Advanced Seminar Led by von Hippel Examines Transition to Nuclear-Free World

Scholars from around the globe will gather May 8–10, 2009, to participate in a PIIRS Advanced Seminar on global nuclear disarmament. “The Control and Disposition of Fissile Material in a Transition to a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World” will be led by theoretical physicist Frank von Hippel, a professor of public and international affairs and a cofounder of the Princeton Program on Science and Global Security.

Von Hippel, the former assistant director for National Security in the White House Office of Science and Technology, planned the conference to contribute to debates within the Obama administration on the role of disarmament in the effort to curtail nuclear proliferation. He points to the February 6, 2009, announcement by U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher about the U.S. commitment to lead negotiations toward a fissile material cutoff treaty, and to the 2008 goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world endorsed by former U.S. secretaries of state and defense.

The time is right, von Hippel says, “to begin to chart a possible transition to a nuclear-weapon-free world.” The sooner all the stockpiles of fissile material can be identified, made internationally transparent, and minimized, he says, “the easier will be the ultimate verification and comprehensive accounting of fissile material that will be essential in a nuclear-free world.”

Seminar topics include:

• How transparency in the dismantlement of nuclear warheads can be accomplished with minimal intrusiveness, and a re-examination of the options for managing recovered fissile material.

• Creation of a catalogue of the isotopic signatures of the material in various stockpiles to aid in identifying the source of unidentified fissile materials.

• Techniques that can be used to independently authenticate declarations of disarmament.

• Technical tradeoffs involved in converting naval-propulsion reactors from weapons-grade, highly enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium.

• The role of civilian nuclear energy in a world transitioning to nuclear disarmament, including the questions: How large would a breakout arsenal have to be to challenge the ability of a denuclearized world to respond? What enforcement mechanisms could be built into a disarmament treaty? How can states respond to forced compliance with a disarmament treaty? How can reprocessing plants be subject to effective multinational control?

• Detection of clandestine nuclear-weapon activities.

This PIIRS Advanced Seminar is an outgrowth of issues that the Program on Science and Global Security has worked on for two decades and made public in their publications, Reversing the Arms Race (1990) and The Nuclear Turning Point: A Blueprint for Deep Cuts and De-alerting of Nuclear Weapons (1999). Von Hippel’s goal is for the seminar to facilitate the development of critical analyses that will generate two publications, Global Fissile Material Report 2009, and a second on country perspectives on the issues relating to fissile materials and disarmament.

A unique network of collaborators will arrive at Princeton for the May meeting, including previous participants in the International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM). Founded in 2006, the IPFM, which von Hippel cochairs, involves 23 scholars and practitioners from 16 countries who work on the technical basis for policy initiatives.

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Global Seminars in Brief

The Global Seminars program expands to five locations in 2009, just two years after its launch. Seventy-five Princeton students will participate in the following seminars.

**Brazil:** “Race, Culture, and Identity in Brazilian Modernism,” São Salvador da Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, June 27–August 8. This course looks at the birth of Brazilian modernism and its roots in two of Brazil’s most important cities. Esther da Costa Meyer (Princeton, art history) and Antonio Sergio Guimarães (University of São Paulo, sociology).

**Ghana:** “Sustainable Design: Creating New Solutions for Global Development,” Accra and Kumasi, June 15–July 24. This seminar blends the theoretical and practical aspects of sustainable design by integrating culture, development, and design techniques into a practical framework for developing new products. Winston Soboyejo (Princeton, mechanical and aerospace engineering) and Makeba Clay (Princeton, Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding).

**Russia:** “The Future is Now: Revolution and Utopia in Early Soviet Culture,” St. Petersburg, June 15–July 24. This course examines the utopian projects that flourished in the period after the political revolution of 1917 and the everyday contexts that shaped the related movements. Serguei Oushakine (Princeton, Slavic languages and literatures) and Devin Fore (Princeton, German).

**Turkey:** “Islam, Empire, and Modernity: Turkey from the Caliphs to the 21st Century,” Istanbul, June 15–July 24. This course is structured around the history, culture, language, and literature of Turkey, which is undergoing a modern cultural renaissance. M. Sükrü Hanıoglu (Princeton, Near Eastern studies) and Erika Gilson (Princeton, Near Eastern studies).

**Vietnam:** “America and Vietnam at War: Origins, Implications, and Consequences,” Hanoi, June 6–July 18. The seminar considers the events that led to the “American War,” the antiwar demonstrations in the U.S., and the political and military policies of the Johnson and Nixon administrations that culminated in the negotiations of the 1973 Peace Accords. Desaix Anderson ’58 (former diplomat), David Lehery (Princeton, East Asian studies), and Christophe Robert (Vietnam scholar).
Program in South Asian Studies Reflects the Diversity of the Region

Pleased with the success of the Festival of Kabir, a well-attended film and music event held earlier this month celebrating the 15th-century North India poet, Program in South Asian Studies Director Isabelle Clark-Decès is excited about the connections the program is making across the Princeton campus.

As a result of the University’s commitment to furthering the study of the region, the number and range of the program’s course offerings is strong, the roster of undergraduates enrolled as certificate students is increasing, and its broad scope of events draws a wide range of people.

The Program in South Asian Studies focuses on the modern history of India and Pakistan—their political, religious, and economic institutions and their relations with each other and the rest of the world. Interdisciplinary in nature, the program offers students the methodological and theoretical tools to study the arts, oral traditions, performance media, and modern literatures of the colonial and postcolonial periods. More than 10 courses were open to undergraduates this semester, and an equal amount will be available in fall 2010. Its curriculum includes anthropology, the arts, comparative literature, Hindi, history, politics, religion, and Near Eastern studies, among others. “The courses reflect the diversity of South Asia and the wide-ranging perspectives available at Princeton,” says Clark-Decès, a professor of anthropology.

The program had its genesis in the Committee on South Asian Studies, organized in 2002 by Atul Kohli, the David K. E. Bruce Professor of International Affairs, and Gyan Prakash, the Dayton-Stockton Professor of History. The committee’s first order of business was to hire a language instructor (Mekhala Natavar, Hindi) and second, to bring in visitors to teach courses related to South Asia.

“Not only did the number of students enrolled in Hindi increase each year,” Clark-Decès says, “but the caliber of visitors helped raise the profile of the region at Princeton and engage faculty and students in issues of global significance.”

Clark-Decès points to the new Bridge Year Program as an indication of the University’s commitment to study of the region. In 2009–10, five students will defer their enrollment for one year to live in Varanasi, India, and work for an NGO. “It’s very likely that these students will join our program,” says Clark-Decès, whose own interest in the region stems from her experiences as a 20-year-old working in Calcutta for Mother Theresa’s Missionaries of Charity.

In addition, PIIRS’ support enabled two visitors specializing in the region to join the faculty in 2008–09. Mallica Kumbera Landrus, an art historian whose current work focuses on 15th-century churches built on the Indian subcontinent by the Portuguese, taught a course on art and architecture; and Zia Mian, director of the Project on Peace and Security in South Asia of the Program on Science and Global Security, taught a course on society and politics in Pakistan.

Following the Kabir festival, a panel on Indian elections held in mid-April concluded the year’s major events. South Asian studies also sponsored a lecture series on Indian contemporary society and a symposium on Hinduism. Upcoming for academic year 2009–10 is a workshop/lecture series on Islam, modernity, and India cosponsored with the Institute for Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, and a film series—a mix of Bollywood and documentary films—organized with the South Asian Students Association.
Srinivas Bangalore is a teaching fellow at Princeton this spring with the Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication. He is teaching TRA 301/COS 401, Introduction to Machine Translation. Bangalore is a principal technical staff member at AT&T Labs–Research and has served as an adjunct associate professor at Columbia University in the Department of Computer Science. His research interests include parsing methodologies, formal grammars, statistical language processing, conversational systems, machine learning and data mining, information retrieval, machine translation, and information theory. Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Mallica Kumbera Landrus is a teaching fellow at Princeton this spring with the Program in South Asian Studies. She is teaching SAS 301, Introduction to Indian Art. Her home institution is the Rhode Island School of Design, where she is a lecturer in art and architectural history. She studies the art and architecture of the Indian subcontinent with a particular focus on India, and the intersection of art, architecture, politics, religion, and social life. Her research interests include transculturalism in Indian art, the reflection of power and politics in Christian and Hindu religious architecture, colonial art and architecture in India, Vijayanagara temples and sculpture, female representation in 18th-century Mughal and Rajput paintings, and Indian popular cinema. Ph.D., University of London

Victoria Vernon joins the faculty at Princeton this spring as a teaching fellow on a joint appointment with the Program in Russian and Eurasian Studies and the Department of Economics. It is her third time as a teaching fellow at the University and the third time she is teaching ECO 371, Regional Studies: Economics of Russia and Eurasia. Vernon is visiting from Empire State College/SUNY in Manhattan, where she is an assistant professor of economics. Her current research involves labor economics. Ph.D., University of Texas–Austin

Teaching Fellows Bring New Insights to Courses Offered by Regional Programs

von Hippel Advanced Seminar
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to secure, consolidate, and reduce stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. The seminar coincides with the spring IPFM meeting. On May 7, a subgroup will give a presentation on the IPFM’s draft Fissile Missile Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) to a group of UN ambassadors. On May 11, another subgroup will travel to Washington, D.C. to give a presentation to analysts interested in an FMCT.

In all, nearly 30 scientists and other experts from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.K., U.S., and the UN have been invited to participate in the event at Princeton.

PIIRS Director Katherine Newman applauded the executive committee’s decision to fund this seminar because it “exemplifies the way in which the institute and the University at large can help to foster important international debates that are vital to the safety and security of the world.”

The PIIRS Advanced Seminars support faculty research in the humanities, sciences, engineering, and architecture. The long-term grants fund gatherings to bring to fruition scholarship that has been under way for some time, but may be slowed down by the geographic spread of participants; or to inaugurate new collaborations bound for publication. Seminar participants must prepare original research papers, and the seminar grants require a plan for dissemination, in the form of publications in journals or edited volumes, as the seminars are expected to contribute finished work to the scholarly community.
Joyce Hwang ’09 has been selected to receive the prestigious Henry Richardson Labouisse ’26 Prize for 2009–10. Administered by PIIRS to support postgraduate work, research, or study, the $25,000 prize will fund Hwang’s research assessing the prevalence of drug resistance in malaria in Mae Sod, Thailand.

The prize enables a graduating senior to engage in a project that exemplifies the spirit of Labouisse’s life and works. Labouisse was a diplomat and international public servant who championed the causes of international justice and international development. During his long diplomatic career, Labouisse not only designed policies aimed at rebuilding war-torn and crisis-ridden societies around the globe, but also played a leading role in implementing those policies, beginning in post–World War II Europe.

Hwang, a molecular biology major, says it was the course “Infection: Biology, Burden, and Policy” that pushed her to look harder for the critical issues underlying problems of development—particularly neglected diseases that receive little interest or funding from the developed world. While her original career plan was to become an M.D., she came away from that class “thinking that medicine would only take you partway to identifying what truly are the critical causes, unknowns, and the solutions in diseases of communities.”

According to Hwang, drug-resistant Plasmodium vivax is associated with adverse outcomes in pregnant women and infants, but less attention has been paid to it compared to the better-known strain Plasmodium falciparum. The prize will fund her plans to carry out integrated field and clinical research to help combat this threat in Mae Sod, an epicenter for drug-resistant malaria and the main gateway between Thailand and Myanmar. Her work will be based at the Shoklo Malaria Research Unit under the supervision of François Nosten, director of the unit and a world leader on the treatment of malaria in pregnancy, and Ric Price, an expert on vivax malaria.

Hwang became interested in vivax after a summer as an Amgen scholar at the University of Washington working with malaria expert Dr. Carol Sibley. Upon learning that there was an opportunity to work with Nosten and Price, Hwang contacted the Office of the Dean of the College at Princeton about postgraduate funding opportunities. “They said the Labouisse prize would be perfect,” she reports.

“I am incredibly excited,” says Hwang, who grew up in Hong Kong. “Not only is it a substantial sum of money, but it is also heartening to have an award program that embraces efforts to make sustainable change on neglected issues. I think that there are probably a lot of students at other schools who want to do something similar, but they don’t have this kind of support.”

Before traveling to Thailand, Hwang will work with Price at the Menzies School of Health Research in Australia to learn the technology she’ll be using in the field, and then travel to Singapore for microscopy training. Hwang will work in Mae Sod for about nine months, beginning in September 2009, and afterward plans to attend an M.D./Ph.D. program. She will pursue a career as a researcher and clinician working on problems of disease and neglect.

In announcing the award, Emmanuel Kreike, an associate professor of history and Labouisse adviser, said the committee was “unanimous in its opinion that [Hwang] was the candidate who best embodied what Ambassador Labouisse’s life and career stood for.”

The Labouisse prize was established by Labouisse’s daughter and son-in-law, Anne and Martin Peretz, in 1984.
CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2009


OCTOBER 2009

Exploratory Seminar. “The Contemporary Study of St. John Perse,” Carol Rigolot (Princeton Writing Program, French and Italian), and Susan Stewart (English). October 2–3, Burr Hall. Details TBA.

NOVEMBER 2009


2010 Global Seminars Information Session. Details TBA.

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