

Stroup, Sarah

From: Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation
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Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 4:24 PM
To: Stroup, Sarah
Subject: CT Collaborative Newsletter, Winter 2024

Letter from the Director



Winter Term Faculty, Staff, and Partners of the CT Collaborative, January 2024. Credit: Sarah Stroup

It has been a great start to 2024 at the Conflict Transformation (CT) Collaborative. At the college, Winter Term has just ended. We had almost fifty college students enrolled in Winter Term courses on conflict transformation and restorative justice, learning from outside experts like MacArthur fellow sujatha baliga and United Nations mediation advisor Francisco Diez. I am tired and happy after another term teaching “Conflict Transformation Skills” with my friend Julian Portilla, an international mediator.

The scope of this work is wide, but the human relationships at the center of conflict transformation make this effort rich and rewarding. I sat with some of our community partners at a retreat at Kirk Alumni Center several weeks ago, seeking to better understand how we can support students’ skills in conflict as they enter new environments and organizations. Today, as I bought my plane ticket to California for the “Transforming Conflict” seminar in May, a student

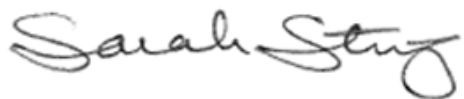
walked in to share about their CT-funded course in St. Vincent, where they learned how contemporary land use is shaped by a legacy of slavery and the plantation system. In a few weeks, Bread Loaf School of English teachers will be back in Ripton for their first ever Winter Institute. It is exciting to see how the lens of conflict transformation can enhance the already excellent teaching and learning across the global Middlebury institution.

Even when conflict is relatively constructive, it still is not easy. Over the past year, I have been fortunate to work with students, staff, and faculty interested in supporting constructive campus conversations about Israel and Palestine. The violence at the end of 2023 reinforced our commitment to this effort. Working in relationships and bringing forth curiosity and compassion are practices that are central to both the liberal arts and conflict transformation. To read about these efforts and our other projects in 2023, please download our 2023 Annual Report from the [Resources](#) page at our website.

Come see us! Our offices in Vermont are in Marbleworks 203 (152 Maple Street).

- Community Hours: this spring, join us Mondays 2-4 pm. We have snacks, warm drinks, strong wifi, a growing library, and great interns!
- Follow us on [Instagram](#)
- Listen to our podcast, [Opening Up](#)

With gratitude and hope,



Experiential Learning and Reflection on Conflict

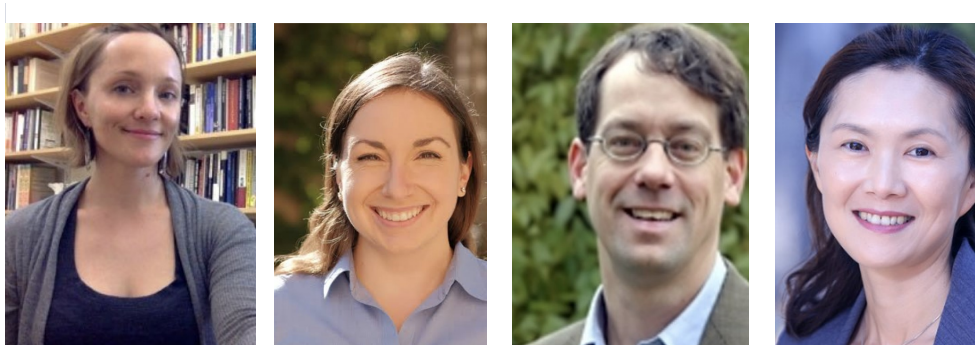
The applications for CT-supported opportunities in Summer 2024 are open or will open soon! The 2024 [Privilege and Poverty](#) Addison County summer internship applications are open, and interested students should apply on Handshake by February 18th [here](#). Watch for announcements of other summer opportunities from the Center for Community Engagement [here](#).

In 2023, over one hundred students participated in CT-supported internships, experiences, and treks where they learned about and experienced many types of conflicts. One key aspect of the experiential “lifecycle” is the ability to reflect afterwards on the lessons and skills gained from those experiences and to consider how to incorporate their learning into their professional, academic, and civic lives. At an October dinner, students reflected in small groups on the kinds of conflicts they encountered in their community-based work, and what they found useful for constructive engagement. Liza Grebenkina ‘25, who has engaged in both Privilege & Poverty and diiVe internships, recalled, “I found myself in several situations of conflict, and I thought that it was really useful to just talk to people around me, be really honest, and be transparent.”

New 2024 CT Faculty Research Grants Announced

Every year, we award \$500,000 to faculty at the College and Institute to support new projects in conflict analysis and transformation. We received a record 30 applications for this year’s cycle. The eleven exciting projects span many disciplines and issues. A few examples include:

- self-determination in conservation management in Madagascar (Mez Baker-Medard, Environmental Studies),
- strengthening verification in the Biological Weapons Convention (Allison Berke, CNS),
- research on trigger warnings (Matthew Kimble, Psychology), and
- Supporting intercultural citizenship for North Korean refugees (Heekyeong Lee, TESOL/TFL)



For the full list of 2024 recipients and their projects, [see here](#). Other CT recipients are sharing their work on conflict with policymakers and the public:

- Sarah Bidgood (2022 recipient) will speak about “strategic empathy” at the U.S. Defense Department's Defense Threat Reduction Agency in spring 2024.
- The six artist visits in the Dance Department’s “Global Body in Conflict” series (2023 culminated in a residency with SLMDances, including a January 2024 public workshop with 80 attendees in honor of MLK Jr. Day.
- A November symposium hosted by Laurie Essig and Carly Thomsen (2023 recipients) showcased student projects that explored feminist studies and activism (article [here](#)).

Look for an announcement of May events featuring the 2023 grant recipients. Many thanks to our 2024 selection committee - Jeffrey Knopf, David Wick, Lida Winfield, and Jamie McCallum!

Partnerships and Constructive Conflict at the Institute

Mark your calendars for **May 10** for the Annual Transforming Conflict Seminar at MIIS!



Photo Credit: Brett Simison

This day-long event will be held on the Monterey campus, with opportunities to engage remotely. Here at the start of the spring semester, the CT Cohort Fellows are continuing to learn about and apply approaches to constructive conflict and developing their independent projects that will be presented at the seminar. The 36 Fellows who started in the fall are joined by three new fellows this semester. They have been working with 7 Mentor Fellows since the beginning of the academic year.

One key principle of conflict transformation is working in relationships, engaging collaboratively alongside community members focused on advancing positive social change. One of MIIS' key partnerships is with the Ohlone Sisters of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. The Ohlone Sisters were invited to give an opening blessing at the November unveiling of the new McCone Mural and have been integral in shaping the collective land acknowledgment process at MIIS.

BLSE's first Winter Institute!



This February, the Bread Loaf School of English (BLSE) will brave the snow on the Ripton, VT campus during a first-ever Winter Institute: *Teaching, Writing, and Acting Across Difference*. Sponsored by the CT Collaborative, this program will provide 12 professional development credit hours for 50 public and private school teachers, the majority from Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York. The faculty who lead the CT summer curriculum, along with other members of the BLSE faculty and staff, will head the Winter Institute, exploring the ways that writing, oral and literary histories, photography, creative practices, and community-based learning and languages foster connection across difference.

Recently approved by New York State as a provider of professional education, BLSE has over a century of experience offering course content for teachers, and its impact on K–12 classrooms is bolstered by the Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN), a nationally visible network of teachers and youth committed to using literacy to further social justice. For more on the Winter Institute, [see here](#).

Building Classes and Capacity at the College

After piloting a new “Conflict Transformation Skills” course last year, we are developing additional college courses to build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support constructive conflict.

Three new CT courses will be offered in 2024: “Theories and Fundamentals of Conflict Transformation,” taught by Chong-suk Han (Sociology), “Restorative Justice Theory and Practice,” taught by visiting instructor sujatha baliga, and “Mindfulness and CT Skills,” taught by Melissa Hammerle (Education Studies). Conflict Transformation is also being integrated into existing courses and trainings, from the Privilege and Poverty cluster to the Experiential Learning Hub to our collaboration with Beyond the Page (BtP).

Faculty and staff continue to build skills to understand and support constructive conflict over the long term. Residential Life staff completed a two-day training course on facilitating community-building circles, and this fall, seven faculty and staff completed trainings at the Center for Restorative Justice in San Diego. Meanwhile, the Engaged Listening Project (ELP) offers training in structured dialogue, active listening, and curious questions to faculty and staff who meet in semester-long cohorts. For Spring 2024, 18 new participants were selected out of 31 applications for the ELP. In this peer facilitation model, professors Will Nash, Michole Biancosino, Lida Winfield, and Chong-suk Han will lead the cohorts.



ELP faculty facilitators Michole Biancosino and Will Nash

Global Engagement in Constructive Conflict

In the Schools Abroad, students from Middlebury and other schools have opportunities to analyze and understand conflict dynamics up close, while developing their own capacities for intercultural communication. This fall, we have been developing a “Schools Abroad CT Toolkit” and supporting projects in Spain, France, Uruguay, Argentina, and Japan.

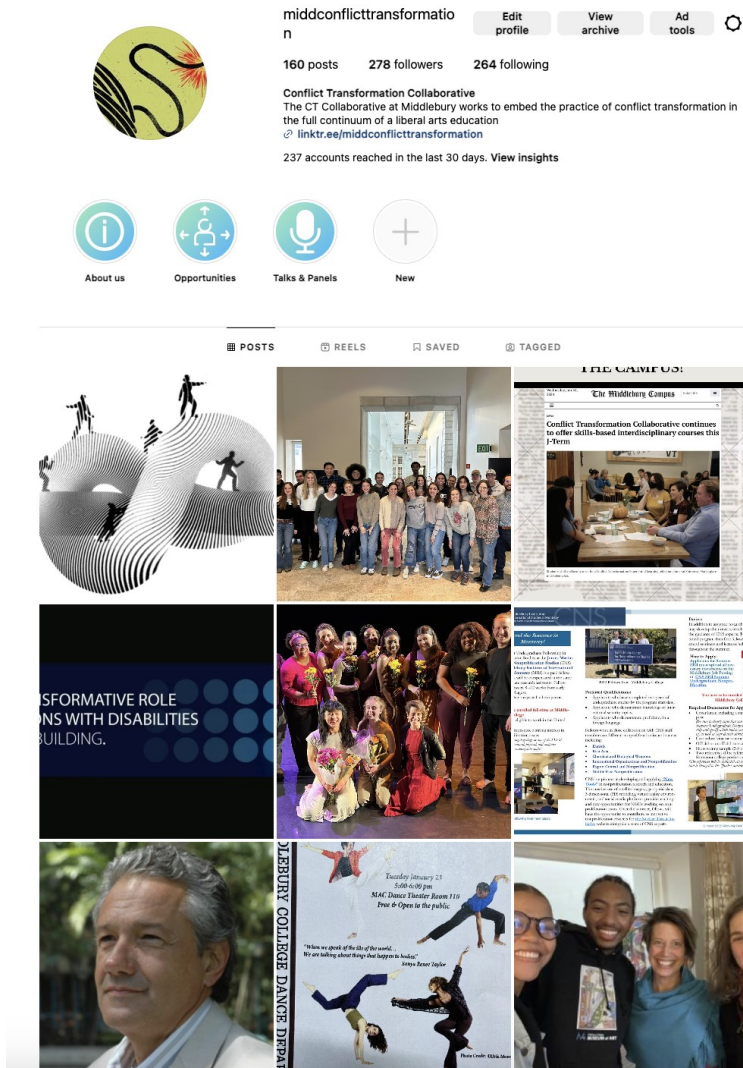


Students in “Water Conflict and Development in Southeast Asia” at the US Embassy in Hanoi for a briefing in January 2024

In a new pilot effort, we are supporting a select group of global courses taught by College and Institute faculty in which students and faculty travel to field sites to learn from and work with community members. This Winter, two courses took students around the world. Anthropology professor Michael Sheridan’s course, “Land and Society in the Caribbean,” traveled to St. Vincent to understand community conflict over land rights and models of community development. Meanwhile, students in “Water Conflict and Development in Southeast Asia” have accompanied professors Wei Liang and Jessica Teets to Thailand and Vietnam, exploring access to water, impacts on low-income farmers, and environmental insecurity.

That's all... for now!

For continuous updates, check out our [website](#) and Instagram: [@middconflicttransformation](#)



The Conflict Transformation Instagram page.

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