

Creating Change within Oberlin College: Developing a Peace Studies Program

Colman McCarthy asks the question: *If peace is what every government says it seeks, and peace is the yearning of every heart, why aren't we studying it and teaching it in schools [and colleges]?*

- Colman McCarthy, *All of One Peace*, p. 12 (1992)

How often do you say, "I really wish Oberlin had _____," but don't continue to take the initiative to follow up on this desire and make it a reality? This ExCo is designed as a practicum for Oberlin students (and community members) on what it takes to create change and implement a desire as reality, focusing our efforts on the ultimate goal of developing a peace and global studies program at Oberlin. This goal is designed to expand upon the curriculum taught in the spring 2004 and 2005 ExCo's "We'd Rather Teach Peace" by extending their goals to the college level. Most work will be in-class, but participants will be responsible for some contact and research outside of class.

Week 1: Introduction, Course Goals, Teaching Peace

- Instructor and participants introductions, get to know one another, reasons for participation and visions of what will be accomplished.
- Overview of process.
- Discuss Colman McCarthy's article about the importance of non-violent education and how it applies to our endeavor.
- Each student will elect one current department at Oberlin to research and with which to establish contact; everyone will also choose a college that offers peace studies.
- Assignment: Review individual major documents found on the website and be prepared to discuss them the following class.

Week 2: Investigation of Majors and Concentrations

- Guest speaker from a recently established program who will give an overview and answer questions about that department's process in becoming one of the college's programs.
- Discuss what makes a major/concentration: what are its components and important facets of its design? How was this developed by individual majors?
- What are peace studies?
- Assignment: Look into the history of the development of your chosen department. You might begin making/furthering contacts with that department.

Week 3: Beginning Research

- Discuss our departments: how are their majors designed in terms of scope and requirements, etc.? Do they have any courses which could apply to peace studies? (If so, we will list them on the website.)
- Brainstorm how this program of study would differ from any other offered at Oberlin, what careers/further study students would then be prepared for, how strong the campus interest might be.
- Begin researching assigned college with a peace studies major.

Week 4: Outreach Research

- Report on any progress/observations on other peace studies programs.
- Research session: the ultimate goal is to have at least one contact with the program, be it a faculty member or a student, and a written overview about their program that can be accessed from the website, as well as used as a model for our own program.

Week 5: Further Research

- Report on any progress/observations on other peace studies programs or further progress with departments at Oberlin.
- Research session: continue working to develop an overview of other peace studies programs.
- Assignment: Meet with one faculty member of your selected department to discuss what courses they teach; if peace, reconciliation, or non-violence is incorporated into their course material and, if so, how; if not, how they would hypothetically incorporate it into this course or another course still within that department. You'll have the next week to finish this as well.

Week 6: Further Research

- Guest speaker from the Dean's office to give us an overview on how programs are proposed and established and answer any questions we might have.
- Continue to work on researching other programs and Oberlin's departments.

Week 7: Travel to Investigate Peace Studies Majors

- Talk to students, professors, deans, and career services about the peace programs.
- If possible, attend core curriculum class(es) for the major.
- Those participants unable to travel will be responsible for reporting on Oberlin's involvement in peace activism in non-academic programs, as well as any campus groups that could be interested in similar aims.

Week 8: Discussion and Reflection

- Discuss impressions of other schools' programs. This includes our visit to another program, but also the research each participant has collected about other peace studies programs.
- Also reflect on what we have learned about peace activism at other colleges and what is being done in Oberlin or has been done in the past.
- Mention the mini-conference and lay out a basic idea of what we want to accomplish, and how.

Week 9: Drafting a Proposal

- In groups, write (01) a fake program overview, as it would be found in the course catalog; (02) a rationale depicting the reasons why this major is necessary and beneficial to the college; and (03) a draft of our concentration proposal.
- Go through each document with comments and suggestions as a class.

Week 10: Informal Panel

- Meet with a panel of interested faculty contacts, etc., to informally present and discuss our proposal.
- Continue planning our mini-conference/presentation.

Week 11: Further Conference Planning

- Final conference/presentation planning and organizing.
- Review our proposal and make any necessary changes.

Week 12: Course Evaluation, Closing

- Either this date will be reserved for our mini-conference/presentation, or:
- Dinner together to discuss what was effective and not effective in our efforts. Course evaluations.
- Final presentation details.
- The presentation will take place the first day of reading period (Friday, December 16).