Wren’s Journey to AGS and Beyond

For every student at AGS there is a story, a unique path that brought him or her here at this particular place in time. Wren Sellers, of the 2010 AGS graduating class and the first student in the American M.A. and European LL.M. dual-degree program, was gracious enough to share her interesting and distinctive journey.

Wren’s journey to AGS began while she was studying conceptual sculpting, ceramics and glass at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The pieces she created there represented current cultural commentary, critically capturing experiences in the world. “This type of art is often not traditionally beautiful because truth is not always beautiful,” says Wren. While creating this art was expressive and meaningful, Wren felt a disconnect from the community her pieces were examining. To correct this imbalance and to become more involved in the community, she participated in an internship that took art to inner-city children. Many of the children she worked with had social and physical scars from growing up in Chicago; art proved to be a very effective tool for helping these children creatively demonstrate their feelings and express themselves to others. Wren said that this experience has led her to use art in a way that has her thinking about “them” instead of about herself.

The internship in Chicago opened up an opportunity to go on to Taos, New Mexico, and work with members of the Taos Pueblo through an educational program teaching glass blowing. Wren went to Taos with the intention of helping the community there, however she found that people were not necessarily interested in the “help” she was offering, and so she moved on from the experience with useful lessons about cultural differences and diverse values. About this Wren reflects, “Sometimes you fail. That is when the tide goes out, but the nice thing about the tide is that it always comes back in.”

After Taos, Wren went to Saint Louis where she taught art in a community center. She took a break to venture to Burning Man in the Nevada desert, where
people gather to create, barter and share mind-altering experiences. After Burning Man, Wren took off for Australia where she spent close to a year exploring, camping and fishing in the outback, circling the continent in a 1984 Toyota she had picked up in Sydney. This trip was very educational: Wren learned a lot about cars, and about taking things in stride (especially when animals ate her food!). Most of all, she learned “about listening, and being quiet.” She was completely cut off from the news and missed September 11. She came out of the desert to find the world had changed.

Moving on from this adventure required something else big, so Wren moved to New York City. Staying with friends, she began applying for jobs. After sending out her 59th resume, she was finally contacted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At the Met, Wren held various positions starting in the bookshop and eventually working her way up to the editorial department. She loved working at the Met, a place where art is made available and public to the world. After six years Wren began to feel that only having a B.A. had created a ceiling that was limiting her professional growth. So, based on her experiences traveling through the U.S. and around Australia, and because she wished to further a newly awakened interest in world affairs, she decided she would take some international relations courses at NYU.

This was a crossroad in Wren’s life. Her interest in international relations also stemmed from her personal struggle to better understand people with different cultural values, and she saw this same need in international politics. She wanted to explore the idea of art as a common tool for relating to different cultures, and how art could be used more broadly within international relations. When looking for schools that would fulfill her academic interests, Wren came across AGS and loved the idea of studying in Paris, a place known for art and culture.

At AGS, Wren was able to find a balance between her interest in art and the academic discipline of international relations. Her thesis, entitled Does the Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage conform to Oran B. Young’s “Institutional Bargaining Model” and its “Determinants of successful international regime formation?”, examines the role of the international community in preserving art and culture. Working towards her M.A. degree has not been easy, but with the support of the faculty and staff at AGS Wren has made great achievements in the program, including graduating with honors. She feels the professors and administrators alike have been readily accessible in providing constant attention to ensure that she had the tools for this level of scholarship.

In September, Wren will continue her journey when she enters a partner university of AGS, the French Université de Cergy-Pontoise, to pursue an LL.M. (Master of Laws), tying her interest in art to another newly found interest in law. She adds, “Studying art you have to be able to see. In many ways, law is a tool to help you see.”

Wren is just one of many students to pass through the doors of AGS, and her story demonstrates the diversity of unique experiences and backgrounds of the school’s students. AGS provides them with a common ground for seriously moving forward into the world of international relations and diplomacy.

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**School News**

**Graduation 2010**

This year’s Graduation Ceremony took place on June 3rd in the auditorium of the Alliance Française. The School of International Relations and Diplomacy conferred a Ph.D. degree and twenty M.A. degrees in International Relations and Diplomacy; also seven students from the School of Business and Economics were awarded an Executive Master of Science in Finance degrees. The commencement speaker was Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, who talked about “Youth Power and the Power of Peace.” After the ceremony, students, friends and family celebrated with a Graduation Dinner at the French Senate.

**Political Talks**

AGS recently launched a series of “Political Talks” as a venue for students, faculty members, staff, and the international affairs community in Paris to gather in a relaxed atmosphere “to learn and discuss a range of topics of international affairs.” AGS’s academic coordinator, Sarah Pedersen, explains, “The point is to get a different perspective on issues that are in the press but where we only hear one side of the issue.”

Topics discussed this spring semester were “Haiti: Beyond the Headlines,” “The Greek Tragedy: A Look at the Current Economic and Political Implications of Greece and the EU,” and “The Geopolitical Impact of the 2008 Crisis.”

**Student News**

**Negotiating in Beirut**

This year’s students, working towards their second Master’s degree with AGS partner Université Paris 11, went to Beirut in April to participate in the multi-university mock negotiation for which they had been preparing all year. They spent the first nine days exploring the capital of Lebanon, doing day trips into the north of the country, and making final preparations for the negotiation.

The topic of the two-day negotiation was “Déclaration de
Beyrouth sur la gestion des ressources en eau dans la zone méditerranéenne.” Each of the fifty students, from six different universities, represented a country and, according to a participating AGS student, “truly played their roles with each debating from the point of view of his/her country. We all agreed on basic things such as the need to combat pollution and standards that each country should have in order to do so, the utilization of renewable energy for the development of infrastructure, the initiation of cooperation between national institutes in the field of nanotechnologies and biotechnologies applicable to water, and procedures for conflict resolution.”

Out of the forty-eight articles that had been worked on during the semester, thirty-seven passed at the conference, with eleven being amended.

5th Graduate Student Conference

Held June 1st and 2nd, this year’s AGS conference was themed, “Evolving Borders: Identity and Affiliation in a Volatile International Landscape,” with a focus on how “as a field of inquiry that takes for granted the centrality of the state in world affairs, no issue has so agitated contemporary international relations as the possible decline of state relevance” (as stated in the conference program). Led by students Jenica Jones, Nathan O’Neil and Nora Hartmann and advised by Dr. Ruchi Anand, the conference covered presentations on papers ranging from privatized military, NATO, women’s issues and queer theory, to bioregionalism in terms of resource management and borders of faith and ethnicity. These topics prompted the following discussion questions, also in the conference program: “If the borders of the 20th century separated the territory of nation-states, what will new borders separate? If states retain their central role in IR, how will they cope with interstate and non-state forces, and how will borders and state identity be affected? Along what fault lines, if any, must world affairs ultimately be reorganized? How will we think of ourselves, and what will be the future of ‘us’ and ‘them’?”

Reflections of a Graduate

Timothy McGowan (Class of 2010) writes: “I came to Paris in fall 2009 to spend a semester abroad—a requirement for my Arcadia University M.A. degree program in Peace and Conflict Resolution. I was very apprehensive as I embarked on this first experience of living and studying outside the USA. However I soon found myself gripped by Paris and the American Graduate School in Paris. I wanted more, and decided to remain here to become the first student from Arcadia to do a dual degree with Arcadia and AGS in Paris.

“As my time here drew to a close, I found myself walking by the Seine, thinking back over the two years that were almost over and trying to make sense of the experience. Never in my life had I been more challenged than during this time, beginning with learning French without which day-to-day living would have been very difficult; like getting my hair cut, placing credit on my phone, buying food, and eating out. I pondered over the differences of life I found here in France and in the United States—try finding an open supermarket on Sundays or locating a store open late at night—but I could sit for hours at a table outside a café drinking coffee and indulge in the favorite French pastime of simply watching people pass by, or enjoy discussing world affairs with my friends over long, long meals in a bistrot, or picnicking down by the river.

“I reflected too that AGS is not simply ‘in France’ but is in the very cosmopolitan setting of Paris. I met people from so many nationalities and cultures on a regular basis, some were my fellow students, some were people I came across as I went about my daily life in the city, and some were the colleagues I worked with on internships at UNESCO. I know that, by forcing me to reach out beyond my Americanism to understand them and their cultures, they changed who I am.

“I have now returned home to the U.S. with hundreds of memories of my time in Paris, and with dozens of unforgettable friends now scattered across the U.S., Europe and beyond. I know that I have become a person who is more tolerant of the differences between peoples of other nationalities, more eager to learn about them, far more confident in myself and much more knowledgeable about the world as a whole. I feel ready to seek out new life challenges and will embrace them as I go on to the next stage of my life. I will think back often, and with great fondness, of the experiences and people that I met while at AGS, and know that our common experiences have created a powerful, lasting bond between me and my fellow AGSers wherever they are.”

Jokes and Quotes:

Welcome to the new section of the AGSers, one that shares funny excerpts from class in order to take a breather from the serious subject of international affairs—you know, to keep the mood light and to offer a better look at our professors’ personalities and their sometimes peculiar sense of humor.

“Occam’s Condom: it is in his doc kit; it is a productive device that keeps your bad ideas from reproducing.”—Dr. Yates, in “Methodology” class introducing the concept of Occam’s Razor.

“You go out into the rice paddies and you eat baby girl skulls.”—Professor Bill Stewart, regarding the situation of making shoes in China when looking at open economies and facts of growth in Macroeconomics.

“I smoked that half a cigarette and the other half is still calling my name.”—Dr. Anand, in her lecture on functionalism in “Factors & Theories” as segue to taking a break.

“I say ‘quantitative’ and it’s like something died and we threw it in the trash can.”—Dr. Yates, giving the introduction to his methodology lecture on Quantitative Data to a bunch of un-mathy IR students.

“I read The New York Times and The Onion and I can’t tell the difference.” —Dr. McGiffen, discussing the validity and quality of news sources during a lecture on humanitarian intervention in “Current Issues.”

“I want to etch this in my head… but if I do I will have psychological problems later.”—Professor Yates, explaining the normal distribution bell curve in “Methodology” class.
Gankhet Ariunbold

Growing up in Mongolia, Gankhet Ariunbold’s childhood was filled with exceptionally cold winters, averaging -32°C (-26°F), and mild summers, averaging 20°C (68°F). Ulaanbaatar, the country’s capital where Gankhet grew up, was initially founded in 1639 as a Buddhist monastery center; later in the twentieth century it was converted into a manufacturing center where Soviet architecture became more prominent.

The first years of Gankhet’s childhood were spent with his grandparents in the countryside, while his parents were off studying in Russia. There he aided in the herding of the cows, but mostly enjoyed roaming around wherever he pleased. As an adolescent, Gankhet spent time with friends, just like many other teens across the world. They would go on car trips, to the cinema, and just “hang out,” as he describes it.

Always a bright student, Gankhet won an English language competition while in high school that allowed him to travel to the United States. When he reached his destination—Minnesota—he was surprised at how different life was there. He felt as if he had stepped into a new world. Nevertheless, this experience catapulted his interest in learning more about different cultures.

From a young age Gankhet’s future was laid out. His parents had high expectations for him. He would become the diplomat he dreamed of being. In 2008, Gankhet completed the first step toward this goal when he received a B.A. in Foreign Relations from the University of the Humanities in Ulaanbaatar. Deciding that he was ready for a new chapter in his life, he packed up his belongings and moved to France.

Q: What made you decide to attend AGS?
A: It was exactly what I was looking for. AGS offers an entirely different view of international relations than what I learned back home; it’s a unique experience both in and outside the classroom. Also, we have wide access to an almost unlimited amount of academic sources, which students in many countries don’t experience. However, I was initially hesitant about applying for financial reasons. It was a big decision. In Mongolia the average annual tuition is about €280–€380, which is the same for both state and private schools. This is in line with the low income in the country. Luckily for me everything worked out.

Q: What are the major differences you’ve noticed between social culture here and back home?
Up through secondary school in Mongolia students wear uniforms and there are some pretty clear guidelines about student-teacher interaction. Teachers are addressed with a great deal of respect; during lectures students have to sit quietly with their arms folded and to pose a question they are required to raise their hands in a specific manner. At the university level everything changes. Students are allowed a larger amount of freedom, they are encouraged to speak up in class and they can wear whatever they want.

One big difference is the relationship between students. Back home friendships are usually formed with students of the same sex. I can’t say that I had any close girl friends there. But here, everyone intermingles. Also, professors are friendly with students. You can go and talk to them whenever you like.

Q: What are your plans after AGS?
A: My ultimate goal is to become a diplomat, as well as a recognized writer in international relations. After AGS I would love to work for the Mongolian Institute for Strategic Studies. Mongolia is a very unique country with many challenges and opportunities. One of the most prominent problems going on right now is the utilization of land for mining of minerals from foreign companies—primarily China. Each year, more land is used for mining, which creates a problem for the almost 50 percent of Mongolia’s population that live in rural settings. I am already excited about being able to work in the field and help the country in any way I can.
The Elusive Two-State Solution

By Belal Hamdan (Class of 2011)

What more is needed to formulate an endgame for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? The elusive two-state solution has never seemed quite so distant … so utterly impractical. The very idea that the creation of two states will somehow result in peace is naïve at best. Rest assured, an arbitrary, man-made border will not suppress over 60 years of oppression, occupation and humiliation. Can two historical enemies, out of the blue, learn to live with one another, side by side? I agree, it’s a nice ideal, but it is precisely that. My intuition and short experience in this world unfortunately lead me to a less promising conclusion. Perhaps, it simply is not in the cards to see a freed Palestine … not quite yet. On a very fundamental and practical basis the infrastructure for peace, both conceptually and tangibly, does not yet exist. The hopes of a fair, sustainable two-state solution (but let’s be honest it will never be fair … sustainability is the best we can hope for) is, in my opinion, a model of a dead, over-drummed framework. It has been discussed and written about so extensively people have grown numb to its intentions.

Time after time we hear the term “sovereign Palestinian state,” but what does that really mean? Is it possible to have such an entity separated and littered with Israeli settlements and outposts? Intuitively, the answer is most certainly no. To the detriment of peace, Israel does not shy away from the opportunity to inform every one of the areas within the West Bank they intend on keeping, regardless of any peace agreement with the Palestinians. I feel it is due time to reformulate the Palestinian cause and that of their future. No longer can they afford the courtesy of time. No longer should they idly sit back and allow Israel to effectively confiscate more land right under the world’s nose. The Palestinians must take matters into their own hands, not in a violent manner, but in a way that shows the world their maturity as a people and their readiness and capability to govern themselves, when historically they have been told they cannot.

In this light, they must first learn to live with one another. Both Muslim and Christian, Fatah and Hamas, it is vital now more than ever that their solidarity is expressed. Let them shout to the world “we are Palestinian and we also have the universal right to a homeland and self-determination!” Secondly, they ought to strengthen diplomatic ties with the Arab world despite the historical lack of tangible support. In them they will find the diplomatic and social capital necessary to have their voices heard amongst the highest echelons of the international community. Indeed, I feel it will strengthen their hand not only in negotiations with Israel, but also in influencing the U.S. foreign policy agenda in relation to the cause. It is due time that they more fully represent themselves, rather than take a back seat to their own future. This is not to imply that Palestine is without fault, as the PA has been riddled with corruption for decades, making it an imperative that they hold their politicians more accountable.

Moreover, they ought to be wary of the state they wish to create. Let it be founded on modern ideas of government and economics, freedom, tolerance and human rights. Let Palestine be the model of a flourishing democracy in the Middle East. Indeed, why not Palestine?

One thing remains certain. If, in the end, the problems that continue to plague the region persist, not only will the ideal of democracy be tarnished, but we may never witness a time when we see such a politically vital region realize its full potential.

Belal would welcome feedback on this op-ed, email your comments to him at belal.hamdan04@gmail.com.

Faculty in the Spotlight

Dr. Ruchi Anand

Dr. Ruchi Anand, quoting Salman Rushdie says, “Our lives teach us who we are.” Her father, a general in the army in her native India, would talk about the partition between India and Pakistan, and about the struggles of having to leave pre-partition Pakistan and leave everything behind, which kindled Dr. Anand’s interest in politics, international relations and questions about “identity.” Her family had a history of education (her grandfather was the first man to be educated in his village and a senior railway employee). After considering medical school or becoming a pilot in the Indian Air Force, she entered a Political Science program at Lady Shri Ram College in New Delhi, where she graduated with honors and topped Delhi University. She followed that with an M.A. in International Relations and an M.Phil in International Law, and then went on to Purdue University in the U.S. where she received her Ph.D. in International Relations.

Dr. Anand had been encouraged by her father to go abroad to further her education, and when she did, she thought of herself as a 23-year-old idealist, leaving her native India with the goal of “joining the United Nations, and changing the world.”

At Purdue, she gave academic meaning to her interests in issues of identity, third world politics, race, class, gender and a general interest in justice. There she also met her French husband, Stéphane, and together they decided to move to France to embark on a new adventure. They settled in Valence in the south of France and now have a daughter, Lina. She takes the train from Valence to Paris a couple of
times a week in order to teach at AGS.

Having grown up in India, studied in the U.S. and now living in France, Dr. Anand found herself in a new game of identity politics. “As someone struggling with a new identity of the ‘other’ in France, AGS became my savior in terms of having an academic institution where I could do what I loved best: meet, teach and live international relations,” says Dr. Anand. She fondly remembers how nervous she was the very first day, “I remember coming up to Paris—I got lost on the roundabout at the Champs Elysees and had to call AGS for directions.”

Dr. Anand is multifaceted. Besides teaching full-time at AGS, and being a member of the Academic Committee of the school and internship director, she teaches at a University in Lyon and every summer in the Princeton University summer program for undergraduates. She has published two books, Self-Defense in International Law (2009) and International Environmental Justice: A North-South Dimension (2004), the latter for which she is considering a second edition. She has authored a number of book chapters, and participated in many conference presentations mostly on gender studies and environmental issues. She is also an avid badminton player and the 2010 Champion of France in the Veteran category (over 35). She is in the top 100 in France.

Aside from that, she has two projects in the works: the first is a book written more as a narrative on the subject of identity and identity politics which she considers a crucial aspect on international relations today. She says the book will focus on the question “who am I” and the layers to that question, as well as its links to international relations. The other project Dr. Anand is considering is a book on gender and IR. She hopes to further this goal by co-teaching a Gender and International Relations course with Gender and Armed Conflict Specialist Carol Mann.

Dr. Anand considers herself to be a free thinker. She continues to live in France because it allows her to embrace life, and accept all the exciting ideas that keep coming her way. “I can’t deal with anybody controlling my life, or taking control over my mind,” which is why a career in academia turned out to be a perfect fit. As she said herself, her life showed her that this is where she wants to be.

Faculty News

Dr. Douglas Yates presented a paper at the University of Houston entitled “Port-Gentil: From Forestry Capital to Oil Capital,” May 20-21, funded by the National Science Foundation, to be published in an edited volume, Martin Melosi, ed. “Oil Capitals” (University of Pittsburgh Press).

This summer Dr. Yates will be traveling to Cheju University, South Korea, to present seminars on international peace at the state university’s Peace Island Summer School.

He was also invited to write a chapter on “Post-Coloniality and Conflict in Resource Dependent African Countries,” for an edited volume by Kenneth Omeje (Zed Books).

Dr. Nikita Harwich was a special guest at the radio program “Concordance des Temps” hosted by renowned French historian Jean-Noël Jeanneney on the national radio network France Culture and broadcasted on Saturday, April 3rd. The theme: “Le chocolat: exotisme et familiarité” [“Chocolate: Exoticism and Familiarity”].

Dr. Harwich chaired a working session in two important international symposia that took place in Paris: the first one, on June 24th, in the symposium, “At the meeting point of two bi-centennials: Juan Bautista Alberdi and the intellectual construction of Argentine independence,” organized by the Institut des Sciences Sociales et Politique de l’Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense; the second one, on June 28th, in the symposium, “The Atlantic world empires in revolution. A transnational perspective (1763-1865),” organized at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) Paris.

Dr. Régis Bismuth has published the following articles:


Dr. Steve McGiffen attended a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg on 26th April, at the invitation of Senator Kox of the Socialist Party of the Netherlands, who is Chair of the United Left Group in the Assembly. Dr. McGiffen spoke about the business of running a political website aimed at an international audience. He explained that given that English is now by far the most understood “second” language in the world, it made sense to use it to communicate the ideas, activities and experiences of one’s party or social movement in that language. He argued that we can all learn from each other and urged colleagues—who came from as far away as Moldova, Ukraine, Cyprus and Finland, as well as France and nearby Germany—to establish and maintain their own English-language websites. “International communication between like-minded people concerned with issues such as poverty, the defense of the social state, combating racism and protecting the environment is vital for democracy and progress.”
Professor Joav Toker gave a presentation during a conference on “Evolutions and Complexities of Modern Media coverage of Wars” at the IDC (Interdisciplinary Center, Lauder School of Government) in Tel-Aviv (March 3rd).

He appeared on the International Francophone TV network TV5, speaking about the Iranian nuclear crisis and President Sarkozy’s “transatlantic policies” (March 14th). He also took part in a 55-minute TV debate on President Obama’s “First year of Foreign Policy” on France Ô television (March 25th).

**Alumni Notes**

**Janicke Stramer (Class of 2005)** writes: “The book project that I was part of has finally been published! The New Order of War, edited by Bob Brecher, published by Rodopi. It’s a compendium based on the fourteen best papers presented at the Conference on War and Terror that I attended in Budapest in 2007. It’s really exciting for me, as it is my first research paper that has been published in book form. My chapter is titled, “The Language of War: George W. Bush’s Discursive Practices in Securitizing the Western Value System in the ‘War on Terror.’

“I attended the International Studies Association’s annual convention in New Orleans in February where I presented a research paper on U.S. foreign policy in South America post 9/11. As always, it was an enjoyable four days with so many interesting papers and people.

“I have also been invited three times as a guest speaker at Sierra College, California, where I spoke about the Israeli-Palestinian issue from an international relations/political perspective to students who were learning about it from a philosophical/religious perspective. This has been a lot of fun.”

**Christiane Peuker (Class of 2008)** is in Munich working for Invest in Bavaria, the business promotion agency of the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs. About this job she comments, “I was hired in June mainly to work on the French market, but since then my responsibilities have increased so that I now cover Turkey and Israel as well. My main focus is on the economics of these regions but my task more specifically is to convince companies to set up their businesses in Bavaria and then to accompany them through the whole process of opening a branch office, or the like, in our state.

“I am delighted at how politically supportive my daily work is. I write letters and speeches for our Minister, and regularly organize large events in foreign countries for possible future investors—the most recent event was in Istanbul. On these trips, I am part of the Minister’s delegation and it’s fascinating to see the political and administrative mechanisms from such a close perspective.”

**Christy Davis (Class of 2005)** met with AGS students in May to share with them her expertise in finding internships and jobs in France. Christy drew from her extensive experience screening and hiring job applicants for French companies as well as from her own experiences while job hunting. Her seminar focused on how to create effective and efficient curriculum vitae and cover letters, and gave students advice on interviewing in both English and French. This seminar is expected to be offered each semester to assist students in navigating the road to employment during and after their studies.

**Kenza Idrissi (Class of 2008)** interned for three months at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a part of the United Nations Country Team. “My work was very interesting. IOM does what is considered social/humanitarian work. In particular, it facilitates the voluntary return of illegal immigrants to their country of origin. The office in Rabat is very important specifically because Morocco often serves as a transit country for people going to Europe. It receives over 50 people a week who want to return to Sub-Saharan Africa: mainly Nigeria, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Guinea.

“My job began with the initial screening. I interviewed individuals to determine where they were from, why they had come to Morocco, if they had paid anyone to bring them to Morocco, if they had a valid passport, if their entry to Morocco was legal or illegal, and so on—most migrants enter Morocco illegally without documentation. Then, I would contact the embassy of their home country. Once it was confirmed that the person was from the country in question and the embassy had sent us travel documents, I would send the person for a medical checkup to make sure he or she was fit to fly and work with colleagues to book the flight. We also did HIV/AIDS awareness and distributed condoms before the person left Morocco. Back in his or her home country, our IOM office there provides the person with €485. This money is intended to help them start up a project to enable them to reintegrate into the home country and to discourage the person from leaving again.

“The work was interesting because every case was different. One time, we had a case of human trafficking—a 20-year-old ran away from her kidnapper because he wanted to sell her in Spain for prostitution. Dr Yates’ lectures in our course on Sub-Saharan Africa definitely came in handy in this job.”
Patrick Clairzier (Class of 2009) has joined the faculty of the School of International Relations at AGS to teach “Current Issues in International Relations” to the undergraduate students spending a semester or a year abroad in the “Arcadia in Paris” program.

Patrick also works for the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). This is how he describes the three projects he is involved with:

“The International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, the Resource Panel, as it is called, is a scientific multidisciplinary panel launched in 2007 by UNEP Division of Technology Industry and Economics (DTIE). This Panel provides independent and scientific information to policy and decision makers about sustainable resource management, with the aim of decoupling environmental impacts from economic growth.

The second project is Eco-labeling, which promotes the EU’s eco-labeling scheme by asking developing and emerging countries to pick specific products that they export to the EU zone and to make these products as ecologically friendly as possible at every step of production and transportation.

The third project is the Life Cycle Initiative, which promotes more awareness of the concept of life cycle thinking in the production of goods and services. In a nutshell, the idea is that the economic, social, and environmental impacts of producing anything should be calculated into its production so we try to reduce all of its negative impacts.”

Patrick says that it is his job to work with the teams and to assist in the implementation of these projects.


Eric gave two lectures at New York University of Tirania, Albania, on December 8th and 10th last year. The first was on “Peacekeeping and Nation Building” and the other was on “African Security”—or, as he puts it, insecurity.

He also addressed an audience of about 30 professors and graduate students in the African and International Relations department at Boston University on March 2nd this year. His topic was “the Congolese-Rwanda Security Dilemma: the Continuing Security Dilemma Between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo and the Role of the U.N.” He says he then spent over an hour answering questions from students and professors.

Laura-Lee Smith (Class of 2009) did a three-month internship with the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C. at the beginning of this year. She says, “It was a brand new experience all around; I almost got whiplash trying to attend all the lectures, events, and take advantage of the opportunities arranged for the interns! I also attended two confirmation hearings and the main celebration for Black History Month by the Office of Civil Rights.

Describing some memorable moments of the internship, Laura-Lee writes: “You wouldn’t guess who I sat with for about two hours today—Senator John Kerry. I attended a Senate hearing on the Israeli-Palestine Peace Process. I wanted to pinch myself to wake up! This whole experience is impacting my perspective on international relations very deeply, not to mention my career aspirations! The Committee spoke about so many points that I learned less than a year ago in Professor Kapil’s class—really phenomenal. So I am thrilled with the internship all around.”

She tells us, “As I am seriously considering becoming a Foreign Service Officer, I conducted as many informational interviews as I could during this internship. It was a great experience! I was in meetings with Secretary Clinton’s deputies and really picked up on how everything works. It was very exciting and I learned so much about possible career paths with the State Department.”

Further exciting news is that Laura-Lee was selected as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow for 2010-2011. She interviewed with the selection committee the first weekend in February with 21 other finalists and was chosen as one of 10 fellows for this coming year. She says, “I am a new member of the Humbolditan family of which 43 former Humboldtians are now Nobel laureates. I am very excited, overwhelmed, honored and, of course, happy to have been chosen. For one year, I will be conducting research in Berlin with the German Council on Foreign Relations.”

Laura-Lee has been in Germany since May to learn German before starting her research project in September. “My individual project is about the German role in the Afghanistan war and contradictions between Germany’s international obligations with NATO and waning public support at home. I would not have chosen this topic if I had not been inspired during the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy conference last summer, and if I hadn’t met the policy analyst from the German Council of Foreign Relations, who encouraged me to apply for fellowships such as this one. I am very grateful to AGS for supporting my attendance at that conference. It’s incredible how one event leads to so many others.”

Every year the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables more than 2,000 researchers from all over the world to spend time researching in Germany. The Foundation maintains a network of more than 20,000 Humboldtians from all disciplines in over 130 countries worldwide (www.humboldt-foundation.de).