Hello FIG students,

I will be your Freshman Interest Group Assistant (FA) this coming year! As you probably already know, you will be taking Geography 209: Geography of the Middle East and North Africa, Anthropology 161: World Cultures, and Geography 199: College Connections with your fellow FIG students as part of the Global Oregon FIG.

By way of introduction, my name is Mika Weinstein. I am from just north of San Francisco, from a small town called San Anselmo. This will be my junior year at the UO and I’ve loved my time here so far. I’m majoring in planning, public policy, and management and minoring in biology. Aside from staying involved with University Housing through my position as a Resident Assistant last year, I am involved with several groups on campus. These include Beyond War, Slow Food UO, and the campus initiative in partnership with the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. You will become familiar with this partnership through your participation in the Global Oregon FIG; the FIG is the largest endeavor that’s come out of the collaboration so far. Our FIG professor, Shaul Cohen, is a Carnegie Global Ethics Fellow at their institution.

Shaul’s main area of research focuses on ethnic-territorial conflict. He has spent substantial time researching and writing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the conflict in Northern Ireland. Many of the classes he teaches deal with human geography, specifically the interface between environment, politics, and culture. He’s also interested in studying tree planting from political and cultural perspectives. He has an interesting history that you’ll learn more about in our classes together.

The primary focus of our FIG is ethics in international affairs. The geography and anthropology courses you’ll be taking together will provide a nice starting point but our conversation will range extensively over the course of the year. Our conversations will draw from talks on campus, guest speakers in person or on Skype in the college connections course, and whatever is happening in the news. In the first few weeks, our discussion will also be aided by your two summer assignments: the book *The Death of Innocents* by Sister Helen Prejean (who you’ll meet in the fall) and the film *The Three Kings*. Be sure to finish both of these before arriving at the university. This is a residential FIG, so you’ll have plenty of opportunities to connect with your fellow FIG students beginning on your first night in our residence hall.

There are a few important meetings to keep in mind as you begin to schedule your first week here. Our first get together as a FIG will be the evening of **Tuesday, September 18th**. You will arrive a few nights earlier than most of the new residents. The first large group FIG meeting is on **Friday, September 21 at 10am in Columbia 150**. Make sure to be punctual, as we will be relocating from Columbia to meet Shaul elsewhere. After that meeting, also expect to spend some time doing another group activity before breaking away. Another important event is University Convocation, which is scheduled to take place on **Sunday, September 23**. We will walk over for Convocation as a FIG. Later in the summer, you’ll receive a booklet outlining all of the activities planned for Week of Welcome, so get excited! In addition to that, don’t forget to bring your student handbook to campus.
I’m looking forward to hearing from all of you soon. If you have any questions about the FIG, Shaul, or the UO in general, feel free to email me at mweinste@uoregon.edu. Please send me your email address so we can reach you for more news about this coming fall and I’d love to read a short introduction of who you are and what you do.

Best,
Mika Weinstein and Shaul Cohen