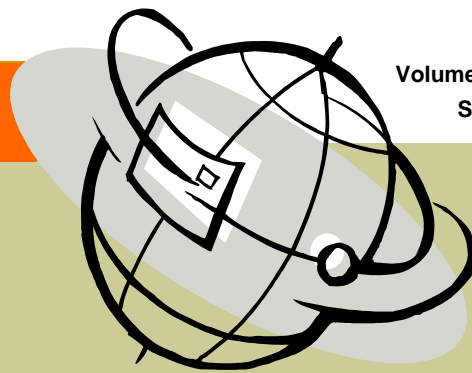


IR Matters!



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What an extraordinary semester! Looking back at the just completed Spring 2020 semester, I still feel amazed by the fact that we were able to pull through with only limited time to prepare for distance teaching and learning after the Spring Break. I remember in the weeks before the Spring Break, my students and I in my East Asian Politics class and US-China Relations seminar were following the spread of the coronavirus in China, Japan, South Korea and Italy and wondering how it might affect America. Nobody expected that the deadly virus that first reached American shores in late January would ravage the nation with such an astonishing speed and with no mercy.

The University made the right decision to close the campus during the Spring Break. Many of us were confused and anxious at first, but quickly we took action to prepare for the rest of the semester. We successfully completed the 2019-2020 academic year, albeit in a way we did not anticipate. Kudos to all our faculty colleagues, students, support staff, administration, and our families for making it possible.

Covid-19 disrupted our normal life and schedule. We were anticipating to see our seniors walk proudly on the stage during the commencement in mid-May. To our great disappointment this could not happen as scheduled. We feel sorry that our seniors' college life had to end this way but look forward to seeing them back on campus for the graduation which is rescheduled for July.

My colleagues join me in sincerely congratulating all our 21 IR seniors who just graduated with majors in International Relations and another four who are completing their studies with IR minors. It was a great pleasure to have you on campus and in our classes. We are proud to count you as Bucknell and IR alums now. We wish you great success in your new endeavors and look forward to welcoming you back in the future.

I would like to highlight two of our newest alums: Marie Catanese and Mikaela Thomas. Marie just won a prestigious Fulbright award and will spend 2020-2021 teaching English in Malaysia. Mikaela Thomas was awarded the Bucknell Prize in

International Relations and successfully defended her honors thesis based on her research from studying in Morocco.

I also want to welcome our new majors. This is a very diverse group of nearly 30 people. Together, the new majors' concentrations cover every global region and all four thematic tracks in our program—foreign policy & diplomacy, global governance & conflict resolution, development & sustainability, and culture & identity. I invite you to read about one of our new majors, Giuliana Ferrara '22, who is featured in this issue.

The biggest event the IR Department organized this year is the "IR Week" in late February. Highlights include 1) a lecture entitled "Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Humanitarian standards in practice," by Denis Kennedy '05, Associate Professor of Political Science at College of the Holy Cross; 2) a student panel featuring 4 IR students who recently returned from study overseas: Jacob Lubinski, Mikaela Thomas, Peter Trousdale, and Kayla Ventura; and 3) an alumni panel "How IR Opens the Door" featuring Grace Han '11, The Wing; Amanda Roy '12, Office of Management and Budget; Neil Ren '17, Immigrant Justice Corps; and Victoria Walker '18, Crowell and Moring LLP. On behalf of the Department, I'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks once again to all those who contributed or participated in the "IR Week."

Alums, please stay in touch. We'd love to hear from you. If you have any news or updates you'd like to share with us on the pages of our newsletter, please let us know. And if you happen to be in this neck of the woods, please definitely stop by.

My colleagues in the Department join me in wishing you and your loved ones healthy and happy days.

Zhiqun Zhu

Professor of International Relations and
Political Science
Chair, Department of International Relations

International Relations Week 2020

IR Week 2020 was held between February 24-28, just two weeks before Bucknell pivoted to distance learning. We heard a talk by alumnus and Associate Professor of Political Science Denis Kennedy '05, and held three panels featuring IR faculty, students, and alumni.

2020 International Relations Week February 24-28



- ✦ **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24**
Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Humanitarian standards in practice
Denis Kennedy '05
Willard Smith VAUG 125 | 7 - 8:30 p.m.
- ✦ **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**
IR Faculty Panel
What is IR? IR Faculty will be discussing what brought them to IR and highlighting their current research.
ACWS 111 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. (Lunch Provided)
- ✦ **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**
IR Student Panel: Study Abroad Experience
Featuring 4 Current IR Majors Who Just Returned From Overseas
BERT 213, Traditional Reading Room
12 - 1 p.m. (Lunch Provided)
- ✦ **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27**
Race, Gender, and Media Depictions of Michelle Obama | Ray Block
Co-sponsored with Political Science
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. ACWS 108 (Lunch Provided)
- Third World Film Series showing "Wasteland"**
4 p.m. & 7 p.m. | ACWS 108
- ✦ **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28**
IR Alumni Panel: How IR Opens the Door
Featuring 4 Recent IR Graduates
LANG 213 Walls Lounge
12 - 1 p.m. (Lunch Provided)

Bucknell
UNIVERSITY

During the last week of February, the IR Department held what has now become a tradition: IR week. Little did we know at the time, of course, that this was going to be one of the last "normal" things we did during the spring semester. The week featured our alumni, students, and faculty, and provided opportunities to engage with our field of study for all who are interested in international affairs. Mikaela Thomas '20 and Charlie Shefrin '20 recap the week's events.



Photo courtesy of Professor Uçarer

On the evening of February 24th, Professor Denis Kennedy '05 kicked off IR Week with a lecture titled "Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Humanitarian Standards in Practice." Kennedy is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Since he graduated with a triple major in International Relations, French, and Political Science from Bucknell, he has held positions around the world in Peace and Conflict Studies and International Affairs. Professor Kennedy's lecture centered around his research on the changing global humanitarian apparatus, and how the push for

international standards of humanitarianism play out on the ground. He explained that the industry of humanitarianism is based on core principles of humanity, independence, impartiality, and neutrality. However, he argues that the push for centralized standardization of humanitarian practices that began in the 1990s has led to more accountability, but also practical issues. Professor Kennedy provided that "standards are not a silver bullet," referring to the organizations' focus on "checking boxes" or fulfilling donor wishes rather than fully integrating responses to crises within their local contexts. He concluded that great strides were made in the last 150 years from creating an extensive international humanitarian system to standardizing practices using a human rights based approach. But he added that "the use of standards is itself not unproblematic," and there is yet more work to be done to effectively and ethically implement these standards in the countries that need them most.

On the second day of IR week, faculty gathered over lunch in Academic West to present their experiences and paths to where they are today, and what research topics interest them. The panel was made up of Professors Cymone Fourshey, Manuel Larrabure, Ilona Moore, Emek Uçarer, David Mitchell, Zhiqun Zhu, and Joseph Jozwiak. Across the diverse group of professors were varied experiences and research interests, but they all concluded with similar takeaways. While many of them did not go directly into International Relations with their undergraduate degrees, they all emphasized their passion for the

IR Week, Cont'd

interdisciplinary nature of the field. Some highlights of the talk include Professor Jozwiak's insight into the connections between individuals and systems, culture and identity, and place and purpose that are the foundation of International Relations. Professors Ucarer and Mitchell's descriptions of their circuitous paths to IR, and their timely research and their excitement for their work. And Professors Fourshey, Laraburre, Moore, and Zhu's deep interests in the Global South and development that show students just how interconnected the world is.



IR Week Faculty Panel

Left to right: Professors Fourshey, Laraburre, Moore, Ucarer, Mitchell, Zhu, and Jozwiak

Photo courtesy of Mikaela Thomas '20

A student panel spoke on the third day of IR Week about their experiences studying abroad and to present advice to students who were thinking about going abroad themselves. Strengthened language skills, intercultural agility, engaging different perspectives and practices, personal growth and perseverance were among the themes that were discussed. The panelists included four International Relations majors: junior Jacob Lubinski who spent a summer in Copenhagen, Denmark, senior Peter Trousdale who spent a semester in Shanghai, China, senior Kayla Ventura who spent a semester in Lisbon, Portugal, and senior Mikaela Thomas who spent a year in Rabat, Morocco. Professor Zhu led the discussion that centered around the highs and lows of their study abroad experiences, and the advice they would give to incoming students. Highlights included the benefits of getting out of their comfort zones, exploring as much as possible, being prepared and flexible in the face of changing lifestyles, and the value of experiencing different points of view beyond Lewisburg. While the students did wish they had more logistical guidance before leaving Bucknell, they all stressed the need for undergrads to do their research, go to nontraditional countries, and not to base their plans on going abroad with their friends. The question and answer portion at the end featured a conversation between the panel and faculty on ideas about how to better prepare future students through cultural competency workshops and strategies for avoiding reverse culture shock when they return. Everyone agreed that studying abroad is a vital

experience for Bucknellians, whether they are International Relations majors or not.

Mikaela Thomas '20



IR Week Study Abroad Panel

Left to right: Mikaela Thomas '20, Kayla Ventura '20, Peter Trousdale '20 and Jacob Lubinski '21

Photo courtesy of Emek Ucarer

On the fourth day of IR week, we featured two events. The first was a talk that the Department cosponsored with the Political Science Department. Professor Ray Block of Penn State University delivered the talk entitled "Race, Gender, and Media Depictions of Michelle Obama." The second was the Brazilian-British documentary [Waste Land](#) directed by Lucy Walker, chronicling the artists Vik Muniz as he traveled to the world's largest landfill outside of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The film tells the fascinating story of how the artist collaborates with *catadores* (waste pickers) to transform recycled materials into prized modern art. This documentary was shown as part of Bucknell's Third World Film Series.

And last, but not least, was the alumni panel. On Friday the 28th, the International Relations Department and Career Center hosted four Bucknell alumnus for a career panel/luncheon in the Walls Lounge in the Elaine Langone Center. The four panelists were Grace Han '11, Amanda Roy '12, Neil Ren '17, and Victoria Walker '18. The hour-long panel, hosted by Professor Zhiqun Zhu, began with brief introductions about what each panelist does for a living, and how it relates to International Relations. Professor Zhu began by asking why each person chose to major in International Relations at Bucknell. The answers ranged from one panelist saying how she knew she would be interested in the topic as soon as she came to campus while one other panelist said she was originally studying Math and Physics but decided IR was a better fit.

The IR Student Panel featured Jacob Lubinski '21, Peter Trousdale '20, Mikaela Thomas '20, and Kayla Ventura '20.

On the last day of IR week, we heard from our alumni: Grace Han '11, Amanda Roy '12, Neil Ren '17, and Victoria Walker '18. Not only was this an opportunity to connect with them, but a wonderful occasion to learn from them on how they forged their paths.

IR Week, Cont'd



IR Week '20 Alumni Panel

Left to right: Grace Han '11, Amanda Roy '12, Neil Ren '17 and Victoria Walker '18
Photo courtesy of Charlie Shefrin '20

When asked about the skills they use daily at work, and how their jobs relate to their IR education at Bucknell, the answers were fairly uniform across the panel. Analytical skills, critical thinking and inquiry, and being able to work in a team were all of the things that the panelists said most resembles the IR major at work.

The panelists then went on to praise Bucknell for its small classes and level of instruction/engagement between students and professors. Group papers and projects, as Victoria Walker pointed out, prepared her well for a career in private law for example. When asked about regrets, the most common answer amongst the panelists was that they did not capitalize enough on the breadth of resources that are so easily available to students. The panelists, when asked to

explain this further, all agreed that they wished they could have gone to more guest speakers, office hours, etc.

Finally, when asked about studying abroad, the panelists all had resounding praise for the experience and harped on how great their abroad experiences were- both while at school and traveling abroad after graduation. Their advice was to go abroad if you can, chase your passion, and make as many connections as possible. The speakers made it clear that the IR major at Bucknell not only has an important place in the university curriculum, but that it is a practical and important topic that has major utility in life after Bucknell.

Charlie Shefrin '20

In this piece, Professor Zhu asks:

Why is China resorting to "wolf-warrior diplomacy"?

Has this aggressive style become the new norm?

Interpreting China's "Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy"

Recently the Chinese foreign ministry has taken an increasingly strident tone against the United States, Australia, and other countries. Dubbed "[wolf-warrior diplomacy](#)," this new approach seems popular inside China and reinforces a presumed transition of Chinese diplomacy from conservative, passive, and low-key to assertive, proactive, and high-profile.

Wolf Warrior and *Wolf Warrior II* are Chinese action blockbusters that highlight agents of Chinese special operation forces. They have boosted national pride and patriotism among Chinese viewers.

"Wolf-warrior diplomacy," named after these movies,

describes Chinese diplomats' offensive to defend China's national interests, often in confrontational way. China's foreign ministry spokespersons Hua Chunying and Zhao Lijian have taken to Twitter to hit back against external criticisms of China's handling of the coronavirus outbreak and the poor quality of exported Chinese medical equipment.

Zhao said [in a tweet](#) on March 20 that "if someone claims that China's exports are toxic, then stop wearing China-made masks and protective gowns."

He suggested in [another tweet](#) on March 12 that "It might be (the) US army who brought the epidemic to

“Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy” Cont’d

Wuhan.”

Why is China resorting to “wolf-warrior diplomacy”? Has this aggressive style become the new norm?

Soaring Nationalism

First, this change did not occur suddenly. Since 2010, when China's GDP overtook Japan's as the world's second largest, the Chinese have become more confident and China's foreign policy has become more assertive, gradually departing from Deng Xiaoping's [taoquang yanghui](#) dictum. As the Communist Party continues to promote “[four confidences](#)”—in our chosen path, in our political system, in our guiding theories, and in our culture—nationalism has been on the rise. “Wolf-warrior diplomacy” is an extension of soaring nationalism at home.

In recent years, President Xi Jinping has advocated “a [fighting spirit](#)” on several occasions, whether speaking to soldiers or party officials. This has apparently raised the morale of Chinese officials and diplomats, and encouraged a more assertive style.

“Wolf-warrior diplomacy” is evidenced not only in combative words but aggressive actions. For example, in early April, a Chinese coastguard ship [allegedly sank](#) a Vietnamese fishing trawler near the Paracel Islands. When Vietnam protested, the Chinese foreign ministry responded by saying Vietnam's claims to the area are “illegal.” Then on April 19, the Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Civil Affairs jointly announced the [naming of 80 islands](#), reefs, seamounts, shoals, and ridges in the South China Sea, triggering angry protests from other claimants. The last time China named islands and other geographical features in the South China Sea was in 1983.

Telling the China Story

Second, as China becomes more powerful, some other countries increasingly view its development as a threat to their national interests. These countries are generally unprepared or unwilling to accept China's rise. Many Chinese believe the Western media portrayal of China is highly biased, often with ideological and racist tinges. Wolf-warrior diplomacy is part of the Chinese government's endeavor to “tell the China story.” The latest diplomatic offensive is also part of the official effort to project China as a great

power leading the global fight against the Covid-19.

China's image suffered during the crisis due to its bungled handling of the outbreak at the early stage. Many blame China for initially covering up the human-to-human transmission of the virus and not sharing complete information with the international community.

From China's perspective, wolf-warrior diplomacy is a direct response to “unfair” approaches by other countries, especially the US, toward China and the Chinese people. For example, earlier this year, the United States and China were engaged in a race to expel journalists, starting after the publication of an [op-ed](#) entitled “China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia” in *The Wall Street Journal*. When the WSJ refused to apologize, China [expelled](#) three of its journalists. Shortly afterwards, the US State Department [declared](#) five Chinese media outlets “foreign missions,” requiring them to register personnel and property with the US government and cut the number of Chinese nationals working there. In retaliation, China [expelled more](#) American journalists.

Zhao's claim that the coronavirus might have been brought to Wuhan by the US military was a response to US politicians' calling it “Chinese virus.” Hawks in the Trump administration, notably Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, continue to use the term “[Wuhan virus](#),” in defiance of the World Health Organization [guidelines](#), to shift all responsibility to China.

Fizzling Out?

Third, just as Chinese society has become more diverse, Chinese diplomats are not monolithic. There is no consensus within the Chinese foreign policy establishment on whether confrontational diplomacy is desirable, and not all Chinese diplomats are wolf-warriors.

Traditionally minded Chinese diplomats, including the long-serving ambassador to Washington Cui Tiankai, have sought to tamp down the combative impulse and [dismissed](#) Zhao's theory about the US military as “crazy.” Another veteran diplomat, Fu Ying, said Chinese diplomats should uphold “the spirit of humility and tolerance, and adhere to communication, learning, and openness.”

It is too early to tell whether “wolf-warrior diplomacy” represents the culmination of Chinese diplomacy's transition. As China faces growing external criticisms and demands for reparations over the coronavirus, it is not inconceivable that Chinese leaders may rein in confrontational diplomacy to create an environment conducive to domestic reconstruction.

Prof. Zhu draws out four factors in China's wolf-warrior diplomacy:

Nationalism, a desire to tell the story from a Chinese perspective, an increasingly diverse diplomatic corps, and a need to balance national interests and soft power.

Striking a balance between firmly defending national interests and enhancing soft power is a great challenge in Chinese diplomacy today.

Professor Zhu

Spending time abroad growing up made me realize there are so many different cultures, experiences and ways of thinking in the world.

Giuliana Ferrara '22

“Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy” Cont’d

In fact, wolf-warrior diplomacy is already hurting China's foreign policy, since it has generated pushback, such as Australia's calls for an independent probe into the coronavirus' origins. China's soft power is weak globally; a belligerent approach will further damage China's global image. According to [Pew polls](#) released on April 21, 66% of Americans say they have an unfavorable view of China, its most negative rating since Pew began asking the question in 2005.

As the American public opinion of China and Xi turns more negative, so does Chinese public opinion on America. Professor Wang Jisi of Peking University noted in a recent speech that attitudes in the Chinese government, think tanks, media, and public opinion toward the US have greatly changed during the Covid-19 period. Yet, one sees no end in the information war and diplomatic battle. America's naming and shaming of China, and China's tit-for-tat response have made much-needed cooperation in combating the coronavirus very difficult.

Balancing National Interests and Soft Power

It is truly unfortunate that China and the United States are engaged in a diplomatic tussle and blame each other when they should work together. It's imperative that they play down their differences and focus on containing the coronavirus.

As a nation proud of its glorious ancient civilization, China should remain humble, benevolent, and magnanimous. It should also admit its botched handling of the coronavirus at the outset and hold relevant officials accountable. The Chinese government should improve the mechanism that encourages, not impedes, local officials to report such public health alerts.

Due to political, ideological, and cultural differences, Western suspicions about the Chinese government and anxiety about China's rise will not disappear anytime soon, and the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated such distrust and apprehension. A more powerful China should be more confident and receptive to constructive criticism. Striking a balance between firmly defending national interests and enhancing soft power is a great challenge in Chinese diplomacy today.

Professor Zhu

This article first appeared in the [Pacific Forum](#) on May 14, 2020

Student Spotlight: Giuliana Ferrara '22



From the time she could walk, Giuliana Ferrara '22 was engaging with her Italian heritage during summers spent abroad with family — and cultivating an interest in foreign languages and cultures that she'd later explore at Bucknell.

"Spending time abroad growing up made me realize there are so many different cultures, experiences and ways of thinking in the world," says the New Jersey native, who still visits Italy every year with her father, an Italian immigrant. "That's what influenced me to embark on a path toward cultural studies, realizing that I wanted to know more about diverse countries — especially the one my family is from."

At Bucknell, Ferrara didn't just discover a way to explore her roots through a double major in [Italian studies](#) and [international relations](#). She's also channeled her passion for global education into on-campus leadership and research.

As head of Bucknell's Student Language Council, Ferrara collaborates with staff and faculty to plan events centered around second-language acquisition. She recently organized a workshop where students could explore the benefits of studying a language abroad.

"In today's world, being a global citizen and understanding the benefits of intercultural awareness is vital," Ferrara says. "Creating global citizens is the goal of every event I help plan on campus."

It's a goal that also fuels her undergraduate research. As a [Presidential Fellow](#), Ferrara has been working closely with faculty mentors on a four-year research project related to her interests in culture and language. In just her first two years, Ferrara developed and administered two University-wide surveys that measure how studying a second language sharpens students' cognitive skills. She presented her findings at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) convention in Washington, D.C., alongside her faculty advisers.

"It was a great experience for me since this was the first time I've presented academic research in this kind of setting," she says. The ability to do important research from her first year was one of the main reasons Ferrara chose Bucknell. The opportunity to present her work to ACTFL — which sets the standards

for language education in the U.S. — "was especially amazing," she adds.

Ferrara hopes her research will help educators around the nation develop language studies curriculum that brings out the best in students — and inspires them to pursue cultural education beyond the classroom. "When you learn a second language, it opens doors to understanding other cultures better," she says. "It's important that students who have this interest can continue to explore it."

The Bucknell Language Council, formed in 2018, includes faculty representation from all languages taught at Bucknell. The Council promotes the transformative value of language study and cross-cultural knowledge for all members of the Bucknell community. For more information about the Language Council, please contact its co-chairs: Prof. Stephanie Larson, Professor of Classic and Ancient Mediterranean Studies (slarson@bucknell.edu) and Prof. Lisa Perrone, Associate Professor of Italian Studies (lperrone@bucknell.edu).

When you learn a second language, it opens doors to understanding other cultures better," she says. "It's important that students who have this interest can continue to explore it."

Giuliana Ferrara '22

Human Security + COVID

The crisis of Covid-19 has had unprecedented effects on our lives: from overturning our daily routines and habits, to the closing of national borders and geopolitical pressure tactics. The international relations of the pandemic and the biology and biopolitics of the virus are examined in our everyday newsfeed, but the study of IREL also gives us the tools to connect the essential questions that lie between the biology of the virus and the unprecedented international and domestic responses.

"Human security" as a concept offers us a framework to think through the various types of insecurities we face (individually and in communities). Human security is both diagnostic and normative; the salience of human security stems from the marked separation of national security from citizens' individual security in the modern (i.e. post-WWII) era. The basic definition of human security is enumerated in seven dimensions -- economic, environmental, food, health, political, community, and personal -- together these illustrate that someone's relative level of security is fundamentally intersectional.

What does this mean in terms of the contemporary politics of covid? The acknowledgement that someone's relative insecurity, even to a novel virus, is compounded by familiar factors helps us better understand the nature of the pandemic as well as currently available measures that could enhance our collective immunity, or security.

For instance, human security as a diagnostic frame helps explain that what the media characterize as conundrums -- about who seems to be coming down with severe cases and even dying from the virus -- actually fit into larger societal patterns. The demographics of covid deaths in the US have been widely noted to be different than in other wealthy industrialized nations. Understanding these realities begins with acknowledging that the ways people are inserted in social and economic structures is one of the largest determinants of risk in the US. Other underlying stressors and insecurities -- such as *health insecurity* (e.g. chronic diseases of diet, or relative access to health care), *economic insecurity* (e.g. the stress and instability of unreliable low wage work), or *environmental insecurity* (e.g. high levels of air pollution or particulate matter) -- compound and exacerbate the risks and comorbidities. For instance: asthma due to high levels of air pollution in neighborhoods that are also underserved in access to health care and grocery stores, as is well-documented in various low-income areas of major US cities.

In countries with comparatively thin social support systems, (like the US compared to Germany, or India compared to Brazil, etc.), economic insecurity is a primary risk factor. This is not surprising to a student of social science, but human security as a normative frame also offers frames for how such discrepant realities could be addressed to ensure greater security for all.

Acknowledging that someone's relative insecurity, even to a novel virus, is compounded by familiar factors helps us better understand the nature of the pandemic as well as currently available measures that could enhance our collective immunity, or security.

Professor Moore

It illustrates that *addressing underlying factors* – relatively straight-forward issues that we know how to remedy (even if they require some political will), and that do not require us to wait for a new vaccine – *would help compound the overall societal levels of resilience and security in the face of such a pandemic.*

Internationally we have seen some temporary policy measures that enhance people's security in various realms (from expanding access to food support in India, to the expansion of health care coverage (e.g. Portugal's inclusion of migrants), to US and other nation's economic support measures). Yet overall, the national and global trends continue to reflect relative levels of security and insecurity. Amartya Sen's groundbreaking research on hunger established that starvation deaths reflect entitlements and inequities with a vengeance. Viruses and pandemics scare power brokers, and all of us, precisely because they need not operate like famine. Yet, our different daily realities (and speculative futures under covid) reflect our relative positions of security. Human security offers a way out of these insecurities and a groundwork to establish more secure and resilient societal frameworks going forward.

Professor Ilona Moore

And the Winner Is Mikaela Thomas '20

IR drew me because it combined all my academic interests, history, politics, culture, language, anthropology, and geography.

Mikaela Thomas '20

Each year, during graduation, one IR senior is awarded the Bucknell Prize in International Relations for a senior demonstrating outstanding academic performance in international relations. This year, the recipient is Mikaela Thomas. Mikaela was a member of the Global Residential College and completed her IR studies with a concentration in the Middle East and Foreign Policy and Diplomacy. She did two government internships during the summers while at BUcknell. She was awarded a [Boren scholarship](#) after a highly competitive process, and this scholarship allowed her to study abroad for a full year in Morocco. In addition to being an outstanding student, Mikaela was always ready to give back, whether it was writing for the department's newsletter, or assisting Professor Fourshey with her research. She also earned a major in Arabic and Arab World Studies and was the first student to ever write an honors thesis for that major. We've appreciated her in and outside of the classroom and wish her the very best as she moves beyond Bucknell.



*In the Sahara outside of Merzouga, Morocco
Photos courtesy of Mikaela Thomas '20*

Mikaela, what drew you to IR? What interests and experiences cemented your decision?

I found the IR major freshman year of high school, when being in AP Human Geography made me realize how interested I was in learning about cultures and interactions between people. IR drew me because it combined all my academic interests, history, politics, culture, language, anthropology, and geography. At Bucknell, I participated in the Global Residential College as a first-year, which provided a fantastic broad overview of IR. Global helped me see what was ahead, and cemented my decision to pursue IR. Also, the department always stressed the importance of going abroad, which was central for me. The nature of the major meant that living abroad for as long as possible would provide me with invaluable opportunities to learn and experience the world and apply what I learned at Bucknell. I was able to go abroad to Morocco for a full academic year as a Boren Scholar, which increased my academic and personal confidence. While I was already focusing my IR major on the Middle East, this abroad experience solidified my desire to focus more specifically on North Africa. Even though I decided to be an IR major well before coming to Bucknell, the classes, professors, and opportunities always reminded me that I had made the right choice.

What skills did you bring to your studies and what skills did you learn or build along the way?

I entered Bucknell with a curiosity and desire to learn that buoyed me throughout my four years. IR helped me develop familiarity with analysis, factual knowledge

of the Middle East and foreign policy, and how to apply the research process. I was able to apply my factual knowledge of IR and current events to my other Arabic and Spanish courses, where it helped me understand the cultural, political, social, and economic contexts of the languages. I found this interdisciplinary major vital to my development of critical thinking skills as well as my ability to apply knowledge and academic processes in any context.

You also did an honors thesis this year. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

I completed an honors thesis in the Arabic and Arab World Studies department. Still, my IR major had a significant influence on the project. My thesis, titled *The Power of Language: An Analysis of Language Use and Attitudes in Moroccan Universities*, centered around survey data from Moroccan students that I collected remotely. The thesis analyzed what languages students used in different contexts of Moroccan society and what attitudes these students held toward these languages. I knew that the country is multilingual from my time abroad, with French, English, Moroccan and Standard Arabic, and local Amazigh present in different geographic and social contexts. I explored the economic, cultural, and colonial relationship between language use and attitudes of these languages and concluded that in the context of my survey results, English is becoming more prevalent than French because it is often used in academic and formal settings. I was able to use my knowledge of the IR contexts, consequences of colonialism, and patterns of globalization as a foundation for this more sociolinguistic-leaning final product.

If you could recommend a few things to students as they make their way through the major, what would those be?

First, I would recommend IR majors attend department panels and events. Secondly, I think it is most important to plan on studying abroad for as long as you can. Going to a country that you are concentrating on within IR and immersing yourself in the culture and language is essential to taking advantage of the experience. My year abroad in Morocco significantly increased my confidence and provided me with valuable first-hand knowledge that I could apply back at Bucknell. My third piece of advice is to plan for scholarship and internship applications early, especially if they are government-related. For example, the Boren scholarship supported my year abroad as a junior, but I had to get nominations and plan on applying by early fall of my sophomore year. The deadlines can creep up on you, so I tried to

research the scholarship as a freshman. In general, take advantage of the opportunities available to IR majors, and be aware of deadlines early.

What are your plans after graduation?

After Bucknell, I will be working for Booz Allen Hamilton as a Junior Communications Specialist. In this consulting role, I will support federal clients using my skills of analysis, critical thinking, problem-solving, and research that I developed as an IR major. After a few years of work experience, I would like to return to school and pursue my interests in national security, foreign policy, and North African relations as a graduate student.



Mikaela in Fes, Morocco, courtesy of Mikaela Thomas

*Mikaela's
advice to students:*

*Participate
in
department
events,
study
abroad for
as long as
you can,
and plan
early to
apply for
scholarship
s and
internships.*

GLO: Residential Colleges and IR

As Professors Moore and Fourshey get ready to lead a second year of Global Residential College focused on Human Rights in the midst of a pandemic, we thought it worthwhile to reflect on the meaning and value of Global Residential College. Residential Colleges at Bucknell began in 1986, and Global College is one of the original two themes, a testament to longevity and the enduring value of thinking globally. Spanning two centuries, Global Residential College fondly referred to

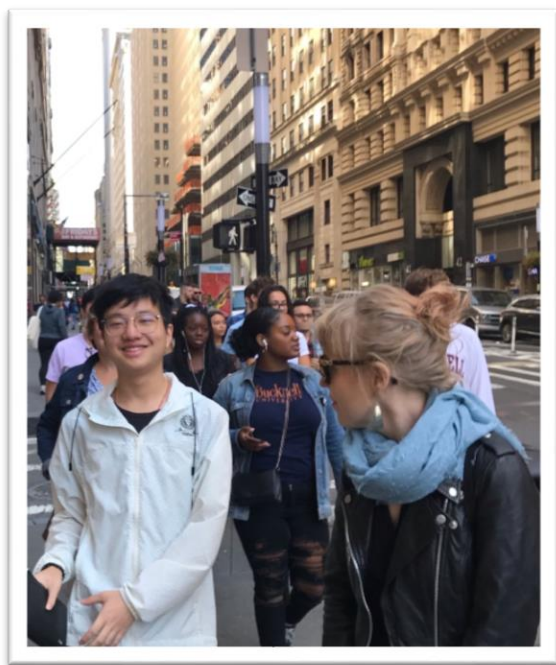
Did you know?

The Global Residential College was one of the two original residential colleges at Bucknell.

Spanning two centuries (or millennial?), Global Residential College fondly referred to by some as GLO will turn 35 next year.

by some as GLO will turn 35 next year.

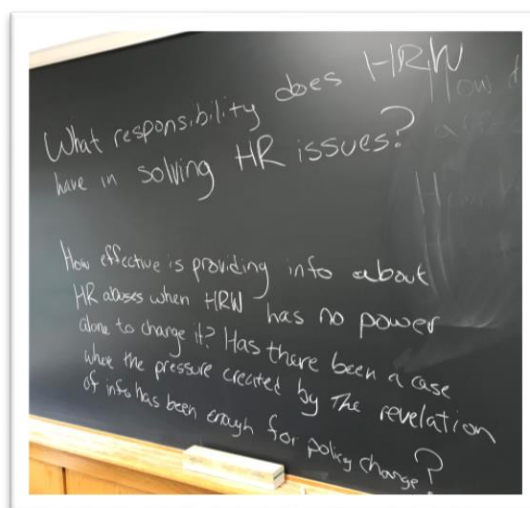
International Relations has often taken the lead on GLO and has been consistently doing so for the last five years. Professors Mitchell and Uçarar organized around a theme of *Global Passports* during the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years. In the 2018/19 academic year Professors Fourshey and Smith developed the theme *The Empire of Human Rights*. Professors Fourshey and Moore continued with the theme *Empire of Human Rights* in the 2019/20 academic year, and are modifying this theme slightly for the 2020/21 academic year. The two sections of residential college have been renamed *Global: Pandemics and Human Rights* (Fourshey) and *Human Rights and Human Wrongs* (Moore). These courses will examine the meanings and values of human rights as well as how the term human rights may be deployed to impose foreign political and economic objectives on populations. The objective of Residential Colleges is to serve as both a first-year writing seminar in which students can learn to critically analyze concepts and ideas and a community building framework for students as they navigate college life.



GLO on the Go in New York, photos courtesy of Professor Fourshey

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear if residential colleges in the fall of 2020 will have opportunity to embark on the iconic field trips to New York, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, and local central Pennsylvania sites. Students are likely to learn about Human Rights work through ZOOM and SKYPE sessions with NGO representatives, UN

officials, and grassroots activists and workers who confront human rights issues on a daily basis. Traveling to offices, museum exhibits, standing on sites where human rights have been declared and/or violated is not likely to occur as a group. We will find other ways to develop visceral and embodied experiences so students can grapple with what it means to not have human rights and begin to comprehend who is most often deprived of human rights particularly in challenging economic circumstances. In 2020/21, we will share conversations over meals in small groups and will continue to discuss global community, human rights, and the challenges and problems these concepts continue to raise and why it is so hard to achieve them.



If you think your academic or professional path might provide students with one way to imagine the many possible meanderings in life, please contact us through the administrative assistant.

Professor Cymone Fourshey



Prof. Fourshey

Prof. Moore

Alumna Profile: Audra Wilson '94



Audra Wilson '94 was only a few years out of law school when she met Barack Obama, who was then an Illinois state senator contemplating a run for higher office. She impressed him — so much that he asked her to leave her job as a lawyer focusing on poverty issues to come work on his campaign for U.S. Senate.

It was just one milestone in a long career dedicated to giving citizens a stronger voice within their government. Wilson is now executive director of the League of Women Voters of Illinois, a nonpartisan organization that focuses on engaging people within the political process and advocating for sound, research-based policy solutions.

"Politics can be complicated and we want to make sure that everyone has the knowledge and ability to participate in our system, from a local mayor's race to a presidential election," she says.

The position draws on Wilson's experience working within the political system — both on Obama's campaign and in the halls of Congress — as well as her deep knowledge of the effects of the laws and policies enacted by politicians. After working for Obama, she became an adjunct professor and the director of diversity education and outreach member at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, where she oversaw several major diversity initiatives and taught classes on U.S. welfare programs. Then the political bug bit her again and she took a job as deputy chief of staff for U.S. Congresswoman Robin Kelly in the Second Congressional District of Illinois, working

to stay connected and attentive to the needs of constituents.

At Bucknell, Wilson double-majored in international relations and Spanish because she initially hoped to work at the State Department. But although her focus changed to the domestic context while she was in law school at Valparaiso University, she says that her Bucknell education created a knowledge base that she frequently draws on in her work on public policy. "Being conversant in international affairs issues is extremely helpful when you're working in a place like the House of Representatives," she says.

She also credits Bucknell with helping her blossom as a public advocate — skills that she now draws on daily. "I was inspired to learn how to speak out and be a more active citizen," she says. "Making sure every individual feels empowered to do that — that's what my work is all about."

Wilson has just taken a new position as the President/CEO of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law, a national anti-poverty organization based in Chicago. IR wishes her the very best in this new chapter of her career.

*I was inspired
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be a more active
citizen.*

*Making sure
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to do that —
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about.*

*Audra Wilson
'94*

*President/
CEO, Shriver
Center on
Poverty Law*

IR Faculty News

Professor Emek Uçarer is working on two projects at the moment: the first is on the limits of solidarity in the European Union, drawing on the aftermath of the "summer of refugees" in 2015. The second is related to the first and explores the rise of populism in Germany and the impact this has had on Germany's ability to push for intra-EU solidarity. She was to present a paper on the latter in Reykjavik, Iceland in June but, alas, it was not meant to be. Many thanks to Charlie Shefrin '20 for his diligent research assistance.

In December 2019, **Professor Zhiqun Zhu** was invited to present a paper on Israel-China relations at the conference "Multilateral Dynamics between the Middle East and Asia" organized by the University of Haifa. While in Israel, he did some field research about growing Chinese investment in Israel and gave a lecture on Japan-China relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was recently invited by the Center for the National Interest (<https://cftni.org/>) to contribute two short essays for its online symposium on North Korea and North Korea-US relations. The first essay deals with Kim Jong-un's health and succession issue, and the second is about relations between Kim and Donald Trump.

*The IR Faculty
teach a wide
array of courses
and engage in
interesting
research—this
summary will
give you a sense
of what we are
currently
working on.*



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International
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*We'd love to
hear from you.
Send us your
updates and/or
your short
submissions on
projects or
perspectives.*

IR Matters!
*highlights events
and people in the
Bucknell IR
community. The
publication
appears once a
semester and
welcomes
feedback and
submissions
from students,
alumni, and
faculty.*



Presenting International Relations Class of 2020

This class is graduating under the most unusual of circumstances. Commencement was to be held on May 17, 2020, but was rescheduled to the weekend of July 17-19, 2020 due to the pandemic. We were all deeply disappointed at the unavoidable abrupt end to our face-to-face classes and feel that we were unable to say our goodbyes, as we would have liked. But we take comfort in the knowledge that these students are adaptable, resilient, and fully capable of putting the skills they honed at Bucknell to use as they move beyond. We are very proud of them and wish them every possible success. Special congratulations go to Mikaela Thomas, which received the Prize for International Relations.

IR Majors

Gabby Bair
Sophie Bullard
Marie Catanese
Enrico Chhibber
Virginia Galbraith
Mateo Garcia Araoz-Fraser
Erin Hausmann
Henry Kelly
Emma King
Jenna Kline,
Olivia Loomer
Beth Meier
Rebeca Mercado-Rios
Ali Nelson

Harrison Olle
Grace Ott
Madeleine Seibert
Charlie Shefrin
Mikaela Thomas
Peter Trousdale
Kayla Ventura

IR Minors

Michael Caruso
Will Hunter
Shruti Khanna
Matt Shobe

Congratulations!

Alumni News

In this section, we highlight news from our alumni. Let us know what you are doing by sending us an email to international-relations@bucknell.edu. We would also welcome short submissions on projects or perspectives.

Jeanne Hey '85. Thanks so much for the [Fall 2019] newsletter. It's great to see IR thriving at Bucknell. I especially appreciated the interview about the protests in Hong Kong and their repercussions in China, the US, and beyond. I was in the first graduating class for the IR major at Bucknell. So it made me very happy to develop a "Global Studies" major here at the University of New England during my time as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. After eight years in that post, I am returning to faculty, teaching political science and global studies. I've also become very involved in leadership development in the Academy. I especially enjoy working with department chairs. I certainly haven't veered very far from the territory I trod at Bucknell. It's wonderful to see IR grads doing such exciting things.