PAX 186a: Introduction to Intercommunal Coexistence
Spring, 2004
Syllabus and Calendar

Instructor
Cynthia Cohen, Ph.D.
Email: cecohen@brandeis.edu
Phone: x62133
Office hours: Wednesdays, 3 – 5

Introduction
Coexistence is a very large field. Entire Master’s programs are devoted to preparing practitioners, and scholars spend their entire careers understanding the meaning of the concept and a broad range of theories that are needed to inform effective interventions in divided communities. These theories derive from many different disciplines, including Anthropology, History, Economics, Politics, Sociology, Education, Theology, Literature, Development, and Psychology.

Effective coexistence work requires more than theoretical knowledge, however. It requires us to understand ourselves and to develop a whole range of capacities that allow us to relate well to others and to mediate conflicts fairly and productively. For instance, we must become aware of our own identities and make choices about how to relate to them. We must develop capacities to listen, to trust, to analyze, to act with both courage and compassion. To engage responsibly in the work of coexistence requires us to be aware of our strengths and limitations and to work in teams with others whose skills complement our own.

To enter the field of coexistence – as a student, teacher, practitioner or scholar – means to begin a long journey filled with questions, doubts, insights, relationships, hopes, disappointments and excitement. An introductory course can only get you started on that journey. It can identify some of the questions and dilemmas that animate work in this arena. It can introduce you to some key concepts and some important scholar/practitioners. It can support you to grow in self-awareness, and to begin to develop the capacities required for coexistence work.

This course will introduce you to the conceptual and practical terrain that comprises the field of coexistence. As the instructor, I will support you to reflect on the steps you have already taken on this journey, and prepare you to continue on this path if you so choose.
**Course goals**
- To examine various meanings of ‘coexistence’ as a concept that refers both to qualities of intergroup relations and to approaches to work in divided communities

- To compare ‘coexistence’ with related concepts, including ‘reconciliation,’ ‘peace,’ and ‘conflict resolution’

- To explore – in theory and in practice – a variety of approaches to coexistence work, focusing in particular on the role that arts and cultural work can play in contributing to coexistence and reconciliation

- To identify key questions that emerge in the field of coexistence, and explore them in relation to particular conflict regions. Such questions include:
  - Is it enough for people to agree to stop injuring each other and to tolerate each other in the future? To what extent does coexistence require adversaries to understand, respect, empathize with, and value each other?
  - To what extent must divided communities grapple with the past? Can past divisions be addressed productively? If so, how?
  - What is the relationship between justice and coexistence? How can injustices be addressed when communities disagree about what is just?
  - When trust has been shattered, is it possible to rebuild it? How?
  - What is the relationship between grassroots coexistence work and changes at the social and political levels?

- To consider ethical questions that emerge in coexistence work

- To gain experience in the practice of coexistence by planning, implementing and reflecting on coexistence/arts project designed to improve intergroup relations at Brandeis University

- To develop a community of inquiry that will support students as they prepare for internships in coexistence and related fields, and/or as they integrate coexistence ideas and practices into their intellectual pursuits and their lives

**Course structure**
The course is composed of several strands of inquiry:

1. **Coexistence theory.** We will explore this by reading several important theorists who write about the meaning of coexistence and who have developed theories about how intergroup relations can best be strengthened.
2) Coexistence practice. We will explore this by reading cases of coexistence projects and engaging in experiential learning activities in and outside of class. One emphasis of this exploration will be the role of arts and culture in promoting coexistence and reconciliation.

3) Coexistence at Brandeis. We will read about the status of coexistence at Brandeis, reflect on issues that are emerging on campus, and design, implement and assess modest programs to improve intergroup relations here on campus.

4) Coexistence in conflict regions. Students will work in small groups to consider the theoretical and practical issues of coexistence in a particular conflict region in the world. In particular, we will use the tools of conflict analysis to map the forces that contribute to the conflict, and examine the various approaches being taken to address the legacy of human rights abuses. We will explore the range of approaches that are being used in each region to promote coexistence and reconciliation.

Course requirements
A portfolio documenting your learning:
Each student will construct a portfolio as a way of documenting your learning journey. In the portfolio you will include responses to assignments, reflections on class activities and discussions, items that you notice in the news or at cultural events that relate to the questions we are considering in the course.

Unless the entry into your portfolio itself consists of reflective writing, each entry (a timeline you construct in class, or a flyer for an on-campus event, a quotation from one of the readings, a sketch or photograph of someone you interview, for instance) should be accompanied by reflective writing that links the entry with the questions we are considering in the course. These reflections should indicate what the entry means to you, how it affects your thinking, and why you feel it is important. They most likely will take the form of two to three pages of prose writing, but you could also consider other forms of reflection, such as a poem or a graphic design.

The purpose of the portfolio is to facilitate your learning, to document it, to help you synthesize it, and to make it visible to others. At certain points throughout the semester, you will be asked to share your portfolio, both with classmates and with the instructor. Since the portfolio is not intended to be a private document, you should feel free to keep private reflections in another form.

You are free to organize the portfolio chronologically or in any other fashion that facilitates your learning.

There will be specific assignments of entries to include in the portfolio. You are also free to include additional entries. In general, however, you should expect to make two or three entries each week: one reflecting on the assigned reading, and one reflecting on activities and discussions in class. The portfolio will account for 40% of the overall grade for the class.
Oral history interview:
Each of you will conduct and reflect on an oral history interview with someone who is different from you in important ways. These interviews and reflections should be completed by class on February 12, just before the winter break.

The interview and your reflections on it accounts for 10% of the grade.

Coexistence and the arts program(s) at Brandeis:
As a class, or working in small teams, we will plan, implement and assess one or more programs that address issues of coexistence and diversity at Brandeis. These programs will be part of the Brandeis Festival of the Arts. Our April 22 class session will be devoted to a program that will take place in the gallery in Shapiro. It could be a café-style event, with each student in the class reading something from your oral history interviews or your portfolios or something you compose just for this event; we can work together to create a space that uses the power of the arts to engage people in understanding each other and addressing important questions. Each student in the class will contribute substantively to this event.

In addition, students who wish can conduct modest interventions designed to bring different groups together.

The planning, implementation and assessment of the arts and coexistence program(s) at Brandeis will account for 10% of your grade.

Final paper synthesizing learning and responding to initial questions:
Each student will write a final paper that synthesizes his or her learning in the course and focuses on one or two central questions. This paper should be 8 – 12 pages long, and should be a formal paper, with a clear structure and appropriate references. First drafts of the paper are due in class on April 29, when we will discuss them. Final versions will be due on Thursday, May 10.

The final paper, including the first and final drafts, account for 20% of the grade.

Class participation:
Each students’ learning in this class depends, to some extent, on the quality of every other students’ participation. Consistent, prompt and alert attendance is expected. Timely completion of readings, viewing of videos and writing of reflections is critical.

Like in many other classes, students in this class are expected to express their thinking. In addition, in the class, there are other communicative skills that are especially valuable:

- Eliciting ideas and feelings from other members of the class by asking questions of each other
- Supporting other students to refine and clarify ideas
Expressing feelings in ways that others can hear and learn from
  Listening attentively and receptively so others can fully explore their thoughts and feelings

Your attendance and the quality of your participation in class sessions accounts for 20% of the grade.

Note: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you, please see the instructor before the second session of class.

Required texts:


Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*. Beacon Press. 1998

PAX 186a: Introduction to Coexistence Spring 2004

Outline of Sessions

SESSION 1: Thursday, January 15
• Overview of course and questions we will explore
• Oral history activity and discussion

SESSION 2: Thursday, January 22
• The meaning of coexistence
• Exploring our identities

SESSION 3: Thursday, January 29
• Reconciliation in our relationships
• The meaning of reconciliation
• The importance of context

SESSION 4: Thursday, February 5
• Artistic and cultural approaches to coexistence and reconciliation
• The nature of aesthetic engagement
• Photo L’engage

SESSION 5: Thursday, February 12
• Sharing portfolios
• Planning for Arts Festival event(s)

SESSION 6: Thursday, February 26
• Conflict analysis and transformation

SESSION 7: Thursday, March 4
• Analyzing regional conflicts
• Sharing portfolios

SESSION 8: Thursday, March 11
• Trials, tribunals, truth commissions and memorials

SESSION 9: Thursday, March 18
• Trials, tribunals, truth commissions and memorials in conflict regions
• Sharing portfolios

SESSION 10: Thursday, March 25

• Connecting work at grassroots, elite and policy levels
• Finalizing plans for Brandeis events

SESSION 11: Thursday, April 1

• Ethical issues in coexistence practice
• Should oppressed people listen to their oppressors?
• Sharing portfolios

SESSION 12: Thursday, April 22

• Festival of the Arts Program

SESSION 13: Thursday, April 29

• Reviewing drafts of integrative essays
• Sharing portfolios
• Review and evaluation of course
SESSION 1: Thursday, January 15

- Overview of course and questions we will explore
- Oral history activity and discussion

ASSIGNMENT FOR 1/22:

Read the following:

- Read Cohen, “Listening is the Beginning of Peace” in Cohen, II-1.3 – II-1.R16
- Read Weiner, “Coexistence Work: A New Profession” (handout, pages 13 – 24.)
- Read Ogata, “Imagining Coexistence in Conflict Communities”, in Chayes and Minow, pp. xi-svi.
- Read Chayes and Minow, “Introduction,” in Chayes and Minow, pp. xvii – xxiii

Work on your portfolio:

- Create structure for your portfolio
- Prepare portfolio entry reflecting on class session
- Prepare portfolio entry on one or more of the readings

ASSIGNMENT FOR 2/12

Conduct an oral history interview with someone who is different from you ways that are salient to you. The person you choose might or might not be a member of the class; he or she might or might not be members of the Brandeis community. Write up two or three excerpts from this interview. These excerpts could be stories, or descriptions, or images. Choose aspects of the interview that evoked new insights or strong feelings for you. Enter these excerpts into your portfolio and add your reflections. Your reflections can be in the form of personal comments, a poem, an illustration, or some combination. Be prepared to share these in class on February 12, our last session together before winter break.

SESSION 2: Thursday, January 22

- The meaning of coexistence
- The importance of identity
ASSIGNMENT FOR 1/29:

Read:
- Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation: pp. 1 – 91
- Lederach, “Reconciliation: The Building of Relationship” pp. 23 – 35 in Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (handout)
- Cohen, “What is the Meaning of Reconciliation?” – handout
- Assefa, “Reconciliation” (pp. 336-342 in Reychler)(hand-out)

View:
- Long Night’s Journey Into Day (video on reserve in the library)

Add to your portfolio:
- Entry reflecting on identity work in class
- One or two entries on reading and video

SESSION 3: Thursday, January 29
- Submit portfolios for review
- Reconciliation in our relationships
- The meaning of reconciliation
- The importance of context

ASSIGNMENT FOR 2/5

Read
- Krondorfer, Remembrance and Reconciliation: complete book
- Cohen, “Removing the Dust from Our Hearts”
- Cohen, “Engaging with the Arts to Promote Coexistence”, in Chayes and Minow

Add to your portfolio:
- Entry reflecting on reconciliation work in class
- Reflection on Krondorfer and Cohen

SESSION 4: Thursday, February 5
- Artistic and cultural approaches to coexistence and reconciliation
- The nature of aesthetic engagement

ASSIGNMENT FOR 2/12
Read:
- Read Cobb, “Fostering Coexistence in Identity-based Conflicts,” in Chayes and Minow, pp. 294-311

Add to your portfolio:
- Excerpts from oral history interview and your reflection them

Bring to class:
- Ideas of how you can contribute to a reading/storytelling/arts event on April 22
- (Optional): Ideas for other arts/coexistence interventions to strengthen intergroup relations at Brandeis

SESSION 5: Thursday, February 12

- The importance of narrative
- Sharing & submitting portfolios
- Preparing for Arts Festival event(s)

ASSIGNMENT FOR 2/26

Read:
- Assefa, “Coexistence and Reconciliation in the Northern Region of Ghana, in Abu-Nimer; pp. 165-186
- Francis, People, Peace and Power.
- Begin research on regions, generating reading list

View: Lecture by Hizkias Assefa on approaches to peacebuilding in Africa: the case of Northern Ghana

Prepare entries for your portfolio:
- Prepare at least one entry mapping conflict at Brandeis
- Prepare at least one entry mapping conflict situation described by Dr. Assefa

WINTER BREAK – No class February 19.

SESSION 6: Thursday, February 26

- Conflict analysis and transformation
ASSIGNMENT FOR 3/4

Read:
- Articles, books, internet sites pertaining to the region you are studying – prepare list with input and agreement from instructors

View:
- Videotapes pertaining to the region you are studying

Prepare entries for your portfolio:
- Reflection on previous class session
- Entries linking conflict transformation analyses with readings on your region

SESSION 7: Thursday, March 4

- Analyzing regional conflicts
  - Sharing and submitting portfolios

ASSIGNMENT FOR 3/11

Read:
- Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*

Prepare entries for your portfolio:
- Reflection on *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*
- Reflection on one or more of the videos

SESSION 8: Thursday, March 11

- Coexistence, reconciliation and justice

ASSIGNMENT FOR 3/18

Read chapters from Abu-Nimer and other articles pertaining to coexistence, reconciliation and justice in the region you are studying

View videos relating to the region you are studying, and at least one of the following:
- Regret to Inform (American and Viet Namese widows)
- The Flute Player (Cambodia)
- Gacaca – justice in Rwanda
Prepare entries for your portfolio:
- How is history being addressed (or not) in the region you are studying?
- How is justice being sought in the region you are studying?
- How are cultural work and the arts being used to address painful history and questions of justice in the region you are studying?

SESSION 9: Thursday, March 18

- Coexistence, reconciliation and justice in conflict regions
- *Sharing and submitting portfolios*

ASSIGNMENT FOR MARCH 25

Read:
- Anderson, Mary; *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*  
  [http://www.cdainc.com/cda/cda-publications.php#books](http://www.cdainc.com/cda/cda-publications.php#books)

Prepare for your portfolio:
- Reflections on *Confronting War*
- Reflections on previous class

SESSION 10: Thursday, March 25

- Connecting work at grassroots, elite and policy levels (possible guest speaker Dr. Mari Fitzduff)
- Finalizing plans for Brandeis interventions

ASSIGNMENT FOR APRIL 1

Read:

Prepare entries for your portfolio:
- Selected worksheets from *Working with Integrity*, as assigned in class
- Reflections on previous class

SESSION 11: Thursday, April 1

- Ethical issues in coexistence practice
• Should oppressed people listen to their oppressors?

ASSIGNMENT FOR APRIL 22

Prepare for:
• Arts Festival Program (and coexistence interventions)
Review and revise portfolio entries

SPRING BREAK: No class April 8
BRANDEIS TUESDAY: No class April 15

SESSION 12: Thursday, April 22
Festival of the Arts Programs – Coexistence interventions

ASSIGNMENT FOR APRIL 29

Prepare draft of essay integrating learning experiences from course

Finalize and prepare your portfolio to be turned in

SESSION 13: Thursday, April 29

• Reviewing drafts of integrative essays
• Turn in essay drafts for feedback
• Sharing portfolios with other students
• Group work – sharing learning, appreciation, feedback, etc.

ASSIGNMENT FOR MAY 10:

Complete and turn in portfolio and 8 – 12 page integrative essay that summarizes your learning on a theme, question or topic of your choice.