



Wellesley College Peace and Justice Studies Program Newsletter Spring2021

"Revolution is not a onetime event." - Audre Lorde





Wellesley College occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary unceded lands of the Massachusett tribe. We recognize that we are on stolen land, and we extend our gratitude to the many Indigenous peoples who have rich histories here, including the Massachusett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuc nations, for their ongoing stewardship of the land. We commit to recognizing, supporting, and advocating for the sovereignty of the Indigenous Nations whose traditional territories are in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as well as for the many Indigenous people who live, work and study in Wellesley and Massachusett. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and commit to holding Wellesley College more accountable to the needs of the Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the language behind this land acknowledgement, which was written by the Native American Student Association at Wellesley.



What a year! These 15+ pandemic months have been hard, to say the least, on all of us. And, needless to say, they have been unevenly and unequitably harder on those peoples and communities already harmed by structural violence -- to use a Peace Studies term -- that is, by those structures, institutions, and systems that organize and distribute resources and power to some and not others. While the US and most other States in the Global North are slowly emerging from COVID-19 and returning to some semblance of normalcy (whatever the new normal may look like from now on), I am mindful of those places where

access to vaccines is limited to non-existent; those whose health systems have struggled to handle distribution; or those whose political leadership has failed to handle the contagion and spread of the disease. I am also mindful of the many other 'pandemics' that pre-existed COVID-19 and in many cases exacerbated it, in this country where I live, as in others: the pandemics of poverty, houselessness, mass incarceration, racism, sexism, environmental destruction....in our P&J language we see these as violences -- not natural or inevitable ills, but deliberate and avoidable harms, which we must strive to eliminate. Our students know and care about all these forms of violence, and they are passionate and committed to the hard and difficult work of realizing peace with justice. The profiles in this edition of the newsletter showcase some of their work. I am incredibly proud of what they were able to achieve, and even more so of the strength they have shown in continuing the work amidst the challenges of online classes and pandemic life. They have surmounted the isolation by staying close to each other in creative ways; they have doubled their commitment by joining in and standing beside each other in their struggles for justice. And they have engaged in rigorous study and self-reflection in order to realize more peace and justice in their lives and in those of others.

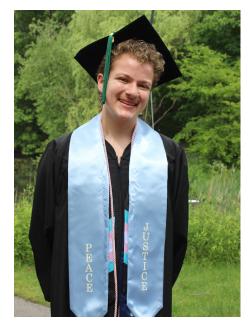
As in previous years, the Class of 1950 has provided much support for our students to pursue their work. Given that last year we were unable to award a stipend, this year we awarded the Class of 1950 Emily Greene Balch Stipend to two students -- both showcased here. In addition, generous gifts from the family and friends of beloved 1950 alumna Kathleen Dandy Gladstone, funded an additional student for a climate justice internship.

In this newsletter you will find descriptions of these and other students' work, including a thesis and an independent study project. A list and pictures of our P&J graduates concludes the newsletter. In our cards to our graduates, Nadya, Larry, and I wrote that our wish for all of them is a life full of hope. Our students, for me, already embody that hope.



Student Spotlight: Lauren Colodny, '21

For the experiential component (250H) of my Peace and Justice Studies major, I spent the summer of 2020 working on a campaign to re-elect Ed Markey to the U.S. Senate. On the campaign, I was tasked with organizing and coordinating the volunteers in my town and the surrounding towns in Western Massachusetts. A lot of the work that I did on the campaign was based around direct community outreach and the bulk of the campaign's mobilization efforts was focused on interpersonal relationships. This approach was ultimately successful for the campaign, but it led me to question whether it was actually effective in creating change for the people who dedicated their time to it. While working on the campaign was a rewarding experience for me, I felt as though electoral politics was not the most effective place to have spent my own time an energy, nor was it the most effective for the people in my immediate community.



To further explore some of these questions and to reflect more deeply on my own experience, I produced a miniseries of five podcast episodes. Across these episodes, I describe the time I spent working on the Markey campaign and I interview a couple of people with whom I worked on the campaign to get a better sense of what drew people to this line of work and what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of organizing around electoral politics. In these conversations, we were able to generate some new ideas of ways to continue to engage and mobilize communities after elections have ended. In another interview, I had the pleasure of speaking to Jose Barros of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Roxbury, MA. Jose described his own efforts with DSNI in pushing voter turnout in their local elections and he stressed the importance of being involved with politics at the community level. Across all of these conversations, a bigger picture emerged of community outreach and mobilization occurring beyond just electoral politics.

While listening to the podcast, I call on people to consider the same questions that I did- questions about the efficacy of electoral politics, the role that our immediate communities play in our organizing work, and how we can work together to create meaningful change for our communities.

To listen to Lauren's podcast series type the following link into your internet browser: https://soundcloud.com/user-908566539/sets/p-j-podcast



Student Spotlight: Anna Beyette, '21

This year I had the privilege of carrying out an honors thesis in the Environmental Studies Program entitled "Environmental Legacies of Colonialism: How Past Colonization Affects Current Social and Environmental Outcomes." Although my research was completed in the ES program, I found myself relying on conceptualizations of and questions about power structures learned in Peace and Justice Studies classes. With the support of a wonderful and diverse committee, including Professor Catia Confortini, I was able to apply my Peace and Justice Studies background and interests to delve more critically into environmental justice. Below you will find the abstract to my thesis.



Abstract:

The devastating history of colonization worldwide includes centuries of violence and conflict with lasting effects that continue to alter the social, economic, political, and environmental structures of post-colonial societies. Colonization affects the environment directly through historic exploitation of natural resources leading to environmental degradation. But colonial legacies also affect the environment via pathways of disenfranchisement such as economic disparities, social inequalities, and political turmoil. In this thesis I explore the potential ways in which variations in colonization may influence current environmental conditions as well as environmental concern in former colonies. I explore variations in mode of colonization, duration of colonial events, time since colonization ended, enslavement of colonized populations, environmental exploitation, population demographics, and educational institutions. I examine 77 case countries with differing histories of colonization, 19 of which have never been colonized.

Beyond its historical impacts, colonization and its on-going legacies have shaped the world we live in. Countries that have been colonized have lower levels of income equality, weaker structures of governance, and worse environmental conditions today than those that have not been colonized. Colonial legacies potentially affect environmental condition both directly as well as through current governance structures and levels of income equality, which are both shaped by variations in colonization and have potential to affect environmental outcomes. Legacies of colonization will continue to affect structural and environmental outcomes in modern society until we actively address them in our environmental and equity solutions.

To read Anna's thesis visit the Peace and Justice Studies website at the link below: https://www.wellesley.edu/peaceandjusticestudies/research



The Power of a Peace and Justice Studies Major Alum Spotlight: Nedda Bozorgmehri '20



During my sophomore year at Wellesley, I took PEAC 104 with Professor Catia Confortini, an introduction to the study of conflict, justice, and peace. I was curious to delve deeper into the field of peacemaking and conflict resolution. Within the first week of class, we explored foundational concepts like structural violence, conflict, and peace. During the lively class discussions, Catia encouraged us to draw connections between our assigned readings and experiences, to build upon our classmates comments, and to ask thought provoking questions.

There was one class discussion in particular, that I'll never forget. It started with a video about Zainab Salbi, an Iraqi-American women's rights activist, humanitarian, and author. Salbi described her experience growing up during the Iran-Iraq war, the challenges she faced and how she overcame them. Her story immediately resonated with me. In fact, it was strikingly similar to one I had heard before. My mother grew up in war-torn Iran, and would share stories about the hardships she experienced, and how she persevered. In their profound stories, both my mother and Salbi had described moments of collective power, community building, and care amidst the conflict. These were two women, on opposite sides of the same conflict, who shared similar experiences. Although both nations were at war, that didn't necessarily mean the individuals on each side were in conflict with one another. In fact, these stories illustrate how in times of conflict, individuals on both sides, are making an effort to care for themselves and their families, demonstrate compassion, and build peace from the ground up. Realizing how these two seemingly disparate individuals, have so much in common, was eye-opening. It revealed the importance of setting aside our differences, and focusing on what unites us. This is one example of the many profound discussions that I've experienced while studying peace and justice at Wellesley.

After that class, I went to Catia's office hours and we continued the conversation over a cup of tea. It was an exciting moment in my Wellesley journey where I decided to double major in Peace and Justice Studies, as well as Economics. Over the years, I continued to engage in riveting discussions that not only broadened my worldview but also taught me skills that I use in my day to day. I took a variety of interdisciplinary peace and justice studies courses that explored topics of public health, engineering and social justice, religion, and education. I learned about the broad applications of peace and justice, and how the field intersects with nearly all disciplines and aspects of life.



During another office hours session, I remember Catia telling me, "the Peace and Justice Studies major teaches you how to think, not what to think." That is certainly true. The major has taught me so much more than just "peace" and "justice"-- it's taught me how to think creatively, build connections, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

These invaluable skills have continued to help me in my professional endeavors. For example, during a job interview, I spoke about how my Peace and Justice Studies major has really influenced my day to day. It's taught me how to understand other's interests and needs, navigate difficult conversations, solve challenging problems, engage in authentic listening, and much more. Each of these skills are applicable to our personal and professional lives.

I would encourage all Wellesley students to explore the field and take at least one Peace and Justice Studies course. Whether or not you choose to major, that course will help you develop fundamental skills that will influence your future academic, personal, and professional goals.

And when it comes to searching for an internship or a job opportunity, I would encourage you to trust your gut, follow your heart, and stay true to yourself. Search for opportunities that excite you, and spark your curiosity. Keep an open mind and try new things. Regardless of the field you choose to enter-- whether it's law, or social justice, or business, or the arts, or anything else really-- the Peace and Justice Studies major, and your Wellesley degree, will be beneficial. Peace and Justice Studies concepts permeate all disciplines. You will be equipped with the necessary skills to make a positive impact in whatever career path you choose.

Furthermore, for any career path you choose there are creative ways to continue incorporating your passion for social justice. For example, I currently work in higher education communications, and I've had the opportunity to write press releases about social justice topics, spearhead accessibility initiatives, and foster collaboration and team building. There are also many other ways to connect with peace and justice topics in addition to your career, through volunteer and extracurricular opportunities.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Catia, and all professors of Wellesley's Peace and Justice Studies Program with whom I've had the pleasure of learning with. Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and support. You all have inspired me, and I hope my story will inspire current and future Wellesley students.



Emily Greene Balch Class of 1950 Awardees Olivia Feldman, '22

I have been working with Justice 4 Housing doing communications work. My job is to be in charge of creating accessible infographics, media campaigns, and other ways of spreading information in an accessible format to let people know our services are free and available to help appeal their public housing rejections. I also have been managing a group of other students to create informative content about COVID, vaccines, and how to help those incarcerated in the COVID era. Moreover, I help to publicize and get others involved in Justice 4 Housing efforts in conjunction with Mass Bail Fund to bail out people



from Nashua Street Jail and provide them with PPE, information, and basic necessities. I have contributed to get our bill, An Act Relative To Housing For All, talked about in sources from the Boston Globe to the Wellesley News (sponsored by our own Rep. Liz Miranda '02!). I have also been working on the Hands-On Defense program, which is focused on eviction appeals and educating our community on the harms systems of power like the public housing authority (PHA) cause in predominantly communities of color. In my communications capacity, I work to tell the stories of those Justice 4 Housing has helped through our programs and tell the stories of those we are currently fighting for. We are currently working on a campaign to secure housing for a father to be reunited with his son, who is now in foster care until he has a stable living situation. I have been helping to create and spread petitions and letter campaigns to get the Boston public involved and fighting for our community's access to housing. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved with Justice 4 Housing and the fantastic work of our founder Leslie Credle, you can check out our website at justice4housing.org. The program is founded and run by a formerly incarcerated woman who saw many of her friends suffer while trying to find housing after being released. She wanted to ensure that housing trauma wasn't continual for others in her communities and that people are granted or get to keep their housing. I believe that housing rights and housing justice are crucial to creating a better world that cares for all people in our communities. It is impossible to develop caring communities when we do not have housing for everyone.



I want to work to change public attitudes by working on information campaigns about the criminalization of housing and helping people access information and legal services to ensure they are provided or keep their housing. Public housing is criminalized, wherein public housing applications can be denied if you have any sort of "criminal record." This means that those who have a record are essentially cast onto the street and into shelters if they don't have enough money to access private housing services, which people often do not. It also means that if you have a loved one with a record, they cannot live with you as it could put your housing in jeopardy, and the entire family can be evicted from their housing. This is a massive issue as it is tough to be "law-abiding" while you are forced onto the streets with little to no support. The idea of housing first is very centric in this organization. It is proven by many studies that to create stability in one's life and be able to afford food and get steady employment, people require safe and permanent housing. Additionally, since many people on parole are required to pay for their services such as drug testing, monthly supervision fees, electronic monitoring costs, and other one-off fees, many people are reincarcerated simply because they stop parole programs because they cannot pay for them. It is the literal criminalization of poverty. When people don't have homes, cannot gain steady income, and therefore cannot pay fees necessary to stay out of prison, how are we supposed to lower recidivism rates? Accessible and permanent housing is foundational to stop the recidivism cycle and help make reentry possible.





Sumaiyea Uddin, '24

Sumaiyea is pursuing an internship with the Comprehensive Injury Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin. During this 8-week long internship Sumaiyea will:

- 1. Increase knowledge of violence as a public health issue
- 2. Increase knowledge pertaining to Milwaukee's efforts to address violence as a public health issue through its Office of Violence Prevention, 414 LIFE program and Blueprint for Peace
- 3. Assess the existence and infrastructure of state-level injury and violence prevention programs and Offices of Violence Prevention including but not limited to their structure, staffing, budget, programming, and legislation.
- 4. Research and report on best practices for culturally response suicide prevention and intervention programs/approaches for youth 17 and under.





Sophia Pechaty, '22

Inaugural Awardee of the Kathleen Dandy Gladstone '50 Internship in Climate Crisis Solutions

Hi everyone! I'm Sophia (she/her), a rising senior and a Peace and Justice Studies major. This summer, I've been honored to receive the Kathleen Dandy Gladstone funding to continue my work for the Sierra Club North Star Chapter as a volunteer on the Stop Line 3 team.

Line 3 is a pipeline currently under construction across northern Minnesota that will carry tar sands (the most hazardous type of crude oil) through hundreds of the state's precious lakes, streams, and rivers. It directly endangers the headwaters of the Mississippi River, and Lake Superior, which contains 2% of the world's fresh water. Line 3 is being built through treaty-protected lands, against the wishes of the Indigenous people living there.



Enbridge Energy, the Canadian corporation building Line 3, is responsible for the largest inland oil spill in the U.S., right here in Minnesota. The outcome of this fight will set a powerful precedent for the protection of Indigenous treaty rights, and send a clear message to the fossil fuel industry.

This summer, we're shifting our focus away from local government to pressure the Biden administration, which is more likely to revoke essential permits Enbridge needs to continue construction. In addition to ongoing legal battles, we're going to be supporting large actions to draw national attention to this issue. We kicked off with the Treaty People Gathering earlier in June that set the tone for the summer by bringing more than 2,000 people from around the country to the Indigenous-led frontline resistance camps along the construction route. As part of my work, I'll send out weekly emails with updates and volunteer opportunities, manage the chapter's Line 3 content on social media, and help organize and promote events. Line 3 is officially more than halfway built, and gaining national support will be crucial in the next few months. As we wait for court decisions on several lawsuits, it's difficult to say exactly what the summer will look like, but this summer is going to be a critical moment as we fight corporate power with grassroots power.

To learn more, check out @HonorEarth, @GiniwCollective, @MN350, and @SierraClubMN on Facebook. (And of course, please get in touch with me if you're interested in being involved.) Thanks!



Fall 2021 P&J Courses Preview



PEAC 104: Introduction to the Study of Conflict, Justice, and Peace

An interdisciplinary introduction to the study of conflict, justice, and peace. The course engages students in developing an analytical and theoretical framework for examining the dynamics of conflict, violence, and injustice and the strategies that have been employed to attain peace and justice, including balance of power, cooperation, diplomacy and conflict resolution, law, human rights, social movements, social justice (economic, environmental, and race/class/gender), interpersonal communication, and religiously inspired social transformation.

PEAC 206: Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences

This is an introductory course for students interested in using qualitative methods in their research and studies. By qualitative methods, I mean methods that involve small numbers of intensive observations, and that do not rely on statistical tests for drawing causal inference. The course is designed to help students develop proficiency in the use of qualitative methods in two respects. The first is to understand and be able to articulate assumptions about empirical reality and arguments about knowledge production. Next, the course will address practical considerations by helping students develop basic knowledge of principal techniques used by qualitative researchers like: navigating the IRB process and ethics of research, conducting in depth interviews, engaging in participant observation, and tracing archival and historical research.



PEAC 207: Schools and Society

Why does everyone go to school in the United States? How does the culture of a school shape the learning environment, and why do school cultures vary? Why do some students learn more than others? How do schools perpetuate inequalities along lines of class, gender, and race? How does the "hidden curriculum" shape the educational experiences of students? How does the US school system compare to the education systems of other countries? What makes it so hard to bring about change in schools? Questions like these drive this course. This course is an introduction to the sociology of education, broadly exploring the role of education in American society. The course will cover key sociological perspectives to education, including conflict theory, functionalism, and human and cultural capital. Topics will include schools and communities, the role of teachers and students, educational inequalities (including tracking and measures of achievement), school violence, and school reform.

"History isn't something you look back at and say it was inevitable, it happens because people make decisions that are sometimes very impulsive and of the moment, but those moments are cumulative realities." - Marsha P. Johnson



Fall 2021 P&J Courses Preview

PEAC 215: Understanding and Improving Schools



In this course students will engage with a spectrum of historic and contemporary school reform efforts across different contexts in the United States. Making use of a diverse array of texts from articles to podcasts and videos, students will struggle with both the promise of education as a tool for remedying inequalities and the stubborn reality that too often schools reflect and reproduce injustice. The structure of the course session and activities prompts students to learn about and experience alternative educational possibilities. Working in groups, pairs, and as individuals, students will explore scholarship and cases in educational anthropology, sociology, history, and critical theory, while questioning the purposes, processes, and products of schooling. Central to the course is the community students create with the instructor for mutual learning support and debate. All members of the course are engaged in a learning stance that centers a discipline of hope and engages with the proposition that communities can organize their own struggle to define and demand a humanizing and liberatory education. Students also have multiple opportunities to explore their own educational experiences and design their own research or educational initiatives

PEAC 217: Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

How do Arab-Islamic history and culture shape politics in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa? Why is the Arab world-despite its tremendous oil-wealth-still characterized by economic underdevelopment and acute gaps between rich and poor? How have the events of September 11 and the U.S.-led "war on terror" affected the prospects for greater freedom and prosperity in the Middle East in the future? What do the 2011 revolts mean for the existing regimes and prospects for democracy? These are some of the questions we will examine in this course. In readings, lectures, and class discussions, the analysis of general themes and trends will be integrated with case studies of individual Arab states.



PEAC 219: Social Inequality: Race, Class, and Gender

This course examines the distribution of social resources to groups and individuals, as well as theoretical explanations of how unequal patterns of distribution are produced, maintained, and challenged. Special consideration will be given to how race, ethnicity, and gender intersect with social class to produce different life experiences for people in various groups in the United States, with particular emphasis on disparities in education, health care, and criminal justice. Consideration will also be given to policy initiatives designed to reduce social inequalities and alleviate poverty.



Fall 2021 P&J Courses Preview

PEAC 220: Epidemics and Pandemics: Biopolitics, and disparities in historical and cultural perspective



The course will examine epidemics and pandemics and how they shape society and culture. It will explore catastrophic disease events such as the 4th century BC Ancient Greek plague, the Black Death of Medieval Europe, the European infectious diseases that killed native populations of the Americas, the Spanish flu of 1918, the AIDS/HIV epidemic in the late 20th century, and the present-day coronavirus pandemic. Key questions that will guide the course are: 1. Who holds the biopolitical power to guide the population through the danger of widespread morbidity, and how is this power used and/or abused? 2. What kind of socioeconomic, gender, ethnic ,and racial disparities are perpetuated and constructed in times of disease? 3. How do individual political entities cooperate and coordinate in their efforts to curtail disease? 4. How is the rhetoric of "war" employed to describe epidemic and pandemic diseases? 5. What are the effects of actual war, violence, and genocide that often follow epidemics? 6. What are the uses and the limitations of international public health organizations in addressing pandemics?

PEAC 240: U.S. Public Health

A quarter century ago the Institute of Medicine defined the work of public health as "what we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy." Historically rooted in a commitment to social justice, U.S. public health is now renewing this commitment through 1) an epidemiological shift to examine the social, economic, and political inequities that create disparate health and disease patterns by gender, class, race, sexual identity, citizenship, etc., and 2) a corresponding health equity movement in public health practice. This broad-ranging course examines the debates shaping the above as well as the moral and legal groundings of public health, basic epidemiology, and the roles of public and private actors. Highlighted health topics vary year to year.



PEAC 261: Civil War and the World

This course examines the American Civil War, one of the central conflicts in US history, by placing it within the broader context of the making of the modern world. The course will explore the roots, consequences, and experiences of the war—the long history of slavery and emancipation, territorial expansion and industrialization, and the everyday experience of modern warfare. The class will do so by considering those events through the lens of global history. We scrutinize the political upheavals around the world that gave broader meaning to the Civil War; the emergence of modern weaponry and tactics and their consequences; and the development of the nation-state and colonialism, which resulted in new forms of governance and coercion that emerged in the wake of emancipation.



Fall 2021 P&J Courses Preview

PEAC 304: Seminar: Nonviolent Direct Action in Theory and Practice

A wide-ranging study of nonviolent direct action, in theory and in practice, as a technique and as a way of life. It begins with discussion of some classic and modern theories of nonviolent direct action but also some modern critiques of it. It then turns to a selection of classic case studies, among them labor movements, women's rights movements, India and Gandhi, the American Civil Rights Movement, campaigns in Europe and Latin America against authoritarian regimes. It then expands its range, looking at how nonviolent direct action has been deployed in campaigns of environmental justice and economic justice, and making space to consider whatever campaigns of nonviolent direct action are going on at the moment at which the course is being taught (e.g., in the United States today the work of Black Lives Matter).



PEAC 388: Trauma, Conflict, and Narrative: Tales of Africa and the African Diaspora



This 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 after 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 as a social and political instrument for post-conflict reconstruction.



Congratulations to the Class of 2021 Peace and Justice Studies Majors and Minors!



Anna Beyette



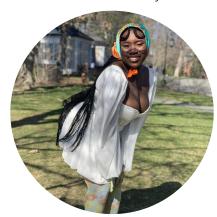
Lauren Colodny



Jhenna El-Sawaf



Lauren Gedney



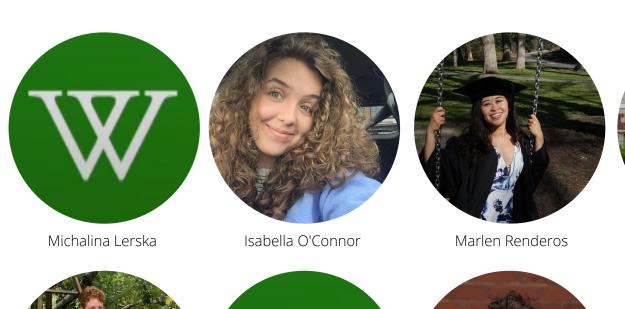
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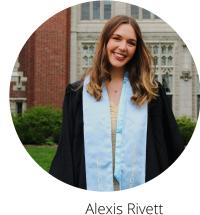


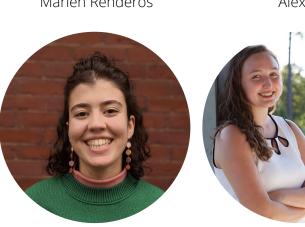
Madison Lee



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Studies Majors and Minors!









Violet Sulka-Hewes

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Vei Vei Thomas

Hanan Traiba

Caroline Witten

