

Peace and Conflict Studies Program: Preliminary Goal Statements February 2002

Integrated Goals/Mission Statement:

The Peace and Conflict Studies program focuses on the ways in which conflicts within and between individuals, groups, and societies are created and perpetuated, and the possibilities for transforming these conflicts into processes beneficial for human development. Students will explore the nature of peace and how it is created and maintained; the necessity of conflict for human development and its relationship with human nature; and what a “just social order” might look like without destructive conflict.

Students will achieve a number of goals. They will gain a comparative analytic understanding of how conflicts and peace are created and perpetuated in cultures around the world. Students will also learn how to detach from and explore their actions and beliefs in order to understand how these may contribute to solving or exacerbating conflicts. Students will also learn to see in the world around them the possibilities for working to end conflicts and to live peacefully with others.

PCON courses will focus on a variety of levels of social life, including the individual, interpersonal, intergroup, and national and global spheres, and will provide students with intellectual tools for understanding conflict and practical tools for mediating or eliminating conflicts and acting in accordance with a carefully reasoned vision of a just world. Course pedagogies will further the intellectual goals.

Thematized Goals:

General pedagogical goals applying to the individual, interpersonal, intergroup, and societal levels of analysis

1. Explore the nature and causes of peace and conflict
2. Consider what a world without conflict might look like, whether or not some kinds of conflicts are necessary for further human development, and whether conflict is intrinsic to human nature;
3. Explore whether peace is intrinsic to human nature, and what conditions generate peace;
4. Understand processes, ideas, belief systems, and concrete actions that facilitate conflict resolution and promote peace.

Program Goals:

Comparative and analytic understanding: To facilitate development of the analytic tools needed to understand the nature and processes of peace and conflict through comparative, multidimensional analysis at different levels of social life (micro, meso, macro), and the recognition of the comparative benefits of mechanisms for managing peace and conflict as reflected in cultures around the world.

Reflexivity, responsibility, and action: To help students detach from and explore their actions and belief structures and those of their social groupings; to help students understand the “chain of responsibility” that binds them to other humans around the world; and to help students see the possibilities for concrete individual and collective actions that come about as a result of this engagement with the world around them.

“Leading by example”: To help students envision the possibilities for managing peace and conflict by offering them a curriculum and an educational experience that *is what it teaches*; to enable students to participate in a collective experience of exploring other modes of personal and social organization.

Practical skills: To help students develop practical skills in mediation, conflict resolution, and group transformation to facilitate both personal growth and employment opportunities in the professional world.