

PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

UNDERGRADUATE FACT SHEET

American college students have been interested in peace and conflict issues since the end of the Civil War. Peace and conflict studies, as an interdisciplinary field of study, emerged nationally in the 1950s and 1960s (the oldest program in the country dates to 1948) but has seen its most rapid growth since 1970. Drawing from a diversity of specialized academic domains, especially the social sciences and humanities, peace and conflict studies imparts an understanding of human conflict and how to manage it constructively. War is the most destructive form of conflict; terrorism is the most complex and thorniest form, and these on-going problems have received a great deal of attention.

The field also highlights conflicts of other sorts – for example, those rooted in ethnicity, class, or gender. The intent throughout is to show that conflict can be managed – not necessarily eliminated – without violence. Peace and conflict studies aims for a world in which “positive peace” prevails (a world of justice), not just “negative peace” (the absence of overt war, terrorism, and other forms of violence). This would be a world quite different from the one we now experience, and one worth the effort.

Peace and conflict studies also relates to our interpersonal lives in a more intimate way. The problems we face as workers, managers, and members of communities and families require the skills and analytic abilities you’ll study as a peace and conflict studies minor.

Career Opportunities

By minoring in peace and conflict studies, you will become better informed about important social, political, and personal issues. You will acquire tools for conflict management which will benefit you no matter what career path you choose. You will have a sense of how different disciplines in which you have taken courses relate to one another.

Beyond this, since conflict is a “growth industry,” you will be better prepared for careers in government (e.g.,

in mediation or arbitration work) or nongovernment organization (NGO) work. The latter includes internships and jobs with “cause” organizations such as Peace Brigades International and Union of Concerned Scientists, whether in administration, fund-raising, public education, or organizing. Additionally, there are positions in the field of education (teaching, training, and consulting), opinion and attitude research, and other professions such as the ministry, social work, and politics. You may find yourself drawn to a career in an organization that promotes peace and justice locally and/or globally. Peace and conflict studies will help prepare you for self-employment as a consultant, writer, or public relations consultant, or for a supervisory or management role in any field where effective communication, negotiation, or group problem solving is key.

Program Offered

Minor in Peace and Conflict Studies. This 18-semester hour program begins with a required introductory course that highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the field and culminates with a capstone experience meant to solidify and integrate the study of social justice and conflict negotiation with real world experience. The program also requires attendance at campus and community events to highlight the importance of how these issues play out in lived experience. The minor is compatible with any academic major and permits you to elect courses from a number of different departments, some of which may do “double-duty” in satisfying other requirements.

Typical Courses

Environmental Crises

Gender and Peace

Global Perspectives

The Holocaust

Intercultural Communication

Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies

Learn More

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Peace and Conflict Studies Seminar
Propaganda, Power, and Politics
Philosophies of Nonviolence
The Problem of War
Race Relations
Small Group Communication
Sociology of War and Peace
Third-World Women

Related Student Activities

Campus organizations such as the Black Student Union, EARTH (Environmental Association for Repairing the Habitat), and Habitat for Humanity attend to interests and activities that parallel those related to peace and conflict studies. In addition, campus and community events occur regularly that will be of interest, and will be advertised on the peace and conflict studies website, http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas/peac_stu/.

Faculty

You can obtain a complete listing of faculty and their academic qualifications for this program from the contact person listed below.

For More Information

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Peace and Conflict Studies Program
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E-mail: jwoolfrey@wcupa.edu

Web page: http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas/peac_stu/

Undergraduate Catalog: http://wcupa.edu/_information/official.documents/undergrad.catalog/

About West Chester University

A comprehensive, public institution, West Chester University of Pennsylvania offers high-quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs in more than 100 subject areas, as well as certification and certificate programs. As one of the largest members of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, West Chester offers a full and rewarding educational experience as well as reasonable tuition. More than 15,400 graduate and undergraduate students, as well as 1,500 faculty and staff, study and work on the picturesque, 406-acre campus. Strategically located at the center of the mid-Atlantic corridor between New York City and Washington, D.C., West Chester University is just 25 miles west of Philadelphia and 17 miles north of Wilmington.

Information on Admission

Office of Admissions

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