

Nonviolence studies certificate available to K-State students

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In a world that can seem overrun with violence at times, K-State is taking a stand by offering a certificate in nonviolence studies.

The certificate is 15 credit hours with two required courses — Introduction to Nonviolence Studies and Applied Nonviolence Feminist Practice. The certificate is the brainchild of Susan Allen, nonviolence education director and director of the Office of Student Life.

Allen said she thinks it is important for students to learn how to create sustainable relationships by practicing nonviolence in their daily lives.

"We have to update our problem-solving method," she said.

Allen also said conflict comes from unbalanced relationships, which create an unhealthy atmosphere.

Introduction to Nonviolence Studies, which is taught by Allen this semester, focuses on learning how to communicate nonviolently.

Thea Nietfeld, nonviolence communication instructor and Unitarian Universalist minister, visited the class Monday to share her experience with nonviolence.

As a child, Nietfeld said her two younger brothers would fight, which would upset her parents and in turn, escalate the situation.

To resolve the conflict, Nietfeld said she would simply stand there silently.

"One learns that a calm presence makes a really big difference in a conflict situation," she said.

Nietfeld's story demonstrated to the Intro students one of the many ways to practice nonviolence.

"It's an exciting class to be involved in," said Torry Dickinson, professor of women's studies.

Dickinson said the class is geared toward creating change in local and global conditions that lead to violence and creating more peaceful, egalitarian and just social relations, which she said contribute to a better world.