



Every Step



Fall 2013

Wellesley College Peace & Justice
Studies Program Newsletter

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Welcome

This is the Fall 2013 edition of the Peace & Justice Studies Program Newsletter. This issue highlights some of the events that our program has sponsored this semester and showcases the profiles of some recent graduates. Early in the semester, our long-time co-director Victor Kazanjian left the college to become the Executive Director of the United Religious Initiative, an interfaith organization based in San Francisco, CA, which aims at ending religiously motivated violence and promoting cultures of peace. Susan Skeath van Mulbregt and Catia Confortini have been named co-directors while Larry Rosenwald is on sabbatical. While we were saddened by Victor's departure, he left us with a strong and growing program, for which we are immensely grateful. We write about some of the plans for moving forward with the Peace & Justice Studies Program on Page 2 of this newsletter. As usual, if you have questions or comments about particular stories, or suggestions for future issues, do get in touch with us.

Susan Skeath van Mulbregt and Catia C. Confortini
Co-Directors, Peace & Justice Studies Program

Moving Forward: Peace & Justice Studies Program Updates

By **Catia C. Confortini**

We are proud to announce some of the exciting changes developing in the Peace & Justice Studies Program! As many of you know, in October we had to say goodbye to Victor Kazanjian as he left us to lead the United Religions Initiative in California. Victor has been a part of the Peace & Justice Studies Program since 1993 and has coordinated the Wintersession in India trip since 1994. While we miss him greatly, we are very excited for him as he embarks on his new adventure.

With Victor's departure and Larry Rosenwald's sabbatical, I have joined Susan Skeath van Mulbregt as co-director of the program. I have been a professor in our program for the last four years and Susan has been on the Peace and Justice Advisory Board since its inception. Susan teaches in the Economics department focusing on Game Theory and teaching ECON 222 (Games of Strategy), which many of our students take as a part of their major.

Because of Victor's departure, this year's Wintersession in India trip has been cancelled and the program is not expected to offer a wintersession class until 2016. However, we are excited to be exploring new options for this class in both domestic and international sites. Since my arrival in 2010, the program has been restructured to offer four courses as part of our major: the introductory course in Peace & Justice Studies, a 200-level course in Conflict Transformation, a 200-level course with floating topics, and a capstone seminar. We are excited to announce the hiring of Dr. Michelle Cromwell as Visiting Associate Professor to teach our PEAC 204, Conflict Transformation course this spring. Dr. Cromwell comes to us from Regis College, where she holds the position of Associate Professor in the Politics and Social Justice Department. Our capstone seminar this year will be PEAC 388: Trauma, Conflict, and Narrative: Tales of



Catia C. Confortini



Susan Skeath van Mulbregt

Africa and the African Diaspora, team-taught by myself and Margaret Cezair-Thompson from the English Department (For more information see Page 8).

As many of you know, Alba Jameson, a long-time friend and supporter, passed away last year and many of her friends offered generous donations in her memory to the Peace & Justice Studies Program. We are pleased to announce that those donations will enable us to offer an annual student essay prize, which will be named in Alba's honor. More details about this prize, as well as other news from the generous class of 1945, will be forthcoming in the spring newsletter.



Negotiation Workshop

with Celia Cook-Huffman

By Lauren Boatwright '16

On November 20th the Peace & Justice Studies Program, with support from the Wilson Fund of the Committee on Lectures and Cultural Events, Environmental Studies, the Economics Department, the Education Department, the Political Science Department, Africana Studies, Amnesty International and Peace Coalition, sponsored a Negotiation Workshop with Celia Cook-Huffman. Professor Cook-Huffman is a Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College and the Associate Director of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict. Students in PEAC 104 and 259 as well as Environmental Studies students attended the daylong workshop.

Professor Cook-Huffman began by asking students to think about how they deal with conflict and to practice forming clear ideas of how they behave in conflict and why. The morning session explored the complexities of conflict and processes of negotiation; how can we engage and navigate the underlying issues and motivations that different parties hold? Students practiced identifying these issues and motivations and then focused on how to acknowledge them.

During the afternoon, students participated in a negotiation simulation focused on a domestic, environmental conflict. This simulation divided students into four actor groups; the town, environmental lobbyists, a lumber company, and the Forest Service. The goal of the simulation was to have the groups agree on the distribution of land to create a wildlife preserve. Each group sent delegates to negotiate between the group's desires and needs. Through inter- and intra-group negotiations, each group had to develop a set of goals and opportunities for compromise. The students "negotiated" for nearly two hours in an attempt to find multiple working solutions for their challenge. Many students found that this workshop helped them to understand their personal conflict styles, while also providing them insights on how actors' underlying motivations and resources affect their priorities and participation in negotiation.

Alum Profile

Rachel Nagin

Class of 2012

Food Justice

I proudly graduated in May 2012 as a Peace and Justice Studies major with a concentration in Urban Political Ecology. I was one of the lucky few employed after graduation. I joined the 19th Class of Emerson Hunger Fellows, a year long fellowship with an explicit anti-oppression lens designed to address US hunger and poverty by developing leaders through field and policy placements. The interdisciplinary and intersectional nature of the P&J major prepared me well for this fellowship and my continued employment at the National Family Farm Coalition.

For my field placement, I worked on the School Gardens Program of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona in Tucson. I assisted on four gardens and wrote a Tucson-specific School Garden Manual, which emphasized (resource-based) organizing within the school community. While working in the schools, I noticed that teachers were often resistant to and prejudiced against working with their schools' cafeteria staff. The cafeteria staff was usually entirely left out of planning the garden, didn't know the garden existed, or were never invited to see it. When the staff expressed their concerns about potential health code violations with the non-district approved compost collection system, teachers or garden coordinators often simply considered the staff to be barriers to the development of the garden. It seemed to me that some of the resistance was due to professional silos, but mostly it came from underlying racism and classism. My experience taught me how crucial it is for teachers to see their school staff as allies and support their needs too. Teachers often face constraints and barriers put in place at the district or state level. These are



Rachel making art at work



Rachel "the cat"



Tucson sunset



School garden

often the same institutional places where cafeteria staff is maligned.

My field placement, in an unexpected twist, led me to want my policy placement to focus on agricultural policy at large. I understood the value of school gardens and farm-to-school programs, but these are extremely constricted by established district/food service provider contracts, broader food pricing issues, and industrial/corporate influences that fund political candidates that write policies to privatize our public schools and hinder affordable food for everyone in our democracy. My policy placement with the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) has allowed me to further explore those issues and introduced me to land grabs. I knew that imperialism and colonialism were obvious examples of land and resource grabs. I had not realized that neoliberalism has found a way to legalize land grabs and hide them in private financial transactions. Organizations have researched and documented the issue internationally, but NFFC is the first to do so only in the US.

I think it's safe to say that my first job provided multiple examples of careers one can have or issues one can work on solving with a P&J major. Nonviolent direct action organizing works and, I am convinced, is the only way the US government will ever answer to the people of this democracy. I deeply appreciate that Peace and Justice Studies examines the world in what Elise Boulding called "the 200-year present" and demands we pay attention to our interconnectedness. P&J set me up to comprehend the local, national, and global implications of public policy and fostered a lifelong commitment to activism. I used to feel strongly that becoming a DC policy person would inhibit my activism or call into question my authenticity as a progressive, radical activist. After reflecting on both my fellowship experience and my P&J studies, I have come to believe that we actually need activists, grassroots organizers, and people whose knowledge comes from their lived experiences to be in positions of institutional power (institutions like governments, schools, the UN, foundations, etc.). We need so many more allies and champions in Congress who will actually be accountable to the communities they represent, who will lead and legislate from principles and an openness to listening to non-moneyed interests, who will help transform the US from within its most influential halls. We need people who believe in transformative power and justice to guide this country and our foreign policy.

So current P&J majors: be committed and take action on behalf of your cause and in solidarity with others. You will find your way - employment and peace building included.

Alum Profile

Moriah Smith

Class of 2013

Social Justice: Journeys through Education

Although I graduated from Wellesley this May, I have not yet come to terms with that fact as evident from my frequent visits back to Wellesley. While at Wellesley I was particularly passionate about studying education within the context of Peace and Justice Studies to learn how education can be used to eradicate social injustices such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious bigotry, among others. I applied my interests through several abroad experiences where I focused on how education perpetuates racism and how it can be used as a power in eradicating it, especially in the lives of African Indians, known as Siddis, and Afro-Brazilians. The ethnographic research that I conducted in India with Professor Pashington Obeng and during a semester abroad in Brazil was used in a senior research independent study with Professors Catia Confortini and Pashington Obeng. Through the Africana Studies Department I studied Women, Culture, and the Political Economy of Ghana with 20 other impressive classmates and after three weeks of working with distinguished professors, professionals, and classmates during the Albright Institute, traveled to Cape Verde for a summer. There I was able to learn more about my heritage as a Cape Verdean descendent and work with the Organização das Mulheres de Cabo Verde (a Cape Verdean women's advocacy organization) in their micro credit department. After graduating from Wellesley I spent a summer procrastinating on moving on from my undergraduate college student identity by intensively studying Portuguese during an immersion program at Middlebury



Moriah and her golden smile

College's Portuguese Language School. It was a great treat to study there and prepare for my next adventure in Brazil where I will teach English for a year as a Fulbright Scholar. Since my grant does not begin until February, I have been interning at two educational non-profits in Boston until the holidays in December. At Facing History and Ourselves, an organization that aims to end oppression through the instruction of history for high school and middle school students, I am working on the development of a text about apartheid in South Africa. In 2002, I graduated from the Steppingstone Foundation, an organization that prepares some of Boston's brightest elementary and middle school students for success in Massachusetts' best high schools and ultimately for college. There I also work as a Preparation Intern, help run the tutoring program, shadow a teacher, and remind the scholars often that if it weren't for Steppingstone I would not have ended up at Wellesley College. After my Fulbright grant ends next year I hope to do a teaching residency program such as, Boston Teacher Residency, and then study education for a masters or doctoral degree. In the long term, I hope to find a way for education to be the foundation in another civil rights movement to eradicate the ignorance and bigotry that sustains oppression. I hope to start that movement in my future classrooms.

Lecture Series:

Human Rights Across Disciplines: *Art, Healing, and Justice*

Co-written by A Bello '14 & Lauren Boatwright '16

This semester, the Peace & Justice Program, the Spanish Department, and Wellesley Centers for Women co-sponsored a series of lectures aimed at fostering conversations on human rights from different disciplines entitled *Conversations on Human Rights Across the Disciplines*. This year's focus on "Art, Healing, and Justice" brought together an exciting array of speakers, scholars, and activists documenting issues of local, national, and international human rights concerns, including gender non-discrimination, peace processes, and democracy.

The lecture series opened with "The Women of Calama: A Photographic Journey," an interactive talk given by social documentary photographer Paula Allen, and Human Rights Activist, Vicky Saavedra. They discussed their work in the North of Chile, where women continue to search for their missing loved ones. Next, Brooke Ackerly from Vanderbilt University spoke on "Human Rights and the Problems of Everyday Injustice and Global Responsibility." She explored historical conceptions of injustice and human rights and suggested guiding principles for responsible human rights work. Following, Dina Hayens, Professor of Law and the Director of the Human Rights and Immigration Law Project at New England Law-Boston, presented on "Client-Centered Human Rights Advocacy: Lawyers, Victims and Rescuers." She explored the dimensions of immigration law and the ethics of lawyering. On November 20th, Joy Ada Onyesoh, President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Nigeria, spoke on



Joy Ada Onyesoh speaking on November 20th

"Implementing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Nigeria." She presented the challenges and rewards of implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (the "women's resolution") at the local level. Our lecture series closed on December 5th with "The Healing Power of Rights," a talk given by Richard Mollica, Director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma. Dr. Mollica talked about the need and challenges of providing mental health services to survivors of mass atrocities and gross human rights violations.

"Art, Healing, and Justice" could not have been possible without the generous funding by the Annette Finnegan Fund of the Committee on Lectures and Cultural Events.

New Course Offering:

PEAC 388/ENG 388: *Trauma, Conflict, and Narrative*

PEAC 388/ENG 388:

Trauma, Conflict and Narrative: Tales of Africa & the African Diaspora

Assistant Professor Catia C. Confortini & Senior Lecturer Margaret Cezair-Thompson

This team-taught course explores the role of narratives in response to mass trauma, focusing on regions of Africa and African Diaspora societies. Drawing on the emerging fields of trauma narrative and conflict resolution, we will examine the effectiveness of oral, written and cinematic narratives in overcoming legacies of suffering and building peace. Topics include: violence in colonial and postcolonial Central Africa, the Biafran war, South Africa during and post Apartheid and Rwanda's 1994 genocide. We will also explore the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its impact on African-American and Caribbean societies. Types of narrative include novels, memoirs, films, plays, and data from truth and reconciliation commissions. Students will be exposed to trauma narrative not only as text but also as social and political instruments for post-conflict reconstruction.



Catia C. Confortini
(Left)



Margaret
Cezair-Thompson
(Right)

Alum Updates & Advice to the Class of 2014

Becky Reeve

Class of 2013

Since leaving Wellesley, I spent the summer working as a grants assistant at Prosthetics Outreach Foundation in Seattle, and am now living full-time in Bordeaux, France, teaching English to primary school students. My goals right now are taking time to breathe, reflect, and engage with the awesome kids I get to work with, all the while improving my French & further engaging with the academic community at Sciences-Po Bordeaux. Living life and loving it right now!

All of you seniors: follow your heart, and permanently delete the word "should" from your vocabulary. Think about what makes you happy, and follow that! You will thank yourself for it later!

MJ Friedman

Class of 2012

I'm living in JP and working for a job and life skills program at a day shelter in downtown Boston. I think my greatest "achievement" since my time at Wellesley has been mastering the E-chord on a ukulele. Cultivating a supportive community and finding a job have also been important personal successes for me.

In my last year at Wellesley, it felt important to me to appreciate the physical and intellectual space that I knew I would never have regular access to again. In the past year, it has felt important to me to find new ways to measure success. I'm sending lots of support to my 2014 P&J siblings. I will keep your class in my heart and mind often.

Abigail Friedman

Class of 2010

I am currently a third year law student at the University of Virginia School of Law. I will graduate in May and then head to NYC where I will be working as a tax attorney for Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. I worked at Skadden this past summer. I have done various "P&J type"

work while at UVA: I am the co-director of a pro bono project that works with migrant farmworkers to empower them to assert and protect their legal rights. I have also been involved with some alternative dispute resolution work.

Katie Recchia

Class of 2008

I teach students with severe autism and other exceptionalities in the highest-need schools in Brooklyn. It requires more advocacy, mediation, and peace work than you could ever imagine! If you get arrested for any kind of civil disobedience, work really hard to make sure your case is dealt with appropriately. My record was never expunged and it has been a consistent issue during application processes, and especially when working for the city. While you may think that you don't want to work anywhere that wouldn't have you because of your "politics," you may also want to go where you're needed -- and sometimes that turns out to be a place that looks twice at something overtly political.

Rebecca Pisarski

Class of 2008

I am currently a 7th grade math teacher at a culturally diverse middle school in CT. I focused on race relations within Peace and Justice Studies, so I realized that I wanted to go into education. I decided to work on social and racial justice by working in education, so I took 30 credits in math and received an MA of Teaching.

Current students, you'll figure out your calling, just listen to your gut and focus on things you are passionate about.

Karen Hernandez**Class of 2005**

Since graduating Wellesley as a Davis Scholar in '05, I have received my MA in Theological Research in Christian-Muslim Understanding ('07) from Andover Newton Theological School, as well as an MA in Sacred Theology in Religion and Conflict Transformation ('12) from Boston University School of Theology. My anthropological work includes working with women in the slums of Mumbai, as well as a short stint with Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank. I am currently writing a column with OnIslam in Cairo, Egypt, and publishing with other outlets such as State of Formation.

I advice you all to think outside the box and realize that there are so many things you can do with your knowledge. Don't limit yourself!

Diana Sands**Class of 2003**

I'm the Administrative Assistant for a small, national non-profit serving plaintiff's side employment lawyers (NELA) based in San Francisco. Those are the good guys who defend workers' rights in and out of court. I came to this career after several years in human rights advocacy finding that kind of work ineffective and unsustainable. I also survived Peace Corps in Tanzania. There's a much better, not-American service system that I try to guide people into called VSO International.

Currently I have time and space to do other unpaid work and things I enjoy. I'm part of a theater project/documentary/toolkit about child sexual abuse called Secret Survivors, I volunteer most weekends with the Prison Literature Project sending free books to prisoners across the US, and I am a mentor in a program for kids with incarcerated parents. I also enjoy puzzles, playing cards, pizza, aquatic aerobics, women's sports, and cooking - among many other things.

Carissa Wyant**Class of 2002**

I earned a degree in Religious Studies at Yale University. I'm now working on completing a PhD

at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. I work as a college professor, and teach courses in the Religious Studies and Peace Studies areas at Hamline University, the University of St. Thomas, and at several Minnesota State Colleges. I also write professionally as a journalist for Mint Press News, covering faith, race and social justice issues.

Words of wisdom? Follow your heart - I know it sounds corny, but it's worked for me!

Heather Miller**Class of 2001**

I am a Rabbi in Los Angeles. I serve three congregations, officiate at various life events, and teach at the American Jewish University in their Graduate Center for Education.

I am on the board of the Liberty Hill Foundation (a social justice organization funder) and, together with my Wellesley wife Melissa de la Rama '01, we have been named two of their 2013 Leaders to Watch. I am also involved in CLUE-LA: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice and have organized and participated in several delegations of interfaith clergy to advocate for a fair and just reform to immigration policy to Senator Feinstein's office and have been involved in many organizing efforts on behalf of the movement. I have spoken at an Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace Luncheon and have put together creative interfaith prayer services and other organizing efforts on behalf of animal rights, anti-death penalty work, no on Prop 8 organizing, anti-bullying, economic justice, education reform, environmental justice, and an awareness about the working conditions of hotel workers, car washers, nurses, and restaurant workers.

*"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song."
-Maya Angelou*



Fall 2013

Every Step

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Susan Lange, Administrative Assistant

As the new Administrative Assistant for the Peace & Justice Studies Program, I am looking forward to becoming part of this dynamic program. I hope you enjoy the newsletter, Every Step. If you would like to be featured in our spring 2014 issue or have any ideas, please contact me at slange2@wellesley.edu

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