

Specializations

Students in both MA programs are encouraged to develop a specialization within their degree that is aligned with their vocational goals. Students will work with their advisor to assess their interests and goals and will plan their course of study to develop their specialization. A specialization will typically be rooted in two or three thematic courses, complemented by research and skills classes particularly relevant to that area of practice. Each student will be encouraged to create a portfolio of projects that build and demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Here are some sample specializations for students in the MA in Conflict Transformation program:

- Students wanting to specialize in **civil society peacebuilding for societies in transition** might want to take a mix of classes from strategic peacebuilding (e.g. mobilization and war-to-peace transitions) and / or in development (e.g. conflict-sensitive development); a class in leadership for healthy organizations and a trauma course; the research class in either program evaluation or the action research; and skills classes on facilitation and/or on negotiation and mediation.
- Students wanting to concentrate in **transforming a society or a large system over a sustained period** might want to take a mix of classes from strategic peacebuilding (such as mobilization and conflict coaching) combined with other courses that help them understand how to work with communities (e.g. building communities) and/or organizations (one of the organizational classes offered). They will also want to make sure they have developed a wide array of skills used to lead processes in changing systems (for example: facilitation, three dimensional negotiation, circles processes, and a course on designing and delivering workshops and trainings). They could choose a research class that focuses on working with communities (action research) and/or monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of change initiatives.
- Students wanting to specialize in **organizational consulting and/or leadership coaching** would want to consider taking “Organizational Behavior” (offered through the MBA program) and “Leading Organizational Change,” as well as a course in conflict coaching. Because of the amount of information gathering and analysis needed in organizational consulting, they will also benefit from the “Research Methods” course. Finally, they will want to select skills courses focused on negotiation, mediation and facilitation.
- Students wanting to **teach and mentor others in peacebuilding practices** should make sure they have a fully grounded understanding of the core skills in the field (mediation, negotiation, facilitation as examples) combined with an understanding of how to develop and deliver workshops and short courses (designing learner centered training is usually offered in SPI). They should also become familiar with challenges to effective learning, such as strategies to help others deal with trauma so that they can embrace new ideas and practices. Crucial to this area of practice are the classes on program evaluation or monitoring and evaluation. Since workshops and trainings often evolve into ongoing coaching work with key individuals, students wanting to engage in this type of work should also consider taking the conflict coaching class.
- Students wanting to focus on **the theory, practice and integration of psychosocial trauma and peacebuilding** will want to take the courses in the standard specialization; and consider exploring other courses in restorative and transitional justice, reconciliation, faith-based peacebuilding, arts/media/peacebuilding, war-to-peace transitions, public policymaking, international development, leadership, community organizing and program evaluation. A combination of these courses, in conjunction with the required practicum experience, will

professionally prepare persons to work in agencies concerned with the integration of psychosocial trauma and peacebuilding in post-war and post-violence/disaster circumstances. This set of courses will also provide an important foundation to those individuals who want to pursue an advanced graduate degree in trauma-informed approaches to peacebuilding. Students also have an opportunity to become certified trainers or practitioners affiliated with the Strategies for Trauma and Awareness (STAR) program. Please see “Process for MA students Wanting to Become STAR Trainers” for more information on this.

- Students wanting to **work with organizations to improve social change and social justice initiatives** will want to take courses that include a focus on strategic thinking, community-building and public policy, organizational leadership, and as many courses as they can get on research, monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Students would also want to ensure they have developed skills to design and deliver workshops and trainings, and to understand and utilize various approaches to social change including arts- and media-based approaches. (Most arts- and media-based courses are offered during SPI.) This combination of coursework will prepare students to lead and increase the effectiveness of social justice and social movement organizations working at the grassroots to national levels.

Here are some sample specializations for students in the MA in Restorative Justice program:

- Students wanting to **advocate for restorative justice at a macro-systems level** will want to take the 3 required restorative justice (RJ) courses to lay the foundation for RJ theory and practice. Added to these foundational courses, students would want to consider exploring courses that focus on war-to-peace transitions, transitional justice, peacebuilding in traumatized societies, public policymaking, international development, and nonviolent social movements. This combination of coursework would be ideal preparation for professional advancement with international agencies working at the change within global, national and governmental institutions, structures and legislation.
- Students wanting to integrate **restorative justice and community development** will want to take the three restorative justice courses listed above in order to lay the foundation for RJ theory and practice. Added to these foundational courses, students would want to consider exploring courses that focus on conflict sensitive development, building communities, community organizing, organizational development and leadership, social narratives, and program evaluation, monitoring and evaluation. This combination of coursework would be ideal preparation for professional advancement with international and national agencies working at meso-level change within urban and rural community systems.
- Students wanting to weave together **restorative justice, trauma healing and reconciliation** will want to take the three standard restorative justice courses to lay the foundation for RJ theory and practice. Added to these foundational courses, students would want to consider exploring courses that focus on trauma awareness, resiliency and STAR, forgiveness and reconciliation, identity-based conflicts, societal narratives and specific training in RJ skill-sets, including circle processes and victim-offender conferencing. This combination of coursework would be ideal preparation for professional advancement with local and domestic agencies working at change at an individual or small group level.

We also offer a growing array of courses that use **media and theater practices** for peacebuilding and justice work. These methods can be incorporated into any of the focus areas listed above.