PRISM OF DIVERSITY:
CHAMPIONING INCLUSION AND EQUITY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

ALSO SPONSORED BY:
ESIA LEADERSHIP, ETHICS, AND PRACTICE INITIATIVE
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WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
DC CONSORTIUM ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY
YOUNG BLACK PROFESSIONALS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
A MESSAGE FROM DEAN ALYSSA AYRES

The Elliott School’s Inclusive Excellence Week is a week-long series of events and programming that celebrates our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs. Since 1898, the Elliott School and its predecessor schools have developed international leaders with the knowledge, character, and skills necessary to succeed on the global stage. In recent decades, we have been more intentional about our community’s diversity and the leadership landscape we are shaping at our school.

We are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive community with a particular focus on the impact of inclusion in international affairs. We recognize that diversity and social mobility are considered among our country’s greatest assets. This program underscores our commitment to ensuring that the next generation of foreign policy experts and international affairs practitioners reflect the diversity of our nation as we seek to engage with and positively influence the world.

This Inclusive Excellence Week will feature Diplomats and Foreign Service Officers from the State Department, DEI professionals, ESIA faculty members, visiting scholars, students, and alums who are eager to share their experience and expertise and connect with each of you.

The Elliott School of International Affairs and our partners across DC look forward to hosting this year’s Inclusive Excellence Week.

Alyssa Ayres
Dean
Elliott School of International Affairs

GENERAL INFORMATION

SPEAKER CANCELLATIONS/SUBSTITUTIONS
The Elliott School’s Inclusive Excellence Week organizers make every effort to offer panels of the highest caliber. In the event of speaker cancellations, organizers reserve the right to modify panel material, substitute speakers, or cancel a session without advance notice.

2023 ELLIOTT SCHOOL’S INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE WEEK THEME
This year’s conference theme is Prism of Diversity: Championing inclusion and equity in International Affairs. The purpose of enacting change in International Affairs (IA) operates like a prism; that one goal to make the world better is composed of an array of colors and shades (identities) that come together to make this goal a reality. This year’s Inclusive Excellence Week aims to acknowledge and celebrate the diverse voices and agents of change currently making a positive impact in International Affairs, the different disciplines, and areas of life where IA has a presence. Additionally, we will take this conference as an opportunity to advocate for expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CONNECT WITH US
Make the most of our social media channels throughout the conference. Share your experience and hear the buzz from others using the conference hashtag #IEWeek2023.

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Monday, March 20

6:00 - 8:00 pm  Student-Alumni Networking Reception: Celebrating Women in Foreign Policy
In honor of Women’s History Month, join us for a student-alumni networking reception focused on advancing women and women's leadership in international affairs. This gender-inclusive event is open to the entire Elliott School community, including students, alums, faculty, and staff.

Lindner Family Commons | 1957 E St. NW, Room 602, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: N/A

Tuesday, March 21

11:30 am - 1:30 pm  Inclusive Excellence Week Luncheon & Keynote Speaker Address
Join us for a luncheon with our 2023 IE Week Keynote Speaker, Hadeil Ali, Director of the Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and welcoming remarks from ESIA Dean Alyssa Ayres. During this session, audiences will learn about CSIS’s projects on diversity, equity, and inclusion projects and Ms. Ali’s call to action to join these efforts.

The City View Room | 1957 E St. NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Hadeil Ali

4:30 - 6:00 pm  PANEL: Diplomat in Residence
Join us for a facilitated panel of US Department Domestic Officers to learn about civil service careers from the professionals who serve in the roles. Find out how having diverse skill sets, perspectives, and backgrounds benefits the State Department’s mission and network with these diplomats in residence.

Lindner Family Commons | 1957 E St. NW, Room 602, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitators: Ms. Candice Helton and Andy Herrmann
Moderator: Darion Atkins

Wednesday, March 22

6:00 - 7:30 pm  Foreign Service Diversity Roundtable
Join us for a moderated panel composed of various historically underrepresented employees in the Foreign Service. The panelists will engage in topics including the opportunities and challenges of representing diversity in the Foreign Service, how to address or cope with adversity, their resilience, shifts they have seen in Foreign Service diversity during their careers, and their outlooks for the future of Foreign Service diversity.

The City View Room | 1957 E St. NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitators: Gillian Aphel; James Shea’ Hermes Grullón; Gaïna Dávila
Moderator: Janina Talamayan

12:00 - 1:00 pm  LUNCH AND LEARN: Intent vs. Impact: Understanding Cultural Values to Guide Interactions with Students
Malerie Gamblin, M.Ed designed this presentation to give concrete examples of potential biases that faculty or staff may have when working with students and different techniques used to mitigate and become more self-aware of bias while working with students. There will be interactive activities within the session where we will take real student situations/cases, examine the bias that could be present, and use the tools shared in this presentation to navigate the situation with kindness and culture in mind.

1957 E St. NW, Room 505, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Malerie Gamblin, M.Ed

On my Father’s Wings: Entrepreneurial and Philanthropy Journey from Tanzania East Africa
Join us to discuss the legacy of entrepreneurship in Tanzania at the hands of Michael Shirima and how the lessons learned from his father and life abroad have aided Mr. Shirima in leading a life of business success, philanthropy, and global awareness. This discussion will be under the facilitation of Assistant Dean for Student Services and DEI, Dr. Lakeisha Harrison.

1957 E St. NW, Room 214, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Mr. Michael Shirima
Moderator: Assistant Dean Lakeisha Harrison, Ph.D., J.D.
Introductions: Deseree Cha Cha
Wednesday, March 22 (continued)

2:00 -3:00pm  Student Scholarship & Research Expo
This expo is an opportunity for students to present their research projects on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of international affairs. Each student presenter will have a booth on the 2nd Floor Atrium that audiences can visit to learn about the students’ research purpose, methodology, outcomes, and preliminary findings. Additionally, audiences will have the opportunity to learn more about research methods and the students’ processes for research and data analysis.

2nd Floor Atrium | 1957 E St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20052
Student Presenters: Adedasola Adeniyi; Arzina Lakhani; Victoria Freire; Prajna Naidoo

6:00 –7:00pm  The Enduring Challenge: History of Diversity in the Foreign Service
This presentation will highlight how the Department of State, as a bureaucratic institution, has responded to the call for greater diversity in its Foreign Service. Based on new archival research, the presentation will focus on newly discovered events and people that broaden and deepen our understanding of how the Foreign Service has reacted to the concept and need for inclusivity and to the individuals who have advocated for it.

Lindner Family Commons | 1957 E St. NW, Room 602, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Melissa Jane Taylor, Ph.D.

Thursday, March 23

10:00 –11:00am  Coffee with the Dean
Dean Alyssa Ayres will host an in-person coffee with undergraduate and graduate students. This Coffee with the Dean is an opportunity to share your student experience with the Dean and ask her questions about DEI efforts at the Elliott School.

1957 E St. NW, Room 505, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Dean Alyssa Ayres, Ph.D.

12:00 –1:00pm  Diversity in the Curriculum
During this town-hall style session, students, staff, and faculty will have the opportunity to ask the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs, Laila Sorurbakhsh; Director of the Master of Arts in Global Communications, William Youmans; and Director of the ESIA Office for Undergraduate Academic Advising, Sarah Squire, about the trajectory and development of the Elliott School’s Academic Curriculum and how we plan to move forward to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curricula across the Elliott School.

1957 E St. NW, Room 505, Washington, DC 20052
Panelists: Assistant Dean Laila Sorurbakhsh, Ph.D.; William Youmans, Ph.D., J.D.; and Sarah Squire
Moderators: Adedasola Adeniyi and Ayooluwa Akintay

1:00 –2:00pm  Building an Inclusive Vocabulary on Transgender and Disability Studies through Film
What is gender? How does gender intersect with racial identities? How do we maintain a safe space for trans visibility? Further, why is trans visibility not always empowering or desirable? Come and learn about the critical issues with today’s vocabulary about gender as well as a quick history of representations of transgender individuals in popular media in this interactive, illustrated 60-minute session. Through copious film clips, we will learn how to rethink familiar films and television series through a trans-inclusive and trans-positive perspective.

1957 E St. NW, Room 111, Washington, DC 20052
Facilitator: Alexa Alice Joubin, Ph.D.
PRESENTERS & PANELISTS

Alyssa Ayres, Ph.D. // Dean, Elliott School of International Affairs

Dr. Ayres is a foreign policy practitioner and award-winning author with senior experience in the government, nonprofit, and private sectors. Appointed dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs and professor of history and international affairs at George Washington University on February 1, 2021, Dean Ayres is the first woman to serve in the role of permanent dean at the school. Before her deanship, from 2013 to 2021, Ayres was a Senior Fellow for India, Pakistan, and South Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), where she remains an Adjunct Senior Fellow. Her work focuses primarily on India’s role in the world and U.S. relations with South Asia in the larger Indo-Pacific. She served as the project director for the CFR-sponsored Independent Task Force on U.S.-India relations and, from 2014 to 2016, as the project director for an initiative on the new geopolitics of China, India, and Pakistan supported by the MacArthur Foundation. From 2010 to 2013, Ayres served as deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asia. During her tenure at the State Department in the Barack Obama administration, she covered all issues across a dynamic region of 1.3 billion people at the time (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) and provided policy direction for four U.S. embassies and four consulates.

Before serving in the Obama administration, Ayres was the founding director of the India and South Asia practice at McLarty Associates, the Washington-based international strategic advisory firm, from 2008 to 2010 and served as a part-time senior advisor to the firm from 2014 to 2021. Ayres has been awarded numerous fellowships and has received four group or individual Superior Honor Awards for her work at the State Department. She speaks Hindi and Urdu and, in the mid-1990s, worked as an interpreter for the International Committee of the Red Cross. She received a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Hadeel Ali // Director of the Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Ali was appointed Director of the Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project in October 2022. The project exists to elevate diverse voices and perspectives, leading to more ideas, innovation, and robust policy solutions. Ms. Ali is a thought leader on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the national security field. She previously served as a program manager with the Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy at CSIS, where she led professional development opportunities for interns, staff, and external stakeholders. Prior to joining CSIS, she worked for World Learning, where she managed State Department grants and led youth educational development initiatives in the Middle East. Ms. Ali is the chair of the Think Tank Diversity Consortium. She is the events and programming lead with the Race Across the Pond Initiative at Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) and a facilitator with the Anti-Racism Project. Ms. Ali has published numerous pieces with CSIS, Inkstick Media, Business Insider, and Medium on DEI and national security topics. She has participated in dozens of panels, lectures, and conferences throughout the United States. Ms. Ali is a ’22 ICAP fellow. She holds an MA in contemporary Arab studies with highest honors from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and a BA in international relations and communications summa cum laude from Drury University. She speaks French, Arabic, and Spanish.

Candice Helton // Senior Communications Advisor for Policy, Planning, and Public Diplomacy, Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues, U.S. Department of State

Ms. Helton serves as the Senior Communications Advisor for Policy, Planning, and Public Diplomacy for the Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues at the U.S. Department of State. Before this role, Ms. Helton was the Public Affairs Specialist for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. As a tenured government employee, she began her federal service at 16 and will have served a decade in service before age 30. Her passion for communications overlaps with her volunteer commitments. She is a member of Washington Women in Public Relations, Toastmasters Public Speaking Club, and the Thursday Network chapter of the National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP). Candice received her BS in Mass Communications from Winston-Salem State University and her MA in Strategic Communication and Public Relations from Trinity Washington University.
Andrew Herrmann // Division Chief of Strategic Workforce Planning, U.S. State Department

Mr. Herrmann is the Division Chief of Strategic Workforce Planning, overseeing the Department of State’s IT human capital development. He previously served in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Jakarta, Indonesia, and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Prior to joining the Department of State, he worked in the private sector as a Software Engineer at GE, JP Morgan Chase, and Credit Suisse. He holds a master’s degree in Computer Science from the University of North Carolina and an Undergraduate Degree in Graphic Design from Appalachian State University. He speaks fluent Japanese and less-fluent Russian.

Darion K. Akins // Diplomat-in-Residence for DC, US Department of State

Mr. Akins is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service class of counselors currently serving as the Diplomat-in-Residence (DIR) for the District of Columbia (D.C.) Metro area. Before this assignment, he served as the Consul General for Northern Germany at U.S. Consulate General Hamburg. He served in Malaysia, India, Afghanistan, Australia, and Indonesia. After earning a master’s degree in national security strategy at the National War College in Washington, D.C., he served as the Human Resources Division Chief in the Executive Office for European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) and International Organizations (IO). Prior to joining the foreign service, he was an educator and a Peace Corps Volunteer. He solidified his Lone Star State status after graduating from Texas A&M University in College Station with a bachelor of science degree in political science and management. His languages are German, Japanese, and Nyanja.

Gillian Apfel // Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

Gillian Apfel is the Country Fraud Prevention Coordinator for Mission Italy, working from Embassy Rome. Her first assignment was a consular tour in Kingston, followed by a rotation as Human Rights Officer and Immigrant Visa Chief in Bangkok. Gillian has served as the Refugee Coordinator for Admissions in Baghdad and the American Citizens Services Chief in Vancouver. Domestically she has worked in Crisis Management Training at FSI and Crisis Management Support in the Operations Center, as well as the CA LNA Coordinator in HR/CDA. She has served as an EEO Counselor since 2009. Gillian is a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School. Before joining the Foreign Service in 2006, she practiced law in Seattle as a corporate litigator and worked for the International Rescue Committee, assisting refugees, asylees, and victims of human trafficking. She loves her Foreign Service lifestyle even more now that she shares it with her tandem spouse, stepdaughters, and son. A native New Yorker, Gillian’s Judaism, commitment to Tikkun Olam (the fixing of the world), and social justice are central to her identity. She looks forward to further connecting the Foreign Service and the Jewish-American community during her upcoming year as a Una Chapman Cox Foundation Sabbatical Fellow.
Hermes Grullon // Watch Officer, Operations Center, Executive Secretariat, U.S. Department of State

Hermes Grullon is a U.S. Foreign Service Officer since June 2015. A Political Officer in the U.S. mission to the OAS, he will transition in June to be a FSI Orientation Deputy Course Coordinator. Prior assignments include serving as a Watch Officer in the Operations Center from 2020 to 2021; a Consular Officer/Acting Deputy Consul General in Embassy Managua from 2018 to 2020; and the Political Section Chief in Embassy Djibouti from 2016 and 2018. Additionally, he is now the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association president and an adviser to HECFAA. An alumni of several Department-funded programs, he was a Gilman Scholar; Rangel Scholar; Pickering Fellow; and International Career Advancement Program Fellow. A first-generation college student, he completed his BA at DePauw University in Indiana and MA at Johns Hopkins SAIS, while also completing coursework at Howard University. He is from Brooklyn, New York, born to parents from the Dominican Republic. He is married with two children under three-years-old. He is also an active member of La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Incorporated.

James J. Shea // Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

James J. Shea is a career Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State. He joined the Foreign Service in 2010 and has served at the U.S. Consulate in Monterrey, Mexico, and the U.S. Embassy in Yangon, Myanmar; Canberra, Australia; and Islamabad, Pakistan. His most recent assignment was with the Department’s Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs where he worked on the Philippines Desk. He is currently learning Thai in preparation for his next assignment in Bangkok, Thailand.

In addition, James is a member of the board of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association (AAFAA) at the Department. He participated in the International Career Advancement Program (ICAP) in 2021. ICAP is a professional development and leadership program for mid-career professionals in international affairs in the United States, sponsored by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver and by the Aspen Institute. James was included in Out in National Security’s 2022 Out Leaders List of LGBTQIA+ experts in U.S. national security and foreign policy. He is also the recipient of Superior Honor Awards and Meritorious Honor Awards at the Department.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, James worked in the private sector on trade and investment issues. He received his Master’s in International Economics from The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and his B.A. in International Relations from The Johns Hopkins University. James is proud of his mixed heritage, was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, and grew up in Asia, Latin America, and the United States. He is part of a proud lineage in his family of U.S. diplomats and foreign policy practitioners.
**PreSENTERS & PANEliSTs (continued)**

**Gaïna Dávila // Policy Coordinator for Africa, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State**

Gaïna Dávila joined the State Department in 2014, and has since served in Washington D.C., Bangladesh, and the Eastern Caribbean. Most recently, she worked as the Public Affairs Officer at Embassy Conakry in Guinea and now serves as the Policy Advisor for Africa in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Prior to joining the State Department, she served as the Communications Director for Haiti in Transition (H.i.T), a non-profit organization that aimed to develop sustainable means of empowering Haiti’s youth and future leaders. Gaïna is also the co-founder of Davila Kafe, a specialty coffee company. She holds a bachelor’s degree in foreign policy and a master’s degree in international communications from American University. Gaïna speaks French, Haitian-Creole, and Spanish. She is currently based in Washington D.C. with her husband and son.

**Janina Talamayan // Program Coordinator for Undergraduate Programs, Elliott School of International Affairs**

Janina Talamayan is the Program Coordinator for Undergraduate Programs at the Elliott School of International Affairs. She received her B.S. in Diplomacy and International Relations from Seton Hall University, where she also majored in Modern Languages (Spanish & French) and Philosophy. In the Fall of 2018, Janina became the St. John Paul II Fellow for the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. She was assigned to the Second Committee of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council during her term. Janina is currently a Master of Public Administration candidate at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy & Public Administration at GW and specializes in Sustainable Development.

**Michael Shirima // Founder and Chairman, Precision Air**

Mr. Michael Shirima is an Aircraft Performance Engineer and Evaluation by Profession. He worked for 11 Years in Nairobi, Kenya, at the now-defunct East African Airways (EAA). In 1977 he joined the task force established by Tanzania Government to set up the National Airline, Air Tanzania Corporation (ATC), and was appointed its first Operations Director. He resigned in 1979 and traded internationally in coffee. He founded Precision Flight (Africa) Limited, a crop dusting company, in 1986 and Precision Air Services (Precision air) in 1993. He has extensive Boardroom experience: Board member of The Bank of Tanzania (BOT), Chairman of Tanzania Golf Union, the current Chairman of the Boards of Precision Air and TOL Gases, both listed companies in the DSE, Board member of I&M Bank (T) Ltd and Tanzania Assurance Co. Ltd. He established an orphanage, Cornel Ngaleku Children Centre (CNCC) located at his home village in Rombo Kilimanjaro Region. Mr. Shirima is the author of “On My Father’s Wings: An Entrepreneurial Journey of Finding Humility, Resiliency, and a Lasting Legacy.” In this candid and riveting memoir, Mr. Shirima reflects on the value of taking risks; being kind to everyone no matter what age, race, status, or gender they are; and never losing sight of what’s most important in life. This book’s profits will be donated to Mr. Shirima’s orphanage, CNCC.

**Malerie Gamblin, M. Ed. // Assistant Director for Undergraduate Academic Advising & Operations, the Elliott School of International Affairs**

Malerie has been an advocate for all students for many years. As a DMV native, she has worked with students from Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia, focusing on youth who may be considered “at-risk” for not completing their college degrees. Her advocacy for students did not stop in the DMV. Before serving at George Washington University, Malerie worked with Princeton University’s first Dean for Diversity & Inclusion to design a framework to incorporate best practices relating to DEI into all departments to create a supportive and welcoming environment for all students. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the College of William & Mary and her Master of Education from the University of Virginia, where she specialized in educational research design, college student development, cultural values, and implicit and explicit bias. Malerie is passionate about sharing her knowledge of cultural competency and cognitive function related to unconscious bias to continue to advocate for all students.
PRESENTERS & PANELISTS (continued)

Prajna Naidoo // B.A. Candidate, Elliott School of International Affairs
Prajna is an Elliott School Dean’s Scholar candidate pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs with a concentration in International Development and a minor in Psychology. Her research interests focus on cultivating migrant and refugee small business development opportunities through non-profit incubator strategies in Cape Town, South Africa. She has worked for various nonprofits to foster equitable and inclusive growth for marginalized communities that face challenges ranging from discriminatory policing and low-income housing to refugee education, employment, and entrepreneurship. She hopes to pursue a career in consulting where she can gain in-depth sector knowledge and skills to assist her in achieving her long-term goal of ethically localizing International Development aid.

Victoria Freire // B.A. Candidate, Elliott School of International Affairs
Victoria Freire is studying International Affairs and History with a concentration in Latin America. Her primary academic interest is Latin American Cold War History, particularly in declassification diplomacy, intelligence, and guerrilla warfare. Her Dean’s Scholars research project investigates Operation Condor and the extent to which the U.S. government aided the Argentine military junta during the Dirty War. Outside of her studies, Victoria is actively involved in environmental advocacy work, particularly with Sunrise Movement, which aims to stop climate change and create millions of good-paying jobs.

Arzina Lakhani // B.A. Candidate & B.S. Candidate, Elliott School of International Affairs, Milken School of Public Health
Arzina Lakhani is a fourth-year student at George Washington University with a dual degree. She is earning a B.S. in Public Health with a focus on Migration Studies and a B.A. in International Affairs with a concentration in International Development. Lakhani has conducted a two-year intensive research study through a postcolonial feminist lens that analyzes the intersection of climate change and migration within Hyderabad, India, and the role of the Indian government in mitigating these effects. Her passion for policy and climate change fundamentally resides in resilience, accessibility, and equity. Currently, Lakhani is an intern for Climate Resilience Team at the Council on Environmental Policy at the White House. Previously, Lakhani has interned with The American Civil Liberties Union, NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri, Doha Debates, and several political campaigns.

Adedasola Adeniyi // B.A. Candidate, Elliott School of International Affairs
Adedasola Adeniyi is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs, with a concentration in International Development and a minor in Economics. At GWU, she co-founded the GW African Development Initiative and worked as an Economics Learning Assistant. She has interned with the Office of Africa, Global Markets at the International Trade Administration. She has worked with development programs in Africa through HYBR, Doing Good Work in Africa (DOWA), and the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM). Her research compares the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and China Development Bank (CDB) financial activities and examines their development impacts in Kenya.
Melissa Jane Taylor, Ph.D. // Historian, US Department of State; International Affairs Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

Dr. Taylor is currently a visiting scholar at the Elliott School and a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow. During her fellowship year, she is researching the history of diversity in the Foreign Service. While not on fellowship, Taylor’s institutional home is the Office of the Historian at the Department of State, where her portfolio concentrates on the institutional history of the Department. A historian of modern Europe by training, Taylor’s research focuses on the interaction between U.S. consular officers in Europe and European Jewish refugees seeking immigration visas to the United States immediately prior to the Holocaust. These two different research bodies highlight Taylor’s overarching interest in the interaction between the U.S. government and the public it serves. Her research has been published in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Diplomatic History, Journal of Social History, and International History Review. Taylor received her B.A. from Presbyterian College and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina.

Laila F. Sorurbakhsh, Ph.D. // Assistant Dean of Academic Programs and Director of Online Education, Elliott School of International Affairs

Dr. Sorurbakhsh currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Academic Programs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, where she manages and supervises the academic curriculum of the Elliott School. She is also responsible for managing the course calendar and the skill seminars. Dr. Sorurbakhsh also serves as an Assistant Professor of International Affairs at the Elliott School and as the Director of Online Education. Laila Sorurbakhsh received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Houston with specializations in Comparative Politics, American Politics, and Quantitative Methods. Her dissertation, entitled “Feedback in the EU Advocacy System,” studies how institutional, environmental, and structural changes in the European Union have impacted interest group populations via their levels of competitiveness and survivability.

William Youmans, Ph.D., JD // Director of the M.A. in Global Communication, Elliott School of International; Associate Professor of Media and Public Affairs, School of Media and Public Affairs

William Lafl Youmans is an associate professor at the George Washington University’s School of Media and Public Affairs. He is interested in questions of transnationalism, power and communication; his primary research interests include global news, law, and politics. His other research areas include terrorism, American international broadcasting, Middle East politics, and Arab-American studies. Dr. Youmans is the author of “Unlikely Audience: Al Jazeera’s Struggle in America” (Oxford UP, 2017), about the Qatari news network’s efforts to gain a share of the news market in the United States. His paper on CIA recruitment in Arab Detroit won the 2013 Best Paper award in the International Communication Section of the International Studies Association. It was published in early 2017 in The Communication Review. Dr. Youmas holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Michigan, a J.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in Communications Studies from the University of Michigan.

Sarah Squire // Director, Undergraduate Academic Advising, Elliott School of International Affairs

Sarah Squire is the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising at the Elliott School of International Affairs. Sarah has rejoined GW after spending several years at George Mason University as the Academic Advising Coordinator within the Office of the Provost. In that role, Sarah assisted in establishing the Office of Academic Advising, which was responsible for advocating for academic advising, advisor recognition, and enhancing the quality and consistency of the academic advising student experience across the George Mason campus. In addition, she led the initiative to create the Academic Advisor Onboarding Training program required for all new academic advisors and oversaw advising services for Exploratory students. Sarah earned her BA from the University of Texas at Austin, majoring in Psychology and a minor in Business. She earned her MA from the University of Virginia in Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education.
Alexa Alice Joubin, Ph.D. // Professor of English, Co-director of the Digital Humanities Institute, Director of the Dean’s Scholars in Shakespeare

Dr. Alexa Alice Joubin is an award-winning writer and educator specializing in race, gender, and film and performance studies. Dr. Joubin teaches and writes about cultural globalization and arts and humanities in the context of international affairs. At GW, she is also affiliated with the Sigur Center for Asian Studies. Part of her work focuses on racial and national histories that connect imaginative writing to performances on stage and screen. For example, her latest book, Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation, co-edited with Elizabeth Rivlin (Palgrave, 2014), explores the question of ethics in the global appropriation of Shakespeare and local cultures. In 2022, she received GW’s Trachtenberg Research Prize and a Writing in the Discipline (WID) teaching award.

“We are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive community with a particular focus on the impact of inclusion in international affairs. We recognize that diversity and social mobility are considered among our country’s greatest assets.”

- Alyssa Ayres
  Dean, Elliott School of International Affairs
IE WEEK ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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