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Class of 2020
Melissa Mendez
Spring 2019

Social Change: Activism and Agency

DESCRIPTION

I intend to create an individual major that studies the interconnected nature of social work, education, non-profit work, and social activism, and how those things can be combined to promote a more holistic view of social change. In addition, I believe that the subjects of political science and sociology/anthropology are essential to understanding the world we live in today. I will need to combine those methods of thought to discover what it means to be an effective and ethical activist, as well as what methods of activism (political protest, social work, education efforts) are right for me. I am particularly interested in communities in the United States with large achievement gaps between races and large distributions of wealth (which tend to be urban areas), but I also plan on studying many different societies in the country and the world.

The main concepts of this proposal are as follows:

1. Learning what a just society looks like and how it can be achieved
2. Recognizing the needs and privileges of different societies and why inequalities arise
3. Exploring the different forms of activism (non-profit work, educational justice, social work, public policy) and their implications

The motivation for creating this major came from my hometown and my high school education, and the people and programs to which I was exposed. I grew up in Skokie Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago. Skokie is well known for being very diverse in all aspects; race, religion, nationality, language, socioeconomic class, etc. Although we had many different groups represented in the community, disparities still arose in many forms and it would be naive for anyone to ignore them. The most diverse places can simultaneously be the most segregated, and while I don't believe Skokie is the worst example of this, I do believe that my hometown needs just as much introspection as any other town, city, and country.

Through many service trips, involvement in student organizations, academic courses, and conversations I had with those around me, I felt a constant drive towards uncovering the formula for a more just society. This passion drew me to take classes that discussed issues of socioeconomic status, race, gender, and other points of inequality that people experience. After much deliberation and concern about choosing one major that encapsulated all of my interests, I

realized that I shouldn't have to pick just one field of study, and that combining many different disciplines is what I naturally did from the start. Injustice permeates through every aspect of our lives, and therefore should be studied from a multitude of perspectives. It is only through this individual major that I can holistically observe what a theoretically "just" society is, and how to achieve it. I know that no matter what professional field I find myself in, I will be able to use my studies on this multifaceted question to examine the environment around me, and if need be, advocate for a reimagined system for change.

Studying the topic of social change and activism brings in the question of the range of study: how far into the past am I planning to observe in relation to activism, is the focus urban or rural, domestic or international? In pondering these questions, I struggled whether to give my study limitations, as I felt uncomfortable deeming one activist movement more or less important due to the time period. I feel that most social justice movements take roots in urban settings, but I recognize the importance of recognizing rural struggles that are unique to those communities. At first, my vision solely included the study of American social movements and activism, but I quickly realized how short sighted it would be to ignore international efforts towards social progress. In short, the question of scope is an important one as to avoid over-commitment and vagueness. However, it is a question that I will continue to evaluate depending on the class material I am confronted with and the opportunities that I am allowed. The possibility for activism and agency can take place in any location and time period, and I hope to explore many forms of how they present themselves throughout my education at St. Olaf and beyond.

QUESTIONS

Just Society (Theory)

- What does the ideal society look like? Is such a thing possible at this point in history? Was it ever possible?
- What is justice? Is anything entirely just? What kind of justice are "social justice warriors" advocating for?
- Does justice and the ideal society look different in various places in the world?
- Is there a way that justice can benefit everyone involved? How can we better inform the public that giving justice to one group does not necessarily have to take away anything for another?

Needs and Privileges (Reality)

- What are the historical explanations for the birth of inequality between races, classes, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, etc.?
- How do certain groups of people retain so much power and wealth while other groups continue to suffer?

- What have people done in the past to diminish inequality? How can modern society better address these disparities between certain groups?
- How can people with privilege adequately recognize that privilege and use it for good?
- How can we normalize the idea that everyone has at least a small amount of privilege and a small amount of struggle, and discontinue the so-called “oppression olympics”?

Activism and its Implications (Application)

- What is the history of activism (ie. advocating for those in need)? Who are the unsung heroes of activist movements?
- How do we measure how effective a form of activism is?
- Can there be activism that appears productive on the surface, but actually causes harm, or perpetuation of the problem (ie. the white savior complex)? How should these forms of activism be measured against others?
- What is the nonprofit industrial complex? How do we address this issue? How can we diminish it?
- How can we encourage activism and political engagement while not promoting the current tendency towards being the most “woke” and shaming those who are not as knowledgeable about certain social issues?

COURSES IN THE MAJOR

WHAT IS A JUST SOCIETY? (THEORY)

This list of courses seeks to explore what the most ideal and just society is, and whether or not there even is such a thing. These classes discussed what human nature is, how to achieve a fair society, and how far we currently are from that ideal.

PSCI 252: Politics and Development [completed in Spring 2018]

- This course debated the concept of development and what countries are considered to be developed, as well as how certain countries become developed compared to others that do not. Much of the course discussed the Western lens of development, and how this lens is damaging to countries in the Global South. The class included class presentations, group work, and an independent research paper on a country of choice in the Global South and its current development projects.
- The material in this course introduced the idea of international relations and comparative politics on a global scale. It gave me a better idea of the processes countries and cities go through to become “developed,” as well as the obstacles that prohibit certain areas from advancing economically, politically, and socially.

PSCI 260: History of Modern Political Thought [completed in Spring 2017]

- This course was a highly theoretical look at society and justice and how those ideas have changed over time. Through examining philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Nietzsche,

and Marx, we assessed what it means to exist among other beings, and the extent to which violence is perpetuated. Class projects included a podcast, small argumentative essays, and an oral discussion final.

- Along with going hand-in-hand with my Great Con curriculum, this course gave me a theoretical basis to which I could study humans and their behavior towards one another. Our discussions about the definition of violence led to fascinating questions about systemic racism, hegemonic masculinity, and mass incarceration/the prison industrial complex. I continue to use these theories in my current classes and the hands-on experiences I have.

GCON 218: Dissenters and Defenders [completed in Spring 2018]

- This semester of the Great Conversation program delved into philosophers and scholars like Karl Marx and Cornel West who questioned the organization of society and whether the socioeconomic systems of the time were just. We had many heated debates about the effects of religion, art, slavery, colonization, and philosophy on human civilization from the 19th century to the present.
- The entirety of the Great Conversation program forced us to question our previously held morals and ideas, but this particular semester was when it all culminated into an environment where we could freely express our beliefs and confusions with society. Great Con taught me the art of using the text to support my own stance, as well as how to have a productive, respectful, and provoking conversation with someone who comes from an entirely different background from me.

RACE 121: Introduction to Race and Ethnic Studies [will complete in Fall 2019]

- This course, similar to Intro to Women's and Gender Studies, will be an insight into the academic field of Race and Ethnic studies, and it will likely feature many recurring themes I have come across in my other courses pertaining to race. I hope this class helps me build my vocabulary in speaking about racial issues in this political moment, as well as discussing effective strategies in activism and protest.
- This class will be greatly beneficial to my major in giving me yet another lens to view the world as an activist and an ally. I am looking forward to taking this course as a Race and Ethnic Studies concentrator.

PHIL 258: Ethics, Economics, and the Marketplace [will complete Spring 2020]

- This ethics course sets out to examine the philosophy of the marketplace, including concepts like justice, freedom, and fairness. Through studying the presence of the marketplace from ancient times to the present, this course promises to consider tough questions regarding public versus private ownership, fair trade, and economic freedom.
- Economics and the marketplace play a vast role in societal structure and inequalities. This will be the only course within the major that pertains to economics, but the fact that it is framed through an ethical and philosophical lens serves my studies very well. I am

excited to explore issues of capital and wealth inequality in relation with social justice issues.

NEEDS AND PRIVILEGES (REALITY)

Sociology/anthropology classes will serve as the basis to learn what the current socioeconomic situation is in primarily American societies, and how to approach them. These courses help to diagnose certain inequalities and question their impetus.

SOAN 260: Marriage and the Family [completed in Spring 2018]

- This course went over the ever-changing definition of a family in modern society, and what impacts certain families in becoming financially and socially successful while some families are continually knocked down. We discussed the effects of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationalism, incarceration, and death through the lens of families. We completed essays and class presentations through the Structure and Agency model, highlighting the systems in place that help or hinder families, as well as the ways people use their agency to enhance or combat those systems.
- The class highlighted the vastness of Family Studies as a field, and inspired me to add a concentration of Family Studies. The Structure and Agency model is something that I will continue to utilize in my future as a possible social worker, as well as in relation to activism. The ability to enact change in a community relies heavily on the amount of agency one possesses, and the Structure and Agency model helps to explore the types of systems someone may be under that might hinder their agency.

SOAN 264: Race and Class in American Culture [completed in Fall 2017]

- In this course we first analyzed the role of class throughout the history of America, including the widening distribution of wealth, capitalism vs. communism, and the ways class impacts family life. These topics inevitably converged with race, and we talked about the huge roles race and ethnicity play in American society. We conducted an ethnography in which we examined a topic of choice further.
- I greatly valued this class in its curriculum, class discussion, and its papers and projects. The course challenged my ideas about race and class, and introduced me to authors and literature that I continue to carry with me. For my ethnographic project, I interviewed St. Olaf students about the ways they've dealt with their own intersecting identities on campus, and how those identities have differed in the transition to college.

SOAN 269: Urban Sociology [completed in Fall 2018]

- This course laid out the groundwork of Urban Sociology as a field of study through the lens of the Chicago School and its scholars. The class read a variety of works by urbanists around the country and the world and viewed documentaries highlighting urban issues. This was a heavily demanding course in writing, asking the students to apply the theoretical ideas we read in class to contemporary news articles.

- As the first course focused on urban issues that I took, it was extremely valuable in narrowing my focus of study. In addition, its focus on the city of Chicago gave me much more insight on the city I plan to work in and its history as a metropolis.

SWRK 221: Social Work and Social Welfare [completed in Fall 2018]

- This course covered the loose timeline of the history of social welfare, and provided an introductory examination of the social work profession. Topics discussed included the values of social workers, the different roles social workers play in society, and what social workers are required to know/do. As a writing course, we wrote papers about our own service history, a biography of a social reformer, and an experience shadowing a professional social worker.
- This was the first course I took in the Social Work Department, and it quickly made me reconsider my career path. This course made me realize how deeply the mission of social work resonated with me, and it influenced my current goal of obtaining my masters in social work. It also inspired me to add more social work courses to my major, and to add a Family Studies Concentration.

AMST 301: Great Again? American Fiction [will complete in Spring 2019]

- Through the lens of fiction novels, this seminar seeks to question the ways America is truly great versus the ways it should be critiqued. As a discussion based class, I hope the examination of American fiction will lead to provocative conversations about the state of the country and its values.
- I believe the discussions we will have in this class will provoke some essential questions about where our country has been, where we are now, and where we should be headed. It also seems that the curriculum of this course attempts to blur the lines between fiction and nonfiction, history and the present. I anticipate that this course will also introduce alternative forms of agency and activism, such as fiction writing and poetry.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF ACTIVISM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS (APPLICATION)

This list of courses is an interdisciplinary study of the ways people stand up to injustices around them. In addition to examining the various forms of activism, these courses will also help to gain insight into the implications of certain activism (ie. the nonprofit industrial complex, how to use privilege effectively, misguided activism, etc).

WMGST 121: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies [completed in Fall 2018]

- As the introductory course in Women's and Gender Studies, this course covered the basic definitions, concepts, and theories in this field. We studied readings from well-known feminist scholars like bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Gloria Steinem, and Patricia Hill Collins. We also wrote papers and conducted projects that connected the theories learned in the classroom to our praxis as activists.

- This course was a highlight in my studies here, as it was a safe and activist space. We engaged in conversations regarding the best ways to be activists in a patriarchal, racist, and classist society, and the benefits to both academic knowledge and grassroots activism. Gender has been a recurring theme in most of my classes, and this course gave me a vocabulary to properly address these types of issues we face every day.

SOAN 263: Social Movements [will complete in Fall 2019]

- This is a sociological look at social movements that have taken place and the differing strategies and effectiveness these movements possessed. According to the course description, we will employ case studies as well as comparative analyses of different social movements that aim to change institutions and systems in place.
- This course pertains extremely closely with my area of studies, as the class seeks to examine various social movements from a sociological perspective. I anticipate that this course will take into account systematic oppressions and inequalities that lead to the need for activism and organizing, as well as the different forms of movements that have taken place in recent decades.

PSCI 244: Race and Politics [completed Interim 2019]

- This discussion-based course examined the relationship between politics and racial identities, as well as the validity of the view that we are living in a “post-racial” society. The course featured an intensive study of the HBO series *The Wire*, while course readings pertained to the assigned episodes. Subjects studied include labor, whiteness, appropriation, mass incarceration, urban development, and drug legalization. We completed three group class presentations, three papers, and weekly moodle posts.
- This course immediately pertains to my major, as we discussed very complex aspects of America’s “post-racial” society and how that affects our ability to repair inequalities. Viewing *The Wire* enhanced our perspectives about how much has changed socially from the early 2000s, and how much remains the same. Since this was an interim course, we were able to explore the racial, socioeconomic, and political inequalities to a depth that was unique to any other course I have taken.

PSCI 370: Seminar: Courageous Resistance to Injustice [will complete in Spring 2020]

- This seminar seeks to examine the ways people have risen to injustice in their society in both violent and nonviolent ways. It will also study which methods of resistance have been successful and which have failed.
- As one of the capstones to my major, I believe that this course will be crucial in the conceptualization of activism and how to stand up to oppressive forces. I anticipate that the curriculum will be very relevant to my field of interest, and hopefully will connect many of the ideas that I have already learned in other courses.

SUPPORTING COURSES AND EXPERIENCES

MGMT 251: Management [completed in Spring 2018]

CLASS 253: Classical Studies in Italy

NURS 110: Nutrition and Wellness

Great Conversation Program

Concentration in Race and Ethnic Studies

Concentration in Family Studies

*Presentation at MWCA Writing Center Conference, “Social Justice in the Writing Center”,
March 2018*

Employment as a Writing Tutor through the Center for Academic Support, Fall 2017-Present

Leadership in St. Olaf Dance Marathon

Chicago Connections Program, Fall 2018

GirlForward Internship, Summer 2017

Marillac Hope Jr. Internship, Summer 2018

RATIONALE

This major is related to understanding how people interact, what motivates them to create and maintain inequalities, and how to break from systems of oppression in order to promote ideals of activism. Fields like Political Science, Sociology/Anthropology, Social Work, Family Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Race and Ethnic Studies work well together because they all acknowledge the patterns of human behavior and coexistence that create disparities, power struggles, wars, and protests. At St. Olaf, there is not one established major that integrates all these fields of study in depth. I believe that this major demonstrates the liberal arts values St. Olaf promotes, according to the mission statement:

“St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.”

Allowing these overlapping disciplines to be in conversation with one another is why the liberal arts exist, and I plan to build and grow from the knowledge of them all combined. To me, there is no more meaningful vocation than serving others and helping them find their own cause and passion to advocate for in their community. I hope to be globally engaged as I embark on applying for the Global Semester to examine what types of inequalities exist in various countries around the world.

My goal in proposing this major is to gain a better grasp of what it means to enact social change through activism in a variety of fields. To complete this goal, I first wanted to first determine what a truly “just” society could look like, or at least what scholars long before our time theorized a just society to be. Then I needed to gain a better understanding of the social situations we live in currently, and why certain injustices continue through generations. Finally, and possibly the most difficult piece of my proposal, I wanted to understand what it means to be an activist. To some, being an activist entails shouting and screaming at marches, holding up signs and passionately protesting different corporations, administrations, and ideals. To me, being an activist can look like many different things. I believe that there is no perfect way of embodying an activist, and to believe so would be to exclude a large amount of people who don’t have the privilege to march and protest comfortably and regularly. First and foremost, being an activist means seeing yourself as someone capable of creating change, and this is essential. Many people are discouraged from seeing themselves as agents of change; they are discouraged from seeing their community as something they can shape and improve, or even as theirs at all. I believe that people can be activists through gathering community meetings, or planting a communal garden, or organizing a daycare for neighbors in need. I hope that through my study of social change and activism, I can bolster those around me and those who have been silenced to envision themselves as agents of change.

I have had the privilege of interning at two nonprofits in Chicago, one being GirlForward which serves teenage refugee girls in year-long educational and social support, and the other being Marillac St. Vincent Family Services which provides after-school and summer programs for inner-city children, teens, parents, and elderly in East Garfield Park. Both of these summer experiences taught me the importance of truly listening to those living in a struggling community before attempting to solve anything. They also showed me the impact of showing someone their impact and their agency. At GirlForward, we dedicated a whole week to the study of activism and protest, and organized a mini march through the streets of Rogers Park. The girls designed their protest signs and marched through the neighborhood chanting words of empowerment, and

it was the most energized and impactful day of the summer. At Marillac, I helped direct a play for the kids in the summer program, and while participating in a play is not a typical form of activism, I saw how much the students valued finding their voice and telling a story through a character. I have seen how significant it is when children and teens realize they have a voice, as well as an audience who will listen.

Potential careers from this major include social worker (community organizer, school social worker, child services, etc.), school educator, school counselor, nonprofit program manager, and community activities coordinator. A huge motivation for creating this major was its applicability to many different professional fields, especially ones that go beyond this list. The same human interaction skills that are used in social work can and should be utilized in any type of position, and my hope is to create a major that prepares me to enter a variety of fields, depending on what paths are open and available at the time.

Pursuing this individual major has already enabled me to take courses that I am intrinsically motivated to take, which pertain to social justice ideals. Putting together the major has also allowed me to truly assess what my passions and interests are, and to justify them in a formal way. Finally, creating my proposal and integrating my courses together has supported my natural inclination towards interdisciplinary learning.

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

My strengths in high school and college proved to be human interaction, teaching, and questioning the systemic problems we are surrounded with. These skills continue to be nourished when I am able to connect certain disciplines to others. I am extremely driven and determined when it comes to any project I embark on, while always trying to make sure everyone is being acknowledged and validated. I am drawn to organizations, classes, and careers that have a central theme of serving others, and I strongly believe that this major encapsulates my love for critical thinking, service, activism, and social justice.

In high school, I was avidly involved in an organization called Dance Marathon, in which we chose a different non-profit to fundraise for every year, and we also organized a district-wide dance to celebrate the work done and reveal the amount of money raised. Not only did I gain skills in fundraising, communication, creating and organizing events, and managing a large group of people, but I also gained an inside look at how nonprofits function and their effect on the community. Through this program, I gained a love for philanthropy and social justice, and I had my mind set on working in the nonprofit world. I was also exposed to ways in which I could get involved politically, especially because I graduated high school the summer before the 2016

election. I was fascinated by the political process and how legislature can directly help or hurt people's lives.

I intended to major in political science, with a possible double major or concentration relating to social justice. As I began taking classes, however, I realized many other passions I had for social work, education, and sociology. I quickly realized that a major in political science or education would not be able to encapsulate my continuing tendency towards interdisciplinary learning that I desired.

Due to this drive toward interdisciplinary learning, I was particularly drawn to the Great Conversation Program in my decision to attend St. Olaf, and this two year program guided my philosophy about life and justice more than I could have imagined. Through the examination of Western literature from the beginning of written history up until the present, our living/learning cohort often engaged in tough discussions about the existence of God, the meaning of justice, and the "moral right" way to live. Although not every reading pertained to my interests, by the end of the two years I gained a new way of looking at human behavior. Most importantly, Great Con gave me a more refined ability to engage in a debate with someone who may not have the same views as I do, and to use evidence to enhance my position. No matter what field of work I go into, it will always be useful to truly listen to someone else's ideas and background, and to respectfully stand my own ground.

Aside from Great Con, many other classes changed the course of my plans for a major. Social Work and Social Welfare with Mary Carlsen helped me realize that social work would be a very fitting field for me to put my skills towards, and it motivated me to consider going to graduate school for my MSW in Chicago. Urban Sociology highlighted how race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality all intersect in cities, and this inspired me to focus my major on specifically urban settings. This will be very useful as I plan on working and living in the city of Chicago.

SENIOR INTEGRATIVE PROJECTS

IDEA ONE:

In-depth study on an organization in Chicago that seeks to promote community organizing and activism. What is their mission, and how do they carry it out? What are the beliefs and ideals of the people who work within the organization, and how do those things relate to activism? What do they do to change public policy? How big is the organization, and is it sustainable? Is the organization "effective," and what does effective even imply in this context? How is effectiveness measured in nonprofit organizations? Possibly compare two different organizations

to see which type of organization I would find the most suitable fit for the type of work I wish to pursue after college.

IDEA TWO:

Organize an on-campus protest/demonstration around a certain cause. Contact various organizations on campus and possibly in town to collaborate and assist in spreading the word. Observe the level of participation, the campus reaction, and the overall outcome.

IDEA THREE:

Photography/documentation project in which I take photographs of students on campus or community members in Chicago holding up a sign that says what they fight for. In the caption for each photo, I would include a description about how they choose to fight for that cause. My emphasis would be on the ability for anyone to fight for any cause in many different ways (besides the traditional forms of activism like protesting and voting). Compile them into a website or physical book.

WEB PORTFOLIO

I envision my web portfolio to inform its viewers about the three elements of activism that I am studying (theory, reality, and application), and how they intersect and interact in everyone's lives. I plan to include any projects or papers that relate to social movements and activism.

CONSULTATIONS

FACULTY

Doug Casson:

As my academic adviser, Doug helped me initially sort out whether I wanted to finish out in Political Science, do a fifth year in Social Work, declare Sociology/Anthropology, or do an Individual Major. After weighing the pros and cons, Doug was extremely supportive in my decision to continue with the individual major, and gave me some guidance on the three main pillars of the major. He also assured me that it is a coherent concept, and that it is truly an interdisciplinary study that could not be gained in another department.

Mary Carlsen:

The first time I met with Mary, it was for a brief one-on-one for our Social Work and Social Welfare course. In this meeting, I expressed my sadness that I did not start earlier in social work, as it is something that I realized I would like to pursue in graduate school. Mary validated my

feelings and told me that there are no mistakes in my path of getting an education, and that there is no use in feeling any regret.

The second time we met, I wanted to discuss my dissatisfaction with my current title and concept for my major (Urban Welfare, at the time). I described my proposal in detail and she threw out some ideas for a title regarding “social realities,” “urban realities,” and “urban context.” From this brainstorming, I came to find “Social Activism in an Urban Context” the most accurate to what I want to achieve through this major. Mary also gave me some guidance as to what courses she thinks would be useful, such as Economic Justice and Law, Politics, and Morality. In addition, she suggested I look into some domestic study abroad programs as back-ups to Global Semester, such as the ACM program in Chicago and the HECUA program in Minneapolis focused on social justice in an urban setting. Finally, she confirmed that I am not simply creating my own Social Work major, but an entirely unique and more specific major to my interests, and this made me feel even more confident in my choice to pursue the Individual Major.

Melissa Mendez:

I met Melissa at an event the Social Work department held regarding international adoption, and after the documentary screening I stayed to speak with her about adoption and her career in social work and children’s services.

I made another appointment with Melissa to talk more in depth about her experiences and how they relate to my individual major. She loved the sound of my major and thought that it would fit very well with a possible career in social work and/or children’s services. As a St. Olaf student, she participated in Global Semester, which is what I would love to do to supplement my major, and we talked a lot about what I could do for my project in those countries. Since the semester’s focus is multicultural education, we thought of questions to ask possible interviewees: What are the laws regarding education? What is supposed to happen, and what actually happens? What are the barriers people experience in receiving a good education? Melissa also shares my passion in adoption services and questioning the adoption system as a whole, and I plan on talking to her more in the future about how her interests in social work, children’s services, and international living intersect.

LIBRARY

Reference Librarian: Maggie Epstein

The consultation with my reference librarian was extremely helpful and refreshing, and gave me many new ideas to ponder. To begin, we reviewed the different research databases that the library offers, including WorldCat and the Social Science Premium Collection. We also looked through BrowZine, a database that displays the different research journals in a variety of fields. Maggie gave me valuable advice about deciding on a major title, and she suggested that I explore BrowZine and the different origins of study that already exist. Since there is no such thing as the

field of “Activistology,” we played with the idea of combining different subjects to form an original study, or draw on majors/concentrations that other schools offer (Social Change Studies, Inequality Studies, etc.). This is something that I will continue to think about in regards to my title. Since there are no specific research journals about activism, Maggie suggested that I browse journals that may include activism in its study (ie. the Social Justice Research Journal, or the Journal of Social Problems). Another field of research I can look through is history, since many of my research questions in my major pertain to the history of social justice and social activism. In regards to my senior projects, I explained my ideas regarding Global Semester and conducting a comparative research project about the countries I visit and their differing education policies, and Maggie agreed that conducting most of the research and the coordination of interviews before going abroad would be useful and efficient. Lastly, Maggie introduced me to Zotero, a computer program that organizes and sorts sources of research for later use. This will serve me very well in compiling sources for my senior project and my class research in the future.

PEER

Peer Review: Eva Knee and Tanya Samiliv

Having Eva and Tanya look over my major was greatly helpful in the process of cleaning up my proposal. They each took turns giving me feedback, and all of their comments were extremely detailed and thoughtful. Tanya commented most on my class descriptions, and challenged me to make sure each course was appropriately justified in relation to the theme of activism and social justice. Eva encouraged me to add to my personal description and rationale and give more details in how my major came to be. They asserted that my proposal was in very good shape, and only needed a few tweaks. This was the very first time peers my age took a critical look at my major, which was very important in gauging a sense of opinion from people in my own generation, as my major is extremely forward-looking and progressive.