



## The Peace, Justice, and Human Rights (PJHR) Program at John Carroll University

[Visit our Website](#)



### From the Director's Desk

On this day, May 4th, 1970, four students at a protest against the Vietnam War were killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University. I was not even born yet, but that was the world I would soon enter. Those protesters were fighting to end a crazy war, a war begun on a false pretext (the fake news of the Gulf of Tonkin incident), for

self-interested reasons (geopolitical power, access to resources) in the guise of protecting the South Vietnamese people against the Communist North. I wish I could say that we learned from that terrible war, but thirty years later, it all happened again in Iraq. We just passed the 15th anniversary of that benighted conflict.

All of which to say: we need to reclaim our own history every day in order to work for a more peaceful and just world. Eleven days after Kent State, at Jackson State, IT HAPPENED AGAIN. Another massacre of students, this time, black students. But we don't hear as much about that one, and part of the reason is racism. Because it happened before, at Orangeburg, two years earlier as well.

Enough about our great forgetting. **What I want to remember is all the work of our PJHR faculty, staff, and students to do the good and difficult work of peace-making and justice-seeking, through learning, serving, and action. Every day, I know some student or colleague will be doing something that makes me feel as if the world is better than the picture I get when reading the news. The secret story of our work will not necessarily make headlines, but it will change lives--other's and our own.**

I'll miss the great and inspiring PJHR students who are graduating this year: **Ryley Conway, Jacob Dzierwa, KTB English, Amy Kato, Sami Rafidi, Sarah Sivak, Kelsey Sprenger, and Kaleigh Wagner.** These bright souls have shined brightly, and will take what they've learned all over the world: they'll be going to places as far flung as Vietnam, Korea, Jamaica, Lebanon, and Malaysia. We're so proud of you, and look forward to hearing more about what's next for you and for PJHR at our PJHR party on Sunday, May 6th at 5pm in Rodman A! Come for the Chipotle, stay for the people.

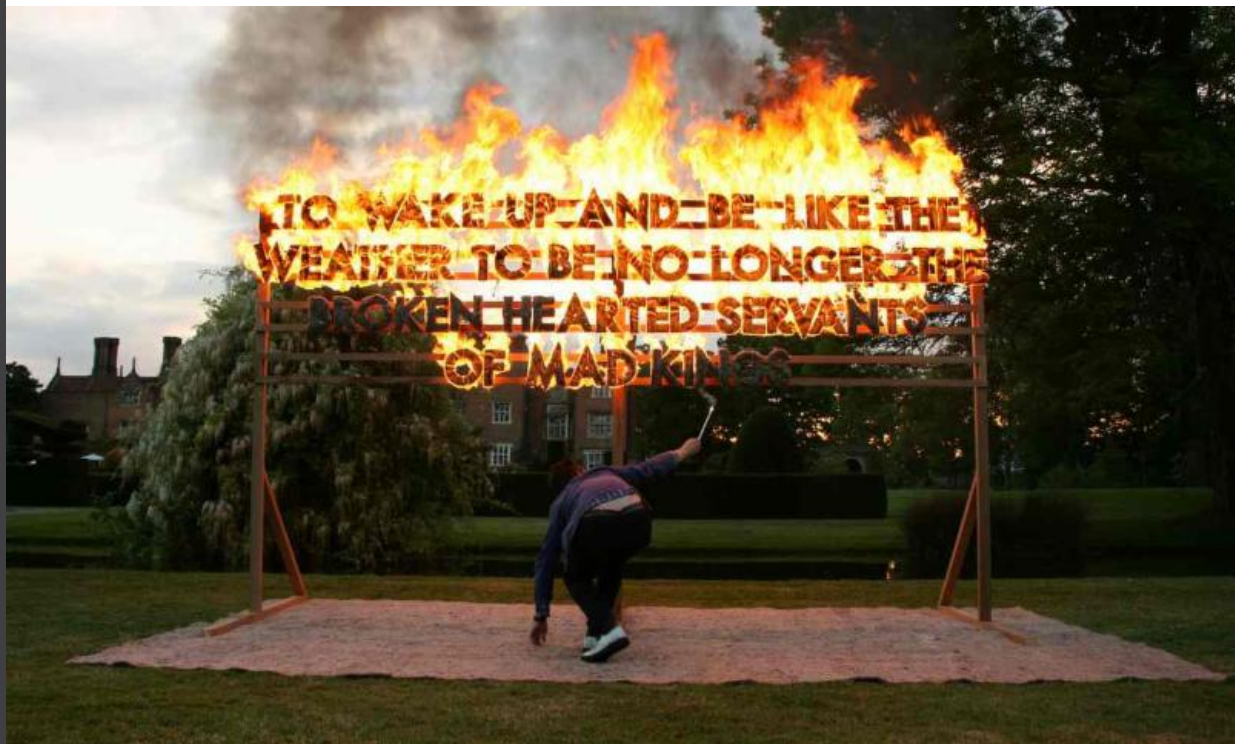
Below is a review of some of the highlights of our semester's work. In addition to the events described below, we co-sponsored a film showing of "The Penalty;" three Students for Social Justice programming events (on Conflict Resolution, Mass Incarceration, and the

Opioid Crisis); an event on "The Ethics of Hospitality and the Question of the Refugee"; a BSA discussion of "Black Panther"; Meghan O'Rourke's lecture on autoimmune illness and the crisis in our health care system; the JRS Advocacy Day in Washington DC; the Woelfl lecture on "Political Engagement in an Age of Inequality"; and the African Dounia celebration. We're grateful for the collaboration with the Arrupe Scholars Program, the Students for Social Justice, the GEND program, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, the Mandel Program, CSSA, Campus Ministry, and all the departments who share our goals (English, Sociology, Political Science, Philosophy TRS). Thanks to Julie Whitmore and Anna Hocevar for all the help!!!

Drop me an email ([pmetres@jcu.edu](mailto:pmetres@jcu.edu)) or come by to O'Malley 219. Let's make this campus, and our world, a place of hope. *Love. Study. Struggle.*

Philip Metres

---



---

---

### Congrats to our PJHR grads!

Pictured, L-R: Megan Whitman (a junior), Ryley Conway, Sarah Sivak, and KTB English, who presented at Celebration of Scholarship their research on Pop Cultural Representations of Intimate Partner Violence, Sex Trafficking in Refugee Camps, and Public Policy Failures in addressing Salvadoran gang violence.

Photo 2: Sami Rafidi and Kaleigh Wagner, representing PJHR and other programs at the Senior Celebration for high school incoming students. They represented well,

along with the amazing Amy Kato.



Photo 3: Jacob Dzierwa!



Photo 4: Kelsey Sprenger, who attended the Jesuit Relief Services Advocacy Day with Dr. Richard Clark and Grace Berry in Washington DC!



Photo 5: Amy Kato, who ran the Social Justice Film Series among 1,000 other things!



### **An Evening with Dwayne Betts,**

African-American writer Reginald Dwayne Betts came to campus on February 12th and 13th to give a talk/reading about his experience in prison and his journey toward finding his voice through poetry and then into his vocation as an attorney. He met with multiple constituencies while on campus, in addition to giving a public reading to about 60 people in Rodman A. The constituencies include a meeting with my creative writing class, where Betts demonstrated the power of literature to transform lives; a breakfast meeting with the Carroll BALLER and Writers-in-Residence programs, to consult with them about how to address the needs of incarcerated juveniles; and 3) a dinner with members of the Black Students in Action.



### **American Dreams: The Play at Cleveland Public Theatre on February 22.**

Special thanks to Salo Rodezno and Gloria Vaquera for the collaboration, as a group of us headed from JCU to CPT to enjoy this play! Everyone seemed to have a good time at "American Dreams." From its opening, which required us to go through checkpoint security and give up private information about our birth place and parents' birth places, the play was doing things that were



quite unusual to its audience. The game show play, in which three candidates for citizenship had to vie for a single green card, showed how much potential citizens need to know about our country—far more than many native born Americans know. The interrogations of each candidate were very uncomfortable, as they exposed the aspects of power that make everyone in the process of applying to be a citizen vulnerable. I personally found the play to be incredibly interesting, particularly by its ending, when we were made complicit in the whole "game show"—since we could vote for only a single candidate, even though one had served in the U.S. armed forces! It was a subtle and discomfiting indictment of bystanderism.

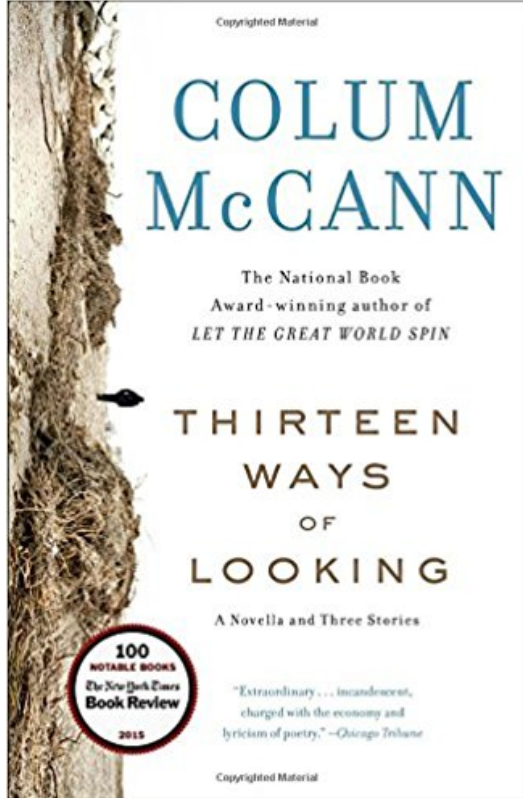
### **An Evening with Irish writer Colum McCann. April 24th.**



Colum McCann graced us with his presence for a couple days at JCU, performing a standing-room-only reading at Donohue Auditorium. McCann's prose is lyrical, yet vivid and grounded, and the stories he tells invite us into what John Paul Lederach calls the moral imagination. Lederach, a practitioner of peacebuilding and mediation, discovered, after years of mediation that the capacities to empathize, to view a world beyond primitive binaries, to look for creative solutions, and demonstrate the courage to risk—all make peace possible. McCann's beautiful work in prose is matched and extended by the work of Narrative 4, the nonprofit he founded, that uses storytelling as a way for people from different communities to learn about each other and grow their compassion. The capacity to listen is more necessary than ever, amid the tantrums and anger of Tweetstorms and gun violence in our world today. But this empathy thing isn't easy. True confessions, folks: I personally fail at it regularly! Empathy calls out of us to something more difficult, and arguably more profound, than the initial action of feeling with another. As McCann notes in "Letters to a Young Writer," "empathy is violent. Empathy is tough. Empathy can rip you open. Once you go there, you can be changed.... Remember, the world is so much more than one story. We find in others the ongoing of ourselves." To encounter stories that invite us—sometimes even require us—to change our lives. That's what McCann's work points us toward/



### **How to Build a Refugee Camp simulation, April 26th**



Finally, thanks to a partnership with the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, a group of us gathered to learn more about the challenges of serving refugees in a workshop format, as groups were tasked to "build" their own refugee camp. It was an illuminating exercise in the devastating realities of refugees and the work it takes to help people fleeing violence. We hope to do this again next year!



Philip Metres, Director, Peace, Justice, and Human Rights Program | 216-397-4528 | [pmetres@jcu.edu](mailto:pmetres@jcu.edu)

PJHR Administrative Assistant: Anna Hocevar [ahocevar@jcu.edu](mailto:ahocevar@jcu.edu)

PJHR Advisory Board: Matt Berg (HS), Rich Clark (SC), Erin Johnson (BI), Paul Lauritzen (TRS), Malia McAndrew (HS), Mindy Peden (PO), Walter Simmons (EC), Dianna Taylor (PL), Kristen Tobey (TRS), Wendy Wiedenhoft (SC), Jen Ziemke (PO).

PJHR Allies: Laura Boustani, Marty Connell, Mona DeBaz, Sister Katherine Flannery, Anne McGinness, Paul Murphy, Julie Myers, Ed Peck, Solomon Rodezno, Debby Rosenthal, John Scarano, David Shutkin, Colin Swearingen, Megan Wilson-Reitz.