

SMALL WORLD NEWSLETTER

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New Coordinator for Peace Studies



Teri Murphy is the new Peace Studies Coordinator for the Mershon Center for International Security Studies. She also teaches courses for International Studies. She received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Teri Murphy is the new Coordinator for Peace Studies at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies. She has been actively engaged in conflict intervention and peacebuilding in several international contexts for the past 25 years. Her primary research interests focus on the intersection between peace, human security, and development.

As a scholar-practitioner, Teri's applied research takes place in conflict-affected settings including Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Turkey/Syria, and the Middle East/North Africa region. Her particular focus is on developing culturally adaptive and complexity sensitive policies and practices for relief, stabilization, development, and transitional processes. She has written several policy briefs

related to Turkey's mediative influence and aid approach in the region.

Teri Murphy is a native of Indiana and has dedicated her working career to the building of peace and furthering our understanding of how and why people engage in conflict and then how to transform and transcend it.

She earned her doctorate in South Africa and expresses special appreciation for what she learned from all people living under the system of apartheid. She learned much from the black South Africans, their struggles, and their journey to liberation. She finds it was a big acknowledgement of our shared humanity. In the effort to mend the wounds from apartheid, there was a dedication to move away from such

ideas as seeing the other side as "evil" or "psychopathic". Those words label a person, and act to finalize an explanation for what happened. Rather, the more demanding process is for perpetrators of violence to take responsibility for their attitudes and actions, to acknowledge that you and the victims of your actions are human beings. We are all part of a moral universe. We are all accountable for our actions.

This is a "restorative model" of post-conflict resolution rather than a "punishing model", said Teri. She has great respect for how the people of South Africa, on all sides, engaged in this process. This experience did much to make her hopeful about the human potential to rise above the antagonism and hatred created by conflict and ine-

Introduction to Peace Studies



Peacekeeping & Collective Security

Dr. Murphy is teaching Introduction to Peace Studies, and Peacekeeping & Collective Security for the 2019-20 Academic Year.

quality.

Dr. Murphy's dissertation work took her to Bosnia in the aftermath of the civil war of the 1990s when the former Yugoslavia broke apart into its constituent ethnic regions.

She worked with Bosnian women who witnessed the death of family in the war and were themselves subject to sexual violence. Some traumas cannot be healed. There are no "right words" to make it better. She learned about the dark side of humanity. These were very sobering experiences. In spite of this, Teri found the women to be very strong. She found they had deepened their commitments to their families and the roles they played in them. Creating stability and building a better future became an important focus for them. But...there are some things you can't get back. There were many endings in Bosnia that were not happy, many traumas never recovered from. Sometimes there are no words that can make it better, and the best that can be hoped for is to move forward in a constructive way.

Teri's motivation to do this work is that she really cares about human beings, especially the vulnerable and scared. She cares about their dignity and is drawn to places where there is fear and pain. She believes in hope and the possibility of transformation. She invites

people to be their better selves. In her academic work she seeks to further her understanding of these processes.

As the Peace Coordinator at Mershon Teri is launching the **Conflict to Peace Lab (C2P)**. This is an effort to forge partnerships in conflict affected regions. She meets with NGOs and other players seeking to bring peace and stability to a conflict zone. As a representative of the Mershon Center, she brings academic support to local practitioners to encourage best practices and create sound policy. She is in Lebanon and South Sudan during the summer of 2019 and is invited to be a project partner in Syria.

In her work, she brings clusters of OSU faculty expertise into these efforts. She notes that governments have their own agendas, NGOs have their own views of peace, and as an important international actor, the United States brings its own views and agenda to the table. Aid donors are also involved, and most importantly, the local people have another view of what is needed. How do we bring these varied actors and their different interests and needs together? Teri finds it to be "very disjointed" in the real world. The C2P Project seeks to help coordinate these views by bringing academic and practical expertise to the discussion.

Meanwhile, back in the classroom and campus of Ohio State, a new student

organization has arisen out of Teri's Spring 2019 International Studies 2800 *Introduction to Peace Studies* class.

The Conflict Project is a group of thirteen class members striving to create an independent student organization. They will apply for OSU status in Autumn 2019. They have an open door policy and seek new members beginning this summer. Please contact Polina Oliynyk if you would like to join (oliynyk.4@osu.edu).

The group seeks to invite students and representatives of varied campus organizations to their meetings and events, including those from conflicting sides of issues from the local to the international level. They will sponsor such events as Narrative Nights (where all sides of an issue can tell their story), pot lucks, workshops and community created artwork.

The underlying agenda of the group is to create a safe place where all sides of a conflict can express themselves. Also, by building and creating as a group, the aim is to increase awareness of our shared humanity and increase understanding. The group does not really seek to change people's minds about the conflicts that will be explored, but rather to "complicate the thinking" of those participating.

The group seeks to facilitate the process whereby a positive peace can be built. This is beyond simply avoiding future conflict, but rather creating bridges so the underlying causes of conflict can be understood by all involved.

The group will soon have a website up and running and intends to have a strong social media presence.

Students already in The Conflict Project represent a great variety of identities and world views. You are invited to join in this effort.