

# Thinking About Violence:

A Summer Seminar  
for Teachers

*"An engaging and expansive week of history and folklore, philosophy and anthropology, placing the every day violence you see in its proper place in the puzzle."*



Sponsored by the VFH Institute on  
Violence, Culture, and Survival

July 8 - 12, 1996

**vfh** Virginia Foundation  
for the Humanities and Public Policy

## Come explore the issues . . .

Confronted with violence in the schools and streets, the public easily forgets that violence has a long and checkered history in America. Many cultural icons and assumptions, from the frontiersman to the gangster, set the tenor and style of today's youth violence. To "stop violence in the schools" requires that we confront our own history and our own assumptions about the usefulness as well as the dangers of violence. And the issue is more than one of violence on television or in sports. It is our unclear and complicated relationship with a form of human behavior that is as compelling and captivating as it is destructive.

## Participate in the discussion . . .

For one week, teachers will work with Professor Herbert Hirsch, author of Genocide and the Politics of Memory, Violence as Politics, and Learning to be Militant, and with his guests, to discuss the wider cultural and historical context of youth violence. They will look to that wider context for answers to violence that go beyond managing violence in the schools, looking to how the history and culture of American communities sometimes educated children to be violent. They will also look to the past for answers that may be applicable today: after all, the Wild West was tamed to a degree; and the riots and lynchings of the last century have been less evident in this century. Our forbears may have themselves found ways to harness a society in many ways more violent than our own.

Constructing a perspective on violence that begins with interpersonal violence and moves to family violence, institutional and community violence, and international violence and genocide, Professor Hirsch will show the common threads of all violence, and the dangers and opportunities of violence understood in this broad way.

## Respond to the challenge . . .

With the assistance of Professor Hirsch you will work to develop curriculum units to explore violence with students themselves, as a phenomenon to be understood and managed as a part of our heritage, however dangerous and confusing it may be.

# Program Outline

## Part I: An Overview

- ▼ Violence in the United States
  - A brief review
  - Who commits violence and why?
  
- ▼ Theories concerning the causes behind individual violence
  - Psycho-social
  - Social learning
  - Biological
  - Structural
  - Drugs
  - Gangs
  - Guns
  
- ▼ Where violence occurs
  - Domestic violence
  - Schools
  - Gangs
  - Business and the work place

## Part II: International Violence

- ▼ An overview of forms of international violence
  - Terrorism
  - War
  - Genocide
  
- ▼ Theories and Causes
  - Psycho-social
  - Social-cultural
  - Political-economic

## Part III: Can violence be prevented?

- ▼ The Next Question
  - Violence and the role of education
  - Curriculum units on violence and culture

## Texts . . .

Copies of the following materials will be provided to workshop participants:

Adam Walinsky, "The Crisis of Public Order." The Atlantic Monthly, July, 1995, pp. 30-54.

Peter Carlson, "Murder American Style," The Washington Post Magazine, June 19, 1994, pp. 10-32.

Joyce Carol Oates, "I Had No Other Thrill or Happiness," The New York Review of Books, March 24, 1994, pp. 52-59.

James E. Long, "Violence: The Role of Prevention," Prevention Forum, Fall/Winter, 1993, pp. 4-11.

Carnegie Corporation of New York, Preventing Contemporary Intergroup Violence. 1994.

Carnegie Corporation of New York, Saving Youth From Violence. Winter, 1994.

## Guest Presenters . . .

**Vanton Hum**, survivor of the Cambodian holocaust

**Jay Sommer**, National Teacher of the Year and Holocaust Survivor

**Chris Taylor**, Fellow, Virginia Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy

**Teachers and other school officials**

## Films and other activities . . .

Films, fieldtrips and evening events at Charlottesville's summer theatres will complement the class material.



## Application Form

Please complete, detach and return this application by *June 15* to:

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities  
145 Ednam Drive  
Charlottesville, VA 22903-4629

Please register me for the workshop **“Thinking About Violence”** to be held July 8 - 12 at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities in Charlottesville, VA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Eve) \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed my \$50 registration fee.

(Make checks payable to: VFH)

I would like information about financial assistance.

Please bill my credit card account:

Master Card: \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Visa: \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like further information please contact us. More details on place, activities, and lodging will be sent with your registration confirmation.

**? QUESTIONS ?**

Phone: (804) 924-3296

E-mail: [rac3r@virginia.edu](mailto:rac3r@virginia.edu)