

Castleberry Peace Institute

University of North Texas Spring 2016 Newsletter



It has been a very eventful year for peace. While the news of the world seems like it has been an unrelenting litany of violence and chaos, at least here at the Castleberry Peace Institute I can report that our news has been all positive. Our faculty continue offering some of the most popular and insightful courses on peace and conflict you will find on any college campus. They continue their cutting edge research into what conditions are most useful in explaining and helping build and sustain peace. In March we hosted a poster show peace at UNT on the Square in Denton featuring student research on the causes and consequences of conflict. Attendance was good and our audience learned a lot about peace and the great research our students are engaged in.

Our work with the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal to survey the witnesses who have testified before the Court continues as we seek to understand what impact testimony has on individual's social, psychological and physical health. Our faculty are also beginning to explore the possibility of a collaborative partnership with scholars and leaders in Colombia as that nation gets ever closer to ending its decades-long civil war.

And perhaps most fitting of all, we are hard at work in raising funds for the Vivian Castleberry Trailblazer Scholarship to honor Vivian's legacy as a "Texas Trailblazer" and pioneer in the field of journalism as well as her passionate commitment to the cause of

peace. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to endow this scholarship so it can support our best, brightest and most deserving students. If you would like more information, please contact me at the email address below. Or you can contribute on-line at [Vivian Castleberry Trailblazer Scholarship](#)

I have no doubt that we will continue to build on these successes this year and will have many more wonderful stories to share with you. In this newsletter we'll try to give you a more in-depth appreciation for all of these important accomplishments.

Thank you for all of your support.

Professor James Meernik

Director, Castleberry Peace Institute

[Castleberry Peace Institute](#)

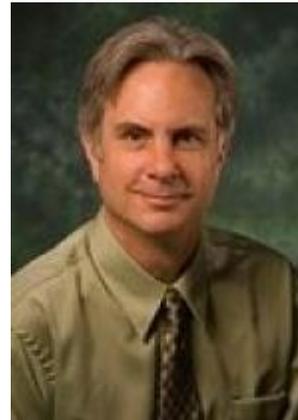
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Student Research

The Castleberry Institute Poster Show

On March 11 at UNT on the Square in Denton the Castleberry Peace Institute hosted a poster show featuring the research of our students, as well as some faculty. They displayed the results of their research on peace, politics and justice on large posters to a sizeable crowd that evening. The posters were very well received and in the competition for a cash prize and designation as best poster, two of our graduate students won the top honors. Chris Pace and Chris Macaulay tied for first. Chris Pace's poster was "A World Safe for Democracy: Common Enemies, the Democratic Community and Democratization". Chris found that as the military power of democracies increases, there is more democratization in the world. Chris Macaulay's poster was entitled, "Territorial Conflict: Initiation and

Escalation" and he found that states will initiate conflicts over tangible things like land and natural resources, but they will escalate the level of violence when there are ethnic divisions involved in the dispute. We are very proud of all of our student scholars and look forward to a bright future for them!

Women and ISIS

What attracts young, Muslim women from the West to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS, also called Daesh), which is an organization that advocates a strict gender hierarchy and misogynist philosophy? Professor **Marijke Breuning** and graduate student **Chris Pace** set out to investigate this topic. They presented their findings at a recent International Studies Association conference.

It is estimated that more than 550 Western women have made the journey to join the Islamic State, which suggests that women

account for approximately a quarter of the Westerners who have joined ISIS.

Social media play an important role in recruitment, but the visible signals are frequently attributed to life events, rather than radicalization. Several of the young women they studied became more religious and began to dress differently after the death of a parent, which was interpreted by those around them as a response to their loss. It was recognized as radicalization only after the young women disappeared into ISIS-held territory.

In sum, for these young women, the process of radicalization tends to occur as part of an age-related developmental process, aggravated by traumatic trigger events. Unfortunately, this suggests that radicalization will remain difficult to identify and prevent. We look forward to more to come from Professor Breuning and her students.

Support for Students



The Castleberry Peace Institute and the Department of Political Science have long had a well-deserved reputation for outstanding teaching. Just this past year Professor Bethany Blackstone won UNT's highest teaching honor, the 'Fessor Graham Award", which is decided annually by the students. Bethany joins the ranks of our other winners such as Andrew Enterline, who won just a few years ago, Kimi King and Valerie Martinez. Wendy Watson also won a top UNT teaching award, the J.H. Shelton Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Political Science Department is also the only department in the United States to host the Research Experience for Undergraduate, which is awarded by the National Science Foundation. This year's REU focused on the geography of conflict and students learned

not only about research methods and conflict, they also learned about GIS, or Geographic Information Systems. Congratulations to John Ishiyama, leader of the REU and our graduate students who assisted.

We are not only concerned about the quality of our teaching, we are also interested in making sure that our students are able to afford a college education. A majority of our students at UNT are first generation students, which means that no previous generation in their family ever attended college. Many are working parents, returning US veterans or come from homes of modest means. They all need and deserve out support. Therefore, we are beginning two scholarship programs. The first is

The Political Science and Castleberry Peace Institute Undergraduate Research Fellows Program. This program will provide tuition support for students who are working with faculty on research projects related to peace. Four awards will be made every year to the most outstanding students who have identified a peace-related project and a faculty member to work with them.

The second scholarship program is to be the **Vivian Castleberry Trailblazer Scholarship**, which will be annually awarded to the best students studying peace and who have a special interest in being trailblazers in their field of endeavor. We are especially interested in encouraging students who are interested in studying the role of women and peace since this has long been of special interest to Vivian Castleberry.

We sent out a letter seeking support for this scholarship and have been very pleased with the response so far. While we still have a distance to go before we reach our goal of a \$100,000 endowment, we strongly believe that there is deep support in the North Texas community for this program and to help support the life's work of Vivian Castleberry.

If you have any questions or would like to support this scholarship, please contact Jim Meernik at meernik@unt.edu.

Getting to Know Our Castleberry Peace Institute Students

Elena Guerini is one of our newest PhD students who is interested in human rights, gender issues and international law and has been a wonderful help here at the Castleberry Peace Institute. I asked Elena to tell the story of how a young woman from Italy found her way to Denton, Texas and the UNT Castleberry Peace Institute. This is her story!

"I applied to the Doctoral Program in Political Science at the University of North Texas because I wanted to pursue a final degree in the areas of just war theories, human rights and women's studies, and doing so in a stimulating, international setting. I chose UNT over other programs because I understood that I could fit well within the department, and hopefully flourish as a competent scholar in the field of Political Science.

I obtained both my Bachelor and Master degrees in Philosophy at the University of Verona, Italy, where I received a strong preparation in political philosophy, the history of political thought and gender studies. During the Master program I was selected to participate in the European Exchange Scholarship Program "Erasmus" that allowed me to move to Copenhagen for a semester to work on my Master thesis. In Denmark, I delved into the debate about just war theories, comparing the medieval and modern traditional conceptions of warfare (i.e. in Vitoria, Suarez, Grotius, and Hobbes) with their more recent reformulations, such as those of Michael Walzer and Noam Chomsky. There I also experienced the richness, the challenges, and the excitement that living and studying abroad can bring.

This is why, considering my background and my interests, I thought I could play a part within the department's cutting-edge Peace Science program, an environment in which I would be able to explore those topics, as well as the role of international organizations and criminal tribunals in the protection and support of human rights, and in the difficult attempts of post-conflict peacekeeping and reconciliation.

Furthermore, considering my strong interest and preparation in feminist studies, I was enthusiastic about the emphasis placed in this research project on the sexual violence crimes and gender related aspects. I also planned to develop my work assessing the connection between gender and national sovereignty/aspirations in war, and on the role of women in conflict resolution, possibly working with Professors DeMeritt or Breuning. I came to UNT interested in the structural issues of recent conflicts (just war theories, collateral damages and casualties) and I am now realizing how much these topics are interwoven with broader international ethical issues regarding human rights and international justice.

Melissa McKay is a third year International Relations PhD student whose focus is primarily on human rights, international criminal tribunals and post-conflict reconciliation. As a UNT undergraduate alumna, she seized the opportunity in 2005 to join a UNT Political Science Department study abroad class to The Hague, The Netherlands where the class attended war crimes trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. On trial were perpetrators of some of the most heinous acts committed against man, and witnessing justice being served on this scale sparked a passion to become involved and

study the overall process of transitional justice. As a Castleberry Peace Institute research student, Melissa has presented at the International Studies Association annual conference in New Orleans in 2015, as well as the ISA Joint Human Rights Conference in The Hague in 2015.

Her research interests include the psycho-social impact of war and how testifying about the experience effects an individual's emotion well-being. She also focuses her attention to studying statecraft and diplomacy, national security strategies, and foreign policy. Upon completion of her PhD studies, Melissa's goal is to earn a leadership role in an international non-governmental organization to advise on policy and action.

News Shorts

Moot Court Victory

University of North Texas **Moot Court** members Taylor Ledford, a recent graduate from San Antonio, and Eryn Mascia, a junior from Trophy Club, took first place for their written appellate brief at the **American Collegiate Moot Court Association** National Championship Tournament. The competition was held in January at California State University at Long Beach.

Professor David Mason Wins UNT Faculty Leadership Award.

In recognition of his work in establishing the Castleberry Peace Institute and has outstanding research and teaching in peace studies, Professor David Mason was given the UNT Faculty Leadership award, one of the top faculty awards at UNT. Upon winning the award, Professor Mason commented, "My goal since coming to UNT has been to use the resources of the Peace Professorship to institutionalize UNT's strength in human security and peace science research, so that UNT will become and remain a destination point for the top undergraduate and doctoral students in peace studies and a place where leading scholars in peace science and human security research will want to be and want to stay."

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