



Ambassador Milton A. Wolf Seminar on Media and Diplomacy 2019

The New Global Media (dis)Order in International Relations: Agonizing Struggles and Elusive Solutions

Vienna, Austria

APRIL 23-25, 2019

ABOUT THE MILTON WOLF SEMINAR SERIES

Launched in 2001, the Milton Wolf Seminar Series addresses 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) have jointly organized this seminar since 2010. Guests 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 select group of outstanding graduate students selected each year to attend the seminar in Vienna as Emerging Scholar fellows.

The organizers envision the Milton Wolf Seminar as a meeting place for media practitioners, diplomats, academics, and students to share their perspectives, formulate new ideas, and identify areas where 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 2019 SEMINAR

As we move further into the 21st Century, a seemingly endless array of challenges-- fake news, information warfare, environmental degradation, migration crises, cyber warfare, terrorism, and rising global populism---have upended once safe democracies, destabilized traditional diplomacy, and called into question the future of the international system. The relationship between media and international relations are at the center of many of these crises. Platform empires like Facebook and Google increasingly appear to operate as sovereign states while many traditional “old media” platforms have been starved financially and are unable to cut effectively

through the noise of a distorted and dystopian media environment. Media platforms, both digital and non-digital, are simultaneously spaces for the practice of diplomacy, tools of reconciliation, and agents of dissent and discord. Diplomats, journalists, and pundits struggle to make sense of this complex array of issues facing contemporary international relations and global communications.

While there have been myriad conferences that focus on documenting media's role in the breakdown of the international order, this seminar is dedicated to solutions. The 2019 Milton Wolf Seminar will explore the wide range of proposals for how to ameliorate pressing challenges to international relations, particularly those wrought by a weak and degraded media and communications environment and probe the strengths and weaknesses of conceivable avenues forward. It will bring together actors from diverse arenas who are conceptualizing solutions to today's acute issues related to media and international relations.

Legal scholar Lawrence Lessig has posited that there are four modalities of media and communications regulation: technological code/architecture, market economic forces, law and policy, and social norms. Panelists at the 2019 Seminar will include actors working both within these modalities and beyond to discuss the consequences and implications of each. For example, how do technological fixes to the spread of fake news influence freedom of expression norms? How do campaigns focused on changing social norms undermine technological or legal solutions and vice versa? As computational propaganda, fake news, and misinformation intensifies international conflict, what are the potential benefits of a reviving and strengthening public media systems? How is the training of diplomats and the role of diplomats adjusting to meet the altered realities of communications systems? Invited guests include academics, researchers, legal experts, technologists, citizen activists, regulators, diplomats, and journalists actively involved in identifying and building different solutions.

AGENDA

DAY ONE – TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2019

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

DAY TWO: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome Tea & Introduction

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

10:00 – 12:00 Session 1: Institutions Adjust or At Least Try—Breaking the Cold Hand of Inertia

While regulation evokes immediate associations with law and policy solutions, this panel, and this seminar more broadly, takes a broader approach, considering legal, social, technological, and other avenues taken to ameliorate the complex array of social problems wrought by contemporary media vis-à-vis international relations. Representatives from academia, diplomacy, journalism, and activism will set the stage for the ensuing panels. Panelists will articulate the key challenges that today's complex media system pose for contemporary international relations with a particular focus on assessing the range of solutions put forward among their particular community of practice. These presentations will provide a starting point, a chance to bring the diverse Milton Wolf audience into the conversation about competing approaches to regulating media.

12:00 – 1:30 Welcoming Lunch

1:30 – 3:00 Session 2: Beyond the Demands of Skirmishing: Legal Norms and International Challenges

In 2011, internet freedom and the right to communicate dominated Milton Wolf discussions about new media's role in international relations. Less than a decade later, it appears that freedom of expression and information access questions have taken a backseat to discussions about how to curb election interference and misinformation, disinformation, and computational propaganda. This session focuses on the transnational implications of recent legal and policy attempts to regulate domestic media in the name of promoting societal stability. Panelists will discuss an array of legal architectures put forward in different countries, with particular attention

to the implications of these efforts for international norms of freedom of expression and access to information.

3:00 – 3:15 *Tea Break*

3:15 – 5:00 **Session 3: Shutdowns, Intranets, and Moderation: The Internet and Jurisdiction**

The question of immunity of the platform for material placed on it by third parties is now more heavily disputed. The duty of the platform operator to moderate—to establish and enforce standards—is a matter of increasing significance. This is an intense and revealing moment as various governments including the United States, the European Union (and countries within it), China, Russia, Pakistan, etc. invent and alter governance arrangements. This panel focuses narrowly on the utility and dangers inherent in national attempts to regulate and restrict media flows for international relations.

7:00 **Reception at the US Chargé d’Affaires Residence**

DAY THREE: THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019

9:00 – 10:00 **Coffee and Conversation with the 2019 Emerging Scholars**

Supporting junior scholars is a key part of the Milton Wolf Seminar. Please join us for a morning coffee and a lively roundtable discussion features our 2019 Emerging Scholar Fellows. They will discuss their research and how it relates to the 2019 Seminar theme.

10:00 – 10.15 *Tea Break*

10:15– 12:00 **Session 4: Strengthening Independent and Traditional Media**

In the wake of information warfare efforts, fake news, election interference and computational propaganda, the focus is too-often on assessing how to regulate and restrict digital activity. Panelists in this session will explore a wide variety of efforts to strengthen traditional media both in terms of supply (i.e. traditional media platforms) and demand (i.e. media literacy). Topics for discussion include how public service broadcasting can be reimagined to fight these challenges, media development efforts in Eastern Europe, and media literacy efforts.

12:00 – 1:15 *Lunch*

1:15 – 3:00 **Session 5: Activism and Sites of Resistance**

NGOS and activists play critical roles in the contemporary debates, often speaking truth to power and raising awareness about the social justice implications of different governmental, legal, and technological attempts at normalizing media flows within and between national borders. This panel features activists and academics working on these issues in the international arena.

3:00 – 3:15 *Tea Break*

3:15 – 5:00 Session 6: Digital Propaganda: Digital Problems, Digital Solutions?

Even a few years ago discussions about the role of the internet in international relations centered on the tension between a so-called Western ethos heralding the free flow of information and opponents like China and Russia advocating information sovereignty. Exponential increases in cross-border election interference, computational propaganda, and fake news have upended this bi-polarity. States that once heralded the free flow of information are wrestling with the need to combat information warfare from abroad even as they continue diplomatic interactions. This panel will look at digital solutions to these digital problems. It will bring together representatives from technology companies working on innovative solutions to these issues with journalists and diplomats.

7:30 *Heurigen in Neustift*