

2019-2020 Simmons World Challenge: Language, Power, and Violence in Society

Faculty:

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World Challenge 2020 focuses on the various aspects of Language, Power, and Violence in society on local, national and international levels. Issues surrounding language, power and violence touch on a wide variety of disciplines, including sociolinguistics, social work, library and information science, history, management, health services, economics, law, politics, international relations and sociology. In addition, significant activities in and around the various communities of Boston as well as international efforts provide a wide arena to draw from for student engagement. The ultimate objective of this year's World Challenge is to provide students with a set of analytical and conceptual tools to engage in critical civil discourse on addressing situations in which violence has been chosen as a course of action, whether systematically or impulsively.

World Challenge 2020 explores a number of topics. Some of these topics include, political violence, gang violence, the role of weapons technology and economy, internal and external political efforts to address violence, the role of state and its coercive apparatuses (police, and military organizations), social and cultural movements that endorse and even celebrate violence, groups that participate in or are subject to violence, and historical, political and existing strategies (including peace negotiation and reconciliation efforts) to engage violence within local, national, and international situations. Particular attention will be paid to the role of language vis-a-vis power and violence. Similarly, how these issues affect women, children and oppressed groups will be explored.

The focus of this course will be on

1. Using case and legal studies to address ways in which violence manifests itself through identifying variables and assessing their impact in local, regional, national and international contexts
2. Examining role of language in addressing issues of power and violence
3. Researching, analyzing, critiquing and evaluating the current state of response to violent situations on both macro and micro levels in different contexts
4. Designing actionable solutions to problems gleaned and articulated from research that addresses the intricacies of language, power and violence examined through group projects.

Travel Component for SWC 2019-2020

A 14-day field-based travel component for the course will be designed to develop a deeper understanding of issues related to language, power and violence for select communities in Uganda. These will include health clinics, teenage pregnancy centers and women's groups. The course will seek to expand knowledge and resources that are available to Uganda people's as a sub-Saharan group that has been affected by these issues as well as the psychosocial, political, and legal factors affecting their experience.

The course will seek to develop students' systems thinking about the needs of this population "What are their condition? What are their predicament? Where does the Simmons mission fit in? What role do students have in addressing issues both internationally and domestically?

The travel component will also emphasize the psychological effects of language, power and violence in a developing country. As learners on a journey, the course will build a supportive group of learners through living and working closely together. Students will visit with key organizations and participate in service learning with at least one organization (e.g. Wakisa Teen pregnancy Center; Gaba Mixed High School; Makula Breakfast Club; Bead For Life; Straight Talk Foundation; Most At Risk Population Initiative; Music For Life School)

In addition to the field experiences, course faculty will work with one local university and students will attend lectures on a range of interdisciplinary topics, including faith as a resource, local politics, colonialism, gender based violence and the human rights (as needed). To help students process the often-intense work, they will participate in discussions and reflective writings. Students will develop knowledge of policies that promote change as well as resiliency in addressing violence.

Application:

The 2020 SWC application is due October 7, 2019. If you are student interested in participating in the 2020 SWC send a completed application to kristina.pechulis@simmons.edu. The application may be downloaded from the [Simmons World Challenge](#) webpage.