

 <p>THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & PEACEBUILDING</p> <p>A PROGRAM OF EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>GUN VIOLENCE, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, AND COMMUNITY HEALING PAX 686</p> <p>SPI 2025 Session 3: June 9 – 13</p> <p><i>Course location: TBA</i></p>
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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Gun violence is an on-going inter-generational public health crisis and social justice issue in the United States. The increase in mass shootings across the country is almost a daily occurrence. Movie theaters, playgrounds, grocery stores, night clubs, concerts, churches, graduations, and even Super Bowl parades are susceptible to massive loss of life caused by this epidemic. School and community shootings continue to cause deep and far-reaching harm. This course will **explore** the individual and collective impact of gun violence related trauma.

Black and Brown bodies are disproportionately injured and killed from gun related incidents in the US context. We will **examine** the intersectionality of race and gun violence, as well as the root causes of firearm fatalities and injuries among young people and the LGBTQ+ community. An Afro-Indigenous value system, centered around the principles of **Sankoka**, **Ubuntu**, **Sawubona**, and **Uhuru** is the cultural framework for this course: *Gun Violence, Restorative Justice, and Community Healing*. This five-day experiential workshop integrates a culturally responsive healing circle process with ritual poetic drama, in order to provide participants with a sacred safe space to build community and establish trust.

Through the transformative power of story, participants will be invited to **engage** in the development of a vision for healing the traumatic effects of gun violence in their chosen community. We will utilize drumming, dramatization, and dance to generate open and honest dialogue. Paulo Freire – renowned Brazilian Educator – stated “*the community must be uplifted... through a process of self-healing.*” Our aspiration is to tap into communal intuition and channel the wisdom of our collective consciousness.

The flow of this course will include exploring the impact of gun violence trauma on individuals and communities, examining the intersectionality of race and gun violence from an Afro-Indigenous perspective, and engaging in the creation of a vision for reducing gun violence in the US. We encourage you to join us on this journey!

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the experiential learning process, participants will be able to:

- Bring a culturally rooted, trauma and resilience-informed approach into their personal and professional experiences with gun violence, restorative justice, and community healing.

- Conduct dialogues around the impact of gun violence trauma with their families, organizations, communities, and other spheres of influence.
- Deepen their understanding and awareness of the connection between personal, intergenerational, and ancestral resilience (*i.e.*, social ecological model for community healing).
- Examine the complex realities of gun violence in America (*e.g.*, social determinants of health, racial disparities, *etc.*).
- Explore the implications of a restorative justice mindset (*i.e.*, *acknowledge, accept, and amend*), in relationship to the on-going intergenerational trauma caused by gun violence.
- Engage in creation of sacred safe space, using a healing centered approach to promote equity, justice, and freedom, through ceremony, group processes (*e.g.*, drumming, dance, drama), ritual, poetry, and the transformative power of storytelling.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Ani, M. (1980, 1997). *Let the circle be unbroken: The implications of African spirituality in the diaspora*. Nkonimfo Publications. ISBN: 978-1-6028102-3-5

Davis, F. (2019). *The little book of race and restorative justice: Black lives, healing, and US social transformation*. Good Books. ISBN: 978-1-68099-343-1

Freire, P. (2013). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. Bloomsbury. ISBN: 978-0-8264-1276-8

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Routledge. ISBN: 0-415-96818-6

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (ADDITIONAL REFERENCE TEXTS LISTED AT END OF SYLLABUS):

Boal, A. (1973). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group.

Boyes-Watson, C. (2008). *Peacemaking circles & urban youth: Bringing justice home*. Living Justice Press.

brown, a. m. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. AK Press.

Mitchell, S. (2018) *Sacred Instructions: Indigenous wisdom for living spirit-based change*. North Atlantic Books.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

FOR GRADUATE CREDIT: Please note that all assignments should be submitted via email to rambhagatEdD@gmail.com by no later than **11:59 pm ET on 8 August 2025**.

Engaging in a course with this content, whether for academic credit or for training purposes, can be challenging. We invite all participants to:

- **Show up to all sessions:** as the learning is designed as a formative, iterative, and community-based experience, we value your presence and insights. We also understand personal commitments may conflict with the schedule on some occasions. For optimal learning, we would

discourage missing any sessions. If you need to miss, we encourage you to connect with another class participant about what went on in class, before the next session.

- **Commit to ongoing self-care during and beyond the course:** The content covered in this course may be *traumagenic* (i.e. causing a trauma response). We will take time in the first session of the course to discuss agreements and what kind of commitments make sense for us as individuals and as a community, to feel free and supported.
- **Identify and lean on your resilience network:** We will take time early in the course to identify who are some of the resource people you might lean on as you embark on this learning journey.

Taking the course for Professional Education/Training

Homework assignments are designed to complement and enhance the course experience. Although training participants do not need to submit them for credit, you are encouraged to complete them in order to fully engage in the interpersonal and group activities.

Taking the course for Credit

All assignments are designed to enhance your overall learning experience during the class sessions, as well as meet the course requirements. **Students may enroll for graduate credit or professional development.**

Please show up to all sessions of class. Presence in class will account for **50% of your grade.** As previously mentioned, the learning is designed as a formative, iterative, and community-based experience. Your presence and insights are essential to achieve wholeness as a collective. We understand personal commitments may conflict with the schedule. Yet, for optimal learning during this 5-day immersion, we discourage missing any sessions. If you need to miss, then we expect you to connect with another class participant about what went on in class, prior to the next session. Presence each day accounts for 10% of your grade (a total of 50% of the final grade).

2-credit students: The assignments below add up to 50% of your grade. There is no final project.

Please note that all assignments should be submitted via email to rambhagatEdD@gmail.com by no later than 11:59 pm ET on 8 August, 2025.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment	Due date	2 credit students (% of grade)
SHOWING UP	All sessions	50
1) Pre-Work: Intention and question inventory - Bring your responses on Day 1. What impact has gun violence had on you personally and on your community? When have you experienced, observed, and/or witnessed restorative justice being practiced? How might you engage in community healing upon completion of this course?	Day 1 Jun 9	5

<p>2) Lead a centering or release activity*</p> <p>Each class will open/close with a 5-minute activity to help center our energies (to welcome us into the learning space or prepare us to leave). Participants are invited to lead at least one of these.</p> <p>Participants will sign up for these in class.</p> <p>*In addition to brief opening/closing activities, the course will include 3 circle processes (cleansing the space, symbols of resistance & resilience, and symbols of freedom.</p>	At least once	5
<p>3) Reading response – From Ginwright’s <i>The Future of Healing: From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement</i> in <i>Medium</i>. Interpret the 4 tenets of HCE and illustrate a question that came up for you.</p>	Jun 10	5
<p>4) Reading response - From Rice, et.al <i>Lived experiences of people impacted by gun violence: Qualitative analysis of the prescriptions for repair project</i>. Write about what resonated with you, or raised questions for you, facilitated structured learning session. Feel free to write in prose or poetic form.</p>	Jun 12	5
<p>5) Group interpretation of a Community Healing process (e.g. equity, justice, liberation, etc.)</p> <p>Note: Details will be explained during the course.</p>	Jun 13	10
<p>6) Response to Practitioner Spotlight or Field Trip We will have one or two sessions with a practitioner who is applying culturally rooted principles and practices. Write a thank you note sharing with the practitioner what you learned during their session, questions you have for them, and any appreciation you care to share.</p>	Jun 20	5
<p>7) Reading response From hook’s Teaching Community (Ch 8), Moving beyond Shame (Ch 9), and Keepers of Hope, (Ch 11) Heart to Heart. Write 2-page (single spaced) summary about the</p>	Jul 27	5

insights / revelations that you gained from these chapters.		
8) Reading response From Ani, Davis, and Freire (Choose 3 inter-connected themes). Write an essay on what resonated with you, or raised questions for you, about each of these characteristics. Feel free to write in the form of questions or poetry. *Creative presentations (optional)	Aug 4	10
TOTAL	All Assignments	100

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS:

The course Moodle page will provide additional details about the topics we are likely to explore. Topics and schedule are subject to change, based on the needs and preferences of the group.

DAY	OVERVIEW	TOPICS/THEMES
1	Opening Ceremony & Introductions Shared Values & Ritual Poetic Drama	Sankofa
2	Sacred Safe Space, Gun Violence Trauma & Massive Resilience <i>(Invited Guest: TBD)</i>	Ubuntu
3	Afro-Indigenous Approach To Restorative Justice & Healing Centered Engagement	Sawubona
4	Community Healing Through 'The Art of Conciliation'	Uhuru
5	Symbols of Freedom, Critical Thinking About Race (CTR) & Group Interpretations (Acknowledgement, Affirmation, Action) Closing Ceremony	Pedagogy In Action: (Putting It On The Line)

REFERENCE TEXTS AND RESOURCES: *The following texts supplement the course content and delve into one or more areas in greater depth. You do not need to read all of these! You might choose one or more to support your own learning and practice:*

Akbar, A. (2020). *Beyond ally: The pursuit of racial justice*. Publish Your Purpose Press.

Akbar, A. (2017). *Urban trauma: A legacy of racism*. Publish Your Purpose Press.

Burke Harris, N. (2018). *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Cohen, E. W. (2018). *From generation to generation. Healing intergenerational trauma through storytelling*. Morgan James Publishing.

DeGruy, J. (2005). *Post-traumatic slave syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury & healing*. Uptone Press.

Delgado, M. (2019). *Urban youth trauma: Using community intervention to overcome gun violence*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Diallo, Y. & Hall, M. (1989). *The healing drum: African wisdom teachings*. Destiny Books.

Erdozain, D. (2024). *One nation under guns: How gun culture distorts our history and threatens our democracy*. Crown.

Friedman, R. L. (2000). *The healing power of the drum: A psychotherapist explores the healing power of rhythm*. White Cliffs Media.

Friedman, R. L. (2011). *The healing power of the drum, book two: A psychotherapist continues to explore the healing power of rhythm*. White Cliffs Media.

Ginwright, S. (2022). *The 4 pivots: Reimagining justice, reimagining ourselves*. North Atlantic Books.

Ginwright, S. (2016). *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart*. Routledge.

Ginwright, S. (2010). *Black youth rising: Activism & radical healing in urban America*. Teachers College Press.

Gore, R. (2024). *Treating violence: An emergency room doctor takes on a deadly American epidemic*. Beacon Press.

Haines, S. K. (2019). *The politics of trauma*. North Atlantic Books.

Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror*. Basic Books.

Herman, J. (2023). *Truth and repair: How trauma survivors envision justice*. Basic Books.

Hicks, D. (2011). *Dignity: Its essential role in resolving conflict*. Yale University Press.

- Jensen, E. (2001). *Arts with the brain in mind*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Jensen, E. (1998). *Teaching with the brain in mind*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Levins Morales, A. (2019), *Medicine stories: Essays for radicals*. Duke University Press.
- McCreary, M. L. (2023). *Trauma and race: A path to wellbeing*. Fortress Press.
- Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. Central Recovery Press.
- Muhammad, M. (2019). *The restorative journey, Book one: The theory & application of restorative practices*. Akoben.
- Pranis, K. (2005). *The little book of circle processes: A new/old approach to peacemaking*. Good Books.
- Pranis, K., Stuart, B., & Wedge, M. (year). *Peacemaking circles: From conflict to community*.
- Prothrow-Stith, D. & Spivak, H. R. (2004). *Murder is no accident: Understanding and preventing youth violence in America*. Jossey-Bass.
- Rich, J. A. (2009). *Wrong place, wrong time*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, A., Smith, A. & Gonzales, A. (2022). *Let your light shine: How mindfulness can empower children and rebuild communities*.
- Stanley, E. (2019). *Widen the Window: Training your brain and body to thrive during stress and recover from trauma*, Avery.
- Van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score*. Viking Penguin.
- Van Dernoot Lipsky, L. (2009). *Trauma stewardship: An everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Wells-Wilbon, R. & Estreet, A. (2022). *Trauma and mental health social work with urban populations: African-Centered clinical interventions*. Routledge. Wilson, A. (year).
- Wilson, A. (1992). *Understanding Black adolescent male violence: Its remediation and prevention*. Afrikan World InfoSystems.
- Wilson, A. (1991). *Black-On-Black violence: The psychodynamics of Black self-annihilation in the service of white domination*. Afrikan World InfoSystems.
- Yoder, C. (2020). *The little book of trauma healing: When violence strikes and community security is threatened*. Skyhorse Publishing.
- Zehr, H. (2015). *The little book of restorative justice: Revised and updated*. Good Books.

RECOMMENDED MANUALS:

- Boyes-Watson, C. & Pranis, K (2015). *Building a restorative school community*. Living Justice Press.
- Boyes-Watson, C. & Pranis, K (2010). *Heart of hope: A guide for using peacemaking circles to develop emotional literacy, promote healing & build healthy relationships*. Living Justice Press.
- Generation FIVE (2007). *Transformative Justice Handbook* (PDF). Available free online (in English and Spanish) at: <http://www.generationfive.org/resources/transformative-justice-documents/>
- Hooker, D. A. & Czajkowski, A. P. (2011). *Transforming Historical Harms*. Available free online at: <https://emu.edu/cjp/docs/transforming-historical-harms.pdf>
- Kivel, P & Creighton, A. (1997). *Making the peace: A 15-session violence prevention curriculum for young people*. Hunter House Publishers.
- Prothrow-Stith, D. (1987). *Violence prevention: Curriculum for adolescents*. Education Development Center.
- Wazyatawin & Yellow Bird, M. (2012). *For indigenous minds only: A decolonization handbook*. School for Advanced Research Press.
- Wilson, W. A. & Yellow Bird, M. (2005) *For indigenous minds only: A decolonization handbook*. School of American Research.
- Vasquez, H., Myhand, M. N. & Creighton, A. (2003). *Making allies, making friends: A curriculum for making the peace in middle school*. Hunter House Publishers.

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at spi@emu.edu before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI team and confirmed with the instructor. **For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session.** SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These [documents](#) are all available online

Criteria for Evaluating Arts-Based Peacebuilding Projects

CRITERIA	A – Excellent	B – Minimal expectations	C – Below expectations	Comments
Goals & Audience <i>Are the goals or learning objectives of the project clear? Have they been met?</i> <i>Is the intended audience clearly specified?</i> <i>Is the project appropriate for this audience?</i> <i>Does the project communicate to the intended audience?</i>	-audience & goals/learning objectives clearly identified. -project appropriate for, and likely to meet, its goals -project is appropriate for specified audience -project understandable to & likely to engage and/or communicate to audience	-audience and goals identified though not as clearly as they could be - project may meet its goals but this is not entirely clear - project is at least somewhat appropriate for, and likely to communicate to audience.	-audience and goals inappropriate or inadequately identified -project unlikely to meet its goals and/or communicate to the audience	
Methodology <i>Is the overall methodology clear and appropriately used?</i> <i>Has the project incorporated specific methods required by the assignment?</i> <i>If intended as a form of intervention, has thought be given to how it will be implemented?</i>	-project incorporates inquiry methods required by the assignment -all methodologies & technologies have been appropriately used, with attention to ethical and methodological issues -if intended as intervention or advocacy, project has given adequate thought to implementation -sources & methods are adequately identified	- methodology basically appropriate to the project and appropriately used, but could be strengthened -sources and methods identified but not as fully as they could be -more thought should be given to implementation issues	-methodology inadequate and/or inadequately articulated. -sources not appropriately identified -inadequate attention to implementation issues	
Analysis <i>Is there evidence of critical thinking and analysis?</i>	- evidence of critical thinking about methods, sources, information and analysis or editing. -uses analysis/editing methods appropriate for the project -method of analysis or editing is adequately articulated	- some evidence of critical thinking but could be stronger -analytical approach and the analysis itself is basically appropriate but could be stronger and/or articulated better.	-inadequate evidence of critical thinking -analysis lacking or inadequate -analytic approach inappropriate or inadequately specified	
Craft & Coherence <i>Is the level of artistic and/or technical craft adequate for the specified goals and audience?</i>	- level of craft is clearly adequate for the audience & to meet project goals (whether or not it meets “artistic” standards) -project is coherent & likely to resonate	-level of craft is minimally adequate for the audience and goals -project coherence could be stronger	-level of craft inadequate for purposes and/or audience -project is not coherent	

<i>Did it involve an appropriate amount of work? Does the final product have coherence and "resonance?"</i>	with the intended audience -product shows an appropriate amount of effort for this assignment			
Content <i>Is the content appropriate & adequate, given the goals, audience & assignment? Is there evidence of insight, originality &/or creativity?</i>	- information conveyed is clearly adequate for goals, audience & assignment -shows depth & breadth of content -shows insight, originality &/or creativity	-information conveyed is adequate but could be strengthened -some evidence of insight, originality, or creativity	-inadequate information -little or no evidence of insight, originality and/or creativity	
				Grade

Criteria for Evaluating Arts-Based Peacebuilding Projects

Background notes:

- Arts approaches can be used in several different stages of a project:
 1. To gain or create knowledge. (For example, research “subjects” or participants might be engaged in an arts-based project as a way of soliciting information or encouraging insight.)
 2. To add complexity or nuance to created knowledge. (For example, an arts practice may serve as one method in a multi-method research project, creating an integrated, reflective methodology for the project. Alternatively, an arts practice could be used to analyze and/or interpret data collected by conventional methods.)
 3. To test knowledge. (For example, researchers might verify their interpretation of findings from a more traditional research process by creating a play or exhibit and testing it for resonance with their subjects.)
 4. To share findings. (For example, a play or exhibit might be created to (re)-present data collected or analyzed via conventional methods in order to impart the particular kinds of meaning the researcher considers important, and as a way to reach and engage a broader audience.)
 5. As a form of intervention. (For example, a project might be designed to raise awareness of an issue or conflict, to promote dialogue on a contested issue, or to advocate for a cause.)
- Arts-based products often do not specify methodologies used. Thus, it may be important for a project to be accompanied by a short paper discussing analysis, theory of change, audience, goals, and methods used.
- Patricia Leavy, in *Method Meets Art: Arts-based Research Practice* (New York: Guilford Press) 2009, argues that “[t]raditional conceptions of validity and reliability, which developed out of positivism, are inappropriate for evaluating artistic inquiry.” (p. 15). She suggests that authenticity, trustworthiness, and validity can be assessed through attention to such elements as aesthetics, resonance, and vigor.
- For a discussion of standards, see “Method Meets Art” (Leavy, 2009: 15ff and Chapter 8).