

Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence

Dr. Sushil Mittal, Director

Phone: (540) 568-4060

Location: Cardinal House

Mission

In pursuing the threefold mission of education, research and engagement, the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence at James Madison University seeks to advance the understanding of, appreciation for, and practice of nonviolence, by exploring the significance for the contemporary world of the great task Mahatma Gandhi set for himself and for all of us as an experiment and an actual experience. "My mission," he said, "is to convert...the world to non-violence for regulating mutual relations, whether political, economic, social, or religious."

Leadership

The Gandhi Center is led by director Sushil Mittal. The team working with the director to set the intellectual agenda of the center includes the advisory board and the board of trustees. The advisory board serves as a consulting body to the director. The board includes Nobel Laureates, former heads of state, high civil servants, CEO's of international corporations, academicians, scientists, social activists and artists from five continents, who pool their different experiences from a wide range of backgrounds to promote a culture of nonviolence and peace. The board of trustees provides governance of the business and affairs of the center, safeguards the independence of the center's work, helps to increase community awareness of the center and its programs, and assists the philanthropic activities of the center. The board is composed of distinguished business executives, academics and community leaders.

Programs

The Gandhi Center engages in a wide variety of local, national and international educational, research and engagement programs in support of its mission. The center's work is interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and cross-civilizational. Listed below are some of the programs in which the center is currently involved:

- **Teaching:** In addition to the broad range of learning opportunities, each academic semester the director offers an interdisciplinary course, "Gandhi, Nonviolence and Global Transformation."
- **Research:** The center supports research across disciplines in five broad areas with particular emphasis on scholarship that bridges theory and practical application: theories and critiques of Gandhi; transnational and cross-cultural dimensions of Gandhi and his legacy and relevance; nonviolent praxis through everyday modes of living; alternative visions of nonviolent approaches to human relations and world affairs; and alternative moral and political theories.
- **Conferences:** The center organizes and hosts an international conference and a student conference in alternate years.
- **Lecture Series:** The center has two established lecture series: Tolstoy Lecture Series in Global Nonviolence, and Lecture Series in Religious Traditions.
- **Publications Program:** The center publishes the International Journal of Gandhi Studies, and a series of publicly available online publications: Working Papers Series and Project

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- **Research Scholars Program:** This program brings faculty, post-doctoral candidates and advanced graduate students from outside the university in temporary residence to lecture, teach and work on their own research projects.
- **Student Internship Program:** The internship offers unique and diverse opportunities for undergraduate students who are interested in the center's work. The program has special appeal for those who wish to combine academic study with practical application and experience.
- **Engagement Program:** The center's engagement program includes the following: the summer camp, which prepares children to appreciate the value of nonviolence, the potential of nonviolent action to address conflicts, the value of social responsibility, the interconnected nature of human experience and the planet's natural environment as they participate in an eclectic blend of exciting activities; the worldwide drawing and painting contest, which fosters a culture of nonviolence and peace among children; and the Gandhi-King prison initiative, which introduces inmates to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence and the teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi that influenced King's vision.

Student Affiliate

The Gandhi Center is proud to offer support and encouragement to its student affiliate, Global Nonviolence Club, which has implemented several campus-wide events.

The King Library

The Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King Library at the Gandhi Center serves the needs of the center and its programs. The King Library is also open to researchers and the interested public. It is primarily a non-circulating library.

Gandhi Statue at JMU

The government of India has presented a larger than life-size bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi as a gift to the university in recognition of the work of the Gandhi Center. The statue was dedicated and unveiled on October 2, 2008, the International Day of Nonviolence and the birth anniversary of the Mahatma, by the Ambassador of India to the United States. The statue is the first of Mahatma Gandhi in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Gandhi Award

The Mahatma Gandhi Global Nonviolence Award is bestowed upon individuals with global recognition who believe humans everywhere are to be peacemakers, support nonviolence, love their enemies, seek justice, share their possessions with those in need, and express and demonstrate these beliefs in their words, life and actions. The Gandhi Award is given every two years. The inaugural award was given in 2007 to the Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu, 1984 Nobel Peace Laureate, South Africa.