"Is College a Lousy Investment?" This postulation, which appeared in a recent *Newsweek* article, stems from the increasingly divergent trends of a lagging economy and the rising cost of higher education. The crux of the article suggests that the time and money students devote to college leaves them worse off than when they first arrived. Particularly when pursuing liberal arts degrees, it says that students learn little that is of practical use for the job market. Thus the investment does not pay off.¹ In order to challenge this growing sentiment, in this paper I will contend that a liberal arts education is of profound value by way of its indirect contribution to the issue of war and peace. I will argue, that is, that a liberal arts education is essential to forming citizens who are self-examining, empathetic, imaginative, and willing to learn from other viewpoints—characteristics that are fundamental to engaging justly and effectively in matters of war and peace.

I will structure this argument in two parts. In Part One, I will examine recent works by renowned peacebuilders John Paul Lederach and Marc Gopin—namely, Lederach’s *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* and Gopin’s *Bridges Across an Impossible Divide: The Inner Lives of Arab and Jewish Peacemakers*. After numerous books on the concrete practices of peacebuilding, in these most recent works Lederach and Gopin direct their attention to character formation as the key to establishing partnerships across enemy lines. In Part Two, I will draw on Josef Pieper’s *Leisure the Basis of Culture* and Martha Nussbaum’s *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* to contest that a liberal arts education is key to producing citizens such as Lederach and Gopin describe. In the end, these two complementing sections will illustrate that (at least) with regard to the issue of war and peace, a liberal arts education is not only worthwhile, but rather a necessary investment for democratic societies to maintain.