

2024 MAYDAY! PEACE CONFERENCE



NAVIGATING CONFLICT

How do we communicate across
differences and work toward peace?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1 | 10-11:30 A.M. | CEC ECKHOFF ALUMNI HALL



The annual MAYDAY! Peace Conference was established in 1981 with funding by the late Florence and Raymond Sponberg. It was created to inspire attendees to work for justice and peace throughout the world.

The Conference teach-in and panel discussion model spotlights the expertise of Gustavus faculty and demonstrates informed conversation across disciplines.

The goals for the MAYDAY! teach-in are to demonstrate:

- How to engage in dialogue across multiple personal and intellectual perspectives
 - How to engage in a topic as an informed member of society
 - How to listen and ask questions with curiosity
 - How the liberal arts can engage in the issues of peace
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**Celebrating 50 Years of
Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies
at Gustavus**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies (PJCS) program at Gustavus, which makes it one of the oldest peace studies programs in the country. PJCS is an interdisciplinary field of study that addresses the problems of war, social oppression, and violence, and the challenges of implementing nonviolent conflict resolution and social justice.

MAYDAY! PEACE CONFERENCE

Welcome and Introductions

Rebecca M. Bergman

President, Gustavus Adolphus College

Yurie Hong

MAYDAY! Chair and

Professor in Greek, Latin, and Classical Studies

Keynote Remarks

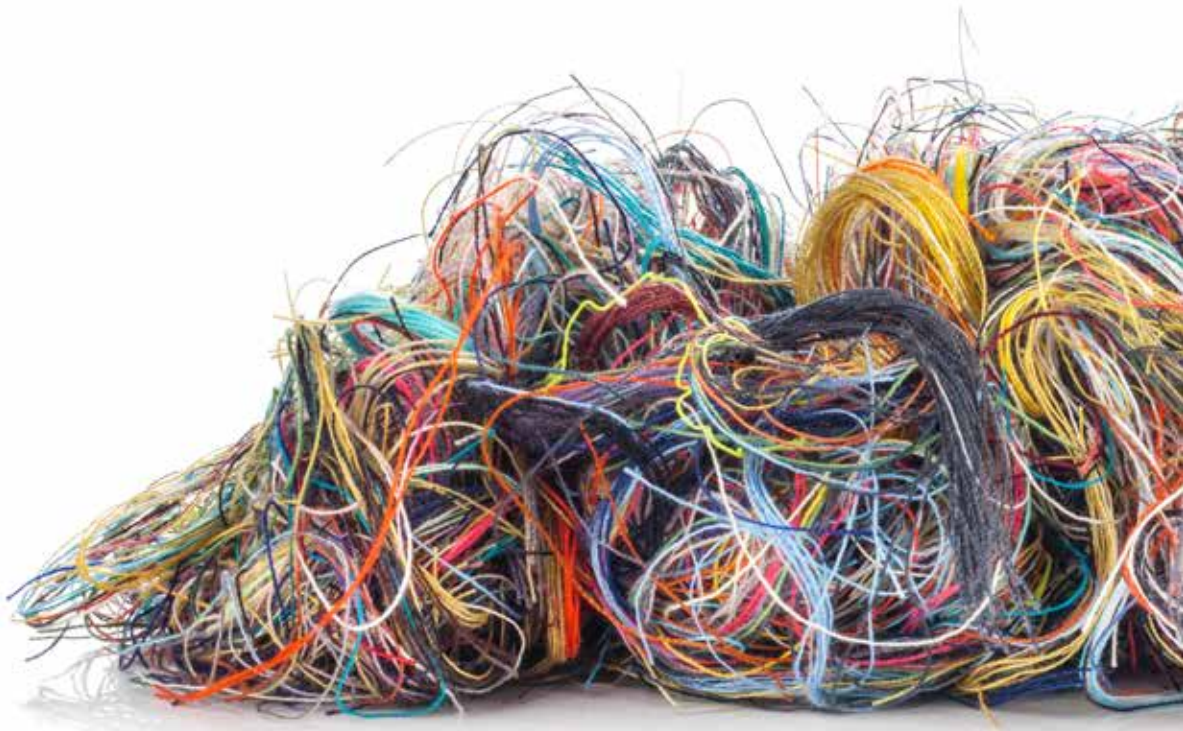
Carlos Mejía Suarez

Professor of Modern Languages

Panel Discussion

Audience “Learn More” Opportunities

Closing



FACULTY PANELISTS

Keynote Speaker



Carlos Mejía Suarez, Professor of Modern Languages, Literature, and Cultures

Carlos Mejía Suarez has been a faculty member at Gustavus since 2013. His areas of expertise are modern languages, literature, and cultures; Spanish; Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean studies; comparative literature; peace studies; and gender, women, and sexuality studies.

Moderator



Kate Knutson, Professor of Political Science

Kate Knutson has been a faculty member at Gustavus since 2005. Her research and teaching interests include U.S. politics and government, public policy, the U.S. Congress, political interest groups, and gender and politics.



Panelists



Marie Walker, Professor of Psychological Science

Marie Walker has been a faculty member at Gustavus since 1998. Her areas of expertise include emerging adult identity development, political identity and behaviors, emotional self-regulation, and social psychology.



Joaquin Villanueva, Professor of Environment, Geography, and Earth Science

Joaquin Villanueva has been a faculty member at Gustavus since 2013. His areas of expertise include urban geography, political geography, carceral geography, legal geography, and social theory. He is also co-director in the Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies Program.



Martha Ndakalako, Assistant Professor in English

Martha Ndakalako has been at Gustavus since 2021. Her areas of expertise include African feminisms, African literature, and global anglophone literature.



Rachel Flynn, Academic Librarian

Rachel Flynn was a visiting faculty member at Gustavus from 2018-2020 and returned in 2023 as an instructor in the Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library. Her areas of expertise include critical information literacy, research skills, digital liberal arts, and maker spaces.

Program Consultant



Kathy Lund Dean, Professor of Management

Kathy Lund Dean has been a faculty member at Gustavus since 2012 and is the inaugural holder of the Board of Trustees Distinguished Chair in Leadership and Ethics. Her areas of expertise include leadership strategy, experiential learning practice and scholarship, ethics, and conflict management.



NAVIGATING

How do we communicate across differences

At a time when there is so much conflict—in world events, national politics, and even in our personal lives—how do we engage with others and find common ground? This MAYDAY! teach-in dives into peace-inspired strategies for navigating conflict and recognizing our shared humanity even when we disagree.

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Understanding Conflict.

- **Conflict arises when one or both parties perceive a threat.** It is more than just a disagreement.
- **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not to an objective review of the facts.** Our perceptions are influenced by our emotions, circumstances, life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
- **Conflicts trigger strong emotions.** Getting comfortable with your emotions and managing them in times of stress helps resolve conflict successfully.
- **Conflicts do not go away when ignored.** If the conflict requires our attention (and not every situation does), it stays with us until we face and resolve it.
- **Conflicts are an opportunity for growth.** Resolving conflict strengthens relationships by building trust—even if you continue to disagree.
- **There may not be a final outcome.** Managing conflict is a process that requires embracing the discomfort of uncertain outcomes.



How Do You Respond to Conflict?

- **Embrace Conflict** > Conflict is understood as engagement, interest, and investment
- **Accept Conflict** > Conflict is understood as a naturally occurring part of human interaction
- **Avoid Conflict** > Conflict is understood as dysfunctional and bad

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO NAVIGATING CONFLICT

In order to sustain a more peaceful society, we must be able to engage productively in conflict and resist the impulse toward contempt, which can lead to dehumanization, polarization, and violence. Not everyone, however, will be able to manage their approach to conflict in the same ways. There are different privileges and risks involved for people who occupy different positions of power.

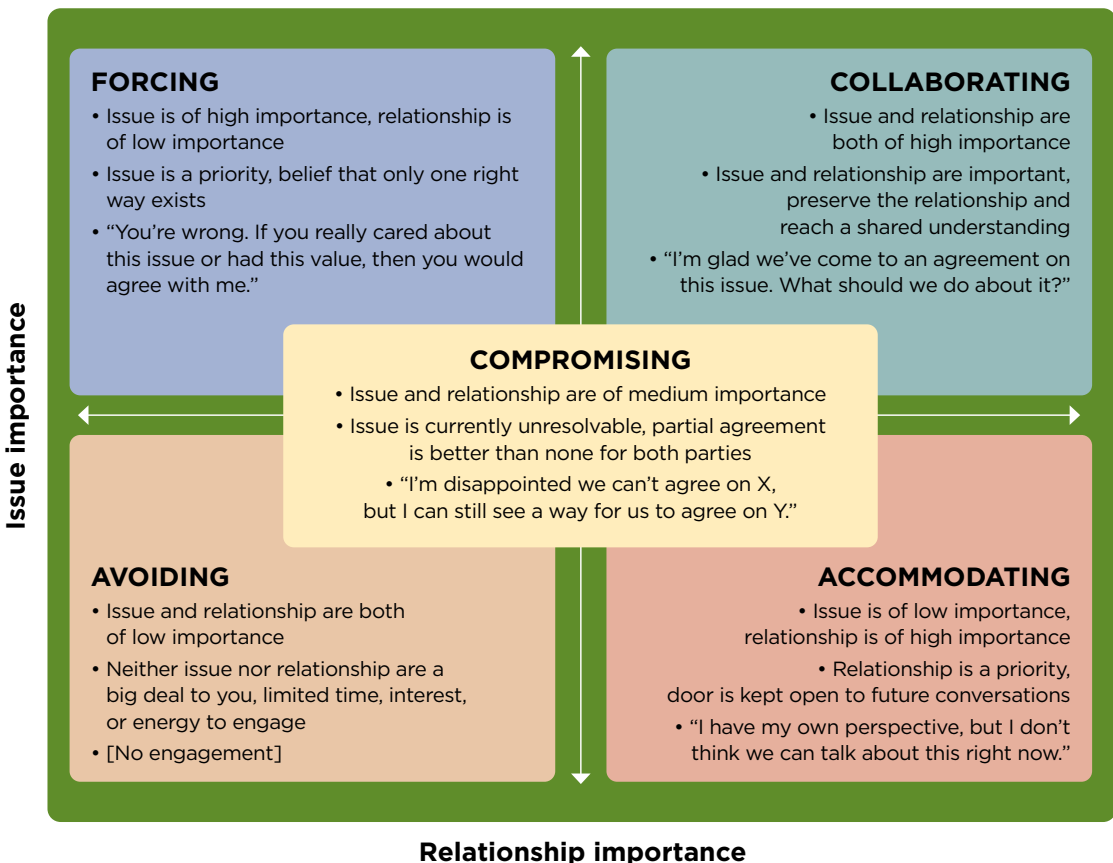
How do you know when to engage in conflict?

- What are short-term and long-term goals related to this issue?
- What are your goals for the relationship with the person you're talking to?
- What would you like to come out of this conversation?
- What is the power dynamic of the situation and the people involved?

The ability or willingness to engage will often depend on access to different levels of personal and/or institutional support, protection, and resources. Approaches and outcomes may also vary depending on the relative status and goals of each individual involved.

Deciding whether to engage in difficult conversations depends on

- 1 How important is that relationship to you?
- 2 How important is that issue to you?



BUILDING YOUR SKILLS

Given that you cannot control another person's thoughts and reactions, what is within your control? How can you prepare yourself for potential conflicts and their outcomes?

- **Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally** for the lead up, process, and aftermath of the conflict. Envision multiple possible outcomes and practice accepting uncertainty.
- **Reflect on your own physical and emotional responses** as you think through this conflict.
- **Identify your goals** and what degree of engagement you have capacity for.
- **Consider what scenarios would be most likely to be safe** and supportive of productive engagement.
- **Identify what kinds of personal or institutional support are available to you.** Who can help you think this through or advocate with you?
- **Practice or roleplay** with a friend if possible.

Manage conflict by approaching with curiosity, compassion, and courage.

Helpful language for engaging in conflict:

Own: Use “I” statements to convey your feelings, experiences, and perspectives.

- “I believe ...”
- “In my experience ...”
- “I think the impacts of that ...”

Name: Name the problem or issue, rather than focusing on the other person. Describe the issue as you understand it.

- “The root of the problem seems to be ...”
- “I think where the issue is coming from is...”
- “I’m worried about what’s going to happen next...”

Listen: Make mental space to use active listening techniques to fully absorb what the other person is saying.

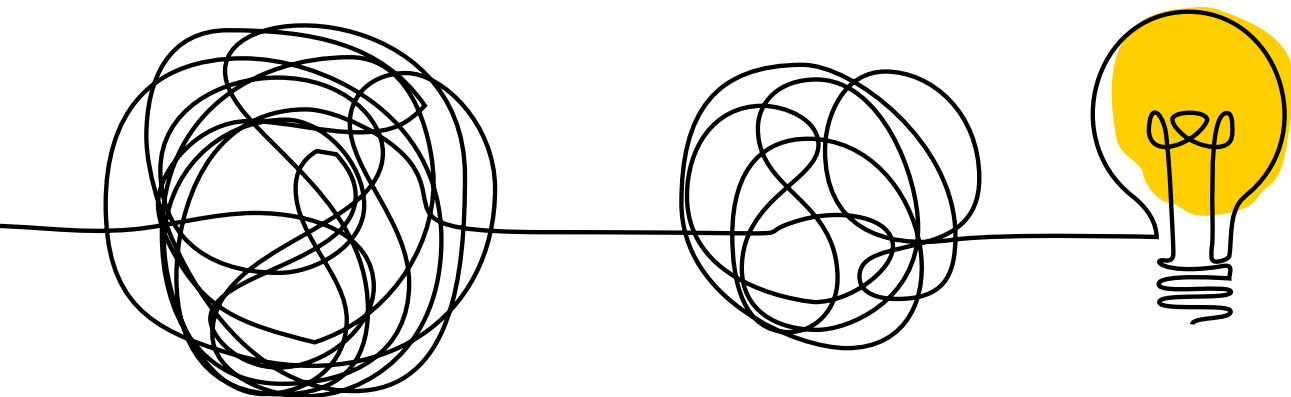
- Focus on what they are saying, not what you want to say in response.
- Focus on the essence of what they are trying to convey, rather than the details. Look for what is unspoken—emotions, intentions, meaning, and needs.
- Show that you’re listening by maintaining good eye contact and occasionally nodding your head to show that you are taking their words seriously.

Summarize: Reflect what you hear back to them and ask clarifying questions. The aim is not simply to repeat, but to show that you’ve understood key concepts and recognize their feelings and perspectives.

- “What I’m hearing you say is X... Is that correct? I want to make sure I understand.”
- “Could you tell me more about how/when you started to think that?”
- “Would it be fair to say that you feel...?”

Explain: Explain your thinking in response to what you’ve heard and invite more conversation.

- “The reason I believe X is because I learned/experienced ...”
- “What have you learned about this issue?”
- “This is important to me because X... Why is this important to you?”



LEARN MORE

Take advantage of opportunities right here at Gustavus.

- **Take courses** on topics and modes of analysis that are of interest to you, including but not limited to Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies (PJCS); Communication Studies; Political Science; Philosophy; Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies (GWSS); Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean Studies (LALACS); and African/African Diaspora Studies (AADS) and more
- **Go to the library!** Ask a librarian to look up some sources and figure out how to decide which online sources to trust
- **Participate in the Public Deliberation and Dialogue program.** Join in a discussion or become a facilitator

Make curiosity and skill-building a part of your daily routine.

- **Starts with Us:** Toolkits, blog, and newsletter offering strategies to de-escalate conflict and reduce polarization
- **Braver Angels:** A podcast series regarding depolarization
- **National Coalition For Dialogue & Deliberation:** Clearinghouse for resources and best practices
- **SIFT Method:** Improve your fact-checking strategies with Stop-Investigate-Find better coverage-Trace claims
- Diversify your media intake

Become more informed on issues.

- **National Issues Forum:** Read about different positions on various divisive issues
- **Ballotpedia.org:** Information on candidates' positions on issues
- **League of Women Voters:** Non-partisan voter information, voter guides, candidate and ballot information

Go to gustavus.edu/mayday for links to the resources above or scan the QR code.



MAYDAY! PEACE CONFERENCE

HISTORY



- 1981 Arms Control—MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
- 1982 The Response of Faith to the Nuclear Dilemma
- 1983 Seeing Through and Beyond the Mushroom Cloud
- 1984 Making Peace in a War-Keeping World
- 1985 To Negotiate a Peace
- 1986 Schooling for Peace
- 1987 Wages of War, Profits of Peace
- 1988 Building on Hope: Working for Peace
- 1989 Other Voices – Global Perspectives on the Arms Race
- 1990 Making Peace with the Earth
- 1991 U.S. Policy in the Middle East: What Roads to Peace?
- 1992 Food for a Peaceable World
- 1993 Overcoming Violence in Our Lives
- 1994 Building Community from the Inside Out
- 1995 The Challenge of Building a Non-Violent Global Community
- 1996 Land Rights, Land Use, and Social Justice
- 1997 The Family and Public Policy
- 1998 Immigration and Social Justice
- 1999 Toward a Worldwide Ban on Landmines
- 2000 Vietnam: 25 Years On
- 2001 Revisiting the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux after 150 Years
- 2002 Sanctions and Beyond: What is the Human Price?
- 2003 World Religions: Waging War or Promoting Peace?
- 2004 The United Nations at the Crossroads
- 2005 Energy for Peace
- 2006 AIDS + AFRICA: The Unfolding Crisis
- 2007 Community Food Security
- 2008 Troubled Water
- 2009 Tiananmen + 20 Years
- 2010 Imagining Peace
- 2011 Executing Justice: Debating Capital Punishment
- 2012 Multicultural Sweden
- 2013 Decision: Roe v. Wade
- 2014 Tibet: Finding Hope in Exile
- 2015 The War Within: Can the Soldier Be at Peace
- 2016 Divestment & Reinvestment: Making Money Count
- 2017 What Would You Do? Mass Surveillance and the Citizen
- 2018 Mighty Be Our Powers: Gender, Justice, and Peacebuilding
- 2019 War on the Press
- 2021 Voices of Change: Our Generation of Student Activism
- 2022 Growing Peacebuilders
- 2023 The Future of U.S. Education: Who Decides What Gets Taught

