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Cartoonists provoke, but say the real message is tolerance



Northeastern hosting "Cartooning for Peace" symposium.

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Editorial cartoonists are accustomed to dealing with the enmity of powerful individuals. But making Richard Nixon's "enemies list," as cartoonist Paul Conrad famously did in the 1970s, is different in kind from Al Qaeda placing a \$100,000 bounty on your head.

That is what happened to a Swedish editorial cartoonist who, in 2007, depicted Muhammad with the body of a dog — and such reactions are growing more commonplace. As political and religious conflict has spread across cultures, editorial cartoons have become a flashpoint for widespread outrage.

This week at Northeastern, a half dozen editorial cartoonists from around the world will advance their own perspective: that humor with a very sharp point should provoke dialogue and not death threats, and lead to tolerance and not repression.

Members of the international organization Cartooning for Peace/Dessins pour la Paix, will discuss these and other ideas at "**Cartooning for Peace: A symposium on free expression, responsibility, and tolerance,**" at Blackman Auditorium on Wednesday, April 14, from 11:45 am to 1:15 pm. The public symposium, focusing on free speech and the power of cartoons to foster tolerance, will include a lengthy question-and answer session with the audience.

The distinguished panel includes Plantu, the renowned editorial cartoonist for Le Monde and the weekly magazine L' Express; Khalil Abu Arafah, the editorial cartoonist for the leading Palestinian newspaper, Al-Quds; Daryl Cagle, the widely syndicated editorial cartoonist for MSNBC.com; Jeff Danziger, an editorial cartoonist with the New York Times syndicate; Uri Fink, creator of Zbeng!, Israel's popular-culture comic, and author of the graphic novel, "Israel-Palestine: Between War and Peace"; and Daniel Wasserman, a Boston Globe editorial cartoonist since 1985.

(To view excerpts of Plantu from a United Nations conference, please [click here.](#))

Northeastern political science professor William Miles will moderate the symposium, the capstone to three days of events on campus, including the formal opening Monday evening of "Cartooning for Peace/Dessins pour la Paix," an exhibit of 86 editorial cartoons at Northeastern's **Gallery 360**. The exhibit will be up through May 12.

Plantu and his fellow cartoonists will also engage with Northeastern students and faculty in scheduled classroom visits today and Tuesday.

While Cartooning for Peace/Dessins pour la Paix (CfP) has held exhibitions, seminars and symposia around the world since its founding more than three years ago, the events at Northeastern will mark only its second appearance in the United States. That is expected to change soon: The organization hopes to use its visit to Boston to announce the creation of Cartooning for Peace/America.

CfP grew out of a United Nations symposium, "Unlearning Intolerance," held in October 2006 in reaction to the violent outcry over cartoon depictions of the prophet Muhammad published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten. The Cartooning for Peace Foundation was officially established in Paris in May 2008, with former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as honorary president. Today, the organization includes more than 75 cartoonists on five continents.

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