Ambassador Milton Wolf Seminar 2015
Triumphs and Tragedies: Media and Global Events in 2014
Vienna, Austria, April 19 – April 21, 2015

ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR MILTON WOLF SEMINAR SERIES

Launched in 2001, the Ambassador Milton Wolf Seminar Series aims to deal with developing issues in diplomacy and journalism – both broadly defined. The 2015 seminar is jointly organized by the Center for Global Communication Studies (CGCS) at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, The American Austrian Foundation (AAF), and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA). Guests include those working for state and multi-lateral organizations, journalists, media development practitioners, academics, and a select group of highly engaged graduate students interested in the seminar themes. The Milton Wolf Seminar Series particularly emphasizes the potential contributions of young and mid-career scholars, including a select group of outstanding graduate students selected each year to attend the seminar in Vienna as Emerging Scholar fellows.

The organizers envision the Milton Wolf Seminar as a meeting place for media practitioners, diplomats, academics, and students to share their perspectives, formulate new ideas, and identify areas where further research is needed. While the seminar will incorporate various speakers and panels, it is designed as a two-day continuing conversation in which all participants are encouraged to engage in dialogue and explore potential synergies and future collaborations. In order to encourage the open exchange of ideas, seminar attendance is limited only to invited participants and students.

ABOUT THE 2015 SEMINAR

Punctuated by both diplomatic triumphs and tragedies, 2014 was an extraordinary year for those interested in international communication and diplomacy. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria emerged from the shadows into the media spotlight, sweeping through large swaths of the Middle East. Ukraine and Russia moved to the brink of war and beyond over the annexation of Crimea. The United States and Cuba surprised the world with the announcement of the first moves towards the normalization of diplomatic relations in over fifty years. While Iran and Western leaders inched painfully forward in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. As the year came to a close, hackers seeking to stop the release of a film demeaning Kim Jun un waged one of the most extensive and damaging corporate cyber-attacks in history against Sony Pictures, an attack purportedly sponsored by the North Korean government. These disparate case studies offer fertile examples of diplomatic conflicts and agreements between players of differing geopolitical size and strength. They also highlight the increasingly complex role of old and new media in international diplomacy.

Geopolitical actors of all sizes and shapes are experimenting with new forms of strategic communication that capitalize on the complexities of the diffuse and multi-modal global media system. ISIS not only surprised the West with its swift and precise military offensive but with the sophistication of its social media charm offensive. Even as most

social media platforms remained banned in Iran, Iranian political and religious leaders ramped up efforts to bring the Iranian nuclear case to the world through often contradictory English language websites, Twitter feeds, and YouTube videos. Ukraine and Russia faced off in the battlefield as well as in the international court of public opinion, employing hackers, activists, and social media campaigners—utilizing new techniques but often resurrecting familiar Cold War rhetoric. Finally, the startling Sony episode provided another sign of the significance of hacking and cyber-war in terms of thinking through the complexities of representation, reaction and retaliation.

Taking these studies as a starting point, the 2015 Seminar will examine the historical continuities and potential paradigm shifts in strategic communication surrounding foreign policy events and media's complex and evolving role in diplomacy. Panels will feature academics and stakeholders including diplomats, journalists, activists, and non-traditional media actors invested in shaping these event narratives and outcomes. Questions that will guide the 2015 seminar discussion include:

- To what extent is the proliferation of new communication technologies and corresponding changes in media flows challenging the role of diplomats, journalists, and activists in shaping international understanding of world events?
- How are new techniques upending or reinforcing images of authority surrounding diplomacy?
- How do domestic information and media policies influence foreign policy and international relations?
- How do informational strategies challenge geopolitical power asymmetries?
- What has been the roll of non-traditional media and communications actors in shaping these global events?

Agenda

6:00 – 8:00 PM Welcome Reception and Registration at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna

DAY TWO: APRIL 20, 2015

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome & Introductions

In this opening session, the host institutions will introduce the Milton Wolf Seminar themes and the participants. Coffee and tea and light breakfast pastries will be provided.

- **Katharine Eltz Aulitzky**, Executive Director, *The American Austrian Foundation*
- **Monroe Price**, Director, Center for Global Communications Studies, *Annenberg School for Communication University of Pennsylvania*
- **Gerhard Sailler,** Deputy Director, *Diplomatic Academy of Vienna*

10:00 – 12:00 Session 1: Asymmetries and Strategic Communication– New Mechanisms, New Players, New Strategies

The year 2014 was punctuated by foreign policy crises involving conflicts between players of asymmetric economic, military, and geopolitical strength. The Ukraine faced off against Russia. ISIS challenged the United States in Iraq. Iran faced down a coalition of Western superpowers. Historically speaking, states, particularly powerful states, maintained a privileged control over how over how words and images, even thoughts and ideas, were diffused. With the rise of distributed and decentralized internet and mobile networks, geopolitical size and strength is decreasingly commensurate with the ability to control the media agenda. State and non-state actors are exploring new strategic communication techniques designed to influence and/or control domestic and international media and new media coverage about foreign policy events. This introductory panel will discuss the macro-level trends in strategic communication and the conduct of international relations. Discussions will highlight the emergence of new techniques and new players and their implications for the role of media in international diplomacy.

Panelists

- **Monroe Price**, Director, Center for Global Communications Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania (Chair)
- **Adnan Kifayat,** Senior Resident Fellow, German Marshall Fund
- **Dunja Mijatović**, Representative on Freedom of the Media, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- **Thomas Seifert,** Deputy Editor in Chief, *Wiener Zeitung*

12:00 – 1:30 Welcome Lunch

1:30 – 3:15 Session 2: Mobilizing Public Opinion in the Fog of Diplomacy: Iran and the Nuclear Agreement

The most protracted, and some say promising, diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China provided one of the major foreign policy stories of 2014. Will they or won't they reach an agreement? Even as most social media platforms remained banned in Iran, Iranian political and religious leaders brought the Iranian nuclear case to the world through often contradictory English language websites, Twitter feeds, and YouTube videos. Iranian activists and others invested in the outcomes of the negotiations added their voices to the fray. The 2015 Milton Wolf Seminar will take place a little less than a month after a March 24 deadline to reach an agreement limiting Iran's nuclear technology and imposing tough international inspections in exchange for the gradual removal of economic sanctions on the country. Focusing specifically on competing efforts to mobilize public opinion, this panel will explore how different actors have sought to influence images of authority surrounding these negotiations and to what effect.

Panelists
- **Martin Weiss,** Spokesman of the Austrian Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (**Chair**)
- **Hossein Bastani,** Political Analyst and Producer, BBC World, Persian Service
- **Reza Marashi**, Research Director, National Iranian American Council
- **Sanam Shantyaei**, Journalist, France 24

3:15 – 3:30 *Tea Break*

3:30 – 5:30 Session 3: The Force that Calls Itself the Islamic State: Managing Representations on the World Stage

In 2014, ISIS emerged onto the global stage, renowned not only for its speedy military incursions into Iraq and Syria and its goals of establishing a caliphate, but also for deploying one of the most elaborate, and some would argue successful, social media based public relations strategies to date. Focusing specifically on online propaganda, panelists will discuss the ISIS social media strategy and the extent to which it is evocative of broader trends in the use of social media in contemporary international conflicts.

Panelists
- **Marwan Kraidy**, Professor of Communication and Director of the Project for Advanced Research in Global Communication, University of Pennsylvania **(Chair)**
- **Sultan Al Qassemi**, Director's Fellow at MIT Media Lab (*Gulf News, The National, Foreign Policy, The Guardian, Financial Times, Al Monitor, CNN*)
- **Amjad Baiazy,** Department of the School of Social Sciences, City University, London
- **Michael Slackman**, International Managing Editor, *The New York Times*

7:00 Dinner at the Residence of the US Deputy Chief of Mission, Eugene Young

9:00 – 10:30
Session 4: The Diplomacy of Domestic Media and Information Policy

Tensions between domestic regulations governing media and information flows and "global norms" of freedom of expression, internet rights, and media pluralism are a hallmark of contemporary international relations. While previous panels explored how different state and non-state actors are using media and new media in service of foreign policy goals, this panel focuses more narrowly on cases in which domestic media and information policies become the subject of international controversy and diplomatic negotiations. Panelists will explore case studies from various countries currently under fire for their media and information policies, including: Hungary, Russia and China.

Panelists

- **Steven Ellis,** Director of Advocacy and Communication, International Press Institute **(Chair)**
- **Amy Brouillette,** Director of the European Media Project, Center for Media and Communication Studies , Central European University
- **Eric Nisbet,** Associate Professor, Ohio State University
- **Maria Repnikova**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Project for Advanced Research in Global Communication, Annenberg School of Communication at UPENN

10:30 – 10:45 *Tea Break*

10:45 – 12:15 Session 5: Ukraine and the Superpowers: An Update in the Revival of Cold War Rhetoric

As tensions escalated between the Ukraine and Russia over Crimea, so too did media allusions to World War II and the Cold War. Western media accounts commonly interpreted Russia's interests in Crimea through the lens of resurgent World War II era nationalism, a return to the rhetoric of the motherland. These media narratives typically ally Ukraine both ideologically and militarily with the West. This panel examines the rhetoric and the reality behind the media war surrounding the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

Panelists

- **Andrey Rikhter –** Director, Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe **(Chair)**
- **Yevhen Fedechenko,** Director**,** Kyiv-Mohyla School of Journalism
- **Cornelius Granig,** Former CEO of Siemens, Ukraine
- **Olga Kamenchuk -** Director of International and Public Affairs, Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM)

12:15 – 1:30 *Lunch*

1:30 – 3:30 Session 6: Non-Traditional Uses of Media in Foreign Policy Debates

The rise of a networked, distributed and multi-modal media environment populated by professional journalists, activist media organizations, state funded operations, and citizens with social media accounts has critical implications for media's role in diplomacy. While the case studies examined in previous panels highlighted media's myriad role in diplomacy, this panel is focused specifically on the evolving role of non-traditional uses of media in foreign policy debates. It highlights how actors working within and outside the boundaries of government are seeking to shape foreign policy narratives and outcomes.

Panelists

- **Amelia Arsenault,** Assistant Professor, Georgia State University **(Chair)**
- **Rob Bole**, Director of Global Strategy, Broadcasting Board of Governors
- **Charlotte Gill,** Campaigner, ARTICLE 19
- **Danica Radisic**, Central and Eastern Europe Editor, Global Voices

3.30 – 4.00 *Tea Break*

4.00 – 5:00 Presentation of Emerging Scholars Research

- **Amelia Arsenault,** Assistant Professor, Georgia State University **(Chair)**
- **Nicole Bailey**, George Washington University
- **Robyn Caplan,** Rutgers University
- **Philip van Engeldorp Gastelaars,** Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
- **Kamrand Hooshmand,** University of Texas at Austin
- **Anamaria Iuga,** Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
- **Kevin Kallmyer,** Georgetown University
- **Illan Manor,** Tel Aviv University
- **Luis Peres Neto,** ESPM, Sao Paulo
- **Revati Prasad,** Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
- **Matthew Rae**, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna

7:00 Heurigen