

History of the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program

The Religion and Conflict Transformation Program (RCT) has built on the work and contribution of various partners, including the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), the consortium of seminaries in the Boston area, and the JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation in the United Methodist Church (JustPeace).

Beginning in the mid 1990's, the BTI engaged with member schools to provide information on how churches deal with conflict. From 1997 on, the BTI instituted an international workshop and travel seminar to study how faith communities in different parts of the world dealt with conflict, and worked towards reconciliation. This included trips to Northern Ireland, Former Yugoslavia, South Africa and Ghana, Israel and Palestine, Russia, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, India, Greece, South Korea, and Columbia.

In 2001 the BTI and JustPeace began work in Restorative Justice with seminary students, churches, religious leaders, lawyers and prison chaplaincies. JustPeace and the BTI held Summer Institutes on Restorative Justice which explored the emerging movement of restorative justice as an alternative to retributive justice: its theory, its theological and biblical grounding and its practices. These conferences were focused on not only the criminal justice system but on the culture of the church in the world. The Summer Institutes were as follows:

2002 Institute I: Balanced and Restorative Justice (with Florida Atlantic University)

2003 Institute II: Preventing Violence, Building Community (w/Suffolk Law, BUSTh, & BC advisors)

2004 Institute III: Conflict Transformation & Restorative Justice: Preparing Ministers of Reconciliation

2005 Institute IV: Theology & Relational Healing: Breaking Cycles of Trauma, Retaliation & Violence

In 2003, the Board of Trustees of the BTI voted to establish a Certificate program in Religion and Conflict Transformation. This certificate is awarded by the BTI in recognition of courses and other work in the world of religion and conflict transformation, and related areas, at the schools of the Institute. Ray Hart, Dean of Boston University School of Theology offered his institution to provide an anchor for the program, hiring Tom Porter in September 2004 to direct this work.

In the fall of 2004 Tom Porter, the executive director of JustPeace, and Rodney Petersen, the executive director of the BTI taught a course entitled Engaging Conflict Well, which has been taught every year in the fall and now is called The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation, Creating a Culture of JustPeace. In the spring of 2005 they taught a course in Religion and the Ministry of Reconciliation with Father Raymond Helmick, a Jesuit and teacher at Boston College with a lifetime of peacebuilding work internationally, particularly in Northern Ireland and the Middle East.

In 2004-05, the Henry Luce Foundation granted Boston University School of Theology \$25,000 to advance institutional planning for a program in Religion and Conflict Transformation. A design team of faculty, administrators, alumni, church officials and students worked for a year to prepare a proposal for STH and University approval. The team was chaired by Professor David Hempton, now the Dean of Harvard Divinity School. Groups of STH alumni, faculty, students and church officials were surveyed in 2004-05 and vocally affirmed the need to prepare religious leaders in the theology, theory, and practice of conflict transformation as a

central mission of the seminary and the church. The STH faculty unanimously approved the development of this concentration in its MDiv, MTS and STM degree programs. and a Religion and Conflict Transformation certificate program for external students through the BTI.

A Leadership Team was created in 2005 with Dean Ray Hart chairing the team until Mary Elizabeth Moore became Dean. The executive directors were Porter and Petersen, who retained their leadership roles at JustPeace and the BTI. The Team began with Dr. Shelly Rambo, Bishop Susan Wolfe Hassinger and Dr. John Berthrong. Then Dr. Dana Robert, Dr. Walter Fluker and Dr. Liz Parsons joined the Team. The current team can be seen on the website under "Faculty Leadership Team."

The program launched in 2006-2007 was a five-course concentration within the MDiv, STM and MTS degree programs. Requirements included two core courses; a practicum, for example, in a church agency or NGO; and two other courses in the concentration. The two classes described above became the core courses of the program as well as the BTI certificate. The requirements changed in 2010 to include just one core course to give the students increased flexibility in choosing courses that met their interests and needs. Since the STH curriculum change made contextual education a required component for MDiv and MTS students, the RCT program changed the required contextual education component to an optional component. In practice, all students in the RCT program do their contextual education component through the regular STH curriculum; however most choose to be placed in a setting dealing with conflict transformation themes. The optional RCT practicum allows students to take on a second placement for more contextual education learning. There were 15 students in

the program in 2006-2007 and 29 students in the program during the 2007-2008 academic year. The number of students in the program has continued to grow.

From the beginning of the program, courses were taught by members of the RCT Team, including: Shelly Rambo, Trauma Healing, Bishop Susan Hassinger, the Spiritual Formation of the Peacebuilder, John Berthrong, Interfaith Dialogue, and many other classes, which included offerings from other BTI Schools.

During the first two years of the program there was a wide variety of practicums in local, regional, and international settings, including the Massachusetts Council of Churches, an alternative dispute resolution agency, a religious NGO working with the Han and Xinjiang Uyghur people in western China, the Refugee Immigration Ministry in Boston and the Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe).

In November 2008, the School of Theology received a three-year grant of \$375,000 from the Luce Foundation to help realize its broader vision for the program. The grant supported a full-time program coordinator, teaching assistance, and administrative support needed to sustain the program. The grant also provided scholarship support for students (30), and stipends for practicum or internship placements (18).

During the next three years practicum placements were located in Jamaica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ireland, Washington DC, Boston, Nagaland, Palestine and Israel, South Africa, South Korea, Columbia, Northern Ireland, India, and New York. 2010 was the first year to offer a course that integrates not only the material from the previous two required courses but also the five focal areas of our program (conflict studies, spirituality of peacebuilding, trauma studies, restorative justice and human security). Tom Porter is the lead instructor for the

course, *The Spirit and Art of Conflict transformation, Creating a Culture of JustPeace*, and four class sessions are led by members of the RCT team to introduce students to the focal areas described above. This core course is now available in all the degree programs.

Tom Porter's course on Restorative Justice, which is cross-registered with the BU Law School, received an overwhelming positive response during its first installment in the spring of 2010. The class is also cross-registered with the School of Social Work. The wisdom shared between students from the three schools enhanced student insight to the challenges and opportunities for interdisciplinary work. The experience affirmed our conviction that the work of peacebuilding is ultimately interdisciplinary. Tom has taught this course each year since its debut and with encouragement from the School of Law. Rodney Petersen continued to teach with Father Ray Helmick the course *Religion and the Ministry of Reconciliation* and a course entitled *Principles and Practices of Forgiveness*.

Travel Seminars from 2010 to the present

The RCT program continues to support contextual education through travel courses. We developed a relationship with the School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation centered in Bogotá, Columbia. In 2010, we sponsored a travel seminar to Bogotá, Columbia to study with the School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation there, which works with ex-combatants.

We had two successful RCT travel seminars in 2011-2012. The first seminar took students to Kingston, Jamaica for the 2011 Ecumenical Peace Convocation where they explored the subject of violence and non-violence as part of the World Council of Churches program, Decade to Overcome Violence, with students from every country in the Caribbean. The group worked with religious leaders and organizations in Jamaica, including the United Theological

Seminary of the West Indies in Kingston. The travel seminar was sponsored by the BTI and the RCT program and led by Rodney Petersen and Tom Porter. The second travel seminar took students to Israel-Palestine in January 2012. BU STH partnered with Andover Newton Theological Seminary for the seminar. Fifteen students from STH and fifteen students from Andover Newton attended the seminar. The trip was led by STH faculty Bryan Stone, Tom Porter, and Jennifer Knust. Brita Gill-Austen was the leader from Andover Newton. MEJDI, a dual narrative tour group committed to telling the Israeli and Palestinian narratives, designed the trip. The two-week trip allowed students to meet with religious peacebuilders on both sides of the conflict. The RCT program's travel seminar to Israel / Palestine was offered in 2013 (Led by Salma Kazmi and Shelly Rambo) and 2016 (Led by Paamela Lightsey and Barbod Salmi). It will be offered again in 2018. Upon their return from the first trip, ten students participated in a voluntary oral history project that recorded their perspectives and responses to all they had experienced. Feedback from these trips was overwhelmingly positive, with many students noting significant shifts in their understanding of the conflict and its complexity, and many making important connections between the situation in Israel-Palestine and political issues in the United States.

In 2016 the RCT developed a travel seminar to South India. Fourteen students, Tom Porter, Thomas Thangaraj, and Erin McKinney (TA) visited several cities in the southern part of the country to learn first-hand about the history, harmony, conflicts, and efforts at grassroots peacemaking in the region from people representing a variety of cultural, political and religious backgrounds. Students prepared for the trip with four sessions with Christian, Muslim, and Hindu religious leaders with ties to South India. Students completed selected readings about

the history and culture of India and its various communities, particularly Christians, Hindus and Muslims, and wrote a final paper or project about their experiences upon their return. This travel seminar will take place again in 2018.

In January 2017, Boston University School of Theology and Jakarta Theological Seminary offered a course titled: "Trauma, Theology, and Interreligious Healing." Dr. Septemmy Lakawa (Jakarta) and Dr. Shelly Rambo (BU) co-designed a course that comprised 7 students from Jakarta and 9 students from BU. In her doctoral dissertation, Dr. Septemmy Lakawa, a graduate of Boston University School of Theology and professor at Jakarta, studied theology in the aftermath of traumatic events. Since finishing her dissertation, she has developed a way of integrating the literatures in trauma theory and trauma theology within the Indonesian context. The seminary, influenced by Lakawa's distinctive work, has opened to incorporating certain aesthetic modes of trauma healing, particularly dance. Dr. Shelly Rambo, a member of the RCT Team, has constructed a significant theology of trauma within the North American setting. The course included site visits, in-class lectures and discussions.

Fall Retreat History

The RCT Program, since the fall of 2007 has held annual retreats each fall. The retreats invite eminent scholars and practitioners working in one of the program's focal areas to lead students and the community in a workshop engaging their work and integrating it with their vision for conflict transformation. The annual retreat has been a rich opportunity to gain new wisdom but also an effective way for students in the RCT program to get to know one another and learn contextually.

The 2007 retreat was led by Joseph Montville, Professor at the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation at George Mason University. He is the one who defined the concept of Track II, unofficial diplomacy, having spent 23 years as a diplomat with posts in the Middle East and North Africa. He spoke of his journey in peacebuilding, his work within the Abrahamic Family and his work with healing of memories.

The 2008 retreat was led by Shelly Rambo on the topic of *Practicing Theology in the Context of Trauma: Post-Katrina—type Disasters, Military Chaplaincy, Youth Violence, Refugees, and other Contexts*. She was joined by Laura Bender, a Navy Chaplain and student at STH, and Ruth Beresin, director of Refugee Ministries.

The 2009 retreat, “Imagine Peace: Vision, Vocation and Theologies of Change,” was led by Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore and Josh Thomas, BU’s Episcopal chaplain.

In September 2010, the retreat was led by our Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership, Walter Fluker, on the subject of “A Track to the Water’s Edge: Active Non-Violence and the Witness of Howard Thurman.”

In September 2011, our keynote speakers and retreat leaders were Sheila Heen, a Partner at Triad Consulting Group and a Lecturer at Harvard Law School, and Ann Garrido, Associate Professor of Homiletics and former director of the field education program at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri. They focused on the subject: “Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most.”

The annual RCT retreat in 2012 was led by Robert Stains, Jr. from the Public Conversations Project, giving a workshop entitled “The Practice of Dialogue.”

The 2013 retreat was led by Yehezkel Landau focusing on the theme of Interfaith Just

Peacemaking.

The 2014 retreat was led by professor and hymn writer Reverend Dr. Ruth Duck, a graduate of Boston University School of Theology, on the importance of creativity and imagination in peace building and conflict transformation. She particularly focused on the power of music in proclaiming justice. Students were given an opportunity to write hymns about a social justice issue of their choice.

The 2015 retreat focused on Navigating Race and Difference. Rev. Bill Kondrath of the Episcopal Divinity School and Rev. Dr. Lisa Fortuna of Iglesia de San Juan in Boston led the workshop. Given the political backdrop against which this workshop was held, including the protests in Ferguson and the growing importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, this workshop helped people put structural and casual racism into a personalized framework. For the roughly 50 participants, the workshop provided a unique opportunity to put their own sense of self and identity in conversation with that of others. In particular, workshop leaders helped participants understand the “dance of power dynamics” in which everyone participates, to the detriment of both the more and less powerful actor in the dynamic. The workshop also helped people uncover the perspectives they bring from their own personal and family background to interactions with others.

The 2016 retreat was led by Dr. Carl Stauffer of the Graduate Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University on the topic, “Finding Justice amidst the Rubble: Restorative Transitional Justice.” He shared his specialized expertise in restorative justice and trauma response in post-war societies, drawing upon his own work in South Africa, and upon his research of grass root efforts in Sierra Leona and elsewhere.

Spring Capstone Circle

In the spring of 2007, we began what we called an *Integrative Seminar*: Shandi Mawokomatanda, the program administrator for the Program took leadership of the Integrative Seminar, along with other members of the RCT Team. This course led students to reflect on and integrate the theory, theology and practice of conflict transformation in relation to their own vocational identities. The integrative seminar, taken in the final year of study, was mandatory for students in the RCT Concentration and is open to RCT Certificate students as well. The seminar served as a capstone course for students in the program and is offered each spring semester. This eventually became a *Capstone Retreat* which occurred over three hours on a morning in April every year where each graduating student reflected for the whole community about their learnings from their study in the RCT Program as well as how these learnings will guide them in their work in the future. These have been remarkable events, inspiring and educational. With attention brought to the program's ongoing utilization of circles and circle process the event is now titled Spring Capstone Circle.

Lecture Series

The RCT program has sponsored lectures to enrich students' learning in religion and conflict transformation. Lectures included:

In April 2009 Walter Wink gave a lecture entitled "Nonviolence for the Violent."

In December 2011, The RCT Program sponsored a dinner and discussion with renowned author and peace builder Richard Deats.

Dr. Shelly Rambo, member of the RCT Leadership Team, was a featured speaker in January 2012 in a series sponsored by the Mary Baker Eddy Library entitled "Paths of Peace in Crisis." In February 2012, John Kiser came to BU STH to discuss his recent book *Commander of the Faithful*. Kiser is a historian who spoke about the importance of lifting up positive examples from history to promote peacebuilding and break stereotypes.

In April 2012, Dr. Ervin Staub, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at UMass and world-renowned expert on genocide and mass violence, came to BU for a lecture titled, "Resisting Evil, Creating Goodness: The Prevention of Mass Violence, Reconciliation, and the Development of Inclusive Caring and Active Bystandership."

Other lectures became part of an interfaith engagement series, discussed later

Conferences

We advanced our goal of connecting our program with the programs of other Schools of Theology around the world by sponsoring two conferences for theological educators. The first three-day conference of theological educators was held in August 2010 to explore ways to advance teaching, learning, and research in religion and conflict transformation. The second conference, held in May 2012 and entitled, "The Formation of Interfaith Just Peacemakers: A Working Consultation," brought together an unprecedented group of educators and students from the Abrahamic faiths to develop best practices for shaping future religious leaders to be effective advocates for peace. This consultation built on the work of our 2010 consultation on

theological educators by expanding the work to the Abrahamic traditions, sharing interfaith strategies for peacemaking, and focusing on the formation of interfaith just peacemakers.

Consultation of Theological Educators in Conflict Transformation

On August 9th-11th, 2010, we held a Consultation of Theological Educators in Peacebuilding. The major challenge and goal of this consultation was to address the growing need to teach students in higher education skills that equip them to engage conflict constructively in their communities and in the world. We identified four objectives for the consultation: (1) consult on the state of teaching and research in religion, conflict transformation, and peace-building; (2) discern emerging pedagogies useful for teaching and learning in this field; (3) strategize how to institutionalize such teaching and learning in sustainable ways; and (4) strengthen networks for ongoing collaboration.

The consultation brought 43 educators in the field of religion, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding from across the country. The three days consisted of keynote speakers, small group breakout sessions, plenary sessions, and evening presentations with panel discussions. Challenges to teaching peacebuilding named during the consultation included the need to: analyze the dynamics of conflict and peacemaking without getting stuck in analysis; avoid simplistic explanations of conflict; and avoid simplistic religious solutions. Participants also highlighted approaches to teaching religion, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding, which included: teaching through narratives, apprenticeships, pilgrimages, collaboration, healing practices, action-reflection methods, dialogue, holy envy and hard conversation, democratic

process and consensus decision-making, and the practice of discovering what one does not know.

In the end, the consultation named the need for personal and cultural paradigm shifts to be brought about in colleges and schools of theology through right action, new pedagogies, and curriculum changes. Consultation participants concluded around a round table of reconciliation and committed themselves to be more mindful, imaginative, and collaborative in their work for justice, conflict transformation, and peace. For an Executive Summary of the Consultation, see *Appendix E*. Consultation papers and reports are accessible on our website:

<http://www.bu.edu/rct/consultation2010/reports/>.

Consultation on The Formation of Interfaith Just Peacemakers

On May 21st-23rd, 2012, we held a Consultation on the Formation of Interfaith Just Peacemakers. The major challenge and goal of this consultation was to address the growing need for collaboration across faith traditions to promote the Just Peace movement. We identified four objectives for the consultation: (1) gather the wisdom and best practices of people working on interfaith just peacemaking; (2) consult on how to teach, train, and spiritually form new generations of interfaith just peacemakers (3) provide tools for shaping curriculum, pedagogy, and practices of spiritual formation to foster interfaith just peacemaking. The consultation brought together 50 educators in the field of religion, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding from across the country. The three days consisted of panel discussions, round table breakout sessions, and plenary sessions. Eleven students also participated in the

consultation, partaking in the roundtable discussions, taking notes for later reports, and serving as interviewers of educators for our peacemaker oral history reports. Participants highlighted approaches to teaching religion, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding, which included: sharing narrative, sharing our sacred practices, cultivating imagination, cultivating humility and empathy, identifying strategies for collective and effective efforts, and engaging people with one another across cultures, countries and the world. Challenges to teaching peacebuilding included the need to: define the meaning of terms, address the challenges of time and budget, create genuinely safe places for conversation and transformation to take place, and the challenge to stand with and for people who are oppressed while knowing your stance will stir conflict.

The consultation ended with the commitment to collaborative efforts and the naming of four critical values of the field: companionship, compassion, change-agency, and collective power.

For an Executive Summary of the Consultation, see *Appendix F*. Consultation papers and reports are accessible on our website: <http://www.bu.edu/rct/consultations/consultation-2012/>.

In June of 2013, The Henry Luce Foundation awarded STH a grant of \$350,000 to develop a Clinic – a sustainable, replicable model for clinical teaching, service, and partnerships. This program was based on the belief that learning in theologically-informed conflict transformation and just peacebuilding needs to be located in the world we are called to serve, facilitating the development of skills and leadership capacities while serving community needs and partnering with community organizations.

As a result of this generous support we were able to hire in February of 2014 a half-time co-director of the Clinic, Salma Kazmi, to develop our Clinic Program in interfaith just peacebuilding as well as to develop community partnerships. In the spring of 2016 we supported her move to work full-time to develop a seminary in Boston for Imams and Muslim religious leaders. We then made a significant move to assure the sustainability of the Clinic and the RCT Program as a whole by hiring a very experienced teacher and practitioner to be the full-time Co-Director of the RCT Program and RCT Clinic with Tom Porter.

Internships

Public Conversations Project (PCP) Internships:

Our first intern at PCP reviewed, cataloged and analyzed the materials from PCP's conversations with twelve Anglican Bishops between 1999 and 2001, on the subject of the Church's stance towards homosexuality. The goal of the project was to examine the evolution of the Bishops' thinking on the topic during the course of the meetings with PCP, and since that time. The second intern in the following year explored the perception of dialogue among Evangelical communities. The intern had personal experience with evangelical congregations and worked with PCP to conduct the research and analysis in support of future engagement of evangelicals in dialogue projects.

Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence (ISPN) Internships:

Our first intern at ISPN engaged in a project to help research, minimize, and resolve fines for gang-involved, at-risk and recently incarcerated juveniles and adults. These fines for minor infractions (parking violations and so on) can have a serious cumulative impact on the

ability of some to move beyond a violent past towards a better life. The second intern worked with relating the work of ISPN to religious communities in Providence.

Harbor COV (Communities Overcoming Violence) Internship:

Harbor COV is an organization that provides healing edge services to women of color who are survivors of domestic violence. Our intern at Harbor COV worked on documenting the effectiveness of using Peacemaking Circle Process in helping to restore the mental and emotional health of survivors of domestic violence. She conducted interviews with women who have participated in this process, and also researched the viability of using these processes in an organizational setting to enhance staff retention and enable better decision-making. She conducted focus groups and observed circle processes among Harbor COV clients, as well as among the staff who have also begun to use this innovative technique for team-building, cohesion and emotional healing.

Artsbridge Internship:

Artsbridge, Inc. is an inspiring and innovative nonprofit organization based in Salem, MA. Through the use of the arts and dialogue, Artsbridge program works with youth from the Middle East as well as the United States to develop constructive partnerships between people on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their goals include preparing these youth to become strong leaders and change-makers within their communities. Over the past ten years Artsbridge has brought together youth from Israel, Palestine and the US in a three week summer camp, with follow-up sessions in the Middle East Region for continued support. More recently, they are developing partnership in the US to work with youth in other divided communities. The STH student from Nigeria worked with Artsbridge to develop this new

model, develop a strategy for marketing and development, and research funding opportunities. This student brought the Artsbridge model to the Nigerian community in Boston, and continues to seek funding for this partnership.

Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries Internships:

Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries (CMM), founded in 1966, is the greater Boston area's oldest interfaith social justice network. Its mission is "to mobilize congregations and communities across economic, religious, racial, and ethnic boundaries so that, in partnership, we can work more effectively for a just and peaceful society and for spiritual growth and interfaith understanding." Much of CMM's work is focused on public education and organizing through their weekly newsletters, spirituality workshops and special events, interfaith youth programs, and their forgiveness and reconciliation workshops. Interns at CMM participate in a variety of ways, depending on intern interests and the current agenda of CMM events. Two of our students were interns. One student intern served as the "Beloved Community Intern." The main project was to coordinate reflections and study on the nonviolent legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout faith communities across Boston. This project particularly focused on the 50th anniversary of King's important "Beyond Vietnam" speech delivered in 1967, but also included spiritual reflections on the current political environment. The second area of focus was assisting in the public education aspects of CMM's work. This included contributing to CMM's work in their areas of Interfaith Youth Initiative (IFYI) and RUAH Interfaith Spirituality Program. Another student conducted research on peace movements in Korean churches and liberation theology (Min-Jung theology) in Korea, and wrote a report on cross cultural approaches to peace.

Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy Internship:

Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy Inc. (NID) is a non-profit organization that aims to teach the principles and methods of nonviolence in the process of establishing democracy in the Middle East. NID empowers Middle Eastern women to achieve democracy for their countries by promoting a Culture of Nonviolence; promoting electoral democracy through raising public awareness and electoral reform to ensure free and fair elections; encouraging people to develop civil society and increase their political participation; and promoting a culture of equality and affirming actions to ensure full participation of all citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, class, and religion. At NID, the STH student intern from Iran worked on strengthening women's capacity to be capable and powerful leaders and on increasing recognition and support from institutions and the general public in Iran. In NID, the shared vision is for women in Iran to have equal opportunities and the capacity to fully participate in political and societal decision-making processes and for women to be recognized and supported in politics and society as leaders and agents of change. The STH student initiated and broadcasted weekly "Baran 4 Iran" podcast to encourage Iranian women to run for the election. Baran podcasts are designed in five phases of Pre-Registration season; Registration week; post registration; election day; and celebration. Baran's project offered different plans in each phase to support the candidates in accordance with the timeline of the election. The STH student was the producer, host, and editor of the podcasts that more than 68,142 Iranians were able to access over a six-month period.

Trauma Healing Student-Designed Project:

The RCT piloted an initiative to engage a cohort of three students in a self-designed project related to trauma healing. This was a cross-school initiative that engaged one STH student, one Social Work student and one dual-degree student across both schools. The three students of different faiths worked in partnership with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, which serves as a center for healing, teaching and learning for families and communities dealing with murder, trauma, grief and loss. The three interns designed a four-day curriculum to engage Peace Institute staff members in exercises and theological reflection that provided a much-needed respite from their emotionally-intensive work, and a forum for self-care. The students engaged Peace Institute staff in discussions about the need and techniques for such self-care in service of the Peace Institute mission. The program was very well received. In addition, the students reflected on their own collaboration across divisions of faith and discipline which surfaced numerous assumptions and points of misalignment that were ultimately recognized as important opportunities for growth and learning.

Oral History Internship:

Our Oral History intern was actively involved in selecting speakers for the Narrative Power class and in working with student interviewers to support speaker visits to BU STH. She coordinated the visits and oral history interviews of nine peacebuilders across the spectrum of Abrahamic Faiths, including arranging for travel, ensuring that consent forms were signed off, that videographers were engaged and coordinated for each interview, that resulting video materials was uploaded securely. She transcribed the interviews for use in future research. Through this process, our intern learned much about conducting respectful and effective oral histories.

Congregational Workshop Internships:

Each year of the workshop, an intern coordinated the participation of lay leaders and clergy from four churches, arranging for travel, food and other logistics related to planning and executing the Congregational Workshop. They also played a key role in planning and designing the course and supervising church meetings, and working with students to fulfill their learning objectives and those of the congregational partners.

Military Chaplaincy Internship:

Two interns supported this project. The two interns had track records of fostering diversity and inclusion at STH, particularly in relation to LGBTQ issues and interfaith engagement. They helped recruit participants and arrange workshop logistics prior to and during the event. They also helped prepare materials for publication and dissemination at the conclusion.

Student Intern Symposium:

The RCT has held two student intern symposiums. During these symposiums, students had an opportunity to summarize and share their internship projects with others, emphasizing points of new learning and growth that were gained through the experience. They were profound experiences for the interns as well as all those who joined in the conversation with the interns.

Partakers Volunteer Internships:

This program takes students at the School of Theology to MCI Norfolk to visit prisoners who are working towards a college degree through Boston University. Visits are once a month at a minimum and provide both academic and moral support for the Partakers members. Over

the course of the year, students are able to build valuable personal relationships with the prisoners they support. Twelve students have been involved in the program as mentors.

In addition to internships, the RCT Clinic also created special opportunities for community engagement, including:

Non-Violence Workshop:

For the last four years, a total of 42 students from STH have travelled to Providence, RI to partner with the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence in a 2-day workshop. STH students were co-learners with ISPN clients, many of whom are court-involved youth and former gang members, on the nonviolent direct action of Martin Luther King. Together they discussed the importance of values, the principals of nonviolence, and the skills required to act in an intentional, non-violent way.

Military Chaplaincy Conference:

In the spring of 2016, BU hosted a workshop entitled “Pathways to Military Chaplaincy: A Seminary Initiative” in collaboration with Iliff School of Theology and the Forum on Military Chaplaincy. The workshop offered an opportunity to re-envision chaplaincy education for the 21st Century, guided by a commitment to an expanded chaplaincy that reflects more inclusive and progressive perspectives and engages with the trauma of war. Two RCT student interns helped develop and coordinate the conference, and brought their concerns to the conference around LGBTQ issues in the military.

Clinic Classes/Workshops

Mediation Class/Workshop. In partnership with Cape Mediation, a non-profit agency based in Orleans, Massachusetts, RCT sponsored three 32-hour Mediation Workshops for course credit, attended by a total of 39 students. The team of teachers included two retired professors from BU STH among the five seasoned mediators teaching the clinic. The first workshop was held in April 2013 over two weekends. The second workshop was held over two weekends in January and February 2014, and the third over two weekends in January and February 2015. The workshop included two required court mediations on Cape Cod, as well as two papers, one a 3 to 5 page report on a mediation-related book, and a final 10-page paper reflecting on connections between the mediation skills students had learned in the workshop and their theological training at BU. All the students who completed the workshop met the minimum requirement in Massachusetts to mediate court-connected cases and received 4 academic credits. This workshop format provided benefits to all parties involved. The students gained new skills and experience in mediation, and the courts and community gained new mediators to resource the justice system in Massachusetts. Evaluations from the workshop and the mediation were consistently positive. Several students commented that the new skills they developed were immediately applicable in both their personal and professional lives.

Congregational Class/Workshop. In the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2015, RCT sponsored a congregational workshop focused on congregational change, conflict, and healing in the twenty-first century. The approach was collaborative teaching and learning with a mixed group each time, including a student intern, eight student participants in 2013 and seven students plus two pastoral residents in 2015, two United Methodist District Superintendents, and twelve

clergy and lay participants from four ethnically and geographically diverse congregations. The planning was coordinated with Bishop Devadhar of the New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Feedback from participants confirmed that the collaboration between the Academy and Church was innovative and welcome. The class included appreciative study of each congregation, congregational assessments, theological and biblical study, analysis of relationality and power in congregations, and the role of sacraments in peace and reconciliation. Each student was assigned to one of the churches, and they participated with leaders of their assigned congregation to develop plans that would implement their collective insights from the class. The workshop provided theological students a place to explore issues of congregational health and change with pastors, congregational leaders, and STH faculty. Students were also able to share their own wisdom with the churches in a collaborative laboratory setting. For pastors and congregational leaders, the course offered opportunities to explore their congregations' stories and systems, to identify questions and potential responses, and to learn from other participants. Together, the participants learned to be adaptive, transformative, and visionary in leading congregations. In 2015, the course included a visit from previous church participants who had enormously positive feedback on the results they achieved as a result of the program. One person said the revival of her church's preschool had been "like a miracle" since discussing strategies to bring about that revival in the 2013-2014 Congregational workshop. That church had managed to raise enough money not only to revive the preschool but also to fully fund any student in the neighborhood to attend free-of-charge.

Narrative Power and Interfaith Peacebuilding class/workshop. This action-reflection class was co-taught by Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore and Salma Kazmi, the RCT Clinic co-director. The course explored the idea of peace and practices of peacebuilding from the perspective of Jews, Christians and Muslims, as well as the role of narrative in the formation and work of peacebuilders. Students learned the art of oral history interviewing and were able to interview nine peacebuilders from three religious traditions, all of whom are effective leaders in local, national and/or international spheres. The peacebuilders interviewed included scholars and practitioners of interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding across ethnic and religious groups, activists who work on initiatives in Israel-Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East, and one who helps engage Muslim women in peacebuilding in Pakistan. The interviews were video-recorded and served as resources for students' final research papers. They will also be transcribed and made available in the BU STH Oral History Archive.

Islam, Judaism, and Peacebuilding class/workshop. This class was taught by Salma Kazmi and Yehezkel Landau with eleven students. The one-unit course offered introductions to both Islam and Judaism, along with an exploration of how resources within these two traditions can be mobilized for interfaith peacebuilding. Students came to appreciate how similar these two faiths are, grounded in communitarian behavioral norms that concretize faith in everyday rhythms of consecration. Participation in congregational worship (*juma'a* and *Shabbat* evening prayers) added an experiential element to the learning process. And in the final segment of the course, students learned how teachings in both traditions can be tapped to heal conflicts rather than exacerbate them.

Skills, Sensitivities for Interfaith Leadership class/workshop. Yehezkel Landau taught this course. This course was a laboratory for exploring theoretical perspectives and practical methodologies for interfaith leadership. It was designed for students aspiring to be congregational leaders, interfaith educators, or community-based activists. It presumed a basic familiarity with the beliefs and practices of Jews, Christians, and Muslims as well as some experience in interreligious dialogue. The primary focus was on developing skills and tools for interfaith leadership, including: compassionate communication; facilitating interfaith encounters; joint study of sacred texts; tapping spiritual resources for conflict transformation; and designing interfaith devotions.

Transitional Justice and Reconciliation: Healing Collective Wounds class/workshop. In the Spring of 2017, Judith Oleson offered a course entitled, "Transitional Justice and Reconciliation: Healing Collective Wounds." The course addressed the need for transitional justice in communities recovering from genocide and other forms of extreme injustice. Theological frameworks of reconciliation and secular theories of social reconstruction were applied to institutions, communities, public policy and cultures of oppression. Truth telling, public apology, criminal prosecution, reparations, and historical conciliation around issues of colonialism, racial economic and environmental injustice, and war crimes were explored. Institutional reform, community re-building, art innovations, collaborative policy change, and culturally based healing practices were studied as specific strategies towards reconciliation. The first half of the course compared transitional justice processes in the Balkans and Rwanda. The second half examined reconciliation processes between Indigenous communities, mainline churches, and governments in Australia, Canada and the US, to address one hundred years of child removal,

institutionalization and cultural genocide of Indigenous communities. The historical roles of the Church as advocate, bystander or perpetrator were explored, as well as more recent forms of public apology, reparations, and community healing efforts. Students had an opportunity throughout the course to apply frameworks of transitional justice and reconciliation to their own contexts.

Interfaith Engagement Series: The RCT Clinic initiated over the grant period the Interfaith Engagement Series, including:

Teny Gross spoke about his work at the *Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence* in Providence, RI.

Dr. Adam Seligman spoke about his international summer school devoted to exploring diversity and coexistence in different global contexts, called *CEDAR - Communities Engaging with Difference and Religion*.

Salma Kazmi, the Clinic Co-Director, presented an Introduction to Islam in partnership with a student who presented an Introduction to Judaism.

Yusufi Vali, Executive Director of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, spoke about Community Organizing from an Islamic perspective. Mr. Vali discussed his experiences as an organizer for the Obama campaign as well as for the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, and the resonance he finds between the principles of Community Organizing and his Islamic faith.

Kecia Ali, Professor of Religion at BU, spoke about her new book "The Lives of Muhammad." Dr. Ali's discussion at STH was a follow up to a university-wide lecture she had delivered earlier, and allowed the students to engage more intimately with her work on the multiple

interdependent narratives that have been told by Muslims and Non-Muslims about the prophet of Islam.

Salma Kazmi, Clinic Co-Director, also presented a lecture about her trip to Mecca for the annual Hajj. She provided historical and spiritual perspectives as well as personal reflections on her journey.

Partnership Development: A major development in the Clinic's interfaith engagement is the relationship BU STH has developed with Hebrew College. We continue to collaborate with Salma Kazmi as she develops the Islamic Seminary. Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore has worked with Hebrew College to shape a partnership that includes co-taught courses, a co-published journal, and collaborative programs. The relationship is invaluable for STH, HC, and BTI students, and for a wide-ranging public. The RCT Clinic has been the STH leader of the collaborative programs, which are open to students, faculty and the Boston public. These have included:

November 3, 2016 – Interfaith Panel, “Religion and Race in the 2016 Election Cycle” with Dr. Susannah Heschel, Chair, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies, Dartmouth College; Dr. Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion, Boston University; and moderator, Rabbi Daniel Lehmann, President, Hebrew College.

November 7, 2016 – “Stories Across the Divide: Personal Narrative and Interreligious Leadership” with Catherine Burns, Artistic Director, The Moth Radio Hour, PBS James Carroll, acclaimed writer and journalist, *Boston Globe*.

February 7, 2017 – “In Search of Peace and Wholeness: An Evening of Music and Storytelling With The Yuval Ron Ensemble and Friends (from Jewish, Christian and Muslim Traditions).

March 28, 2017 – “Seeking Higher Ground: Religion and Conflict Transformation” with Mark Gopin as featured speaker and faith leaders/scholars from Christian, Jewish and Muslim Traditions.

April 7, 2017 – “Liberation and Renewal: Preparing for Passover and Easter” with faculty presenters from BU School of Theology, BC School of Theology and Ministry and Hebrew College.

On-line course and MOOC: Judith Oleson and Tom Porter are now creating an online course in conflict transformation for the D. Min. program, as well as a MOOC for the School of Theology’s 4-part series in transformative leadership.