

Unusual minor explores peace

□ The interdisciplinary peace studies minor raises awareness of alternatives to violence and ways to improve the world

By Lisa Millegan
Emerald Associate Editor

Sometimes there are benefits to not having a lot of money.

At least that's what they say in the University peace studies program, which gets so little money that it's staffed largely by volunteers.

"One nice thing about having only \$1,000 (a year) is you know they're not going to cut you off," said Rob Gould, a sometimes graduate teaching fellow with the program.

When a group of professors, students and staff first began discussing the possibility of creating a peace studies minor back in the early 1980s, they knew they couldn't ask for much money because the University was already encountering budget difficulties.

Out of fear that the program wouldn't be approved at all, the group decided to ask for as little money as possible.

Because the University's money situation hasn't improved that much since 1987 when the program was finally instituted, the eight-member peace studies steering committee is still staffed by professors who volunteer their time.

"It's kind of a labor of love for most people," said Cheyney Ryan, co-chairman of the peace studies steering committee.

Although most committee professors are strongly committed to the program, many have difficulty finding time to spend on the minor, Ryan said.

"People don't have time," Ryan said. "If we had more time we'd be able to do more for the program. It's hard to sustain people's energy and commitment for a long period of time when they're volunteers."

An interdisciplinary minor, the University peace studies program offers no specific peace studies courses. Instead students take classes in departments including philosophy, political science, international studies and even telecommunications and film.

Courses have titles such as "Intro to World Value Systems" (international studies), "War in the Modern World" (history) and "Systems of War and Peace" (sociology).

According to the program's brochure, the minor "addresses the conditions which constitute the alternative to violence, and how to promote them; and the strategies for achieving peace in its various forms."

Gould said the peace studies program is good for students who want to improve the world.

"A lot of students at the University are in pre-wealth studies," he said. "They want to make a lot of money. On the other hand, there's a lot of

people (interested in peace studies) who come to higher education to see how they can contribute to life on this planet."

The minor is available to all University undergraduates and has no admission requirements. Gould said many peace studies minors have majors in philosophy, English and the arts.

Some of the highlights of the program are the classes taught each year by the visiting Savage Scholar.

Each year, a professor from a different part of the world comes to the University for a term to teach classes in peace and international affairs. This year's scholar was Japanese professor Yoshikazu Sakamoto, who was at the University fall term.

Senior Kent Hill said he was attracted to the peace studies minor because he's always tried to challenge the status quo. A work study student with the program, Hill said his interest in peace studies increased after the Persian Gulf War last year.

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— Rob Gould,
peace studies GTF

"I had all these feelings and I needed to feel them out," he said.

He particularly enjoyed a telecommunications and film class titled "History of Non-Violence and Peace Making." He said the class taught him, among other things, about how much more difficult it is for people to communicate than to fight.

Although Hill said it wasn't the primary reason he became involved in the peace studies program, he thinks the minor will be useful in his post-college plans to work in peace groups.

Senior Anthony Weersing came to the peace studies minor more by accident. After awhile, he realized he had taken many of the classes needed for the minor so he decided to apply for one.

Weersing said he enjoyed peace studies classes because they give students a "feeling of empowerment or a desire to contribute to change."

He believes his peace studies minor will be useful in his career plans of working with giving technical support to Third World countries.

For the future, peace studies program planners are talking about developing some sort of joint bachelor's degree program with Portland State University or Oregon State University.

Such a plan would combine the strengths of existing state programs without using a lot more money, Ryan said.

Group seeks legal use of marijuana for the sick

SALEM (AP) — The anti-drug fervor that's sweeping the country is denying sick people a chance to use marijuana to ease their suffering, says a group that's seeking changes in state drug laws.

"When people seek pain relief, they are given rhetoric about the evils of drugs," Laird Funk of Williams said Monday. "We cannot allow this travesty to go on any longer."

Funk made the comment as backers of a measure to legalize use of marijuana for medical purposes announced they've started collecting petition signatures in hopes of forcing a statewide vote on the issue.

A group calling itself the Partnership for a Responsible Drug Policy said marijuana offers therapeutic benefits for people who suffer from glaucoma and from the effects of chemotherapy.

The group's measure would allow physicians to prescribe

marijuana to their patients.

Most doctors are aware of marijuana's therapeutic benefits in treating sick people. Funk said, "but they are scared to say anything about it" because marijuana has become so politically unpopular.

Rosanna Creighton, executive director of Citizens For a Drug Free Oregon, said the proposed ballot measure is just another attempt to legalize marijuana.

"The main thing that we want citizens to know is what it will do, not what people say it will do," Creighton said. "What it will do is legalize the cultivation and possession of marijuana in Oregon. It's just a hoax."

Supporters will have to round up at least 67,000 valid signatures by July 3 to place the measure on the November ballot. They said they've already gotten about 1,000 of those signatures.

PROGRAM ASSISTANT
U of O Residence Halls

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