma. Others, not personally involved, know people who are. They bring these personal experiences with them. To ignore these in favor of more

“objective” approach would reflect social distance, objectifying reality and personal disengagement. Unfortunately, these are forces often associated with the production of violence.

The academic profession often promotes a high degree of social distance between student and teacher. Though this may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. relationships and actions related to sexual harassment) understanding violence demands a degree of connection in relation to student personal experiences and understandings of these experiences that goes beyond most courses.

One thing I have come to feel over the years of confronting student culture and beliefs during this course is that many students belong to what I call the “*post-dehumanized generation*”. The dehumanization process discussed in class was identified in the generation following World War II and came to a height during the Vietnam years. Indeed, the phrase “Do not fold, spindle or mutilate,” a phrase many of us saw on the old IBM punch cards in our utility and telephone bills, served as a humanizing cry for a generation. During these years warnings about the violence causing potential of technology and social forces leading to a world of more impersonal feelings about self and our social relations were plentiful. Those providing the warnings still understood that there were options, they had lived and experienced them. However, as time has passed, and the effects of these forces have come to fruition, succeeding generations do not have experience with the humanized options. Dehumanized relations are becoming the most experienced option to their way of thinking and behaving. However, the effects of trauma and surviving dehumanization are still felt, though often unnamed or unrecognized, and are feelings with which individuals have to cope. This course gives names and voice to these feelings and in a sense ‘liberates’ students from the bonds of a culture of violence. Thus the course helps students discover and make salient alternative ways of perceiving and acting which counter the violence production process.

For example, one of the things academic, indeed, all bureaucratic institutions do is place personal and emotional distance between students and those with whom they interact. We all do this to some extent. Technology of voice mail and answering machines makes the personal connection less necessary for all of us. We have a thorough discussion about the dehumanizing effects of answering machines and their endless menus. We discuss the practice of ‘call screening’ (letting the machine answer even if we are there so we can determine if the person making the call is worthy of our attention at the moment. I tell the students that I don’t have an answering machine. While many friends point out that this is sometimes inconvenient, I’d rather tell the telephone solicitors “No Thanks, Bye!” and respond to all calls personally. For me, it’s a sign of respect to the caller. Often, students put my claim to the test. Students call my office to see if I really do answer the phone and I answer the phone. No machine, no secretary. (Calls transfer to the secretary after three rings so calls don’t get lost.) Some how the students feel better about themselves as students relating to faculty, they feel more humanized.

The ‘reaction’ paper assignments described in more detail below (p.10) provide opportunity for personal, focused, unobtrusive feedback from the instructor. Such feedback acknowledges the student experiences, feelings, and confusion. Feedback also provides opportunities for the instructor to model empathy (which undercuts the violence process) as opposed to the social-disconnection that promotes it. Technology, which often depersonalizes, actually becomes tool useful in providing more immediate feedback to students. Through e-mail it is often possible to provide more rapid and detailed responses to student concerns and troubles. In addition such e-mail conversations take place outside of the power laden grading context and in the process become more personal.

Finally, teaching Understanding Violence forces me to confront the implicit power in the position of professor and the meanings of small actions, words, and responses to students. In the context of the course I have learned to define power as the ability to empower others. Power as control and dominance (another component of the violence process) must be minimized. Students must be empowered to counter, cope with and prevent violence through their study of violence. They should become analytical experts rather than learning to rely as the processor as expert. (A few weeks ago I received an e-mail from a student who was watching the latest TV production about the Nuremberg trials. She said I had to watch it because everything we had studied about dehumanization and institutional violence and the violence process was being played out. She understood better what was happening rather than thinking of the Nazi’s as simply crazy.)

## Values and the Pedagogy of Violence

In a very real sense, this course on understanding violence is highly subversive. One of the lessons is that to be anti-authoritarian is to be well on the way to not being violence. The course provides behavioral options to hurtful in a wide variety of contexts behavior, and supports the use of those options.

As we seek to understand violence in this course, students come face to face violence and its connection to the following realizations and values diversity, social justice, civic responsibility and the basis of all of these, **basic human dignity**. Without a deep connection to basic human dignity, other values (diversity, justice, civic responsibility) are often transformed into motivations for violence.

In thinking about this course in relation to values a number of connections come to mind. More specifically, through reading, writing and discussion, students are asked to come to terms with the following:

- Humility in understanding our human commonality with those who do violence;
- De-stigmatizing of the violent: allowing them to join the human family;
- Being able to separate and integrate self-role distinctions;
- Understanding the descriptive / prescriptive power of social norms;
- Discovering the meaning and importance of ‘authenticity’;
- Regaining agency – the ability to control ones behavior – and recognizing how unknowingly subject we can be to outside cultural and political forces;
- Taking responsibility for ones actions;
- Recognizing the power of language;
- Recognizing alternative definitions of power and alternative outcomes;
- Recognizing colonizer / colonized relationships in everyday life;
- Recognizing the power of myth making and its links to violence;
- Recognizing the power of cultural forces in shaping options and visions (dehumanization);
- Recognizing the importance of positive ‘points of light’ (people who are supportive of human dignity) influences;
- Recognizing the relationship of the other in defining the self;
- Linking dehumanization and lack of empathy;
- Linking violence process to political processes and social movements.

## Evolution of Understanding Violence: From Criminal Violence to Perpetrators, Survivors and Links between the Two.

In the early 1980's the earliest iterations of this course focused on ‘criminal violence’. After all, the course was part of a criminal justice degree program. Homicides of various sort, assaults, gang and gang and drug related killings provided much of the focus. Though I knew this was an awfully narrow focus, and that understanding ‘criminal violence’ was not the same thing as ‘understanding violence’, I kept the focus narrow for a term or two. However, it was starting to become clearer to me that much violence in the world was not included. War was not ‘criminal violence’ though from my perspective it was certainly violence. Much violence against children and women, though obviously violence, never made it through the criminal justice defining process o become ‘officially labeled’ criminal violence. Suicide seemed to be a form of harm to the person that was somehow set apart. What now is being called hate violence seemed to be separated from ‘criminal violence.’ Each of these forms of violence had their own separate niche in the study of violence and rarely did these paths of study cross. The decision to expand the realm of violence covered in the course necessarily led to a confrontation with the political and academic process of defining violence, something about which we believe there is consensus until we confront the process of deciding what is or isn't violence.

A question I ask students and audiences whenever I speak about violence is “Did you ever study violence when you

were in elementary or high school?" The answer is almost always, "NO!". I then ask, "How many wars can you name that you studied in elementary or high school?" The lists are limitless. "Now," I say, "no one was killed in any of these wars? No one maimed, injured in any way? There was no property destroyed?" Why is it that our understanding of war does not include the fact that war is violence?" A simple question, but what we must confront when faced with this realization is quite disquieting.

A second component of the understanding violence course was that of the survivor of violence. About fifteen to twenty years ago a growing body of research and academic literature started to focus on victims of violence. With this literature it became possible and necessary to include, not only many, not traditionally studied forms of violence, but the process of survival and the impact of violence on the lives of those who are its targets. Whether these targets are victims of legitimate or illegitimate violence (whether the violent act was defined as criminal or not) seemed to matter little. Victims of war or corporal punishment in homes were injured no matter what the law said about the acts that injured them. Such actions then were certainly necessary to understand if we were to understand violence.

In studying survivors and their strategies for coping with their encounters with violence we begin to see how we all utilize common coping strategies in our everyday lives in coping with the 'trauma of daily existence'. Such mechanisms as fight, flight, numbing, repression, isolation, compartmentalization, dissociation, hyper-arousal are employed not only victims of violence, but by all of us as we interact with our culture and social conditions. It is important to note that while such mechanisms are adaptive in the short-run, in that they help people survive, in the long run they become maladaptive in that they lay the foundation for the violence process.

The inclusion of both perpetrators and survivors in a course on understanding violence lead to a third component of the curriculum, *an exploration of the links between victimization, survival and perpetrating violence*. The process of producing people who will do violence clearly involves the victimization of those same people and their struggles and coping with their victimization. Here, the study of the impact of and mechanisms for coping with trauma, victimization and processes of survival were discovered to be strikingly similar to the forces that needed to be in place to produce perpetrators of violence. *This connection between survival and perpetrating violence leads to the realization that any of us can be violent if conditions are right*. We often don't think what we are doing is violent (that's what other people do). We often think OUR violence is for some personal or social good. We think that OUR violence is justified, indeed, often necessary.

**VIOLENCE AS A PROCESS** See p.11 for model (A version of the following section is provided to students during the first weeks of class. It is applied to study of NAM. Mark Baker's NAM describes in the words of Vietnam war participants the transformation from normal everyday young men and women, through the decision to go, boot camp, initial contacts, the process of fighting and being targets, the aftermath and return home.).

For too long we have considered violence a form of deviant behavior, anti-social behavior. We have assumed that those who used violence have something wrong with themselves as individuals. We assume that there was some sort of "deviant identity" transformation takes place when the people who use violence become violent people. Violent people in common sense understanding are people who, by nature, are constitutionally prone to use violence. By making this violence / deviance transformation we try to make what seems understandable more comprehensible. Also, we (society, social scientists, the non-violent) can then define ourselves in more positive ways by labeling these individuals as violent and excluding ourselves from the possibility of *being like them*.

In this "Understanding Violence" course we focus on the process by which individuals are transformed from people who are not using violence to people who do use violence, *in other words, the violence process*. I began with the assumption that people who use violence are not violent by nature. On the contrary, I am first assuming that various forces and conditions operate to structure world-views and perceptions, and options related to violence. Once in place, these structures increase the likelihood that violence will be expressed in behavior. Such structuring is what Toch calls "contingent consistency". This means that various individual, social and cultural forces are operating in consistent and mutually reinforcing ways to produce people who engage in violence in a variety of contexts. Any of us can become violent.

Secondly, I am assuming that those who use violence in a variety of situations and the social collectivities that promote the use of violence have choices about that use. I do not believe that violence is natural at this point in the human condition. Violence is simply an alternative to other non-violent behaviors. However, this does not mean that the person involved in the violence recognizes the other alternatives. The individual may not have been exposed to options, one may have had the known options eliminated from one's repertoire by techniques of child-rearing or training or social bonds or accident.

In exploring the creation of violence, it seems reasonable to draw on what we know about non-violent people and those who oppose violence. How do they see the world? How do they perceive and arrange the same forces with which the violent and the non-violent alike live. How do they view the usual targets of violence? Is there something different in this non-violent world-view?

We must remember the vast amount of violence that occurs in collective contexts. Wars, terrorism, torture, ethnic and racial conflicts and hate violence of all sorts, labor violence, police and prison violence all occur in institutional and collective contexts. Indeed, even the "random" violence associated with America's urban areas is a misnomer. It is apparently "random" only because the victims of the violence may not have a direct connection to the perpetrators and it is difficult to understand why particular victims are chosen. However, the characteristics of the perpetrators and the location of the violence betray the non-random nature of the acts with common experiences linking those involved. Here we must confront the social and legal definition process by which some acts that cause harm are labeled violent and others are not. As Ambrose Bierce put it in defining homicide:

Homicide: The slaying of one human being by another. There are four kinds: felonious, justifiable, excusable and praiseworthy. But it makes no difference to the person slain whether he be fell by one kind or another, the classification is to the advantage of lawyers. (DEVIL'S DICTIONARY).

*Thus the essential nature of violence in this course is not its legalistic definition, but rather **the negative human impact such behavior has**. This becomes this course's working definition of violence.*

In addition to its personal impact, a second important definitional component of violence is its **social impact**. Sanford and Comstock describe this component in their collection SANCTIONS FOR EVIL: THE ANATOMY OF HUMAN DESTRUCTIVENESS as "social destructiveness".

Social destructiveness is a relationship between peoples: a cruel relationship where members of one culture hold power, death or egregious harm over a people regarded as inferior and sometimes sub-human, as material to be acted upon. Not all social destructiveness is lethal or even physical in its agency; much happens through the medium of words or other symbols, in the relationships which people have established or find themselves forced.

This social dimension lets us better focus on the nature of harm causing behavior as a group process and group effect. Here sociological dimensions and structural components which limit and systematically keep peoples from achieving their full potential become part of our focus. Here, the "meaning of the confederate flag flying over state capitols takes on relevance in the study of violence.

We also find clues to the tools of violence creation in the experiences of trauma, victimization and survivorship. Strategies of adaptation and coping often link those who are victimized and those who victimize in a common experiential nexus. From studies of victims we learn that adaptations to victimization and the creation of "survivors" often creates the conditions that breed violent behavior. Arrows in the violence process model below represent this reciprocal relationship.

The violence process is a transformation from a state of being non-violent to a state where one is violent. That is, the likelihood that an individual will engage in a violent act or acts increases from near zero to near certainty as the process unfolds and more and more factors develop "contingent consistency with violent actions. Below are listed those factors that are part of the "violence process" in general. These factors are derived from explorations of various

forms and occurrences of violence of the spectrum of violence, from suicide to genocide, from the spanking of a child to the atrocities of war. The term 'process' implies a series of steps that occur in a particular order, However, the incredible variety of forms of violence and the myriad circumstances in which violence occurs make the exact ordering of the factors and their exact weighting for particular forms of violence is difficult to determine. But it is hypothesized that this will depend on the violent content, the individual personalities involved and situational contexts in which the possibility for violence arises.

**Violence Process Factors: Definitions of Concepts and their Role in the Process (See Model, p.11.**

**Language:** The use of words to manipulate our conceptions of what is and is not violence. Language plays a central role shaping our perceptions of behavior, targets and ourselves in relation to violence. Language works in the following ways:

- Defining Acts: Violence / Not Violence
- Legitimate / Illegitimate (law and blame)
- Violence Definition as Political Act
- Language and Minimizing Harm
- Language and Blaming the Victim
- Language and Social Support (Myth, History and Nature)
- Language and Shifting Responsibility
- Law and Actor Focused Definitions
- Bierce and Survivor Focused Definitions
- Sanford and Comstock's "Social Destructiveness" definition

**Dehumanization:** The tendency as a reaction to personal and / or cultural forces to reduce feelings, emotions, empathy and our connections or the failure to develop such feelings.

- Self Directed: reducing human qualities in ourselves
- Other Directed: reducing human qualities in others
- Adaptive: Positive, helps person to cope with victimization and survive
- Maladaptive Negative: Affects relations with self and others and helps to support violent actions

**Other /Enemy Making):** The development of appropriate, acceptable targets. There is a tendency to perceive others as different and / or less than us. There is a tendency to define ourselves in relation to others, "odious comparisons". To perceive difference as threat. Social norms and expectations contribute to violence process.

- Defining self in the other
- Social processes in enemy making
- Social vs. objective reality

**Removing Agency** means that the person feels or believes that they have no control over his / her behavior. "Agency" means the ability to affect and control ones actions. If one lacks agency, one has no control over ones behavior. Related to the paradox of powerlessness in the perpetration of violence.

**Social Roles** refers to such things as being a parent, a soldier, a "male" where you believe that there are certain socially prescribed behaviors that you are expected to perform in relation to those roles. Such social roles contain legitimized prescriptions for violence.

**Isolation (social / psychological):** The idea that the world in which one acts is separated from the world of others; opportunities to interact with those different from one's self are limited; isolation also limits opportunities for observation and sanctioning by others; isolation also prevents victims from pursuing courses other than victimization.

**Social Support** refers to the belief that salient, legitimate others share and support one's views and actions; social support can be from individuals, groups, cultural values, social expectations. Social support can be real or perceived.

**Reduced Saliency of Non-Violent Alternatives** refers to the lack of knowledge, skills, perceived or real possibilities, or relevance of social interactions, or behaviors, which do not involve harming others. The personal and social meaning obtained from non-violent alternatives not as valued as those from violent **alternatives**.

**Power differentials** refers to the perceived threat of the other (thus the perpetrator acts to thwart the threat) or the real / perceived weakness of the other which makes the other vulnerable to the perpetrator's power. means that there is a difference in the relative power of the perpetrator and the target. Or the perpetrator believes there is a difference. Sometimes perpetrators believe the target is more powerful and hence a threat, even though in reality the target is less powerful and not a threat **LINKS TO SURVIVORSHIP**: polarity of images (Lifton) regarding vulnerability: powerless / under threat and powerful – in relation to potential target at the same time. At the socio-cultural level this links to 'colonizer / colonized' situation where position structurally supported by social custom and / or law.

The above 9 factors appear to be involved in the process of violence regardless of its form or context. These factors might be considered recurrent themes in our understanding of all forms of violence. Though many of these themes overlap in the dynamics of the violence process (that is, as individuals become engaged in the reality of the violence process) analytically they allow for the identification of separate dimensions of the process. In addition, analytically separating these factors allows for the development of targeted strategies of violence prevention and conflict-resolution that aim to undercut or reduce the strength of specific process factors.

Finally, it is important to note that the violence process factors listed above are not coincidentally also factors associated with responses of victims or survivors of violence. When one is exposed to violent actions one needs to psychically cope with the experience. Such coping strategies reflect the conditions listed above. Recognizing this help us to understand the connection between being exposed to violence and perpetrating violence so commonly found in the lives of those who perpetrate violence regardless of its context.

#### **Understanding Violence and Violence Prevention:**

Many years ago after a student finished the final exam for the understanding violence class he punched a hole in the classroom wall. I was not in the room. The student reported to me that afternoon what he had done and how sorry he was. He also indicated that he had gone to the associate dean to report the incident and make an offer to pay for the repairs. He said that as he 'transformed himself from someone not doing violence to someone doing it' he could see it happening. He recognized the process; he just wasn't able to stop himself. He felt that he was making progress and the next time maybe he will be able to stop himself from being so stupid. Clearly this student was on the right track. He recognized the violence process at work in himself and now had some insight to counter it.

Insight, concepts, tools to change perceptions of ourselves, others and our interactions in personal, social, political and cultural spheres are the mechanisms for preventing violence. What students take away from the course is a much greater appreciation of the importance of human dignity and how cultural, political, social and psychological forces and condition work to undermine human dignity and thus lay the foundation for perpetrating violence. Once they understand the process and alternative perspectives they now have the knowledge with which to stop the process before it reaches fruition. Students develop a link to the violent, see the possibilities for violence in themselves and understand how hard they have worked to justify harmful and hurtful behavior towards others. Now they have to think twice, for they are no longer at the mercy of forces they do not understand. They can no longer shift responsibility, for they know the responsibility for their behavior lies with them.

READING LIST for Understanding Violence  
Lucien X. Lombardo  
Old Dominion University

Books:

Mark Baker, *NAM*. NY: William Morrow, 1981.

Judith Herman, *TRAUMA AND RECOVERY: THE AFTERMATH OF VIOLENCE--FROM DOMESTIC ABUSE TO POLITICAL TERROR*. NY: Basic Books, 1992.

James Garbarino, *LOST BOYS: WHY OUR SONS TURN VIOLENT AND HOW WE CAN SURVIVE THEM*. NY: The Free Press, 1999

Robin M. Williams, "Legitimate and Illegitimate Uses of Violence" from *VIOLENCE AND THE POLITICS OF RESEARCH*, W.Gaylin, et.al. (Eds), NY: Plenum, 1981, p. 23-45).

Viola Bernard, et.al "Dehumanization," in N. Sanford and Craig Comstock (Eds) *SANCTIONS FOR EVIL*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, (102-124).

James Comb, "The Triumph of Phony Culture" from *PHONY CULTURE: CONFIDENCE AND MALAISE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1994 (pp. 1-29).

Sam Keen, "To Create an Enemy" (from *FACES OF THE ENEMY*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986 pp.9-14).

Edwin McGargee, "Variables associated with Criminal Violence" from M. Wolfgang and N. Weiner (Eds) *CRIMINAL VIOLENCE*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982 (pp.292-319).

J. Monahan and D. Klassen, "Situational Analysis of Violence," from M. Wolfgang and N. Weiner (Eds) *CRIMINAL VIOLENCE*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982 (pp.356-402).

Hans Toch, "The Violence Prone Person: A Typology" (from *VIOLENT MEN*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969, pp.133-177)(American Psychological Association).

Robert J. Lifton, "The Survivor" (from *DEATH IN LIFE: SURVIVORS OF HIROSHIMA*. NY: Basic Books, 1968 (pp.479-539),

Alice Miller, "Breeding Grounds of Hatred: Guides to Child Rearing from Two Centuries", from *FOR YOUR OWN GOOD*. NY: Noonday Press, 1990, pp.8-32.

D. Scully and J. Marolla, "Convicted Rapists' Vocabulary of Motive: Excuses and Justifications" (from *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*, 31/5, 1984 (pp.530-544).

Patricia Martin, et.al., "Fraternities and Rape on Campus" (from *GENDER AND SOCIETY*, 3/4 1989, pp.457-473)

K. Ferraro and J. Johnson, "How Women Experience Battering: The Process of Victimization", *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*,30/3, 1983, (pp. 325 - 339)

Dee L.R. Graham, et.al, "Survivors of Terror: Battered Women, Hostages and the Stockholm Syndrome" (from *FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON WIFE ABUSE*, K. Yllo and M. Bograd (Eds), Sage: Newbury Park, CA, 1988, (pp.217-233)

Gregory Herek, "Psychological Heterosexism and Anti-Gay Violence: The Social Psychology of Bigotry and Bashing", From Gregory Herek and Kevin Berrill (Eds), *HATE CRIMES*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992 (pp.149-169).

Linda Garnets, Gregory Herek and Barrie Levy, "Violence and Victimization of Lesbians and Gay Men: Mental Health Consequences," From Gregory Herek and Kevin Berrill (Eds). *HATE CRIMES*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992 (pp.207-226).

Amnesty International, "The Process of Torture" (from *AI, TORTURE IN THE 80'S*, London: Amnesty International, 1984, (pp.18-26)



Lauren Baritz, "God's Country and American Know-How", from BACKFIRE. NY: Morrow, 1985 (pp. 19-54).

Robert J. Lifton, "The Auschwitz-Self: Psychological Themes in Doubling," from THE NAZI DOCTORS, NY: Basic Books, 1986 (pp. 430-465).

**Reaction Papers and Personal Engagement with Values and Beliefs:**

A key component of the course is a series of ‘reaction papers’. In these papers, students are presented with a film or video related to some aspect of violence that we are studying. The films serve to ‘concretize’ the concepts presented in their readings and class discussions. Students then write structured papers requiring them to apply their readings to the film. In addition, there is always a personal reflection question that requires students to integrate their life experiences, feelings, and emotions with what they are studying. This aspect of the course ‘humanizes’ the ‘objective – academic’ study of violence. Discussion of papers in class allows students to share experiences and starts to explore many of the value perspectives listed above. Writing ‘Reaction Papers’ serve to help students counter dehumanizing forces of culture and the coping strategies we employ to cope with the trauma of everyday life. These papers also ‘humanize’ the educational process (pedagogy) by integrating learning with person-hood and the personal experiences of students.

Topic	Reading / Film	Self-Reflective Questions
War Basics of Violence Process How everyday people transformed to perform violent acts and how affected by experiencing and performing violence	Reading: NAM by Mark Baker My Lai Night and Fog	For each of 8 Chapters pick out 3 quotes that were particularly meaningful to you, that hit you, that made you think and wonder. Explain what attracted you to the quote.
Definition of Violence Definition of Enemy How susceptible we are to imagery and metaphors; law and violence; role of cultural forces in dehumanization	Reading: Viola Bernard, “Dehumanization”; Robin Williams, “Legitimate and Illegitimate Violence”  Film: FACES OF THE ENEMY, Sam Keen	Have there been times in your life when you have felt yourself undergoing the enemy making process? Describe one and how you understand that incident now.
Survival Process Responses to Trauma Explore the extreme to see range of responses we’ll see in less extreme situations; Develop empathy and questioning political judgments	Reading: Robert J. Lifton “Survivors”; from LIFE IN DEATH Judith Herman Trauma and Survival (Chapter 2)  Film: BLACK RAIN (Japanese portrayal of survivors of Hiroshima)	Try to empathize with the people involved. What emotions or feelings do you experience thinking about what you would feel if this happened to you?
Suicide, Murder, Adolescence, Dehumanization and Survival Importance of Authenticity Surviving Little Traumas Failure to develop “positive connections”; personal and social responsibility.	Readings: James Garbarino, LOST BOYS; Bernard, Lifton, Herman (see above).  Film: Tom Cottle, Soap Box, and Teenagers Discuss Suicide Attempts.	Drawing on your own experiences during your teenage years, do you find these characteristics in the lives of young people who were around you? Give specific examples and relate to concepts discussed in other questions.
Hate Violence Norms vs. diversity Odious comparisons Relation of other to self-definition; power and self definition and social justice	Readings: Herek articles on functions and impacts of homophobic hate violence.  Film: “Beyond Hate” (Bill Moyers)	In thinking about the film and readings, why do you think hate is such a powerful force? Why are race and sexuality such important socially defined categories for generating hate? Which of Herek’s functions do you find useful in describing your own attitudes toward people with sexual orientations different than your own and people of different races?

**MODEL OF VIOLENCE PROCESS:**

**TRANSFORMATION FROM STATE OF BEING NOT VIOLENT TO VIOLENT**

**AND LINKS THROUGH THE SURVIVAL PROCESS**

