

– TPU –

METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

FOR PEACE

– TPU –

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(A) Basic Information

- Course Title: in English: "Methods of Analysis and Research for Peace", in Italian: "Metodi di Analisi e Ricerca per la Pace"
- Next Term: 12th March- 30th May 2013 (12 weeks); 12 Marzo- 30 Maggio 2013
- Work load: 6/7 hours per week ; lavoro richiesto: 6/7 ore la settimana
- Course Instructor: Alberto L'Abate

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(B) Personal Note:



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Alberto L'Abate, born in Brindisi (Puglia, South Italy) in 1931, lives in Florence, Tuscany. He graduated in Social and Political Sciences at Florence University, and specialized in Methods of Social Research and the relationship between Social Action,

Nonviolence and Social Change at the Collége Cooperative and the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, (France); at the Tavinstock Clinic in London (England); and with Gene Sharp, the so called Machiavelli of Nonviolence, at Harvard University, Cambridge (USA). His commitment to better understanding various aspects of nonviolence has not been limited to studies and writings, but also put into practice: working with Danilo Dolci, the so called "Italian Gandhi", in slums of Palermo, where he lived for two years, and in struggles against nuclear power stations in Tuscany, which contributed to the rejection of the project, and against a missile base in Comiso (Sicily), which was subsequently converted into a civilian airport. He has also been active abroad in the attempt to prevent armed conflicts in the first Gulf War, in Iraq, and as Peace Ambassador in Kosovo. Though these attempts failed, they were very instructive as regards the reasons for war and the possibilities of preventing them. In Italy he has published various books and numerous articles, some of which have been translated in eight languages. For his writings and engagement in active nonviolence, he has received various awards, in Italy and abroad.



(C) Course Content:

This course allows for participants all over the world to partake in the coming to life of a recent publication: <u>"Methods of Analysis in Social Sciences and Research for Peace. An Introduction" by Alberto L'Abate This</u> publication is, at present, the textbook for the lessons, on line, by the same author, in Transcend University, both in English and in Italian, Johan Galtung wrote the preface to the book which is also published in conjunction with the Publishing House CinnamonTeal, of Goa (India). This course is founded on the Author's lectures, at Florence University, on "Peace Research Methodology" for the Peace Workers' graduate course (now amalgamated with the one for Economic Development) and also for the course specializing in social research technologies.

This study deals with its subject in a rather original way if compared with the usual research methodology texts. First of all, it discards the traditional standpoint of research "neutrality", which, according to the author, favours the preservation of the "status quo", since research is increasingly financed by the state, by the army or by important economic entities, which are more concerned in furthering their own power rather than promoting peace.

Because of this L'Abate has adopted the principles of "constructivism", which considers a piece of research to be completed not with the publication of a good book, but only when the author has succeeded in transforming society in the hoped-for direction, especially following the participatory type of research (action-research) with which he has so successfully experimented. In this event the outcome would be the creation of societies with more solidarity and less belligerence, or at least with the tendency to develop the known, but not yet implemented, possibilities for armed conflict prevention, both at international and at national level.

In addition, the author tackles other problems in the methodological sphere, trying to find solutions for them which he deems to be valid: among these the one initiated by Kuhn's book on scientific revolutions, searching for a comprehensive paradigm for social sciences. According to the author of this book, the solution to this problem can be found (also with the help of an English Researcher Ms Masterman) in distinguishing three different fields in the concept of paradigm: 1) meta-theoretical 2) real and proper theory and 3) paradigmes intended as research methodology.

Following this line of thought the author considers that at the first level it is necessary to overcome the still unresolved conflict between models of society which highlight the conflictual element and those which instead stress the consensual character, by means of the concept of "unstable equilibrium", which, by accepting them both, supersedes them. Still at this level L'Abate conveys understandings that allow the development aid worker or the peace practitioner to overcome the conflict between structuralists and individualists: the former who give priority to the social structures and their conditioning on individuals, and the latter who put in evidence the individual persons with their capacity for interaction and social relationships. This antithesis is resolved by L'Abate with the acceptance of "methodological individualism", however clearly distinguishing it from the "political" one, and highlighting, instead of social structures considered as static, the process of their construction and deconstruction.



At the second level, the author, following R. Boudon's line of thought, believes that it is necessary not to search for a single theory but rather to accept the possibility of several theories, even from some other social sciences, if founded on deep and solid methods of research.

At the third level, the methodological level, L'Abate aware of anti-methodological leanings (which rightly criticize the rigidity of the traditional quantitative-deductive method, proposing, with Feyerabend, an anarchic methodology) considers instead necessary to find a methodology founded both on deductive and inductive logic, which might overcome the antithesis between quantity and quality, explanation and comprehension. In this field he believes in the existence of four methods of analysis to be used simultaneously, as different "lenses" which, if used as a complement to each other, would each allow us to see a part of the reality around us. These are, according to the author: a) causal analysis, b) structural analysis, c) functional analysis, d) processing analysis.

In the final conclusive chapters the author illustrates these various methodologies for the analysis of social reality, and provides tested ideas for a better definition of each one of them. He will in this course endeavour to show how, through their interaction, the prevention of the problems of war and violence, can become more accessible and sustainable.

(D) How is the course designed?

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"Methods of Analysis and Research for Peace", also incorporates other texts by Prof. L'Abate and other authors which will be sent weekly, by TPU-Admin, to the students. These texts must be read and studied by the students and will be the basis of their assignments both individual and collective. The students will be organized in small groups, who are to work online discussing among themselves, and writing a collective essay that requires cooperative work on a common document (font size 12, word format) of maximally 5-pages length. They will draw from their personal experience, the readings as well as the discussions accompanying the course. The goal of the course is to acquire a creative, constructive and concrete idea on how to carry out research which is aimed to better understand the reasons of conflicts, how they could be overcome, and especially how they could be prevented from escalating into violence. A special emphasis is given to understanding how to work with "action research" in the field. It is a kind of research that does not end with a written report, but works towards changing the reality in the field. The entire process will be highly interactive and transparent with all participants freely exchanging their thought processes, their experiences and their interpretations as well as their views on the instructor's responses.

The participants at the end of the course should be able to plan and carry out research on a specific conflict, chosen by them, and should be able to produce an action-research programme which could , if not solve a given problem , at least enable them to deescalate the intensity of the conflict chosen by them.



(E) Content Carriers

Before starting the course, each student will be sent a copy of the book which will be the basis of the teachings. In addition to this by e mail, a page of instructions on which pages are to be read will for each lesson will be provided, and, on the necessary date, the extra material which will substitute some of the pages of the book will be made available.

(F) Course Syllabus and Timetable

Week 1: Introduction to the course, plus indications for the first personal assignment, to be sent back within 14 days;

Week 2: The purpose of research plus a PPT of introduction to the book;

Week 3: The complex analysis of war and peace; plus indications for a first group assignment to be sent back in weeks later.

Week 4: Paradigms in scientific research and the cognitive cycle, plus, en example of research on prejudices.

Week 5: Hypothesis in Research for Peace with particular reference to the tranformation of conflicts; Week 6: Values in social research;

Week 7: Some methodological problems (methodological individualism, understanding or explaining, problems of observation); plus indications for a second group assignment to be sent back three weeks later Week 8: Quantity and quality;

Week 9: Causal analysis;

Week 10: Structural analysis;

Week 11: Functional analysis; plus indications for a second personal assignment to be sent back 14 days later;

Week 12: The analysis of social processes.

(G) Study Material and Suggested Readings, videos and websites

The book, by Alberto L'Abate, "*Methods of Analysis in Social Sciences and Research for Peace: an Introduction*", Transcend University Press, Basel, Second reprint, 2013.

The capter 8, of the Part II, by Alberto L'Abate, "Sociology", in, Luciano L'Abate, editor, "*Paradigms in Theory Construction*", Springer Sciences, New York, Heidelberg, London, 2010, (scanned ans sent by E mail to the students)



The capter 10, of the Part I, by Michael Lund, "Preventing Violent Intrastate Conflicts: Learning Lessons from Experience", in, "*Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia. An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*", edited by Paul van Tongeren, Hans van de Veen, Juliette Verhoeven, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder,London, 2002, (scanned and sent by E mail to the students).

In addition to these texts much material on these themes can be found in this last book.

(H) Assignments

Deadlines

As we adhere to a weekly schedule that may include activities such as skype-discussions and assignments, please do respect deadlines. Due to the fast paced and digital nature of this course, deadlines are not to be extended.

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Technology

As you understand, you will be an element is an entirely web-based set of multiple courses. TPU will be cooperating with the Galtung-Institut for Peace Theory and Peace Practice (G-I) which will be providing TPU with a new and improved digital infrastructure. For those of you who have been with us from the beginning, this means that we are moving away from moodle.

You can easily complete all TPU work from your home or en route as long as you have an internet connection. For this course to be successful, we need to be in contact with each other, to write to each other and to discuss content and procedures swiftly. TPU offers a course model staunchly based on interconnectivity and interoperability. For this purpose, no specific technology is required. You can use an e-mail account of your own to interact with Prof. L'Abate, but it is highly recommend to use the interaction-infrastructure provided by the <u>G-I Community</u> for communicating both with the TPU-Administration and with Prof. L'Abate. Most importantly, you will have to maintain your mailbox in the G-I community to ensure it does not overload. To better support you, we do offer a chat-room and a forum which are both very easy to use. Please make sure to familiarize yourself with your G-I environment and share suggestions for improvement with TPU-Admin between January 31^{st.} and March 12^{th.}.

Certificate

At the end of the course we shall provide a certificate of completion signed by the Course Instructor and by the Rector of TPU, Prof. Johan Galtung.