



Will work for peace

For graduates of peace studies programs at Catholic universities, the career track can lead to all kinds of interesting places.

HEATHER GRENNAN GARY

In her first job out of college, Erin Hivner has been able to do something many recent grads never get a chance to do: put her major to work. No, she didn't study engineering or accounting or education, majors that lead directly to jobs in their fields. Hivner graduated in 2008 from Ohio Dominican University in Columbus with a major in peace and justice and a concentration in nonviolent conflict resolution.

When people ask what she majored in, "Usually I have to repeat myself several times," says Hivner, and she still gets blank stares and puzzled looks from many people. When she tries to explain, "Often I feel like I'm speaking another language, searching for words the person will recognize. I'm really trying to describe peace and justice in a way that excites people and opens their minds to new ways of seeing the world and solving conflicts."

HEATHER GRENNAN GARY is a contributing editor at U.S. CATHOLIC.

As a member of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a one-year program that focuses on eliminating poverty, Hivner is working as the volunteer and donations coordinator at the YWCA Family Center, a temporary emergency shelter for families in Columbus. She's found the lessons she learned at school to be borne out in her work: "The best way to see peaceful change in the world and in other people is to treat them with respect and dignity," she says.



Erin Hivner

When her year of service is up, Hivner hopes to stay on as paid staff at the center or work for another nonprofit in Columbus. Before she discovered the peace and justice program at ODU, she says, "I knew I wanted to work for change in the world. I just didn't know how. My major changed my whole life."

Hivner is in good company, according to Julie Hart, one of her former professors. Hart, a sociologist and peace scholar and activist, has been teaching peace studies for 15 years and sees many positive traits in her students. "Students who choose this direction typically have a well-integrated faith, and this is a real calling for them—when they hear there's a major that matches up with their passion, they're very excited about it." Plus, she adds, "The field tends to attract really strong students, and that's a treat."

Ronald Pagnucco, chair of the peace studies department at the College of St. Benedict-St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, agrees. "Some of them are the most intelligent students I've seen anywhere," he says. Additionally, "Our students have a strong values orientation. They're in peace studies because they're really interested in working for peace and justice, not just in getting a job."

Peace studies programs (and similarly named programs in justice and conflict resolution) have multiplied in the past six decades, from the first one in 1948 at Manchester College, a Church of the Brethren school in Indiana, to more than 215 across the United States. Students are able to major, minor, and earn a certificate in the field, and a small number of schools offer peace studies graduate programs (see sidebar on page 14). Because it's such an interdisciplinary field—involving political science, sociology, history, economics, and theology, among other disciplines—graduates of peace studies programs go on to a wide variety of jobs.

"Peace studies can qualify a person for many, many things," says Heidi Tousignant, director of faith formation at Guardian Angels Church in Oakdale, Minnesota.

Tousignant should know: As a driving force behind establishing justice and peace studies as a major at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1991, she's seen her classmates and other justice and peace alumni of UST go on to law, medicine, counseling, teaching, ranching, politics, and church work. Others have gone to work for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including the American Refugee Committee, the Organization of American States, and the United Nations. Still others in recent years have gravitated toward work with Latino immigrants and the environment.

Here's a sampling of some of the ways peace studies graduates have put their degree to work.

A volunteer year

Many recent peace studies graduates, like Hivner, spend a year or two volunteering with programs such as the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Catholic Relief Services, or other religiously affiliated programs. Christopher Albanese, a classmate of Hivner's who graduated from ODU in 2009, is also a member of AmeriCorps VISTA, serving as community and faith relations coordinator for Honolulu Habitat for Humanity.



Christopher Albanese

The transition from classroom to full-time work can be challenging, as Albanese has experienced. "I was just so excited to have learned such amazing material from such amazing professors that I hoped I could use every bit of it

to save the world," Albanese says with a laugh. "Fortunately, being able to think critically and closely with a wide lens, two aspects of a liberal arts education, helps me in my job at Habitat for Humanity."

Albanese knows he wants to return to graduate school when his AmeriCorps term is done, and he knows he still has a lot to learn about social justice and social change. "I could not have seen myself studying anything else," he says. "This field has changed the way I look at, think, and feel about the world."

Commerce for a cause

When he was at the University of St. Thomas in the early 1990s, Stephen Bauer combined his entrepreneurship major with a justice and peace studies minor, which confounded more than a few of his classmates. "People saw these two fields

as completely separate," he says. "But it seemed to me very natural to put them together."

He's now a coffee trader and co-managing director of Paragon Coffee

in White Plains, New York, a wholesale buyer and seller of coffee beans that handles millions of pounds of coffee each year. Paragon doesn't deal only in fair-trade certified coffee. "It's not the

most profitable way to go," Bauer says. But he recognizes certain non-monetary benefits to Paragon's business strategy. "There's fair trade, but there's also fairer trade and improved trade," he says.

A higher degree of peace

While most peace studies programs are at the undergraduate level, at least 76 schools worldwide offer graduate programs. Among Catholic schools in the United States alone, there's amazing variety, including Duquesne University's graduate certificate in conflict resolution and peace studies; Georgetown University's master of arts in conflict resolution; Catholic Theological Union's M.A. in justice ministry; and the University of Notre Dame's Ph.D. in peace studies. These programs often draw students who already have considerable peacebuilding experience.



Christopher Yanov

Christopher Yanov received his master's degree in peace and justice studies from the University of San Diego in 2003. In 2001, after several years of doing youth ministry and outreach to gang members, Yanov started Reality Changers, a San Diego nonprofit that provides academic support, scholarships, and faith-based leadership training to disadvantaged inner-city youth to help them reach college.

He enrolled at USD's Kroc School of Peace Studies (KSPS) shortly after because he wanted to learn practical skills for conflict resolution. Instead, he found the program much more theory-based.

That doesn't surprise Holy Ghost Father William Headley, dean of KSPS. "If there's a common thread among our students, it's that they largely see peace and justice studies as an applied discipline," he says. "These are people who want to put what they learn to work."

Today Yanov is still with Reality Changers, which has expanded rapidly and has raised more than \$4.2 million in scholarships for the program's graduates. He also has a greater appreciation for what he learned at KSPS: "When people see what a successful program [Reality Changers] is, they often ask about the philosophy and theory behind it."

Yanov's class of 13 at KSPS included students from Afghanistan, Rwanda, Uganda, and Eritrea, and others with strong international ties. The global perspectives of his classmates complemented his coursework, and the bonds they formed in and out of classes remain strong. "We still trade off e-mails all the time," Yanov says.

The international aspect has been likewise valuable to Shamsia Ramadhan, a master's student at Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. (The late philanthropist

Joan B. Kroc, wife of McDonald's CEO Ray Kroc, funded the peace studies programs at both schools). "You get to engage people outside of class on what challenges they've faced and how they've been able to address them," says Ramadhan, a Muslim from Kenya who has worked with Chemchemi Ya Ukweli ("Wellspring of Truth" in Swahili), an interfaith organization in her home country that promotes peace through active nonviolence and dialogue.



Shamsia Ramadhan

Ramadhan doesn't have to go far to compare notes with someone: Her roommate, Myla Leguro, worked for Catholic Relief Services in the Philippines for 12 years on peacebuilding initiatives between Christians, Muslims, and the indigenous population in her native western Mindanao before coming to Notre Dame. Leguro expects to continue her work with CRS and the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute after graduation, but she opted for graduate study in order to gain a wider perspective on the practice of peacebuilding and to get more grounded in her own Catholic tradition so as to better engage people of other beliefs.

Perhaps surprisingly, Ramadhan has also been able to grow in her faith during grad school. She recently had a chance to meet with Father Theodore Hesburgh, president emeritus of the university and founder of the Kroc Institute. He told Ramadhan he hoped that her experience at Notre Dame was helping her to strengthen her faith and become a better Muslim—a message she's also received from faculty, staff, and fellow students at the Kroc Institute.

It's a message this peace studies student takes in stride. "People of all religions have something in common: the desire for the well-being of communities," she says.

—Heather Grennan Gary



Myla Leguro, left, with rural leaders in Nepal.



Stephen Bauer

Even if coffee isn't certified, there are still opportunities to improve the producers' circumstances while doing business. Plus, Bauer is able to introduce customers who may never have been interested in the social or environmental impact of coffee to a better option.

A couple of years ago, for example, Bauer brokered a deal with a company that hadn't previously bought certified coffee to buy 10 million pounds of it, thereby improving the working conditions, environment, and income of thousands of people who helped fulfill the order.

"The customer is looking for guidance about what to buy," Bauer says, "and what I choose to offer customers is up to my discretion. I know who I buy from and how they procure their coffee, and I know who the better shippers are—not just on the business side of things, but who makes an extra effort to develop communities."

Change agent

Patrick Edrey graduated from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota with a major in peace studies in 2004, and he's worked on the issue of homelessness ever since. He currently serves as a family advocate at Simpson Housing Services in Minneapolis, where he helps families achieve stability and work toward permanent housing.

"A lot of my work is trying to break the cycle of poverty and helping create conditions that allow individual

families to thrive," he says. Still, there's a ripple effect: "We serve our families first and foremost, but I always view the work in a larger social and cultural context," he says. "We're trying to affect the community as a whole."

Edrey says his motivations are theological and spiritual: "The reason I do this work is because God said

so. That's what it boils down to, ultimately. God has special love and concern for folks who are vulnerable."

Teaching eighth- and ninth-graders in the religious education program at his parish, St. Odilia in Shoreview, Minnesota, gives Edrey another chance to draw on his peace studies background. "That's where I can share some of the theological underpinnings of why I do what I do," he says.

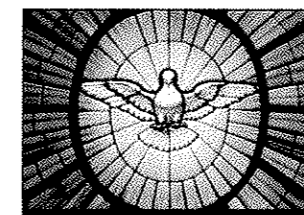
Putting the law to work

Tona Boyd graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2003 with majors in government and Spanish and a peace studies minor. During her

"The reason I do this work is because God said so. God has special love and concern for folks who are vulnerable."

junior year she oversaw the student peace conference, and after graduation she went on to Harvard Law School. She's currently a clerk on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia and will be working next year as a trial lawyer for the civil rights division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The peace community at Notre Dame nurtured Boyd's interest in human rights, and she says that in



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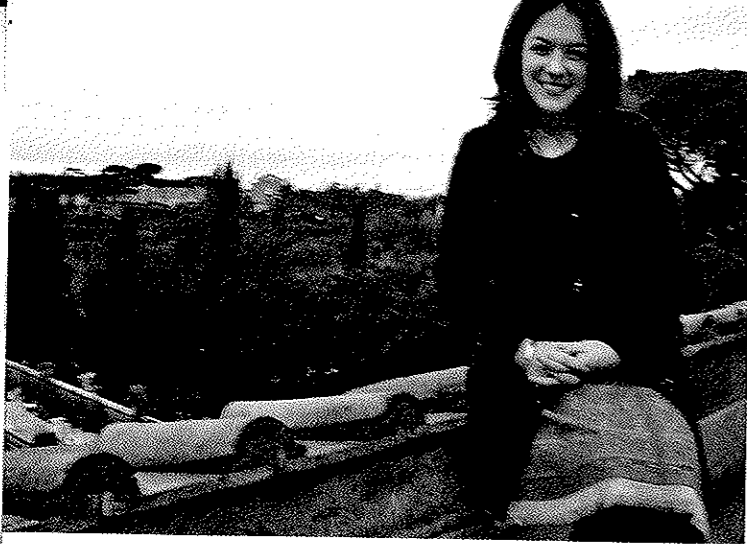
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Amanda Zurface

particular the passion and commitment she observed in the international peace studies students there continue to inspire her: "I really try to integrate that commitment to service and the approach to conflict resolution into my own life."

Amanda Zurface, a 2009 graduate of Ohio Dominican, also took the law school route, but with a bit of a twist: Zurface is a first-year canon law

student at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. She says her double major in peace and justice and theology has been helpful, not because she's more prepared than her peers, but because "I'm able to remind myself more easily why I'm here studying canon law."

I am studying for the sake of being able to really assist the church in helping all people, and in particular the vulnerable and marginalized."

Zurface hopes to work for the church in some capacity, either as an advocate or in a diplomatic position, focusing on peace and justice, humanitarian relief work, and developing peace and justice education programs.

Churchwork and life

For Heidi Tousignant, the faith-formation director from Minnesota, having studied peace in college relates directly to some of her most important—and unpaid—work. As a parent "it absolutely enhances my vision of how to raise kids," she says. It's influenced her family's conversations, their values, their faith life, the decisions they make as a family, and what action they take in their community.

"We talk about our actions and what good they do, or what harm they do. We talk about what people need and what we can do about it. It's helped me to educate my kids in an important way."



Heidi Tousignant

Blessed are the peacemakers

The first Catholic college to launch a peace studies program was Manhattan College in New York, which opened its Pacem in Terris Institute in 1965, offered its first interdisciplinary peace studies class a year later, and had an undergraduate major under way by 1971. Early in the program's development, Pope Paul VI took notice and sent his blessing, along with a message to the Institute's organizers encouraging the "efforts for education for peace" that were taking place.

While peace studies have long been offered at schools affiliated with historic peace churches (Church of the Brethren, Quaker, and Mennonite), as well as some nonreligious schools, Catholic institutions have experienced a remarkable growth of peace studies programs in the past several decades, in no small part because of an emphasis by recent popes and bishops on the centrality of peace, as well as the enthusiasm of students and faculty.

"I came into this field because of a strong commitment to my faith and to the church," says Ronald Pagnucco, chair of the peace studies department at the College of St. Benedict-St. John's University in St. Joseph, Minnesota. "I've been impressed with a lot of the statements that have come out of Rome and from the U.S. bishops."

In particular, Pagnucco points to a section of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II's 1990 document on Catholic universities: "A Catholic university... as an extension of its service to the church... is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as... the promotion of justice for all... the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources."

"I thought, 'Wow, this is great stuff,'" says Pagnucco, who came to peace studies from sociology. "It reaffirmed that this kind of research, this kind of concern for the world and for the poor, is what a Catholic university should be doing."

Father William Headley, C.S.Sp., dean of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego, agrees. "Any school that calls itself Catholic builds on Catholic social teaching, and justice and peace is a hallmark of that," he says. "It's hard to find an embodiment of that hallmark as practical as a school or a program deliberately designed to address conflict, development, human security, and human rights. We are considered a real asset to our academic community."

—Heather Grennan Gary

Studying peace in college "absolutely enhances my vision of how to raise kids."

In her work as director of faith formation at her parish, Guardian Angels, she's able to draw on her peace studies connection, too, but in a way that's unique to her own story. When she works with Confirmation students, she talks with them about the importance of discerning the Holy Spirit in their lives. She shares her story about taking a peace and justice class in college, and the sadness, anger, and guilt she felt about the issues she encountered in the class, and how she felt inadequate to deal with them.

A few months later, while working

in Montana for the summer, Tousignant had what

she calls a "mountaintop experience," when she was able to discern the Holy Spirit supporting her in her passion for peace and justice and in her determination to major in the discipline.

"I took time for reflection, time to let God in," she says. Since then, more than 200 people have graduated from the justice and peace studies program at St. Thomas.

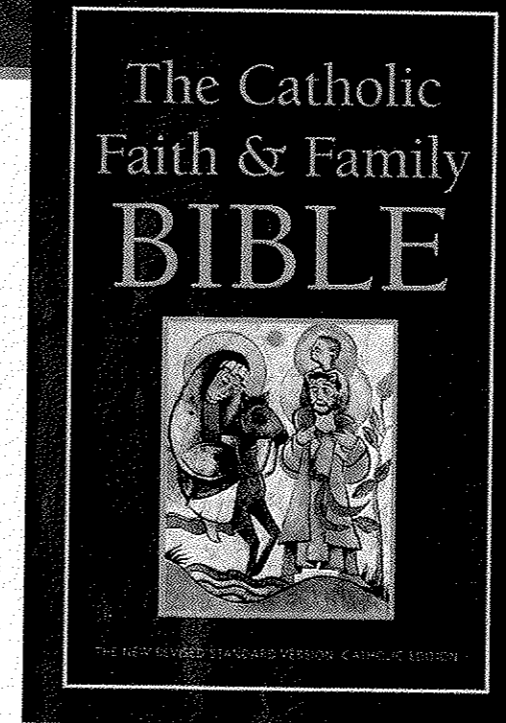
Tousignant's story, though, is not

about her, as she emphasizes to her students. "The point is, you make one decision, and you think it's your own personal decision, but then you realize the miracle God was able to do with your help." **USC**

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