ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Academic Year

2014-2015

Program Specific Admission Requirements

This is a post-baccalaureate certificate. To be admitted student must earn an undergraduate degree or equivalent from an accredited institution prior to admission into the certificate program. An undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 (letter grade of B) or higher is necessary for regular admission consideration. The certificate director may consider conditional admission under extenuating circumstances.

Admissions Requirements:

1) Personal Statement

Applicant should provide a 700-900 word statement indicating reasons for personal and/or vocational interest in pursuing a certificate in conflict transformation. Statement should include a description of any life experiences or professional work pertinent to the field of conflict transformation and how knowledge and experience gained from this certificate may be utilized.

2) Official Transcripts

(Note: Admission can be determined with unofficial copies of transcript. However, official transcripts must be on file with university registrar before beginning the program.

3) Resume

Please note: Admission into the certificate program does not guarantee admission into St. Mary's master's degree in International Relations and Conflict Resolution. Students interested in pursuing the master's degree program must meet the normal admission requirements outlined by the graduate international relations department. See www.stmarytx.edu/grad/ir

Language Requirements: The language of instruction for the academic certificate in conflict transformation is English. All applicants who are citizens of countries where English is not an official language must demonstrate competency in English by submitting test scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the academic IELTS. The minimum TOEFL score for admission is 550 on the paper exam or 213 on the computer exam. The minimum IELTS score is an overall band of 6.0, with no individual band score below 5.0. TOEFL and IELTS scores may not be more than two years old.

Exceptions may be made for applicants who hold a degree from a university where English is the language of instruction. Exceptions may also be made by the director of the certificate program.

Academic/Candidacy Requirements: In order 1) to ensure high academic and professional standards, 2) to reach candidacy for participation in the Fourth Unit Capstone Field Study, and 3) to complete successfully the academic certificate, each student must:

1) Earn a minimum 3.0 or letter grade of B in each of the first three units of the certificate course

2) Remain in good standing throughout the program, demonstrating consistent, proactive, and prompt participation through and across each course unit

3) Demonstrate a positive attitude and mutual respect in learning through and across each course unit

The certificate program director and unit faculty will meet immediately following completion of Unit Three to evaluate and determine candidacy.

Certificate Requirements

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Unit One: IR8305 Conflict Transformation: Theory and Practice

This course offers an educational exploration of the structures and processes of conflict transformation, introducing established and emerging theories, strategies, and applications within this dynamic field. Participants will conduct an interdisciplinary, multilevel investigation into the underlying attitudinal, behavioral, and structural causes of violent conflict and the theoretical and practical approaches for empowering people and reconciling communities in conflict and post-conflict situations. Students will also explore the diverse range of actors and institutions participating in the multidimensional work of conflict transformation.

Participant Learning Objectives:

- Develop a working knowledge of established and emerging theories and methodologies in the field of conflict transformation
- Study and acknowledge the significant challenges associated with "peace-building" language and terminology in the expansive field of conflict transformation
- Explore a wide-range of innovative and creative academic thinking in how to conceptualize and analyze twenty-first-century violent conflicts within transformative and non-conventional learning frameworks
- Learn and develop approaches for integrating research, theory, and practice

Unit Two: IR8351 Identity, Religion, and Violent Conflict

Understanding the complex tectonics of identity.religious, ethnic, tribal, etc..is necessary for policymakers and academics wanting to grasp more fully the underlying causes of violent conflict between communities. This course examines identity construction in the diverging contexts of conflict and coexistence. It explores the relationship between identity and conflict transformation. In particular, it focuses in on the paradoxical role of religion, religious ritual, and religious identity in escalating violence and building peace.

Participant Learning Objectives:

- Engage in literary and narrative analysis of how religious, ethnic, and political communities construct collective ideologies, identity, and memory
- Explore religion and its paradoxical role in escalating violence and building peace:
  - To understand and confront the tendency of religious systems to justify the violent use of their holy writ against other systems and communities of belief
  - To understand how religion, religious institutions, and religious affiliated organizations are contributing constructively to transforming conflict and building sustainable peace
- Consider imaginative and alternative ways for engaging "faith" and "identity" constructively

Unit Three: IR8352 Models for Engagement and Encounter

This course introduces participants to established and emerging peace-building methodologies used to help transform conflict in positive ways and heal divisions in divided and traumatized societies. From thematic interventions (i.e., religious, ethnic, political, etc.), interface work, and trust-building workshops to creative writing, remembering, and storytelling methodologies, participants are exposed to a variety of imaginative and relevant conflict transformation techniques used by practitioners working with divided communities.

As an exercise in reflective practice, course participants will be tasked to work alongside the course instructor to create a tailored and integrated set of methodologies for peace-building that are potentially beneficial to their unique historical and/or vocational contexts.

Participant Learning Objectives:

- Explore and evaluate creative and constructive strategies for encountering and learning from the "Other"

- Learn practical skills for peace-building and inter-communal reconciliation
- Learn and cultivate constructive approaches for facilitating and evaluating models for intervention
- Participate in a constructive forum for mutual learning and reflective practice in the development and application of peace-building methodologies

Unit Four: IR9302 Conflict Transformation Capstone: Field Study

The capstone course gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their competency in the learning objectives set out in the conflict transformation curriculum. In this capstone course students will apply curricular objectives through a field study project in Northern Ireland. Following a four-week period of online and independent field study preparation (reading/writing exercises), learners will travel to Northern Ireland for a two-week series of practitioner workshops, creative and critical thinking sessions, field-based experience, and reflective practice. The course will conclude with a summative evaluation by faculty of participant.s ability to comprehend and integrate the strategies, concepts, and practices of conflict transformation.

Capstone Learning Outcomes:

- Provide participants an opportunity to learn from and work within an active and pertinent peace-building organization participating in local and global conflict transformation initiatives
- Offer Northern Ireland.s story as a learning parallel to each participant.s vocational journey, providing unique peace-building methodologies and practices to consider
- Create and reinforce a community of practice, building a network of positive relationships beneficial for the dynamic work of transforming conflict in constructive and creative ways

Department Courses and Descriptions

IR8351 **Identity, Religion, and Violent Conflict** (3 credit hours . Unit 2 certification course)
Understanding the complex tectonics of identity . religious, ethnic, tribal, etc. . is necessary for policymakers and academics wanting to grasp more fully the underlying causes of violent conflict between communities. This course examines identity construction in the diverging contexts of conflict and coexistence. It explores the relationship between identity and conflict transformation. In particular, it focuses in on the paradoxical role of religion, religious ritual, and religious identity in escalating violence and building peace.

IR8352 **Models for Engagement and Encounter** (3 credit hours . Unit 3 certification course)
This course introduces participants to established and emerging peace-building methodologies used to help transform conflict in positive ways and heal divisions in divided and traumatized societies. From thematic interventions, interface work, and trust-building workshops to creative writing, remembering, and story-telling methodologies, participants are exposed to a variety of imaginative and relevant conflict transformation techniques used by practitioners working with divided communities.

IR9302 **Capstone Field Study Course** (3 credit hours . Unit 4 certification course)
The capstone course gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their competency in the learning objectives set out in the conflict transformation curriculum. In this capstone course students will apply curricular objectives through a field study project in Northern Ireland. The course will conclude with a summative evaluation by faculty of the participant's ability to comprehend and integrate the strategies, concepts, and practices of conflict transformation.

Department Faculty

Academic Certificate Program in Conflict Transformation Faculty Website

Department Website

Academic Certificate Program in Conflict Transformation Website