



Milton Wolf Seminar 2018
Public Diplomacy in Moments of Geopolitical Transformation
Vienna, Austria,
April 16-18, 2018

ABOUT THE MILTON WOLF SEMINAR SERIES

Launched in 2001, the Milton Wolf Seminar Series aims to deal with developing issues in diplomacy and journalism – both broadly defined. The University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School for Communication, The American Austrian Foundation (AAF), and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA) are jointly organizing the 2018 seminar. Participants include those working for state and multi-lateral organizations, journalists, representatives from media and internet companies, academics, and a select group of highly engaged graduate students whose studies relate to the seminar themes. The Milton Wolf Seminar Series particularly emphasizes the potential contribution of young and mid-career scholars, including a group of outstanding graduate students selected each year to attend the seminar as Emerging Scholar fellows.

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

ABOUT THE 2018 SEMINAR

Discussion abounds about dramatic geopolitical shifts: the end of the American unipolar moment, the rise of G-Zero, the end of NATO, a new Cold War, Russian and Chinese soft and hard power on the rise, global populist movements, etc. Potential examples are endless. There is little agreement on the immediate causes and long-term consequences of these shifts. However, as we take stock of the evolving geopolitical realities, public diplomacy (or lack thereof) and the role of media and communications are no doubt critical to the current state of and future of international relations. Governments around the world increasingly view social networks as the primary conduits between governments and foreign publics and between foreign publics and domestic publics and actively seek to build networks of fans, followers, and friends. Words like fake news, disinformation, computational propaganda, net neutrality, among others are buzzwords among diplomats and pundits alike.



The 2018 Seminar will examine **Public Diplomacy in Moments of Geopolitical Transformation**, with a particular focus on the current and potential role of media and communications actors in these transformations.

This general theme allows a discussion of many salient subjects, including information polarization, democracy and information technologies, and information and economic development. It also allows for a critical perspective on the institutions involved in classic state-to-state diplomacy, public diplomacy, and media and society to explore innovative ways forward. What do recent shifts in the international system suggest about traditional definitions and practices associated with public diplomacy? To what extent do state-driven narratives like China's one belt one road and America First conform to or upend how we think about power and agency in international relations? Are geopolitical transformations opening up new spaces for action by entrenched and emerging state and non-state actors and to what effect?

AGENDA

DAY ONE – MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 PM Welcome Reception and Registration (Diplomatic Academy)

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome Tea & Introduction

- **Katharine Eltz-Aulitzky**, Executive Director, *The American Austrian Foundation*
- **Monroe Price**, *Annenberg School for Communication University of Pennsylvania*
- **Ambassador Emil Brix**, Director, *Diplomatic Academy*
- **Amelia Arsenault**, Senior Advisor, Public Diplomacy Research and Evaluation Unit, US Department of State

10:00 – 11:30 Session 1: Is this a Transformative Moment in International Information Diplomacy?

This introductory session will reflect on whether there are indeed vast changes—geopolitical and technological—that are gnawing at older models of public diplomacy. Panelists will explore, for example, persistent tendencies and radical changes in the way states try to influence the population of other states. Recent developments, such as the contentions concerning the manipulation of publics in the US, in France, in Ukraine, and elsewhere suggest that suggest this might be a transformative moment: in terms of organization, vocabularies of intervention, lessons learned, and the geographies of saliency. Among the areas that could be indicative are what one might call the anxieties of information flows: the mysterious power of algorithms, the sudden rise of computational propaganda, the invisibility of decision-making, and the concentration of industry power. Other grounds for new anxieties include fears for national

sovereignty accelerated by information technology, the disappearance and significance of trusted intermediaries, and the threat of cyberwar. Do these add up to a “transformative moment,” and if so, what transformations? Panelists will discuss current transformations, historical antecedents, and expound on what they consider the reality behind the rhetoric of geopolitical shifts.

Panelists

- **Monroe Price**, Annenberg School for Communication University of Pennsylvania (Panelist & Moderator)
- **Elena V. Denezhkina**, Research Fellow, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham
- **Ambassador Leigh Turner**, British Ambassador to Austria and UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna
- **John Hudson**, National Security Reporter, *Washington Post*

11:30 – 12:45 Welcoming Lunch

12:45 – 2:45 Session 2: Sites of Contestation Part I: Propaganda, Continuity and Change

This session will kick off an afternoon of discussion and debate about active sites of contestation in the international community. From concern over computational propaganda, fake news, and information warfare to freedom of expression and net neutrality, the ability to shape national media ecosystems is a critical site of conflict in contemporary international relations. Using Russian information operations as a case study, this panel will explore the evolving role of propaganda and information sovereignty in the international system. Panelists will explore the rhetoric and the reality behind Russian disinformation campaigns in a variety of contexts. They will focus on myriad ways external actors are working to shift narratives and understanding in response to perceived Russian influence, in Ukraine, in the European Union, the United States, and globally.

Panelists

- **Ambassador Emil Brix**, Director, Diplomatic Academy (Moderator)
- **Jacek Kucharczyk**, President, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
- **Igor Rozkladaj**, Lawyer, Center for Democracy and Rule of Law, Ukraine
- **Konstantin von Eggert**, Journalist & Political Commentator, TV Rain
- **William Burke White**, Director, Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania

2:45 – 3:00 Tea Break

3:00 – 4:45 Session 3: Sites of Contestation Part II: Geopolitical Hotspots

This session will focus on current geopolitical hotspots where there is active consideration and reconsideration of the instruments of reform, assistance, democracy development and institutional reformulation. Case studies presented in this session will include dynamic theaters—both physical and digital—places where there are both continuation of historic policies and active reassessment of the role of domestic actors and the international community. Panelists will consider the evolving role of the state, old and new media actors, and civil society in shaping the current and future diplomatic resolutions to these hotspots.

Panelists

- **Omar al-Ghazzi**, Assistant Professor, London School of Economics (Panelist and Moderator)
- **Josh Lederman**, Foreign Policy Reporter, Associated Press
- **Sung-Yoon Lee**, Kim Koo-Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Studies, Tufts University
- **Andy O’Connell** – Manager, Global Policy Development, Facebook

6:15 Bus leaves from DA

7:00 – 9:00 Cocktail/Dinner Reception at US Deputy Chief of Mission – *Photo ID required for entry!*

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2018

9:00 – 10:45 Session 4: Impact on the Institutions of Public Diplomacy and Democratic Change

Public diplomacy institutions responsible for international broadcasting efforts, exchange programs, and a whole host of other people-to-people activities are not surprisingly in a state of flux. These institutions are seeking out ways to adapt to unpredictable and expansive geopolitical changes, and a consistently evolving media and communications environment. Panelists will discuss the many ways that state and non-state actors are attempting to identify and shift the institutions of public diplomacy and democratic change in light of recent geopolitical shifts.

Panelists

- **Angus Robertson**, former Deputy Leader of the Scottish National Party (Panelist and Moderator)
- **Gerry Power**, Chief Research Officer, M&C Saatchi World Services
- **Sonja Gloeckle**, Senior Director, Center for Insights in Survey Research, International Republican Institute
- **Alexander Klimburg**, Director, The Hague Center for Strategic Studies

10:45 – 11:00 Tea Break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 5: Threats to Multilateral Institutions and the Impact on Democracy Discourse

Multilateral organizations like the UN, UNESCO, the OSCE, and the European Court for Human Rights are under pressure. There is speculation on the future of the international security architecture, the viability of transnational justice, and the appropriate balance of power between national and international interests. Panelists in this session will examine significant issues related to these and other institutions that are charged with consideration of the nourishing of international norms regarding free expression and democratic societies. Panelists will examine the current and future state of these organizations and how multilateral organizations are responding, and to what effect.

Panelists

- **Simon Haselock**, Founding Director & COO, Albany Associates (Panelist and Moderator)
- **Alister Miskimmon**, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics - Head of School, Queens University, Belfast
- **Kristina Stoeckl**, Assistant Professor, University of Innsbruck
- **Frane Maroevic**, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

12:30 – 1:45 Lunch

1:45 – 3:15 Session 6: Technological Shifts and Political Shifts

This panel will explore the extraordinary period of review and examination of social media platforms, corporate media, and communications companies generally, as they affect issues of shifting public opinion, affecting elections, shaping national identity. Presentations will explore the relationship between large multi-national social media platforms and governments, trends in computational propaganda, and the rise of data and analytics companies providing strategic communications services to governments, with particular attention to the implications of these trends for diplomatic processes. The panel will also discuss how recent political and technological shifts are calling into question prevailing models of public diplomacy, the organization and influence of public opinion, and the future of international relations.

Panelists

- **Amelia Arsenault**, Senior Advisor, Public Diplomacy Research and Evaluation Unit, US Department of State (Moderator)
- **Theresa Rodríguez de las Heras Ballell**, Professor of Communication Law, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid
- **Vidya Narayanan**, Director of Research, Computational Propaganda Project, Oxford Internet Institute
- **John Hudson**, National Security Reporter, *Washington Post*

3:15 – 3:30 Tea Break

3:30 – 4:00 Wrap Up Discussion

During this session, all panelists and participants are invited to share their thoughts and conclusions on the two days of discussion.

4:00 – 5:00 Emerging Scholar Discussion Session

During this afternoon session, we will invite emerging scholars to describe how the issues discussed relate to their own projects and activities.

- **Megan Burnham**, MA Student, Indiana University, USA
- **Samantha Dols**, PhD Student, American University, USA
- **Mona Elswah**, PhD Student, Oxford University, UK
- **Oliver Gruenbacher**, MA Student, Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, Austria
- **Clay Gruber**, MA Student, University of Pennsylvania, USA
- **Pauline Heinrichs**, PhD Student, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
- **Sanjay Jolly**, PhD Student, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania
- **Emelie Poignant Khafagi**, MPhil Student, University of Oxford, UK
- **Nathalie Maréchal**, PhD Student, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, USA
- **Chloé Nurik**, PhD Student, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, USA
- **Elizabeth Parker**, MA Student, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

6:15 Bus leaves from DA

7:00 Heurigen Fuhrpassl Huber, Neustift