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

As a member of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a one-year program that focuses on eliminating poverty, Hinver is working as the volunteer and donations coordinator at theYWCA 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.

When her year of service is up, Hinver hopes to stay on as paid staff at the center or find a fellowship 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."

Hinver 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 ever met," 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 315 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, researching, 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 Hinver, 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 Hinver who graduated from ODU in 2009, is also a member of AmeriCorps VISTA, serving as a community and faith relations coordinator for Honolulu Habitat for Humanity.

The transition from classroom to full-time work can be challenging, as Albane- se 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 those two fields..."
A higher degree of peace

While most peace studies programs are at the undergraduate level, at least 18 schools worldwide offer graduate programs. Among Catholic schools in the United States alone, there's an 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 offer diverse students who already have considerable peacebuilding experience.

Christopher Yanov received his master's degree in peace and justice studies from the University of San Diego in 2003. In 2007, after several years of using youth ministry and outreach to gang members, Yanov started Reality Checkers, 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 to 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 Checkers, which has expanded rapidly and has raised more than $2.5 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 Checkers) has done, they often ask about the philosophy and theory behind it.

Kroc's class of 2016 at KSPS included students from Afghanistan, Rwanda, Uganda, and China, and others with extensive international experience. The global perspectives of his classmates complemented his coursework, and the bonds they formed in and out of classes remain strong. "We still stay in touch all the time," Yanov says.

The administrative aspect has been liberating valuable to Shavonna Remaulie, 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 program 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 Remaulie. A Muslim from Kenya who has worked with Chatham House in the Netherlands ("Woolf Institute" in Swaziland) on an international organization in the home country that promotes peace through truth and reconciliation, and Remaulie didn't have to go far to compare notes with someone. Her roommate, Myla Legeras, 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, Legeras expected to continue her work with CRS and the Mindanao Peacemaking Institute after graduation, but she opted for graduate study in order to gain a wider perspective on the science of peacebuilding and to get more grounded in her own Catholic tradition so as to better engage people of other beliefs.

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

"It's a privilege to have peace studies students take in stride," says Foster Grennan, O.P., director of the Vincentian Peace Institute at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. "People of all religious have something in common: the desire for the well-being of others."

Putting the law to work

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

The first Catholic college to launch a peace studies program was Manhattan College in New York, which opened its Peace Center in 1965. It 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 Pugmucco, 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 her work as director of faith formation at her parish, Guardian Angels, she’s able to draw on her peace studies connections, 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, Toussignant 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 peace and justice studies program at St. Thomas. Toussignant’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.”

Churchwork and life

For Heidi Toussignant, the faith-formation director at Minnetonka, 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 to educate my kids in an important way.”

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