



SPIA Community February Update

Dear SPIA Students, Faculty and Staff:

Hope you had a wonderful time in the month of February. As you can see from the stories below, SPIA faculty and students continue to do remarkable work.

The big event in March is the Giving Day scheduled for March 18-19. Giving Day is mostly a digital campaign that is conducted at the university level with all of us acting as ambassadors and lifting up VT SPIA. I want to encourage everyone to consider giving a gift to the school. Gifts of any size can have a positive impact on SPIA as they help propel our mission of helping students and developing dedicated scholars who are prepared to address global challenges. There is also the opportunity to serve as [a SPIA ambassador for Giving Day.](#)

With gratitude,
Mehrzaad Boroujerdi
Director, VT SPIA

Support SPIA

When making a contribution for Giving Day, please select:

Select an area:

College of Architecture & Urban Studies

Select a fund:

School of Public and International Affairs Annual Fund

Faculty & Student News

Huyen Le (Ph.D., Planning, 2019) is the recipient of CAUS Outstanding Dissertation award and her dissertation has been nominated for VT Outstanding Dissertation. [Dr. Le](#) is currently an assistant professor of Geography at Ohio State University.

Sezaneh Seymour (PGG) successfully defended her dissertation entitled "What Factors are Associated with Multilateral Environmental Agreement Noncompliance, and can Agreement Provisions be Designed to Mitigate them?" on February 11, 2020. Dr. Seymour is currently a senior policy advisor on Europe at the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Congratulations to Dr. Le and Dr. Seymour!

Know SPIA alumni who should be recognized for their achievements and service? Nomination submissions for outstanding undergraduate alum and outstanding graduate alum for the [VT SPIA Hall of Fame](#) have been extended to **March 18**. The criteria on which SPIA's Alumni Council will evaluate the nominations can be found on the [form to nominate](#).

Professor Ariel Ahram (GIA) has been [named](#) a (non-resident) research associate of the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg, one of the premier European think tanks for the year 2020. He will be working with them on projects related to Middle East politics and ways to leverage cross-regional comparisons to improve social science.

Professor Mehrzad Boroujerdi was quoted in the Swiss magazine "Republik" in an [article](#) about Iran's 2020 parliamentary election. Professor Ralph Buhler's work on why are kids riding bikes less was covered in a Huffington Post [article](#).

Professor Steve Hankey became the first SPIA faculty member to receive an [NSF Career grant](#). Dr. Hankey received this \$500,000 grant for a proposal entitled Leveraging mobile monitoring, low cost sensors, and Google Street View imagery to identify and modify street-level determinants of exposure to particular air pollution. Congratulation Steve.

Professor Shalini Misra (UAP) delivered a keynote lecture on the "Ecology of Team Science" at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico on February 8, 2020. This research symposium was attended by university leaders from colleges and schools of pharmacy interested in maximizing their institution's potential to support and sustain high-impact research. Meanwhile, Shalini's research on the interpersonal impacts of smartphones continues to be cited in national and international news outlets. Recent media mentions include: [Medium](#), [Gigazine](#), and [The Conversation](#). The issue of smartphone distractions was a part of [Pope Francis' New Year speech to devotees](#).

Staff News

Georgeta Pourchot has been teaching for SPIA for the past ten years and in the last five, she took on additional administrative responsibilities doing recruitment, alumni relations, building and maintaining databases, talking to each prospective student and guiding them to a SPIA program.



In the last four years, she started and managed the International Refugee Research Project that brings together scholars, students and alumni, policy experts, and refugee service agencies from the US, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Greece, and Jordan, in seeking to impact how policy on refugees is made and implemented. Her swan song is an international conference on refugee integration to be held in Jordan in April. Georgeta will be departing from SPIA in May and she will be moving on to other things. We wish her smooth sailing and thank her for her many contributions to the well-being of SPIA.

Events



SPIA, the Office of the Vice President for Strategic Alliances, Hume Center for National Security and Technology and VT Applied and VT Applied Research Corporation (VTARC) have decided to cooperate

with one another in the area of national security in the Washington Metropolitan Area. **Faculty and staff from each of these units are invited to a weekly coffee gathering on Wednesdays at 2 pm in the SPIA kitchen area in Arlington.**



EXPERT PANEL ISRAEL, TRUMP & THE 'DEAL OF THE CENTURY'

MARCH 24, 2020 || 7:00 - 9:00 PM
900 N. GLEBE RD, ARLINGTON, VA 22203
ACCESSIBLE BY BALLSTON METRO



**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**
VIRGINIA TECH.

On Tuesday 24 March 2020, 7 to 9 pm, SPIA will host an expert panel discussion on **“Israel, Trump & The ‘Deal of the Century’”** at the Virginia Tech Research Center, 900 N. Glebe Rd, Arlington. The panel will be moderated by Professor Joel Peters and will consist of:

- David Newman, Dept of Politics and Government, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel
- Eugene Finkel, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)
- Moein Odeh, George Mason University
- Sarah Yerkes, Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

RSVP



DID YOU KNOW? Editorial operations for the scholarly journal [Administration & Society \(AAS\)](#) have been housed in the Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) in SPIA for over 40 years. Professor Emeritus Gary Wamsley, first CPAP director, brought the journal to Virginia Tech and raised its profile significantly over the course of his long tenure as editor. The editor of A&S since 2015 is CPAP Professor Emeritus Brian Cook.

AAS is widely respected not only in the United States but across the globe, with scholars from more than 25 nations publishing in the journal in just the past three years. The journal receives more than 400 new and revised manuscripts annually.

Program Update

Washington Semester in Global Engagement

The students in the Washington Semester in Global Engagement's Diplomacy Lab welcomed Mr. Avedis Seferian, President and CEO of Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), a non-profit organization that works on global social compliance in apparel manufacturing. Since the project students are developing in coordination with the State Department this semester deals with the intersection of

human rights and corporate practices, it was particularly informative to hear Mr. Seferian's insights on how the apparel sector pushed forward corporate social responsibility within the framework of ethical concerns and risk and reputation management starting in the early 1990s as brands began to outsource their manufacturing production. Students and Faculty joined for a group picture at the end of the day.



Local Government Management

Students from across the Commonwealth attended the Annual Virginia Local Government Management Association conference in Charlottesville, VA on February 13th. Virginia Tech had over 20 students in attendance from the Local Government Certificate Program, the MPA program and one student from the SPIA Undergraduate Program.

