

APPENDIX

Peace and Conflict Studies Concentration Proposal

A concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies at Oberlin College would fill a gap in our curriculum and respond to considerable student interest by highlighting and reconfiguring existing courses to map out a course of study. It would thus add to the curriculum with little additional demand on faculty time or College resources.

Intellectual Rationale

Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) is an increasingly popular field offered to undergraduates at over 160 colleges and universities in the United States (there are over 450 undergraduate and graduate programs in the field worldwide). The field is multidisciplinary. It examines conflicts ranging from the interpersonal to the international, united by a common goal of understanding the causes and consequences of violence and seeking and critically evaluating a range of solutions to various conflicts. The approaches within this field are diverse. For example, conflict resolution, itself a growing field, uses mediation as a tool to attempt to transform potentially violent situations into ones of consensus or cooperation. Others in the field study how nonviolent methods can be applied strategically, not to avoid conflict, but as means to end oppressive situations (from the colonization of India to the rule of recent dictators such as Slobodan Milosevic). The field is also diverse in terms of the levels of analysis examined: these include understanding conflict and peace processes at the level of the individual, the group, the national and the international or transnational.

While informed by social theory and historical example, and by the critical examination of the causes of conflict and of peace, the various approaches united under PACS share an applied approach to solving the problem of violence. As the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung has argued, peace studies is needed to extend the theoretical insights of various disciplines to address the problem of violence in the same way that the study of medicine is needed to apply the insights of biology and other natural sciences to address the problem of human disease.

PACS has its own professional association, The Peace and Justice Studies Association, and there are some 60 journals dedicated to publishing research on the topic.

Why PACS at Oberlin

Historically Oberlin has been a leader among American colleges and universities in the emphasis it has given to the values of social justice and international understanding. A prominent feature of Oberlin College's Strategic Plan of March 2005 is the statement that "Oberlin's genius has always been bound up with the conviction that men and women can change their societies – and the world at large – for the better." Yet regarding peace and conflict studies, there is a gap in Oberlin's curriculum, and as a result it lags behind a growing number of colleges, including several of those in its peer-reference group, such as Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr/ Haverford, and Grinnell

A substantial number of courses that could fall under the rubric of PACS are scattered throughout the various departments of Oberlin College. However, there is no

pathway for students to select a course of study based on these existing courses. So far, the only way that students with interest in PACS could devote serious study to this field was to go through the laborious process of developing an Individual Major. Though a significant number of students have chosen this path, surely others have taken the easier route of selecting another academic discipline to learn what they could about conflict and non-violence. Still others, as prospective students, might have looked elsewhere for colleges with peace and conflict programs. Indeed, the Five Colleges website for Peace and World Security Studies encourages prospective students concerned about peace and world affairs to consider choosing a school with a peace studies program, and then lists the many such schools offering such a program. Needless to say, Oberlin is not on that list.

The number of students that have taken the effort to craft an Individual Major in PACS is only one indication of the strong student interest in this area of study. While strongly supported by the faculty group that has come together in support of the PACS concentration, the initiative springs from the support of a number of students (as well as members of the broader Oberlin community). Since spring of 2004 a series of ExCo classes have been taught concerning peace education in the public schools and the development of a PACS program at Oberlin College. The most recent ExCo class (fall of 2007) had about 30 participants from the College and community, and included guest lectures and discussions by seven Oberlin faculty. In February of 2007, members of the ExCo classes and other Oberlin students hosted a “Symposium to Promote Peace and Conflict Studies at Oberlin College,” designed to bring together various experts in peace education, and generate campus-wide awareness of the PACS proposal. The keynote speaker was renowned peace activist, columnist and scholar Colman McCarthy, and other speakers included PACS educators from Swarthmore and Earlham colleges.

Why a Concentration (and not a major)

The proposal for a PACS concentration is made with an understanding that there are already a large number of majors at the College, as well as considerable strain on faculty and other resources. A concentration in PACS, modeled roughly on the existing concentrations in International Studies and Cognitive Studies, would complement rather than substitute for a major. Its completion would be noted on the student’s final transcript along with majors, minors, and honors. The establishment of the concentration would not require any additional faculty resources, and little additional time on the part of faculty. Rather, the concentration would highlight already existing courses and configure them in a way that interested students could fashion a coherent body of study from them.

The proposed concentration would draw from a variety of already established departments – such as Anthropology, Comparative American Studies, Economics, Environmental Studies, History, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Religion, and Sociology. By bringing these varied disciplines into dialogue and collaboration, the concentration might have the additional benefit of bringing shared interests to the attention of faculty members in different departments.

What would a PACS concentration look like?

Students wishing to pursue the concentration would consult with a member of the PACS committee, and would file a declaration form with the committee chair.

The Peace and Conflict Studies Concentration would consist of introductory material, a series of electives, a capstone seminar, and practical applications through a required internship. Specifically, the concentration would require:

- Two core introductory courses (selected from a small group of designated "core courses" – see course list below) to provide a framework for the other studies in the Peace and Conflict area.
- Three additional courses, each from a different department, drawn from an approved list (see list below).
- A capstone seminar that would include individual research.
- An internship experience in the practical application of peace and conflict studies (which could draw on an impressive field of alumni involved in professional fields dealing with conflict resolution). This might be conducted over Winter Term.

Students completing a Peace and Conflict Studies concentration will develop:

a) an understanding of:

- the factors shaping human conflict, including oppression and injustice, and an understanding of the inter-relationship of those factors traditionally stressed by different disciplines.
- specific cases of conflict, including those arising on different levels -- interpersonal, community, national, and international – and the inter-relationship between conflicts on these different levels.
- the theoretical models, from various disciplinary fields, that examine conflict and promote social change, including theories of non-violence and just-war.
- the goals of conflict resolution, and the factors for selecting the means of conflict resolution in given situations.
- multicultural perspectives on conflict and conflict resolution.

b) skills:

- to relate and apply theories and models of conflict resolution to their major field of study, expected profession, and daily activities through mediation, political strategy or judicial methods.
- to be able to enter the professional field of conflict resolution, as well as other fields including education, law, diplomacy, journalism or politics, as well as further academic study in fields such as psychology or sociology.

c) opportunities:

- for study and practice of conflict analysis and conflict resolution through internships outside the Oberlin campus environment.
- for engagement with a broad network of scholars and practitioners in the area of conflict resolution, including students, faculty and alumni that would enhance the structure of the program.

List of Courses:

The following is a list of existing and relevant Oberlin College courses, which initially might comprise the PACS concentration. We anticipate the development of one or more courses at the core introductory and/or capstone level focusing on peace and conflict studies. One purpose of creating the concentration and a corresponding oversight committee would be to promote the development and integration of relevant courses.

Core Courses	Two required	
ANTH	278	Human Rights, Universalism, and Cultural Relativism
ENVS	101	Environment and Society
FYSP/Pol	188	Non-Violent Strategies of Conflict
FYSP/Relg	124	Seeing War and Peace through Religious Traditions
FYSP/Psych	102	Peace, Conflict, & Violence
POLT	120/121	Introduction to International Affairs/Relations
POLT	211	Revolutions

Intermediate Courses	Three required, each in a separate department	
AAST	219	Freedom Movement: Civil Rights & Black Power
CAST	311	Militarization of American Daily Life
ECON	209	Economic Development
ENVS	208	Environmental Policy
ENVS	291	Colloquium on Sustainable Agriculture
JWST/HIST	131	Jewish History from Biblical Antiquity to 1492
JWST/HIST	132	Jewish History from the Spanish Expulsion to the Present
JWST	234	Good and Evil: Ethics and Decision Making in the Holocaust
JWST	235	East European Jewry
HIST	226	World War II and the Making of the 20th Century
HIST	286	World War II in Asia, 1931-54
HIST	293	Dirty Wars & Democracy
HIST	294	US and Latin America
POLT	132	Explaining Social Power

POLT	209	Public Policy
POLT	239	Marxist Theory
POLT	216	Political Economy, Adv. Capitalism
POLT	225	International Organization
POLT	227	War, Weapons, and Arms Control
PSYC	204	Cultural Psychology
PSYC	218	Social Psychology
RELG	245	Modern Moral Issues in Religious Perspective
SOCI	254	Political Sociology
SOCI	271	Sociology of Law & Legal Instit.

Capstone Seminars	1 Required
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GAWS	407	Seminar: Picturing War: American Visual Culture, Militarization, and Crisis of Identity
HIST	357	Non-Violent Opposition to British Imperialism: M. Gandhi
PSYC	440	Seminar in Environmental Psych.
PSYC	430	Seminar Psychology of in Social Conflict
POLT	328	Seminar: Pirates, Priests and Protestors:

PACS faculty working group:

(While the names of individual members of a PACS oversight committee might change, we would aim to maintain the same diversity and representation from various departments.)

Stephan Mayer, Psychology

Stephen Crowley, Politics

Clovis White, Sociology

Michael Fisher, History

Baron Pineda, Anthropology

Shulamit Magnus, Jewish Studies/History

John Peterson, Environmental Studies

Ben Schiff, Politics

Cynthia Frantz, Psychology