Focus on Interdisciplinary and Cross-Regional Inquiries

PIIRS Research Communities to Support Faculty-Led Research and Dialogue

The Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies has launched a new funding initiative for Princeton University faculty and students in international studies. The newly established research communities program will provide up to $750,000 spread over three years to groups of Princeton faculty in support of research, teaching, and scholarly dialogue that focuses on a common theme of broad interest within international studies and that cuts across disciplines and world regions. The undertaking marks PIIRS as an incubator of new directions in intellectual inquiry and reinforces its role as an interdisciplinary and cross-regional space for research and learning at Princeton.

"The basic idea underlying the research communities," explains Mark Beissinger, director of PIIRS, "is to bring faculty and students together across the traditional boundaries of discipline and world regions, to provide them with opportunities to interact in ways that otherwise might not normally occur at the University, and to focus their attentions on issues of common concern in cutting-edge ways." Research communities, Beissinger says, "are meant to engage broad themes that have cultural, social, and political dimensions." Examples that he offers include modernity and modernization, private wealth and public power, religion and violence, the human dimensions of climate change, and empire and resistance.

Research community funding is intended to support a variety of activities, including conferences, lecture series, workshops, graduate fellowships, visiting fellows, and course development, as well as faculty and graduate student research. Research communities will be required to meet monthly and to offer courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. They will be open to participation by all faculty and students, and up to $70,000 of the annual funding may also be earmarked for research.

The first year of a funding cycle is to be devoted to establishing the community and involves activities intended to solidify the community and the interaction of its members. The second year is meant to be a focus year; monies are earmarked for graduate and visiting fellows and additional workshops and lecture series run by core community members. The final year is aimed at community consolidation. Successful communities may apply for renewed funding.

According to Beissinger, the success of a research community will be judged by the size and diversity of the community's core faculty, attendance at its activities, the quality of its discussions, and its publication results. Communities seeking renewed support will also be required to apply for significant external funding.

While a minimal core of six Princeton faculty members from at least three different departments is required to establish a community, applications for funding may be made by groups of three faculty members from at least two departments.

In the first round of applications that took place in February 2011, PIIRS received five proposals from groups of Princeton faculty to establish new research communities. Two of these were selected for further development, and at least one will receive funding and is to begin in fall 2011.

For more information, visit the website at www.princeton.edu/piirs/research/research-communities.
Labouisse Prize Awarded to Two Seniors Working for Marginalized Citizens

In a first for the Henry Richardson Labouisse ’26 Prize, two Princeton seniors have been tapped for the prestigious award. Alissa Escarce ’11 and Léa Steinacker ’11, top choices from what Labouisse prize adviser Emmanuel Kreike calls the “exceptional candidate pool” of 2010–11, will each receive $25,000 to support their postgraduate research. Escarce’s grant will support her work at the Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (CDM), a transnational workers’ rights law center in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Steinacker will study the treatment of sexualized violence in humanitarian settings in Australia, Malaysia, Rwanda, and Bosnia/Herzegovina.

According to Kreike, a professor of history, the dual award was possible due to the financial health of the fellowship’s funds. The committee, he says, was impressed by the skills, experiences, and commitment of both recipients, and felt that they each embody what Labouisse’s life and career stood for.

Escarce, a history major, first became interested in the rights of workers migrating seasonally to U.S. workplaces with H-2 visas during a gap year in which she interned at the Baltimore-based CDM’s legal advocacy center in Zacatecas, Mexico. There she organized and presented educational workshops on workers’ rights in communities with heavy migration to the U.S., facilitated client-lawyer interactions between American attorneys and migrant workers whose labor rights had been violated, and conducted field research for policy projects.

Her interest in understanding the role of ethnicity and indigenous involvement in the H-2 program developed out of her junior and senior independent work on indigenous politics in 20th-century Mexico, which in turn was inspired by an internship (through Princeton’s International Internship Program) at a Mayan women’s activist theater in the state of Chiapas.

These activities, the California native says, “exposed me to the exciting work of labor rights advocacy and opened my eyes to overlooked problems with American immigration and labor policy” and gave her insight into “how discrimination against indigenous Mexicans colors nearly every aspect of societies and economies in indigenous regions.”

Through its work with migrants who enter the U.S. legally, the CDM has uncovered previously overlooked problems with the H-2 visa system, including abuses in the recruitment process and gender inequality in job access and pay rates. Escarce will use her fellowship to spend a year in the CDM’s newly established Oaxaca office helping to expand the office’s capacity and conducting her own research on the effects of the H-2 system in the deeply impoverished Mixtec region of western Oaxaca.

While Labouisse funding will allow Escarce to examine issues of cross-national interest in the Americas, it will enable Steinacker to pursue her goal of understanding and combating gender-based violence in crisis settings across four continents—Asia, Africa, Australia/Oceania, and Europe.

“Gender-based violence has been called the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights violation in the world,” explains Steinacker, an international student who hails from Walsrode, Germany. “One manifestation of this lies in cases of extreme sexualized violence perpetrated in crisis-affected settings.” The Labouisse fellowship, she says, will allow her to explore the treatment of sexualized violence from a global perspective and emerge as a “global citizen who is better equipped to serve…some of the most marginalized in the world.”

Steinacker will explore gender-based violence from an academic perspective in Australia, collaborating with Anthony Zwi, a professor at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, and a leading expert in violence as a public health problem.

In Africa, the Woodrow Wilson School major will explore the human-rights framework underlying the treatment of gender-based violence. Based in Kigali, Rwanda, Steinacker will work with AVEGA Agahozo, where she will assist in systematic documentation of rape cases that occurred during the Rwandan genocide and provide research and administrative support to the Rwandan National Commission of Human Rights.

In Malaysia, Steinacker hopes to gain insight into capacity building, contracting technical assistance in implementation, and advocacy through her work with International Planned Parenthood’s humanitarian initiative in Kuala Lumpur. The initiative seeks to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services in crisis and post-crisis situations in Southeast Asia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will provide Steinacker with the opportunity to learn about health care responses in a post-crisis setting.

Continued on page 5
AFS Certificate Recipient, Inspired by Study Abroad in Africa, Coauthors Memoir of Liberian Civil War

Alumna Emily Holland ’01

With an interest in conflict resolution, Emily Holland ’01 spent the summer after her freshman year as an intern with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Rwanda—just a few years after that country’s genocide. Holland’s experience, funded by what was eventually to become Princeton in Africa, propelled her onto a career path that has been underscored by humanitarian service and taken her to all parts of the continent.

Fast-forward 13 years. In March 2011, the politics major who graduated magna cum laude with a certificate from the Program in African Studies, published her first book, a coauthored memoir that recounts the civil war in Liberia and includes recollections of Liberian child soldiers and their victims. And Still Peace Did Not Come: A Memoir of Reconciliation (Hyperion) is the story of Agnes Fallah Kamara-Umunna’s personal history with the testimonies of these others.

After working at ABC News and as a producer at CNN, Holland spent four years documenting the IRC’s work across Africa. She wrote and produced advocacy films and articles about the organization’s efforts to assist refugees, displaced persons, and other victims of conflict. She worked on a documentary film produced by Don Cheadle about the crisis in Darfur; reported on the post-genocide peace efforts in Rwanda with Tom Brokaw; and published pieces about Somali pirate hunters, Ethiopian micro-finance entrepreneurs, HIV/AIDS outreach in Kenya, and child labor and trafficking in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Holland’s work for the IRC also included telling the stories of resettled refugees seeking to rebuild their lives in the United States. An article she wrote about a group of Iraqi heavy-metal rock-musician refugees who had been persecuted—and received death threats—for playing Western rock music in America appeared in the June 10, 2009, issue of Princeton Alumni Weekly. Holland wrote another piece for the PAW about Darfuri youths’ hopes and dreams.

In 2007, a literary agent who knew of Holland read an article about Kamara-Umunna in the New York Times. He set up a meeting between the two women, believing a writing partnership might work. “Here was a Liberian woman, who had done so much to help her people move on, both in Liberia and in the United States,” Holland explains. “Agnes is a unique and powerful heroine, connecting to her countrymen in ways that others haven’t been able to.”

Reflecting on her life’s work, Holland, who currently is on the board of Princeton in Africa, points to particular professors at Princeton—Emmanuel Kreike, Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, and Michael Doyle as “life shapers and path changers”—and to the time spent in Rwanda as an undergraduate. “It all goes back to that fellowship,” she says. “It was incredibly transformative experience.”

While work in Africa over the past decade deepened Holland’s understanding of the divisions and tensions that exist on that continent, it also provided the framework for what’s next. She is currently pursuing a J.D. from the University of California–Berkeley School of Law, specializing in transitional justice and human rights.

PIIRS on the Web

PIIRS is pleased to introduce its new website: www.princeton.edu/piirs.

Organized according to the initiatives and funding PIIRS provides for faculty and students, the website provides easy access to information on research initiatives, funding opportunities, international studies programs, Global Seminars, and the renowned scholarly journal World Politics. A new feature is an interactive events calendar, which provides a comprehensive list of all international studies–related events on campus, in addition to those sponsored by PIIRS. Check it out at www.princeton.edu/piirs/news-events/events.

The website was designed to be flexible and thus better able to reflect the evolution of PIIRS as an integral part of the Princeton University community. We welcome user feedback in our effort to establish it as an important tool to support work in international studies at Princeton.
Beissinger Named PIIRS Director

Professor of Politics Mark Beissinger was named director of PIIRS in December 2010, six months after being tapped as acting director. The appointment is effective July 1.

As director, Beissinger plans to develop PIIRS as an interdisciplinary and cross-regional space for research and learning. The PIIRS research communities initiative (see page 1) is the first step toward this goal.

Although Beissinger teaches in the Department of Politics, his work with sociologists and historians and his use of both quantitative and qualitative methods have earned him a reputation as a scholar who crosses traditional boundaries. Part area specialist and part social scientist, his interests include the color revolutions in the postcommunist states, how international norms of sovereignty and self-determination have shaped contemporary understandings of empire, and the coalitional nature of revolutionary politics.

Beissinger is the author and editor of numerous publications, including the award-winning book Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State (2002). His recent writings have focused on the persistence of empire in Eurasia over the last century and the relationship between ethnic nationalism and democratization.

Beissinger’s research has been supported by the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Science Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Ford, Rockefeller, and Olin foundations.

Before joining the Princeton faculty in 2006, Beissinger was a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, where he chaired his department and founded the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia—a U.S. Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center. He has also served as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

—Tara Lewis ’11

Workshop on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America

Research collaborators from the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) met in Princeton on March 11–12, 2011, to discuss results from PERLA’s four-nation survey and to outline an edited volume based on that endeavor. The workshop, supported by the PIIRS Conference Fund and the Program in Latin American Studies, was directed by Princeton University Professor of Sociology Edward Telles, who is also PERLA’s principal investigator.

According to Telles, the nationally representative social science surveys, funded in large part by a grant from the Ford Foundation, enable an examination of racial inequality and discrimination in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, four of the five largest Latin American countries and among the region’s most ethnically diverse, and may ultimately be used for public education and developing social policies. Data was collected on race, ancestry, language, income, occupation, education, wealth, human rights, reasons for ethnic and racial inequality, opinions about black and indigenous sexuality and beauty, and racial and political attitudes, among other issues.

PERLA is particularly interested, Telles says, in examining how racial and ethnic inequalities map onto overall income inequalities in the region, racial and ethnic identities in the region, how national ideologies that are prominent in the historical literature are reflected in public opinion, the prevalence of ethnic stereotypes, experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination, and public opinion about ethnic policies and ethnic social mobilization.

“With our surveys,” he explains, “we suspect that we will capture the many ways in which race and ethnicity do matter to people in the region.” A second conference is planned for fall 2011 with the aim of publishing the volume in 2013.

PERLA has been active for two years. In addition to Princeton, its collaborators are affiliated with the Universidad del Valle and Universidad de los Andes in Colombia, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Catholic University of Peru, Interdisciplinary Center Superior Studies of Social Anthropology in Mexico, University of Colorado–Boulder, and University of California–Santa Barbara.

PIIRS Conference Fund

In an effort to streamline the application process for faculty interested in receiving grants for short-term workshops, meetings, symposia, and conferences, PIIRS has reorganized its funding mechanisms into a single PIIRS Conference Fund.

Seeking to promote innovation through research in international studies, the PIIRS Conference Fund supports meetings aimed at producing a publication or paving the way to further collaborative work. It provides administrative support and up to $15,000 toward projected meeting costs. There is no restriction on subject matter, but events must engage international and regional studies—defined as the study of the human dimension of issues in global, regional, or comparative perspective.

A sample of meetings receiving grants in 2011 include: “Ghetto: Themes of a Place, the Spread of an Idea,” Mitchell Duneier (sociology); “Texts and Textbooks in South and Southeast Asia,” Michael Laffan (history) and Bhavani Raman (history); and “Sots-Speak: Regimes of Language under Socialism,” Petre Petrov (Slavic Languages and Literatures).

Proposals are solicited twice yearly, with application deadlines of September 30 and January 15, and are subject to review by the PIIRS executive committee.

For more information visit the Web at www.princeton.edu/piirs/research/piirs-conferences-and-wor/conference-fund.
Undergraduates Engage in Summer Study Abroad

2011 Global Seminars

In a letter to Princeton undergraduates who were accepted in early March to the 2011 Global Seminar in Japan, PIIRS Director Mark Beissinger and Kyoto seminar director Thomas Hare announced that program would proceed as planned unless developments in the wake of the disasters in Sendai make it necessary to change.

Kyoto, located in central Japan, is 450 miles away from the northeastern seacoast region that has been so catastrophically affected by recent events. "We are continuing to monitor the situation closely," they wrote. "We would of course never put our students in harm's way, and the trip will not proceed if there is any significant threat to students' health and well-being."

The students will join 60 other rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors on five Global Seminars this summer. The participants were selected from a record number of applicants for the six-week-long seminars to be held in Berlin, Germany; Galway, Ireland; Rome, Italy, and Krakow, Poland; and Istanbul, Turkey, and Budapest, Hungary; as well as Kyoto. Summer 2011 marks the five-year anniversary of the Global Seminars program.

Internships, made possible through Princeton’s International Internship Program, are available following the seminars in Ireland and Turkey/Hungary.

The 2011 Global Seminars are:

**Germany:** "Memory, Democracy, and Public Culture: Berlin and Its Pasts," June 16–July 30, Berlin. This course examines the German case and also asks broader questions including: Is there an ethical obligation to remember the past? How do collectives—as opposed to individuals—actually “remember”? What should happen when collective memories conflict? Led by Jan-Werner Müller (politics).

**Ireland:** “Performing Irishness: Performance and Theater in Modern and Contemporary Ireland,” June 11–July 25, Galway. Students will explore performance theory and early 20th-century drama, learn the Irish language, participate in daily seminars and performance-practice workshops, and attend the Galway International Arts Festival. Led by Jill Dolan (English and theater) and Stacy Wolf (theater).

**Italy/Poland:** “The Global Ghetto,” June 9–July 23, Rome and Krakow. This course traces the birth and spread of the ghetto as a social form and as an idea throughout world history. It also explores how the social form emerged in different historical moments and what people have made of the experience. Led by Mitchell Duneier (sociology) and Alice Goffman GS’10 (University of Wisconsin–Madison sociology).

**Japan:** “Performance and Practice in Kyoto,” June 9–July 23, Kyoto. This course explores the links between Zen practice and monastic life on the one hand, and several Japanese arts, including ink painting, noh drama, shakuhachi performance, tea ceremony, and poetry, on the other. Led by Thomas Hare (regional studies and comparative literature).

**Turkey/Hungary:** “Islam, Empire, and Modernity: Turkey from the Caliphs to the 21st Century,” June 11–July 23, Istanbul, and Budapest, Hungary. This course, presented for the fourth year, provides an analysis of change and continuity in Turkish society with a focus on history and major cultural transformations. Led by M. Şükrü Hanioğlu (Near Eastern studies) and Erika Gilson (Near Eastern studies).

Labouisse Prize

Continued from page 2

Based in the city of Zenica, she will intern with Medica Zenica, a local nongovernmental organization that provides war-related rape survivors with psychosocial care, counseling, and gynecological exams.

While Escarce and Steinacker will pursue diverse issues in the coming year, they are united by their passion and their commitment to working toward solutions. Both plan to conduct field research and write papers on their findings that may be used to affect related policies. Both also plan to pursue graduate studies.

The Labouisse prize enables graduating seniors to engage in a project that exemplifies the spirit of Henry Richardson 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. The prize was established by his daughter and son-in-law, Anne and Martin Peretz, in 1984.

And does a functioning democracy require public consensus about the past? Led by Jan-Werner Müller (politics).

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MAY 2011


SEPTEMBER 2011


Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication. Translation Lunch Speaker Series will be held throughout the 2011–12 academic year on Mondays in Burr Hall, Room 219. For more information go to: www.princeton.edu/~piirs/programs/PTIC/index.html.

Bomb shelter doors in Israel

OCTOBER 2011


NOVEMBER 2011

Global Seminars Information Session. Details TBA.