



Every Step



Wellesley College Peace and Justice Studies Program Newsletter Fall 2018

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Welcome



In June 2018, Prof. Catia Confortini, Prof. Nadya Hajj, and Dr. Erin Konkle journeyed from Boston to South Bend, Indiana to attend a week-long pedagogical training camp in Peace and Justice Studies at Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. While there, we participated in new simulations for conflict negotiation, learned about cutting edge scholarship, and bridged connections with scholars from across the United States, Colombia, France, and Canada. The experience affirmed that our program is healthy and reflects contemporary trends in the field. We left with a plan to further connect and share our program's message with other faculty, students, and alumnae. On a personal level, the three of us journeyed there as colleagues but left as dear friends with a rejuvenated passion for the study of peace and justice. We are excited to share what we learned with the Wellesley College community.

Our program continues to grow- offering new places and courses of study! In fact, during Winter session 2019, the Peace and Justice Studies program will travel to India to study, both experientially and through the classroom, the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence. It promises to be an exciting and growth filled opportunity for students and faculty alike. Prof. Rosenwald and Prof. Confortini will be on the faculty team. We will offer a full report of the fun in our Spring newsletter. In Spring 2019, the major/minor will offer our introductory course, PEAC 104, PEAC 204 co-taught for the first time by Prof. Confortini and Prof. Hajj, PEAC 205 on Gender, War, and Peacebuilding, and, finally, a new senior seminar, PEAC 358, on Palestinian Israeli Peace Prospects.

One of our main hopes after attending the faculty camp at the Kroc Institute was to maintain our already strong and vibrant connections with our current and former students. Please don't hesitate to email us with updates that we might include in the Spring 2019 newsletter! We would love to feature you and your story. We are always inspired by the passion and commitment of our majors and minors!

Wishing you a peaceful New Year 2019!

Sincerely,
Nadya Hajj

Thoughts

As I write this letter, I am sitting quietly in my home on a peaceful lake in Natick with my beloved daughter, Leila, dozing on the sofa. Before she slept, I read her the classic children's book, "The Monster at the End of This Book," in which the goofy blue "monster," Grover, warns the reader to not turn the page lest they encounter a scary monster at the end of the book. Of course, we all laugh at the end of the story because we learn that Grover was, in fact, the monster and he wasn't so scary after all. Reflecting on the story, I noticed a temptation within me (perhaps, most of us?) to put the world on pause, to fully retreat inward, and to insulate our sweeties from the chaos and "monsters out there."

After all, the news has broken our hearts into a million little pieces. In just the last couple weeks, communities across America are mourning ever growing numbers of victims of mass shootings. On October 27, 2018 a gunman entered the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA and killed eleven Jewish worshippers during Shabbat prayers. On November 7, 2018, thirteen young people were enjoying an evening at a local bar in Thousand Oaks, California and were massacred by a gunman. One fully grasps the magnitude of global suffering when we consider that there are 70 million refugees living in a perpetual "protection gap" where basic services and protections guaranteed to them by the Geneva Convention are denied or underfunded by host states or aid agencies. It seems that there *really* is a big scary monster and it would be best if we all hid under the covers.

From a Zen Buddhist perspective there is compassion and awareness for this impulse to turn inward. The famed medical doctor, Buddhist, and meditation guru, Jon Kabat Zinn writes, "You might be tempted to avoid the messiness of daily living for the tranquility of stillness and peacefulness. This of course would be an attachment to stillness, and like any strong attachment, it leads to delusion. It arrests development and short-circuits the cultivation of wisdom." In other words, avoiding the monster "out there" prevents us from bearing witness to the suffering of others, from sharing their voices, and in the process, robs us of the profound ability to recognize how deeply embedded we are with one another. In retreating from the world, we forgo a pathway of mutual recognition and peace. In her poem eulogizing the late great feminist science fiction writer, Ursula K LeGuin, Naomi Novak shares how her mentor's work helped encounter the monster but never lose sight of one another or even, of hope. Novak writes, "*Calling back sometimes from the far side/Muffled by its bulk/And sometimes she put our hands on a tooth's serrated edge/But never without kindness/The teeth were there anyway/and she wanted us to know where we kept cutting ourselves/She never told the lie that the teeth were the only part that mattered.*" In our homes, in our classrooms, and in our mundane encounters, let us endeavor to remember that there is a monster but *never* lose sight of our deep connection to one another for fear of the teeth.

Nadya Hajj
November 16, 2018

The Emily Greene Balch Class of 1950 Summer Stipend

The **Peace and Justice Studies Program** offers an annual summer internship with a \$4000 stipend for students to carry out a project which analyzes the ways in which injustice is linked to conflict, or which encourages the study of the relationship between peace, justice and social change. Previous stipends have been awarded for internships at an environmental justice organization, a nonprofit program addressing childhood food insecurity in public schools, and many others.

We are looking for interesting and diverse proposals so do apply!

Applications are due **Thursday, March 1st, 2019 at 11:59pm**. They must be submitted through the Wellesley Career Education website.

Visit <https://www.wellesley.edu/careereducation/resources/peace-justice-studies-internship-program> for further details about the award, including application links.

Questions? Contact Larry Rosenwald (lrosenwa@wellesley.edu), Catia Confortini (cconfort@wellesley.edu), or Wellesley Career Education (internships@wellesley.edu)

“We are not asked to subscribe to any utopia or to believe in a perfect world just around the corner. We are asked to be patient with necessarily slow and groping advice on the road forward, and to be ready for each step ahead as it becomes practicable. We are asked to equip ourselves with courage, hope, readiness for hard work, and to cherish large and generous ideals.”

-Emily Greene Balch

In 1946, Balch was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. For Miss Balch, it crowned 30 years of pioneering for peace.

In May 1915, in the midst of World War I, a handful of American and European women, including Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, then a Wellesley College Professor, made an unprecedented journey through Europe to urge a concrete plan for attaining an early peace. As a delegate to the International Congress of Women at The Hague in the same year, she played a prominent role in the founding of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

-From *Improper Bostonian: Emily Greene Balch* and nobelprize.org



Emily Greene Balch Reflection: Culture as a Catalyst in Cuba

By the winner of the 2018 summer stipend: Alberta Born-Weiss '20

As I navigated the bureaucratic maze that is the process of obtaining a visa, valid insurance, and any accurate information about travelling to Cuba from the United States, I attempted to compose goals for my upcoming summer working with an artist collective in Havana. I struggled to concoct measures of success, because I had designed my impending adventure specifically for its incompatibility with the norms of my life in the States-- I knew that I didn't know what I didn't know about how Cuban citizens interact with the state's conception of justice and rights, a discourse that so complicates the paradigms of my own lived experience as citizen of a country in which we take for granted the state's role of abstention from public life and mere enforcement of the law. Ultimately, I landed at the José Martí International Airport with the objective of de-normalizing my assumptions and gaining a perspective that I could not have imagined when I first wrote my application for the Emily Greene Balch summer stipend.

My work at the *Colectivo Artístico Trance*, an interdisciplinary artist collective whose members use poetry, painting, sculpture, Popular Education pedagogy, spirituality, and many other creative mediums as tools for participatory local development, indubitably exceeded my goals. At the end of every day spent in the Collective's headquarters (in the garage of a once-glamorous Spanish-style white stucco house built by the family of one of the collective's members before they fled to Spain and "donated" the house to the State, which divvied it up into three units), my conversations, observations and work on a participatory-action-research diagnosis of the community had inverted my understanding of development, poverty, the relationship between culture and democracy, and the injustices of inaction.

For the members of the *Colectivo Artístico Trance*, the creative process is one that taps into Cuba's rich cultural wealth to intervene and interrupt the violent systems of racism, poverty, sexism and other forms of structural violence. Through the use of poetry, song, dance, paintings, "green map" cartography and spiritual practice, *Trance* intentionally and responsibly generates visibility, popular participation and income. *Trance's* holistic, transdisciplinary understanding

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Interning at the International Center for Transitional Justice

By: Madeline Wood '19



Over the course of the summer, I spent ten weeks in New York City working at the Headquarters for the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) as part of my Albright Fellowship. With the help of Peace and Justice Prof. Catia Confortini, I was able to secure an internship with their Program Department. As an international NGO/

think-tank the ICTJ works with on the ground activists in countries across the world to implement Transitional Justice, a concept familiar to many Peace and Justice students. The Program Department works directly with each country team to devise transitional justice-oriented responses to local human rights issues.

I assisted their Program Team with two major tasks: editing and conducting research for a UN Women training module and doing the original desk research for a potential program in the United States around racial injustice. The UN Women module was a project that the team had been working on for years. They had consistently pushed it back due to more pressing concerns, which seems to be common in the field of NGOs and nonprofits. The desk research was part of an emerging context in the United States that members of the organization had been interested in pursuing for a while but had limited funding to follow-up. The first step for engaging in a new context is doing “desk research,” which is basically finding out everything you can about the field and its actors from behind a computer screen. I did the best I could with what was available on the internet and then laid the groundwork for the “field research” to begin. Since they had my expertise and time as an intern, I was able to conduct the first round of research, present that information to the organization, and compile documents for future funding opportunities to support its propagation.

For the UN Women Transitional Justice and Gender Teaching Modules, I was part of a team of five people working on different facets of the Modules. I edited a previous intern’s work on the international legal framework mandating the inclusion of women in transitional justice efforts. For

the Emerging US Context Project, I constructed a mapping document of over 70 organizations that were working to address historical racial injustice in the US in order to inform current political action. From the working document I created, I was able to draft multiple supplemental documents that outlined when different movements used international inspiration to fuel progress and execute their goals, a summary of the ICTJ's past involvement in these movements, the momentum and gaps of the current movement, and a compiled analysis of the entire mapping project that contained my hypotheses for ways that the ICTJ could offer support in the future. I also presented a portion of this research at a staff Brown Bag Lunch, where I got to practice my public speaking skills in a real-world situation.

To supplement and fuel my individual US project, I helped my supervisor do research for her course at Columbia's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and designed slide shows and talking points for a couple classes. I also sat in on phone meetings with an activist from Harrisonburg, VA to assist with a potential local Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address urban renewal, Invisibilia (the NPR Podcast/ Show) to brainstorm possible ideas for a show around reconciliation, and a potential Truth Ceremony with the Drug Policy Alliance in New York state.

I was intensely interested in the work that I was doing and enjoyed the tasks that they gave me, but the highlights of my internship where I feel like I grew the most were in the weekly meetings with my supervisor, the bi-weekly staff meetings, and the meetings we had with partner organizations that were seeking support or consultation. It was incredible to see people working on and with the topics we talked about in my Peace and Justice Studies classes. Hearing all of my co-workers' expertise in action, I learned a tremendous amount from their practical knowledge. Since the field of transitional justice emerged in the late 1980s and the International Center for Transitional Justice was founded in 2000, the ICTJ has emerged as the foremost organization for transitional justice in the world. The organization as an institution contained an enormous amount of knowledge as well as the individual people I worked with. They have assisted tens of countries in the wake of large-scale human rights abuses and designed programs to help them recognize and learn from their past atrocities. Their institutional knowledge of the organization and the field proved animated my studies and passions from the Wellesley College classroom.

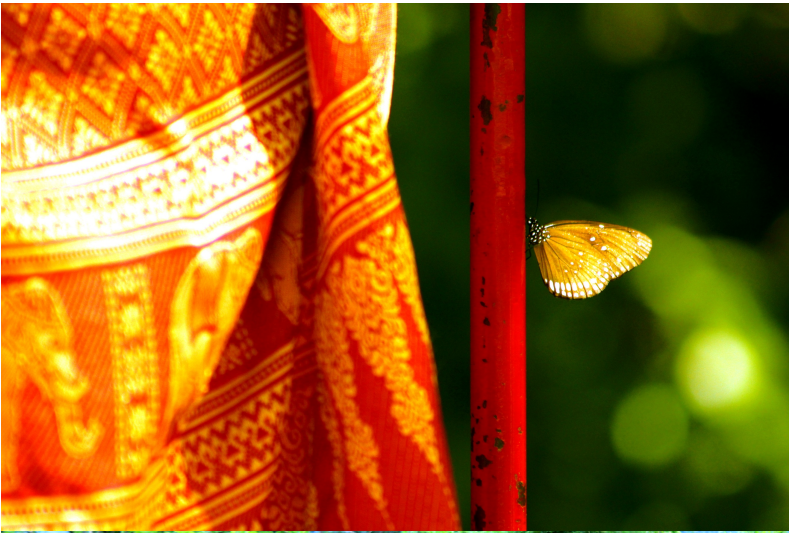
My goal going into the International Center for Transitional Justice was to continue to link my understanding of international politics and experiences working abroad to domestic problems. Often times we separate domestic and international relations, but this internship offered me the opportunity to learn from international activists and actors and apply my learnings to illuminate and creatively think about domestic issues. It was an opportunity to innovatively think about how to transform and heal conflict- a process at the heart of Peace and Justice.

Creativity as a Tool of Peacebuilding

All Photos By: Tara Oanh Kohli '21

These photos aim to shed some light on daily life in Vietnam and Cambodia, and the beauty that still exists amongst the poverty and tragic histories of the war.





A Reflection on the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

By: Charlotte Diamant '22

It was a cold Saturday afternoon, and I was standing at the corner of Howard Avenue and Dudley Street looking across a playground in the direction of a community center I knew was there but couldn't see. Our brief walking tour of the Dudley Street neighborhood had revealed community greenhouses, urban farming projects, playgrounds, and affordable co-ops where thirty years before there had been trash and vacant lots. The neighborhood was beautiful. But as Jose, one of our guides and neighborhood residents, detailed the center's history, his face clouded over, and he explained disappointedly, "They installed metal detectors at the entrance."

At that moment, I remembered my own high school had metal detectors in front of the library. I never knew why — and more importantly, I never bothered to *ask* why. To us, it was just another instance of unexplainable, bureaucratic nonsense on the part of my high school administration. Nobody imagined that blocking the entrance to an ostensible place of learning with metal detectors was problematic.

If you had asked me to explain our district's logic behind this decision, I would probably have cited "safety reasons". But as I was contemplating this, our other guide May began to speak about community safety. Safety, she claimed, was not about "carrying mace in your pocket" and locking your doors. You create safety by building a community based on trust,



meaningful relationships, and, sometimes, vulnerability. You create safety through opportunities for youth development and engagement. And when you trust your community enough to *not* carry mace, to *not* lock your doors and keep a hand on your pepper spray, the barriers to meaningful community development and relationship-building are removed. Those relationships are what make a community safe in the long-term — not metal detectors.

DSNI prompted me to confront my own understanding of safety and community growth. Why is our societal understanding of “safety” based on such a “needs-driven” model of community development — one that assumes the worst of a community and its residents, and judges neighborhoods not for their strengths but for their weaknesses, potential for violence, and crime-related statistics? Why promote an understanding that lays fundamental distrust as the groundwork for community development?

This mindset may not be ill-intentioned, but it is not insignificant. I walked in and out of my library for four years without realizing that by accepting this structure as the norm, I was inadvertently supporting a model of community development that presumed the worst of my school, my classmates, and my neighbors, solely because of my district’s demographic makeup. Why do we blindly accept this model? Why do we accept this generalized concept of “safety”? What happens if we dare to challenge these assumptions?

The next time I walk through a metal detector, I hope I am brave enough to ask.

“You cannot shake hands with a
closed fist.”
~Indira Gandhi



Editor: Anna Beyette
Advisors: Catia C. Confortini and Lizette Rodriguez-Ponce

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Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA
02481