



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

SPIA Community June Update

Dear SPIA Students, Faculty and Staff:

As you can see from the list of activities below, the arrival of summer did not diminish the outstanding performance of SPIA students, faculty, and alumni. Publishing academic articles, winning awards, and educating the public were some of the ways they contributed during the month of June.

In response to [adapting classrooms due to the COVID-19 crisis](#), behind the scenes, the faculty have been busy deciding what mode of instruction to use in delivering Fall courses. Based on their pedagogical preferences, some have decided to return to face-to-face teaching while most have opted for online (synchronous or asynchronous) or hybrid modes. Over the next couple of months, they will deliberate on how to support our students whether in the in-person or digital setting. Regardless of the delivery mode, our commitment to excellence continues. We will work to sustain the spirit of solidarity that we all experienced last semester when we had to switch to online teaching in a matter of days.

June 30 is the last day of work for Krystal Wright who is retiring after serving the school for decades. I wish her a fantastic retirement and express my heartfelt thanks for all that she has done for SPIA.

Starting this month, I will also be sharing with you links to worthy articles that I have come across in a section entitled "Worth Pondering." I encourage you all to send me what you find interesting to share as well.

Enjoy your needed summer downtime to recharge your batteries. More importantly, please stay safe.

Sincerely,
Mehrzad Boroujerdi
Director, VT SPIA

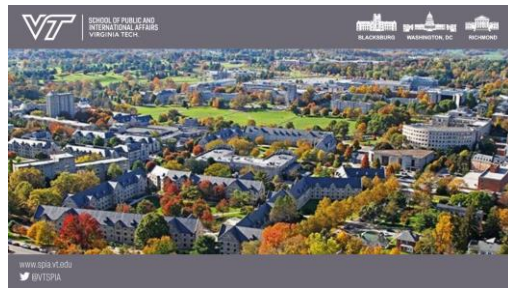
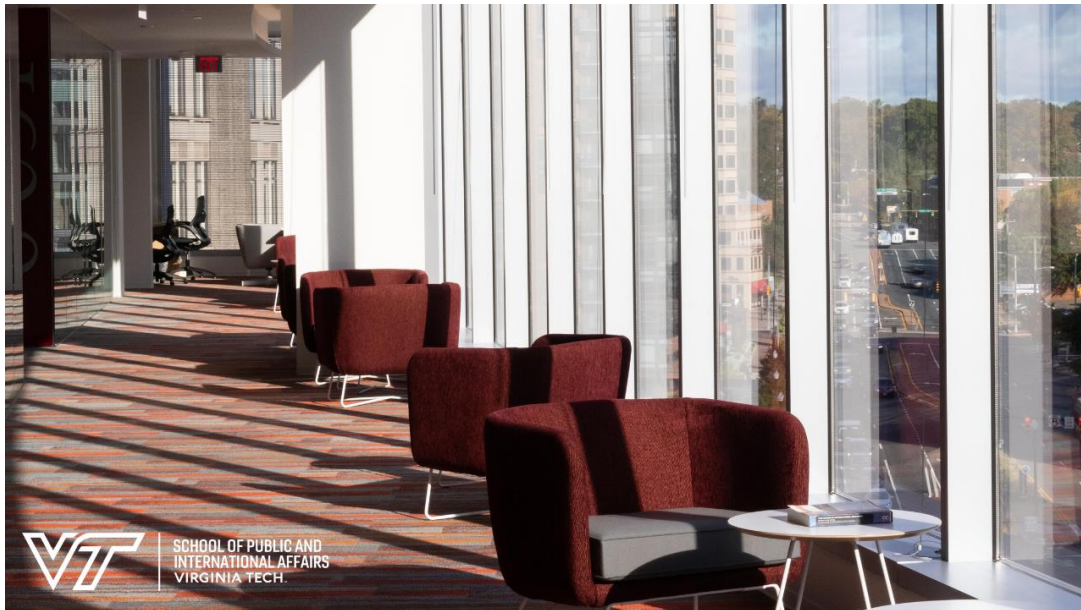
Fall 2020 Courses

To help with planning for your Fall 2020 classes, the tentative list of undergraduate and graduate courses offered by SPIA is now available.

[See Fall 2020 Courses](#)

SPIA Zoom Virtual Backgrounds

Given the number of virtual meetings we have, why not put a little bit of SPIA spin on it? [Click here](#) to access SPIA Zoom virtual backgrounds.



Faculty & Student News

Nada Berrada (Ph.D. Candidate, [Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought](#)) won the Middle East Children's and Youth Studies (AMECYS) graduate student paper prize for her paper entitled "Tournament of Youth Narratives in the MENA Region: Consequences and New Alter-Narratives."

Luis Felipe Camacho Carvajal (PGG) successfully defended his PhD dissertation entitled “Technology, Participatory Management Practices (PMP), and Dignity at Work: Negotiating the Use of Technology in a Plastic Packaging Firm.”

Maggie Cowell (Associate Professor, UAP) moderated a virtual community conversation on economic resilience and responses to COVID-19 on June 23 as part of the [Vibrant Virginia](#) initiative.

Ralph Hall (Associate professor, UAP) and Jessica Agnew (PGG) along with colleagues in the Center for International Research, Education and Development at Virginia Tech, [Egerton University](#) (Kenya), and [AgUnity](#) have received a \$240,000 USAID grant (of which \$104,000 will come to VT) for a project entitled “Exploring the Use of Blockchain Technology to Improve Food Security Through African Indigenous Vegetables in Western Kenya.”

Shukriya Mahmood (Ph.D. candidate, PGG) published an op-ed piece in the Jerusalem Post entitled “[The Longer Erdogan is in power, the more Turkey looks like Iran.](#)”

Gabriel Mitchell (Ph.D. candidate, PGG) published “[COVID-19 Put the Eastern Mediterranean’s Hydrocarbon Dream on Hold,](#)” War on the Rocks (June 15, 2020).

Todd Schenk (Assistant Professor, UAP) [commented](#) on the work of the [Climate Action Commitment](#) revision working group of which he is the vice chair.

Stephanie Smith (Associate Professor, CPAP) received a \$23,000 grant from VT Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment ([ISCE](#)) for a project entitled “Unpacking the Global Health Agenda: Civil Society Priorities and Their Measurement,” 2020-2021. As a global health policy expert, Stephanie also led a webinar on June 25 dedicated to understanding how COVID-19 is impacting global health priorities and how people can help.

Max Stephenson Jr. (Professor, UAP), **Beng Abella-Lipse**, **Lara Nagle**, and **Neda Moayerian** published “[Community Social Polarization and Change: Evidence from Three Recent Studies,](#)” World 1, 2 (2020).

Max Stephenson Jr. and **Laura Zanotti** published “Tacit knowledge, cultural values and agential possibility in rural Haiti,” Community Development Journal (2020).

Lacy Watson (continuing Ph.D. student, PGG) won the Democratic primary congressional race in West Virginia in June and became the first African American to accomplish this feat.



GIA 6124: Topics in Security Studies: Experts, Information & U.S. Politics

SPECIAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

- SUMMER SEMESTER II: BEGINS JULY 8
- FULLY ONLINE: LIVE + ASYNCHRONOUS
- FURTHER YOUR RESEARCH

Special research seminar for Summer Semester II (July 8-August 14): Explore the role of experts and information in U.S. politics. The course is listed under **GIA 6124: Topics in Security Studies**. Learn more [here](#).

Worth Pondering

- [Diversity and Inclusion Are Not Enough](#)
- [Doctoral Dysfunction](#)
- [How I'm Spending My Pandemic Summer Vacation](#)

Alumni News

Carl Ciovacco (PhD, 2018) published "[The Shaping of Threat Through Narration](#)," Journal of Strategic Security 13, no. 2 (2019): 48-63.

Jake Keyel (PhD., PGG, 2019) published "[Encountering and processing secondary traumatic stress during qualitative interviews with displaced Iraqis: a research note](#)," Qualitative Research, June 2020.

Kristin Rader Owen (MURP, 2014) [received](#) FEMA's 2019 Innovation/Project Award for her many contributions to floodplain management as the acting national Flood Insurance Program Coordinator for Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

