



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously-funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current Dialogues guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/dialogues-the-experience-war>

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *Clemente Veterans' Initiative: Providence, RI*

Institution: Clemente Course in the Humanities, Inc.

Project Director(s): Mark Santow

Grant Program: Dialogues on the Experience of War

## PROVIDENCE CLEMENTE VETERANS INITIATIVE DIALOGUES

### DIALOGUES ON THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

**OVERVIEW:** In 2014, Clemente Course in the Humanities (CCH) launched the Clemente Veterans Initiative (CVI) to provide an engaged, humanities-focused intellectual community designed for veterans who are struggling to adapt to civilian life and to offer those who may be considering furthering their education an opportunity to enroll in a college classroom without risking VA benefits. CVI is open to all veterans, regardless of discharge status. As in all Clemente Courses, acceptance is based on need, the desire to connect to a larger community through reading and discussion, and basic literacy skills.

CVI is modeled on over 20 years of CCH's experience offering semester-long college courses to marginalized adults, now at over 30 sites in the US. CVI was designed in consultation with veteran students who had graduated from our traditional courses, and with input from scholars, social worker and community advocates devoted to supporting veterans. CVI draws from four disciplines—US history, moral philosophy, art history and literature. Texts and discussions are designed to support veterans during challenging transitions and to help them envision a “second mission” of civic engagement. The courses offer six college credits from Bard College to those veterans who are considering enrolling in higher education. The credit option otherwise has no bearing on who is accepted into the CVI courses.

As part of our first NEH-grant funded project in 2016, we integrated six 2-hour *Dialogues* into the semester-long CVI courses at two sites – one of which was for women veterans only. The purpose of these original *Dialogues* was to stimulate discussions about the military, national service, self-sacrifice, homecoming and reconciliation among veterans *and civilians*. In addition, two small

community-based groups of mixed veteran and non-veteran students met for 6 sessions to discuss the same texts and images. In 2017 we modified this model to offer an additional CVI option: 12-week *CVI Dialogues* that meet for two hours each, twice a week for a total of 48 contact hours. As in all CVI courses, these are targeted to veterans, but we encourage veterans to recruit “study buddies” to attend with them who may be either veterans or civilians.

The proposed Providence CVI Dialogues is aimed at veterans struggling with readjustment to civilian life, regardless of discharge status. Dialogues will run during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years from September to early May and meet twice a week for two hours a session, for 12 weeks in the fall and for 12 weeks in the spring. Each course will enroll 15-20 students. As with our spring 2019 NEH-funded Providence CVI, classes will be held at the Trinity Repertory Company. Trinity’s Education team will again provide childcare for free on-site, as well age-appropriate theater games and exercises for the children. Trinity actors will be available to do dramatic readings of scenes from plays we will read in the Dialogues, both in classroom discussions and for our Preparatory Trainings.

Trinity Rep has a long history of working with veterans in Rhode Island, making them a perfect partner for the Providence CVI. Their work began in spring 2006 with the project, *Boots on the Ground*. Created from the narratives of returning Rhode Island vets from the second Iraq War, the show was a hit with audiences and was particularly moving to watch with the veterans who came to see it. Trinity then became part of the Blue Star Theater initiative, which offers tickets to veterans and their families. They further deepened this work through the creation of the Veterans' Theater Institute (VTI), which focused on helping vets develop skills-based and academic knowledge through theater-focused classes.

Transportation, like childcare, will be available free of charge to students who need it. These aspects

of Clemente Courses have been enormously important in attracting to students to the program and ensuring consistent attendance. We believe that providing childcare with an educational focus will also be attractive to our students and their families.

We will also work closely with Operation Stand Down RI, the Providence VA, the Vet Center, and the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs. These organizations have deep ties with veterans in Providence and the surrounding communities, which will facilitate student recruitment. They also provide direct services to our target population, enabling us to build in surrounding supports. PCVI will partner with the University of Rhode Island's College of Arts and Sciences, which will provide funding for an instructor and course materials. We will also work with the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH), to help us provide (and perhaps fund) complementary programming for our students and their families, and advise us on ways to facilitate veteran leadership of public humanities initiatives in Providence. Letters of Support from Trinity, URI's College of Arts and Sciences, the Providence Veterans' Administration Medical Center, Operation Stand Down, and RICH are included in this grant application.

**INTELLECTUAL RATIONALE:** The humanities help us to understand multiple points of view and come to terms with our place in the world. They do this by inviting us to delve into a wide variety of stories, events and ideas that reveal how people have lived and thought throughout history. They teach us about the full range of human emotions, thoughts, practices and behaviors that have molded and continue to shape our realities. As Yale University professor John Hare says, "We read the classics to make us feel less lonely." Through engagement with the humanities, we realize that we are not the first to experience anything on this earth, but are rather part of a larger collective experience of being human. For veterans especially, engagement with the humanities can be an essential tool for bringing them out of isolation and into community, self-reflection, and

engagement.

“Stories,” Vietnam veteran Tim O’Brien wrote in his memoir *The Things They Carried*, “are for joining the past to the future.” The humanities are uniquely suited for placing individual stories and experiences into a broader examination of historical and moral questions. This is best done in community, in conversation with others – a conversation that begins with the sharing of stories without judgment, but which can then move toward understanding, reconciliation, and healing. Through stories, we learn to uncover hidden truths, explore emotions, pay witness to loss, find ways to heal, learn about people different from ourselves. And this learning is central to the value the humanities holds for us; as Barbara Kingsolver wrote, stories “help us create empathy, which in turn...can lead us to bridging divides.” Part of what makes the humanities such a useful tool for self-exploration and intellectual growth for veterans is that it provides new ways of understanding and learning from their own unique experiences. The humanities can also help them see beyond what too often isolates them, to the universal human experiences and questions embedded within the experience of soldiering, broadly defined. Often the best way to make sense of profound and soul-shaking experiences is to examine them through the study of history, and the exploration of great works of philosophy, literature, and art. The Providence CVI will provide this opportunity.

The PCVI Dialogues will address actual military conflicts like the Peloponnesian War, the Civil War, Vietnam, and the post-9/11 conflicts, but also the external and internal, sometimes less visible, conflicts that soldiers experience in service and upon coming home including, but not limited to, PTSD, moral injury, reintegration into family, and isolation from community and civic life. Readings will explore a diversity of voices on courage, love, loyalty, patriotism, citizenship, honor, obligation, and how these operate on the battlefield, at home, and in civic life. This will be done through deep reading and discussion of three themes, at the level of the individual and the nation: 1) the decision

to go to war; 2) the experience and impact of war; and 3) coming home and the aftermath of war. History, Literature and Moral Philosophy will be woven together in a rotating schedule organized around the four conflicts.

Our course will begin with an exploration of the power of language and storytelling, noting how people experience the world in a multitude of ways due to their individual circumstances.

Discussion will focus on the need to accept differences of interpretation, on reading to question how we see something and why, on how stories work, and how they help us make sense of our own experiences. Introductory readings will include not only Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell a True War Story," but also Adrienne Rich's "Here is a Map of our Country," which asks readers to consider the mural that makes up America. We'll discuss Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk [\*The Danger of a Single Story\*](#), which challenges us grasp the moral imperative of truly listening to stories that are not our own. The link between humanity and war can be approached philosophically in a manner that opens novice students up to the power of narrative as a means of negotiating conflicts, differences, and meaning. During this initial unit, we'll introduce thinking about the philosophy of human nature, first by asking why we go to war through a conversational reading of Book Two in Plato's Republic. The dialogue form offers an inclusive avenue into philosophical reasoning, as do short essays from Schopenhauer, who poses questions about meaning in the midst of strife.

After this introduction, the schedule will move chronologically with 4-6 week units on the ancient Greek wars, the American Civil War, the Vietnam War, and the post-9/11 wars. When relevant, we'll fold in readings or images from other conflicts. For each conflict, we will look at war and homecoming through the lens of History, Literature and Moral Philosophy, with the goal of trying to understand the stories, thoughts and actions of both individuals and societies – in the crucible of war, and in its often contradictory and challenging aftermath. At least two sessions in each unit will

focus on art history/film, or on text-driven writing or public speaking exercises. Trinity actors will join us periodically dramatic readings and discussion.

Let's use our first unit, on the Peloponnesian War and ancient Greece, as an example. Over a month or so, veterans in the *Dialogues* will spend significant time with each humanities discipline, exploring a variety of texts and ideas that provoke discussion about the call to war, the experience of combat, and the challenges of war's aftermath. For example, Thucydides *Melian Dialogues*, Pericles' *Funeral Oration*, Plato's *Crito* and *The Republic* (Book 5), Jacques-Louis David's painting *The Oath of the Horatii* and Sophocles' play *Antigone* would all contribute meaningfully to a discussion of duty, war, and what one owes to one's country. Philosopher George Kateb's provocative essay on modern patriotism and excerpts from Aristotle and other philosophers on 'Just War Theory' will help frame some of these same questions from the perspective of the state or nation. Book 11 of Homer's *Odyssey* and Sophocles' *Ajax* or *Philoctetes* (all of which depict the horrors of war, and their consequences) can be read alongside excerpts from Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* to explore the impact combat can have on the soul and the psyche – while on the battlefield, and after coming home. Discussions will note the historical context within which the Athenian plays (by Sophocles, Euripides and others) were written: a decades-long war that put great strain on individuals and the society, not unlike our own time and place. A dramatic reading of excerpts from Sophocles by Trinity Rep actors, followed by a robust discussion, would close out this unit. A similar interweaving of humanities ideas and readings will happen in our exploration of the other conflicts, leading to powerful and varied discussions.

*Dialogues* participants will gradually build an intellectual repository of stories, images and ideas with each unit, to inform not only what they explore in the subsequent ones, but reflection on their own

experiences as well. Thus, for example, when they read Tim O'Brien's stories of the homecoming—and eventual suicide—of Vietnam vet Norman Bowker in *The Things They Carried*, they will already have Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* as reference points, along with existential reflections from Walt Whitman, pragmatist analyses by William James, and Winslow Homer's Civil War painting *Veteran in a New Field*. When they read primary sources from the Kennedy and Johnson administrations about the decision to go to war in Vietnam, they will have already examined Thucydides' *Melian Dialogue*, philosophical debates about Just War Theory, Thomas Nagel's meditations on "War and Massacre," and Kwame Appiah's assertions about *Moral Disagreement*. When we finish the *Dialogues* by looking at the post-9/11 conflicts, through Andrew Valls' exploration of terrorism and moral philosophy, the paintings of Steve Mumford, and the poetry and fiction of Iraq war vets Mariette Kalinowski and Brian Turner, students will bring with them a wide variety of meaningful intellectual tools to help them understand and be understood.

In our current *Dialogues* courses, we have made a concerted effort to include texts that represent a diversity of voices and views, including the experiences of family members and communities grappling with returning as well as lost soldiers. For example, Siobhan Fallon's *Tips For A Smooth Transition* and Sarah Kishpaugh's *How to Break Up with A Brain Injured Soldier*, as well as Charlotte Brock's poignant poem *Hymn*, Vaccaro's "Shock Waves," Nancy Sherman's "The Moral Logic of Survivor's Guilt," George Brandt's play *Grounded*, and Wendell Berry's "Nathan" (from *Hanna Coulter*) all push us to think about the broader emotional impact of war and its aftermath, on loved ones and communities.

Toward the end of the spring *Dialogue* in 2020 and in 2021, students will be asked to write and give a speech that draws on texts they've read and things they've learned, reflecting on some aspect of their experience as soldiers and/or veterans. Dr. Torrens will work with them, as will the *Dialogues*



Facilitators (veterans hired from the most recent Providence CVI). The goal is to use the humanities to understand their own experiences (and vice versa), and to then share that understanding orally with their fellow students, for the purposes of discussion. Notably, Dr. Santow and the faculty involved here (Riley and Torrens) were the first to integrate public speaking into the national Clemente course, as a way of reinforcing and deepening classroom discussions with great success.

**DESIGN, CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION:** The proposed Providence CVI Dialogues, like our current program, will be aimed primarily at veterans struggling with readjustment to civilian life, regardless of discharge status. They will run during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, from September to early May. Dialogues will meet twice a week, two hours a session, for 12 weeks in the fall and for another 12 weeks in the spring. Each course will enroll 15 -20 students. We will seek to recruit a new cohort of students for each year with the intention of having them participate in both the fall and spring dialogues, but they will have the option of doing only one of them, should they choose to do so. 3 credits will be available to students for each Dialogue.

Classes will be held at the Trinity Repertory Theater. Trinity's Education team will once again provide childcare for free on-site, as well age-appropriate theater games and exercises for the children.

Trinity actors will be available to do dramatic readings of scenes from plays we will be reading in the Dialogues, both in our classroom discussions and for our Preparatory Trainings.

We will use the Peloponnesian War, the American Civil War, the Vietnam War, and the post-9/11 conflicts -- along with occasional texts and images drawn from other conflicts -- to explore our three core themes: 1) going to war; 2) the experience and impact of war; 3) homecoming and the aftermath of war. These three themes will be examined at the level of the individual, and the nation, drawing on multiple humanities disciplines: History (HST), Literature (LIT) and Moral Philosophy (PHL), with frequent forays into Art History/Film (ARH), and Writing/Public Speaking

(WPS). HST, LIT and PHL will be woven together in a rotating schedule organized around the four conflicts, with periodic discussions of ARH and WPS every few weeks.

Our course will begin with a 2-3 week exploration of the power of language and storytelling, noting how people experience the world in a multitude of ways due to their individual circumstances. After this introduction the schedule would move chronologically, with 4-6 week units on the ancient Greek wars, the American Civil War, the Vietnam War, and the post-9/11 wars. When relevant, we'll fold in readings or images from other conflicts, too. For each conflict we examine, we will look at war and homecoming through the lens of History, Literature and Moral Philosophy.

In many cases, the questions and ideas to which discussion of these conflicts gives rise will also provide opportunities to explore humanities texts that are only tangentially related to war – thus expanding the knowledge of our students and shifting their perspective, while encouraging them to draw connections between the specific experience of military service and more universal human themes. So, while the intellectual and organizational core of the fall and spring Dialogues will be texts and images that deal directly with the experience of war and homecoming, we believe that enlarging our current program into a broader interaction with the humanities will expand and deepen the impact on the students, by inviting them to explore issues that arise for soldiers and their families in entirely different settings. It is in large part for this reason that we are proposing to expand our current PCVI curriculum.

**PREPARATORY PROGRAM FOR NEH DISCUSSION LEADERS:** The PCVI Dialogues will be taught by five faculty, experienced in leading discussions of humanities topics with low-income, adult learners, and veterans. In the Clemente model, an Academic Director, who also teaches one of the disciplines,

is present in every session. The Director's role is to provide students with logistical and material support as needed, to help students recognize common ideas across the disciplines and in-class discussions, and to ensure that best practices for teaching and inclusion are implemented in all class meetings.

PCVI Dialogues faculty will participate in a preparatory training program, co-sponsored by Operation Stand Down RI and URI, to be held over two days in July 2019 and July 2020 at URI's downtown campus. Two veterans who completed the spring 2019 PCVI Dialogues will be hired as 'Dialogues Facilitators' and will help to organize the training and participate in it. They will also help with student recruitment and have a variety of duties. The training program will give all in attendance a sense of what working with veterans will be like, and enhance the ability of faculty to lead open and inclusive discussions across disciplines. We will accomplish this through reading relevant texts, listening to veterans and those accustomed to working with them, and discussing the best ways to make our Dialogues engaging, inclusive, and fruitful. Participants will read a short list of materials prior to the training, which will then be discussed. Some of these materials will be designed to familiarize them with the experiences of veterans and their families and their common needs and struggles. Others will be more academic and pedagogical in nature, to familiarize faculty with the history of the wars we will be examining, and to give them a sense of how issues related to war and homecoming are examined in other disciplines.

The preparatory training will also include a discussion of lessons learned from the spring 2019 NEH-supported Clemente veterans' courses. That discussion will include our Dialogues Facilitators -- two veterans who participated in the spring 2019 PCVI. Representatives from Operation Stand Down and the RI VA Medical Center will work to familiarize faculty with the experiences and needs of veterans and their families, and some of the local services available to them. A dramatic public reading by

Trinity Repertory Company actors of excerpts from Sophocles play *Philoctetes*, will be followed by a discussion led by Dialogues Facilitators. The PCVI faculty and our Dialogues Facilitators will also formally meet 3 times during the 2019-2020 Dialogues, and once more after their conclusion, to work through lessons, difficulties, and improvements. These will then be incorporated into the July 2020 preparatory training.

**DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR MILITARY VETERANS AND OTHERS:** The Providence CVI Dialogues are premised in part on the idea that guided discussion of humanities texts and images can provide veterans with an opportunity to make sense of their experiences and of their transition back into civilian life. Intellectual engagement with these texts can enable veterans to thread new meaning through the years that follow their demobilization, and invite them as citizen-soldiers to help their families and their communities make sense of the burdens and consequences of war.

**Course structure:** The Providence CVI Dialogues will be aimed primarily at veterans struggling with readjustment to civilian life, regardless of discharge status. They will run for 12 weeks in the fall and another 12 weeks in the spring, in 2019-2020 and again in 2020-2021. Classes will be held at the Trinity Repertory Theater in downtown Providence, on Monday and Thursday evenings from 6pm to 8pm. We anticipate 15-20 students. A new cohort of students will be recruited for each fall, with the intention of having them participate in both the fall and spring dialogues, but they will have the option of doing only one of them, should they choose to do so. We will welcome repeat students.

**Veteran Dialogue Facilitators:** Each summer, two veterans who participate in the Dialogues will be hired to serve as Dialogues Facilitators for the following year. They will help organize and lead our July 2019 and July 2020 preparatory training sessions; help recruit students for the Dialogues; and, work with faculty in the fall Dialogues as discussion assistants in class and as supports for students outside of class. In addition to the intrinsic value of putting these veterans in leadership positions,

and building their skills as discussion leaders, Dialogues Facilitators can provide faculty with critical insights, in real time, to help them be more effective and inclusive. They will meet regularly with Dr. Torrens to share ideas on how to guide class discussions, to review readings, and prepare activities. In addition, they will work with Dr. Torrens to implement a public humanities event each spring, for which we will seek funding separately, that brings veterans and the broader Providence community together to share ideas and experiences. Examples include a vet-curated festival of films about war and homecoming, with 'talk back' discussions; dramatic readings or storytelling by Dialogues students, etc. This brings veterans into leadership positions in the broader community, setting them up to organize public humanities dialogues in the future, beyond our program. It also ensures that the impact of the Providence CVI extends beyond participants, to the wider community of veterans.

**Readings and curriculum:** The PCVI Dialogues will be held in a traditional seminar setting. Assigned texts are intended to be manageable for our target population, and so for some longer texts – plays and novels, for example – we will offer selections as the basis for discussion. We have also chosen texts and images that represent diverse voices and genres in order to make these Dialogues as inclusive as possible. Each year the Providence CVI will take at least one field trip to a local cultural center supporting our inquiry. Because of our partnership with Trinity Repertory Company, students will also experience dramatic readings or full performances of the plays they will be reading; each reading/performance will be followed by a discussion, engaging the students with the actors, CVI faculty, the general public, or all of the above.

**Recruitment:** Our experience in recruiting veterans to the spring 2019 Providence CVI will greatly aid us in recruiting for these Dialogues. To recruit students, we will continue to get referrals from and share informational materials with organizations who serve Rhode Island veterans, and are already familiar with our goals and our work, including: the Providence VA, the Vet Center,

Operation Stand Down, the Rhode Island Veterans Community Task Force, the Veterans Education Committee, local Veteran Navigators, TRiO programs and college counselors at the Community College of RI, and through local religious institutions, libraries, social service agencies. The Office of the RI Post-Secondary Education Commissioner will help us reach veterans who have started community college and then stopped. Second, the Dialogue Facilitators noted above will help our recruitment efforts.

**PROJECT STAFF AND FACULTY:** The project co-directors are Lela Hilton, National Academic Director for the Clemente Course in the Humanities and lead on the NEH-funded *Courage to Come Home* (2015), and Dr. Mark Santow, Associate Professor and Chair of History at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, Academic Director of the New Bedford Clemente Course since 2005, and Academic Director of the Providence CVI Dialogues in spring 2019. Santow will serve as Academic Director of the PCVI Dialogues and teach the history classes. A scholar and teacher of 20th century American politics, cities, civil rights and social policy, Santow has taught courses on the Vietnam War for over a decade, with many veterans in his classroom and as advisees.

Jeannette E. Riley, Professor of English and Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Rhode Island, will teach Literature in the spring 2019 PCVI and will teach it again in the Dialogues proposed here. A scholar and teacher of American literature, Riley taught in the New Bedford Clemente course for ten years and also has community college teaching experience for underserved populations.

Cheryl Foster, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Rhode Island, teaches and writes on subjects in philosophy, the arts, literature, and the environment. In 2013, Foster was one of seven educators nationally selected to be a Kennedy Center/ Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher, and that same year was named the 2013 Carnegie Professor of the Year for Rhode Island.

Suzanne Scanlan, Lecturer in Art History at the Rhode Island School of Design, will teach Art History/film. Her research and teaching focuses on women as artists, patrons and collectors, from the Renaissance through the modern period. For the past two years she has taught Art History for the Clemente Course in New Bedford Massachusetts. She has great familiarity with the collections of the RISD Museum and public memorials in Providence, and looks forward to introducing them to PCVI students.

Kathleen M. Torrens, Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Rhode Island, will teach public speaking in the Spring 2019 PCVI and will do so in the Dialogues proposed here. Dr. Torrens will also coordinate the Dialogue Facilitators. With more than 25 years of public communication teaching experience with a variety of populations, Torrens also taught public speaking in the New Bedford Clemente Course for 8 years.

**INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT:** Founded in 1996, the Clemente Course in the Humanities is now offered in 33 sites in US. It provides free, accredited college Courses in the humanities to those marginalized by economic hardship and adverse circumstances. Students are guided by highly experienced college faculty who, using the Socratic method, provide a rigorous education in literature, philosophy, American history, art history, and critical thinking and writing. Class discussions and readings increase students' skills in critical thinking, writing, communication, time management, teamwork, and self-advocacy. Clemente is founded on the premise that liberal education is education to make people free, and it proceeds on the conviction that reflection in the humanities can liberate adults living in poverty and other marginalizing conditions to more actively shape their own lives and those of their families and communities. We believe that through engagement with and appeal to the humanities, individuals can achieve a new understanding of themselves, the world, and the fundamental values of goodness and justice.

Clemente is dedicated to the notion of collective impact, where organizations with complimentary visions and diverse community assets and resources work together to fulfill their common missions for social change. As such, we work with community organizations and institutions of higher education to establish courses, recruit faculty and students, provide professional development for faculty, ensure academic rigor, and collaborate on program development, evaluations and fundraising. Clemente will support the preparatory training activities of the Providence Dialogues proposed here, as well as provide administrative support.

**EVALUATION:** Clemente is collaborating with the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) and Metis Associates, a national research and consulting firm headquartered in New York City with 40 years of experience in K-12 and higher education programs to develop an assessment specifically targeted to CVI. At the heart of our strategy is a pre- and post-test design where the participants complete validated scales—for example, the Groningen Reflection Ability Scale (GRAS), the De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale, and the Social Network Satisfaction Scale from The Veterans' Metric Initiative Well-Being Inventory—at the outset and conclusion of the program in order to measure the social and reflective benefits of participating as well as outcomes key to the CVI model: increased civic engagement, increased critical thinking and writing skills, improvements in overall functioning, and the social and emotional benefits of being a part of the learning community.

The post-test also includes a dozen or so retrospective questions about the program that generally focus on these same themes. This approach has emerged out of Clemente and NHA's research regarding surveys and testimony from participants in previous NEH Dialogues programs, as well as veterans' challenges more broadly. In sum, they are targeted toward widespread issues in the veteran's community that we know that CVI and Dialogues help address, and we're trying to capture those impacts in an objective manner.



**Preparatory Training Syllabus:**  
***Providence Clemente Veterans Initiative Dialogues on the Experience of War***  
University of Rhode Island, Providence campus

Sponsored by the Providence CVI and Operation Stand Down RI

The goal of the training program will be threefold: 1) to give all in attendance a sense of what working with veterans will be like; 2) to enhance the ability of faculty to lead open and inclusive discussions across disciplines; 3) to move toward finalizing the syllabi for the 2019-2020 *Dialogues*. We will accomplish this through reading relevant texts, listening to veterans and those accustomed to working with them, and discussing the best ways to make our *Dialogues* engaging, inclusive, and fruitful.

Two veterans who completed the spring 2019 PCVI *Dialogues* will be hired as 'Dialogues Facilitators.' They will help to organize the training, and will participate in it.

Prior to the preparatory training, faculty and *Dialogues* Facilitators will be expected to familiarize themselves with the basic narrative history of the four wars that will form the core of our curriculum (suggested texts are listed in the Narrative). For the preparatory program itself, most of the readings are aimed at helping faculty to think about war and its aftermath intellectually, and about the ways in which the humanities can be useful for that thinking. Prior to the training, faculty participants will read excerpts from the following:

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Robert Meagher, *Herakles Gone Mad*

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

C.J. Chivers, *The Fighters: Americans in Combat in Afghanistan and Iraq*

Helen Benedict, *The Lonely Soldier Monologues: Women at War in Iraq*

Karl Marlantes, *What It Is Like to Go to War*

Bryan Doerries, *The Theater of War: What Ancient Greek Tragedies Can Teach Us Today*

The Great Books Foundation *Shared Inquiry HandBook*, which is a resource for facilitators and participants in their Talking Service program, will be available for both our faculty and participants.

**Schedule for Day 1, morning session: Why have *Dialogues on the Experience of War*?**

- Presentation by Max Reynard, "The Telling Project," University of Houston, on humanities texts and soldier trauma.
- Panel discussion by representatives of Operation Stand Down RI, the Vet Center, and the Providence VA Readjustment office, to familiarize faculty with the experiences and

needs of veterans and their families, and some of the local services available to them. Things to be read/watched in preparation for this specific session:

- Gregory Bistoën, “Individualization, Decontextualization, and Depoliticization in the Biomedical PTSD-Approach”
- *Thank You For Your Service* (documentary film)
- [Excerpts] *What They Signed Up For*, Jeb Wyman
- Siobhan Fallon, “Tips for a Smooth Transition”
- *Accommodating Student Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, developed by the Kresge Foundation

**Schedule for Day 1, afternoon session: Lessons learned from the spring 2019 Dialogues**

- Discussion of lessons learned from Providence: Mark Santow, Jen Riley, Dialogues Facilitators (two veterans who participated in the spring 2019 PCVI)
- Discussion of lessons learned from Boston: Jack Cheng

**Schedule for Day 1, evening: *Philoctetes***

- Dramatic public reading by Trinity Repertory Company actors of excerpts from Sophocles play *Philoctetes*. Reading for training participants:
  - Bryan Doerries translation of *Philoctetes*
- Public discussion, hosted by Trinity Rep, and led by Dialogues Facilitators

**Schedule for Day 2, morning: Reading Moral Philosophy in the *Dialogues***

- Dr. Cheryl Foster, Philosophy Department, University of Rhode Island: Moral Philosophy, war and homecoming -- a primer and some sample discussions for non-philosophers

**Schedule for Day 2, afternoon: Curriculum workshop for 2019-2020 *Dialogues***

- Providence faculty will use the afternoon, in collaboration with our Dialogues Facilitators, to formulate drafts of syllabi -- what to read, what to see, what to discuss

We believe that good self-reflective practice requires that the training be ongoing, and not just preparatory. To that end, the PCVI faculty and our Dialogues Facilitators will formally meet 3 times during the 2019-2020 Dialogues, and once more after their conclusion, to work through lessons, difficulties, and improvements. These will then be incorporated into the July 2020 preparatory training.

## Schedule/Syllabus for Providence CVI *Dialogues on the Experience of War*

### **Weeks 1-2: Introduction**

Stories and why we need them; Human nature, conflict and war; Critical reading, and the need to see other perspectives

Tim O'Brien, "How to Tell a War Story"

Adrienne Rich, "Here is a Map of our Country" and Anne Sexton, "Courage"

Chimamanda Adichie,, [The Danger of a Single Story](#)

Phil Klay, [After War, A Failure of the Imagination](#)

David Tracy, "The Question of History" (from *Plurality and Ambiguity*)

Plato, *Republic*, "Allegory of the Cave" and Book II (human nature and the origins of war)

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Shattered Mirror" (from *Cosmopolitanism*)

Rene Magritte, *La condition humaine* (Plato's cave); Athenian architecture

### **Weeks 3-6: Ancient Greece and the Peloponnesian War**

What is just conduct, in war and life? What do we owe the nation or *polis*?

Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, *Ajax*; Homer, *The Odyssey*, Descent into Hell (Book 11)

Thucydides, Melian Dialogues

Plato, *Crito*; *Republic*, Book V (just conduct in war)

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (excerpts)

Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii* and Lethiere's *Death of Camilla* (at the RISD Museum)

### **Weeks 7-12: the American Civil War**

Conflicting beliefs about right and wrong action; Memory, Commemoration, Reconciliation and the aftermath of war; War as a source of human progress?

Lincoln speeches: House Divided, Gettysburg, Second Inaugural

Jourdan Anderson, Letter to his former master; 14th amendment

Frederick Douglass, What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?

James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrade* (excerpts)

Walt Whitman, "The Wound Dresser;" "Leaves of Grass" (excerpts); Louisa May Alcott, "[Hospital Sketches](#)"

Stephen Crane, "[The Veteran](#)"

Herman Melville, "[On the Slain at Chickamauga](#)" and Ralph Waldo Emerson, "[Voluntaries](#)"

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Moral Disagreement" (from *Cosmopolitanism*)

Mathew Brady, Photographs (Gettysburg etc); Winslow Homer, *Veteran in a New Field* (with Millet) *Massachusetts 54th* (Augustus Saint Gaudens - Boston Common) and movie, *Glory*

Lynching postcards; Photographs of Confederate Memorials; Civil War memorial with black soldier in Providence's Kennedy Plaza

### **Weeks 13-14: WWI/WWII interlude**

Just wars and good character; Soldering in the age of propaganda, mass armies and total wars

Paul Fussell, "Thank God for the Atomic Bomb"

Studs Terkel, *The Good War* (excerpts)

Franklin Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms" and "The Second Bill of Rights"; GI Bill of Rights

Nicholson Baker, "Human Smoke" (Excerpts)  
Ernest Hemingway, "Big Two-Hearted River" and Wendell Berry, "Nathan," from *Hanna Coulter*  
Edith Wharton, "[Writing A War Story](#)"  
Robert Frost, "[Not to Keep](#)"; Wildred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Vera Brittain, selected poems  
John Cloverdale, "An Introduction to the Just War Tradition;" Michael Walzer, "The Legalist Paradigm"  
Aristotle, Book Two of *Nichomachean Ethics* and Book VIII of *The Politics*  
WWI propaganda posters; Norman Rockwell, *Homecoming GI*, *Four Freedoms*; Picasso, *Guernica*  
Memorial Park in Providence

### **Weeks 15-20: The American War in Vietnam**

How/why should a democracy go to war? 'humping the boonies,' hearts and minds of U.S. soldiers in a war for hearts and minds; Courage has many forms; Questioning war as just; Coping in aftermath of war

Loren Baritz, "Links in the Chain That Led to Vietnam" and "The Warriors"  
Primary sources, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson on the decision to go to war in Vietnam  
Tim O'Brien, "Days" and "Step Lightly," *If I Die in the Combat Zone*  
[Unarmed and Under Fire: An Oral History of Female Vietnam Vets](#)  
W.S. Merwin, "[The Asians Dying](#)" and Bruce Weigl, "[Song of Napalm](#)"  
W.D. Ehrhart, "[Beautiful Wreckage](#)"; Steven Mason, poems; Yusef Komunyakaa, "[Facing It](#)"  
Tim O'Brien, "Wise Endurance," "Rainy River," "Pro Patria" and "Escape"  
Charles Wyzanski, Jr., "On Civil Disobedience and Draft Resistance," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1968  
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam" (1967)  
Karl Marlantes, *What It is Like To Go To War* (excerpts)  
Peter Marin, "Living in Moral Pain," [War and Moral Injury: A Reader](#)  
Nancy Sherman, "The Moral Logic of Survivor Guilt"  
Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre"  
*Vietnam Veterans* (Maya Lin), *Vietnam Women's* (Glenna Goodacre)  
Charles Griswold and Stephen Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography"  
Films: *Going Upriver* (scene from Dewey Canyon III, April 1971); *Two Days in October*; *Full Metal Jacket*

### **Weeks 21-24: The post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq**

Means, Ends, and Justifications; 'The Marines are at war, America is at the mall' -- bridging the gulf; PTSD, moral injury, and the will to live

C.J. Chivers, *The Fighters* (excerpts)  
Andrew Bacevich, *Breach of Trust* (excerpts)  
David Wood, "It's Wrong, But You Have No Choice"  
Bethany Vaccaro, "Shock Waves" and Siobhan Fallon, "Tips for a Smooth Transition"  
Brian Turner, *Here, Bullet*, selections (poems) and Hugh Martin, *In Country*, selections (poems)  
Adrienne Rich, "Calibrations" (prosthetics and how you retain feeling after injury)  
Mariette Kalinowski, "The Train" and Brian Van Reet, "Big Two-Hearted Hunting Creek"  
George Brandt, *Grounded* (play)  
Cara Hoffman, "[The Things She Carried](#)"  
Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Counter-Cosmopolitans" (from *Cosmopolitanism*)  
Andrew Valls, "Can Terrorism be Justified?" and Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (excerpts)  
Paintings by Steve Mumford, artist embedded with US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan  
Films: *The Hurt Locker*, *Jack Ryan* (episode excerpts), *Restrepo* (excerpts)