

**Social/Political Philosophy Seminar:  
*Political Violence***

**Phil 8721  
R 3:30-6p, Anderson 722**

**Course Description**

The topic of this course is political violence. For the bulk of the course, we will be examining the nature of political violence, and asking 3 interrelated questions:

- What is violence? And what is political violence, in particular?
- Can political violence be justified?
- Should we understand structural injustice as metaphorical or literal violence?

We will then consider, in the second part of the course, the nature of resistance to political violence, and ask the following questions:

- Can/must political violence be resisted by nonviolence?
- Is a nonviolent politics possible?
- Must resistance itself be political, or can it be private?

**Instructor**

Lee-Ann Chae: lchae@temple.edu

Office Hours: T 12:30-2:30p, Anderson 751; and by appointment

**Course Website**

Use Canvas to access course information, including readings, assignments, and announcements.

**Grading**

Presentations: 20%

Final Paper: 80%

Total: 100%

Students will be asked to write one final paper (approximately 15-20 pages) for this course. Please send me a copy by email, as well as submitting a hard copy in my mailbox, by Monday, May 6.

**Class Presentations**

Each week, I will ask one person to volunteer to give a presentation of the week's readings and lead discussion for 15-30 minutes. Presentations should not be summaries of the readings; rather, these presentations are an opportunity for you to present your analysis of some aspect of the week's readings. They are an important part of the course, so please take the time to put together a thoughtful presentation.

**Academic Honesty**

All written work submitted for this course must be your own work. If you're unsure whether or not something counts as plagiarism, please ask me. You can find more information about cheating, multiple submissions of assignments, and plagiarism here: <http://bulletin.temple.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/plagiarism-academic-cheating/>. The Philosophy Department Plagiarism Policy mandates an "F" grade, and reporting to the Chair and the CLA Undergraduate Affairs Office, for plagiarized work.

**Accommodations**

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible (and at least by the end of the second week of classes). If you haven't done so already, please contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to learn more about the resources available to you. I will work with DRS to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities.

**Resources**

CLA Advising: <https://liberalarts.temple.edu/advising>

Counseling Services: <https://counseling.temple.edu>

Disability Resources and Services: <https://disabilityresources.temple.edu>

CARE Team: <https://careteam.temple.edu>

Student Success Center: <http://www.temple.edu/class>

**Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities**

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) that can be accessed through the following link:

[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02)

**Lecture and Reading Schedule**Unit I: Political Violence*Week 1 (01/17): What is Violence?*

- Robert Paul Wolff, "On Violence"
- *Optional*: Cheyney Ryan, "Self-Defense, Pacifism, and the Possibility of Killing"

*Week 2 (01/24): What is Violence?*

- Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, Ch. 2
- *Skim*: Ch. 3

*Week 3 (01/31): What is Political Violence?*

- Robert Holmes, "The Concept of Physical Violence in Moral and Political Affairs"

*Week 4 (02/07): What is Political Violence?*

- Ted Honderich, "Democratic Violence"
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (excerpt)

*Week 5 (02/14): Can Political Violence be Justified?*

- Thomas E. Hill, Jr., "A Kantian Perspective on Political Violence"
- Judith Butler, "Violence, Mourning, Politics," from *Precarious Life*

*Week 6 (02/21): Can Political Violence be Justified?*

- Jeremy Arnold, *State Violence and Moral Horror* (Ch. 2)
- *Skim*: Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence"

*Week 7 (02/28): Can Political Violence be Justified?*

- Jeremy Arnold, *State Violence and Moral Horror* (Ch. 3)
- *Optional*: Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre"

**SPRING BREAK***Week 8 (03/14): Is Structural Injustice Violence?*

- Onur Ulas Ince, "Between Equal Rights: Primitive Accumulation and Capital's Violence"
- *Optional*: John Harris, "The Marxist Conception of Violence"

*Week 9 (03/21): What Relationship Between Violence and Oppression?*

- Sally Haslanger, "Oppressions: Racial and Other"
- Tommie Shelby, "Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory"

*Week 10 (03/28): Is Coercion Violence?*

- Steve White, "On the Moral Objection to Coercion"

## **UNIT II: NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE**

*Week 11 (04/04): Should/Can Resistance be Nonviolent?*

- Lisa Curtis-Wendlandt, “No Right to Resist? Elise Reimarus’s “Freedom” as a Kantian Response to the Problem of Violent Revolt”
- Jack Turner, “Performing Conscience: Thoreau, Political Action, and the Plea for John Brown”

*Week 12 (04/11): Nonviolent Political Freedom*

- Dustin Ells Howes, “Nonviolent Political Freedom,” from *Freedom Without Violence*

*Week 13 (04/18): A Way Forward?*

- Albert Camus, “Neither Victims Nor Executioners”
- Tamar Gendler, “The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance”

*Week 14 (04/25)*

- Class presentations on paper topics