



Annual Report

2019-2020

Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy

In the Faculty of Arts and Sciences



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Directors' Letter of Introduction

This past year has been a difficult one for Columbia and indeed for all universities. Not surprisingly, ISERP was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed the way we live, work, teach, and conduct research. The 2019-20 year began normally and ISERP supported an array of activities both directly and through the block grants that it provides to the social science departments. When the enormity of the COVID-19 epidemic became clear in the spring, compounding an already difficult fiscal situation, we took steps to protect the health of the social science community and assure the continuation of the core mission of the Arts & Sciences. This included reducing ISERP-sponsored activities or postponing them to a future time when they can be done safely as in-person events. However, despite the new budget challenges, and the limitations on physical interaction, ISERP continued to provide its administrative services, its academic programming, and its support for activities organized within the social science departments. ISERP also launched new initiatives to support research and education to respond to the crisis. And we celebrated a number of important developments that sustain our momentum as we strive to enhance what is already a thriving intellectual community in the social sciences at Columbia. We give a short summary of our recent activity in this letter, and then provide greater information about these and other ISERP activities in the following pages of this annual report.

AAADS

The creation of a new social science department at Columbia is one of the most important developments of the past year, and this new development expands the mission of ISERP. The new department of African-American and African Diaspora Studies is further highlighted on [page 16](#).

They join the other five social science departments as core ISERP clients. A representative from AAADS now sits on the ISERP executive committee. AAADS receives a block grant from ISERP to support programming. AAADS faculty are eligible to apply for seed grant and conference support. They will utilize the grants administration services of ISERP and are eligible to use ISERP's research space. We are excited by the opportunities for new initiatives that we expect will emerge from ISERP in cooperation with AAADS and the other social science departments in the coming years.

Grant Administration

The number and size of grants that ISERP administers continues to climb. In FY20, ISERP helped faculty obtain 34 new grants, more than in FY19. In FY20 we managed 101 active grants, compared to 68 in FY14, a 48% increase. Altogether, ISERP is now managing grants that total \$27,691,443 dollars, with \$8,533,756 in government grants and \$19,157,687 in private grants. This represents a 27% increase just in the past year.

In the last fiscal year, ISERP assisted with the submission of 82 grant proposals to 25 government agencies, foreign institutions, and private foundations. ISERP's work resulted in 34 grants awarded by 18 sponsors in FY20. Awarded projects include faculty research, grants supporting doctoral student dissertations, and funding for convening scholars, and practitioners. In FY20, Columbia joined a consortium of prestigious universities participating in the Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics. ISERP has now administered Weiss grants led by researchers in Economics, Political Science, and SIPA.

ISERP also continues to provide administrative support for several larger scale research projects at Columbia. These include the Applied Statistics Center, the Tutoring and Learning Center, and the Justice Lab, all of which receive considerable support from government and foundation grants.

QMSS

The QMSS program continues to thrive under the leadership of Greg Eirich. QMSS started fall 2019 with its largest cohort of students (126) and largest number of applicants to date (over 600). Reflecting a strong interdisciplinary spirit, QMSS students took over 125 unique courses last year from dozens of departments and schools. At the same time, QMSS elective courses have become quite valuable to the larger Columbia community. Approximately 1 in 3 students in QMSS elective courses are drawn from the masters and Ph.D. programs of other Columbia departments and institutes. Moreover, the QMSS Research Assistant program supported over 30 faculty research projects on a great variety of topics, even after those projects went virtual in the Spring.

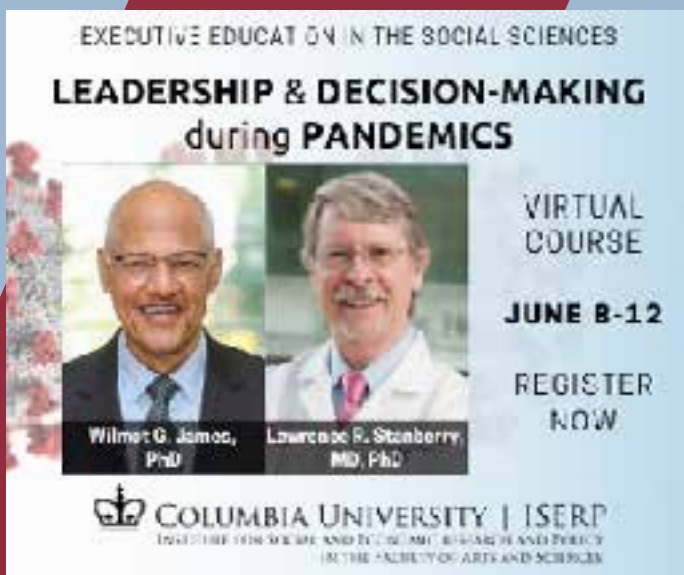
QMSS continues to build strategic relationships across the university and beyond. These initiatives include: (1) the Center for Public Research and Leadership, where QMSS students work with education and public sector organizations to improve education and public policy, (2) the Data Science Institute Working Group on Data Science Education, and (3) the Consortium on Analytics for Data-Driven Decision-Making (CAnd3), based at McGill University. QMSS has joined a massive new international initiative, which includes Oxford, the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany, and several Canadian universities headed by McGill to provide training in data sciences for demographic research.

QMSS Anniversary Celebration



After the pandemic changed life at Columbia in the spring, QMSS made it a priority to still find ways to build and maintain our unique community. During the height of the pandemic, QMSS established the QMSS Innovation Lab, with the goals of generating bold ideas, providing an interdisciplinary perspective, developing valuable methods and processes, and working with data for the public good. QMSS was also able to hold a very moving virtual graduation ceremony in May.

Alongside all these new initiatives, QMSS celebrated its 20th anniversary last fall with a well-attended party along with food, drink, and a new video. The video depicts the QMSS experience, showing how students obtain state of the art training in both classical methods as well as the latest approaches in spatial analysis, data science, network analysis, and other fast advancing topics. In this way, QMSS has prepared students for rewarding careers in a variety of business, non-profit, and academic settings.



Center for Pandemic Research

ISERP supports academic ventures that may generate considerable activity for a delimited period of time and that sometimes have the potential to grow into sustained intellectual activities at Columbia. The most recent initiative is the creation of the Center for Pandemic Research led by Wilmot James. ISERP started this center in the spring of 2020 to coordinate new work by Columbia social scientists on COVID-19. The first major initiative of the new center was a week-long online course on “Leadership and Decision-Making during Pandemics,” which took place under the leadership of Wilmot James and Lawrence Stanberry last June. It featured many high profile speakers, including

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Mayor Jenny Durkan of Seattle.

ISERP also issued a new round of pandemic-related seed grant funding jointly with the Columbia Population Research Center. Most recently, we announced a competition for a new round of seed grant funding for research that addresses the topic of Countering Vaccine Hesitancy and Scientific Misinformation. We expect to award a new round of seed grants on this topic in the fall semester. We hope this research will lead to important insights that strengthen the hand of science and that improve the efficacy of vaccine therapies in our ongoing struggle against the pandemic.

Conferences

The Institute sponsored nine conferences that took place before March of 2020. Later in the spring of 2020, ISERP also sponsored two virtual conferences. We funded six additional conferences for FY20 which have all been postponed to FY21 because of the COVID pandemic.

Seed Grants

In FY20, ISERP awarded five seed grants in its biannual seed grant competition: “Imprecision: The Politics of Precision Medicine,” to Gil Eyal in Sociology, “Underemployment and Racial/Ethnic Inequality among College Graduates” to Yao Lu in Sociology, “Randomizing Tips to China’s Environmental Inspectors” to Douglas Almond in Economics and SIPA, “Improving the Incentives of Anticorruption Auditors” to Paul Lagunes in SIPA, and “Transforming the City: A pilot study of street-level regulation in building and construction” to Joshua Whitford in Sociology

Thematic Workshops

ISERP sponsored two new thematic workshops in FY20: “Digital Mapping and Discourses of Space and Place,” led by Mae Ngai, and “Diversifying the Social Sciences: The Women in Economics Working Group,” led by Sandra Black. We also provided support for four workshops that had begun in FY19 to continue for a second year in FY20. Finally, we awarded 3 new workshops that were scheduled to begin activity in FY21. All of our ongoing workshops transitioned to virtual meetings after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A&S Book Series

In FY20, ISERP sponsored the celebration of five new books published by social science faculty at Columbia, namely Nara B. Milanich, Breandan O’Flaherty and Rajiv Sethi, Gil Eyal, Stephanie McCurry, and Rashid Khalidi. The events attracted audiences as large as 100 people and included a set of distinguished speakers including Harvard President Emeritus Drew Gilpin Faust.

Book selling at Celebrating Recent Work by Rashid Khalidi





*History as a Data Science
Workshop*

Data Sciences Activities

ISERP continued to co-host the “Data for Good” series that is jointly sponsored with the Data Sciences Institute. In addition, History Lab project manager Raymond Hicks and PI Matthew Connelly led a two-week workshop for historians interested in conducting data-driven research on documents from FOIArchive and other digital archival sources. Workshop participants represented institutions from the U.S. (7), UK (3), and France (1) and a wide range of research specialties, from

international relations and U.S. diplomatic history to modern African and Latin American studies. The group included five current graduate students, three early-career researchers, and three faculty.

In addition, ISERP provided funding for a second new start-up center: “The AI Model Share Project,” which is led by Greg Eirich and Michael Parrott. The mission of the AI Model Share Initiative is to create tools that democratize access to the promise of AI predictive modeling. With support from ISERP in FY20 the Initiative’s team worked to develop a platform that makes prediction models instantly sharable such that anyone around the world can make immediate use of cutting edge prediction models. Through FY21 with additional support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and ISERP the project’s team will continue to expand the platform such that it will serve as both a collaborative tool for rapid model improvement and a repository for model metadata.

ISERP continues to be a repository for helpful information about major activities and opportunities in the social sciences through its web site, the ISERP newsletter, and the ISERP annual report. ISERP typically organizes social events for the social science community several times a year, and we expect to resume such in-person activities once the pandemic is brought under control.

Sincerely,



Matthew Connelly
Co-Director, ISERP
Professor of History

Thomas DiPrete
Co-Director, ISERP
Giddings Professor
of Sociology





Research Development Office

The [Research Development Office \(RDO\)](#) supports investigators in Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology, African American and African Diaspora Studies, and the School of International and Public Affairs.

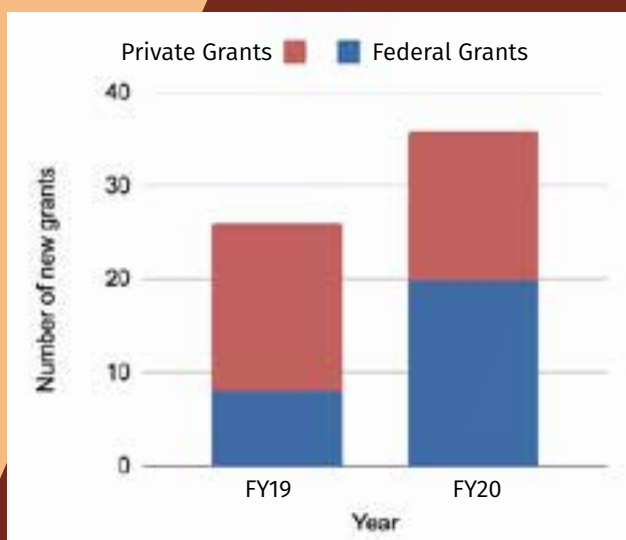
In the last fiscal year, the RDO assisted with the submission of 82 grant proposals to 25 government agencies, foreign institutions, and private foundations.

ISERP's work resulted in 34 grants awarded by 18 sponsors in FY20. Awarded projects include faculty research, grants supporting doctoral student dissertations, and funding for convening scholars and practitioners.

In FY20, Columbia joined a consortium of prestigious universities participating in the Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics. ISERP is pleased to administer Weiss grants led by researchers in Economics, Political Science, and SIPA.

In FY20, ISERP researchers conducted studies involving collaborations with researchers across the United States. To complete their research, ISERP's investigators accessed datasets from a wide range of sources, including private companies and state and federal government agencies.

*Grants awarded to ISERP
researchers, FY19 and FY20*



RDO Outreach

In addition to one-on-one meetings with faculty and students, ISERP participated in activities for larger groups. We hosted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) information session with an official from the Human Research Protection Office and researchers in ISERP's departments.

Seed Grants

Full time faculty in the social sciences and the School of International and Public Affairs are eligible to apply for up to \$30,000 in [seed funding](#) to develop a proposal for an external sponsor. ISERP issued two calls for proposals in FY20 and awarded five seed grants.

“Imprecision: The Politics of Precision Medicine”

Investigator: Gil Eyal

Department: Sociology

“Underemployment and Racial/Ethnic Inequality among College Graduates”

Investigator: Yao Lu

Department: Sociology

“Randomizing Tips to China’s Environmental Inspectors”

Investigator: Douglas Almond

Department: Economics/International and Public Affairs

“Improving the Incentives of Anticorruption Auditors”

Investigator: Paul Lagunes

Department: International and Public Affairs

“Transforming the City: A pilot study of street-level regulation in building and construction”

Investigator: Joshua Whitford

Department: Sociology



External Grants

Partial listing of awards ISERP received in FY20:

“Doctoral Dissertation Research: The Etiquette of Migration: Genealogies of Sudanese Labor in Lebanon”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigators: Naor Ben-Yehoyada and Anna Reumert

“Attacking Networks of Tax Evasion: Theory and Evidence from Paraguay”

Sponsor: Jameel Poverty Action Lab

Investigators: Michael Best and Evan Sadler

“Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections”

Sponsor: Folke Bernadotte Academy

Investigator: Sarah Z. Daly

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Spatial Equilibrium and the Value of Public Transit: Evidence from NYC”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigators: Donald Davis, Lucas Husted, and Vinayak Iyer

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Benefit Disclosure in Financial Choices Online and Field Experiments”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigators: Mark Dean and Han Huynh

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Belief Formation and Choice in Games: An Experiment”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigators: Mark Dean, Duarte Goncalves, and Teresa Esteban

“The reproduction of segregation in U.S. schools”

Sponsor: American Educational Research Association

Investigators: Thomas DiPrete and Benjamin Elbers

“Collaborative Research: Transparency and the Rule of Law: A Field Experiment in Ukraine”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Timothy Frye

“Efficient and flexible tools for complex multilevel and latent variable modeling in education research”

Sponsor: Department of Education

Investigator: Andrew Gelman

“RIDIR: Collaborative Research: Bayesian analytical tools to improve survey estimates for subpopulations and small areas”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Andrew Gelman

“Data-driven Methods for Missing Data Imputation and Surgical Risk Prediction to Reduce Disparities in Joint Arthroplasty”

Sponsor: National Institutes of Health

Investigator: Andrew Gelman

“Scaling Stan”

Sponsor: Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Investigator: Andrew Gelman

“Doctoral Dissertation Research: Identity Theft Remediation and the Production of Economic Insecurity”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Shamus Khan and Jordan Brensinger

“Doctoral Dissertation Research: Forgive us Our Debts: Market Expansion, Ethno-Racial Boundaries, and the Democratization of Bankruptcy”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Shamus Khan and Nicholas Pang

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Behavioral Responses to Taxation of Foreign Personal Income”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Wojciech Kopczuk

“Credibility in Persuasion”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Elliot Lipnowski

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: What’s in a Name? The Effect of Changing Definitions of “Employer” on Worker Outcomes”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Bentley MacLeod and Daniel Deibler

“Doctoral Dissertation Research: On Terror and Trauma: Governance, Law and PTSD in the Wake of the Paris Attacks, November 13, 2015”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Brinkley Messick and Helene Quiniou

“AI Model Share Initiative”

Sponsor: Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Investigator: Michael Parrott

“Support for the Youth Correctional Leaders for Justice”

Sponsor: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Investigator: Vincent Schiraldi

“Gentrification and Political Displacement”

Sponsor: Russell Sage Foundation

Investigator: Yamil Velez

“Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Do Identity Concerns Affect Labor Supply?”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigators: Eric Verhoogen and Suanna Oh

“Investigating the Reciprocal Effect of the Carceral Experience and Individual and Community Health”

Sponsor: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Investigator: Bruce Western

“Square One Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy”

Sponsor: Ford Foundation

Investigator: Bruce Western

“Square One Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy”

Sponsor: Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation

Investigator: Bruce Western

“Implications of Cognitive Limitations on Memory for Economic Behavior”

Sponsor: Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Investigator: Michael Woodford

“Imprecise Inference from Sequentially Presented Evidence”

Sponsor: National Science Foundation

Investigator: Michael Woodford



Faculty Engagement

Welcoming the African American and African Diaspora Studies Department

*Farrah Griffith,
AAADS Dept. Chair*



ISERP welcomes the newest department in the Division of Social Sciences, the [African American and African Diaspora Studies \(AAADS\) Department](#), with a departmental highlight from Chair Dr. Farrah Griffith.

The 2019-2020 academic year was a momentous one for the African American and African Diaspora Studies Department. We started the Fall Semester with *1619 and Its Legacies*: a symposium, roundtable, art exhibition and poetry reading observing the 400th Commemoration of the arrival of Africans in Jamestown, Virginia. The symposium explored the ongoing impact and legacy of chattel slavery and anti-Black Racism. In October we hosted pioneering feminist sociologist and Civil Rights Activist, Joyce Ladner for a three-day residency, which also included a symposium, *Tomorrow's Tomorrow*, named for Dr. Ladner's ground breaking 1970 publication, the first academic book devoted to Black women and girls featuring Professors Dawn Dow, Lakisha Simmons and Salamishah Tillet discussing the impact of Professor Ladner's work on their own. In December 2019, the Department received a \$2 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to elevate and enhance its arts programming. The grant includes funds for an artist-in-residence, a lecture series, a new master's degree, a postdoctoral fellow and a visiting professor. Second semester brought the first annual Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter lecture, featuring a public conversation between Mr. Carter and Columbia's Jelani Cobb. This endowed lecture will bring to our campus, our neighboring community and the City of New York the most innovative thinkers, activists and artists who are making outstanding contributions to our understanding of, and appreciation for, the thought, arts and social movements of the black diaspora. As with everyone else at Columbia, because of the COVID crisis, we had to shift gears and move our classes and some of our programming online. In an effort to address the urgency of the moment, two of our colleagues, Mabel O. Wilson and Samuel K. Roberts created and hosted an innovative podcast, "Black Lives: In the Era of COVID 19." Each episode focused on an aspect of the COVID crisis to discuss, with guests, the impacts of COVID19 on Black life in New York City and beyond.

Faculty Books



Secrets in Global Governance: Disclosure Dilemmas and the Challenge of International Cooperation

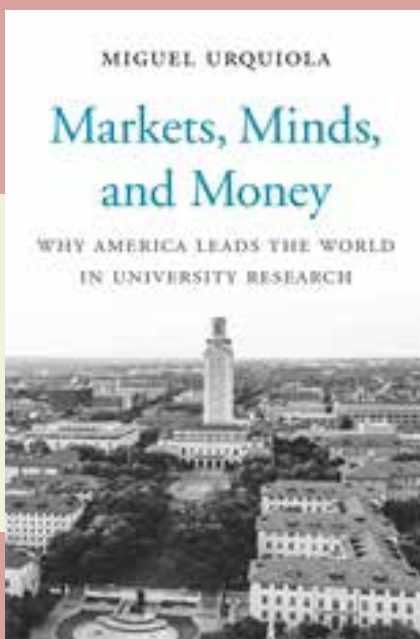
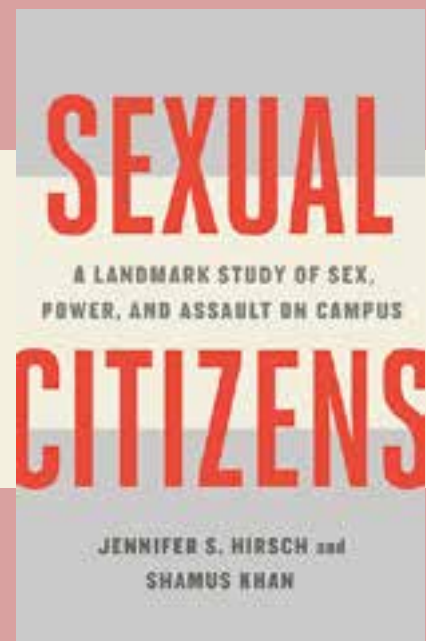
Allison Carnegie, Associate Professor of Political Science, and co-author Austin Carson

[Cambridge University Press](#)

Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus

Jennifer Hirsch, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and Shamus Khan, Professor of Sociology

[W. W. Norton and Company](#)



Markets, Minds, and Money: Why America Leads the World in University Research

Miguel Urquiola, Professor of Economics and Chair, Department of Economics

[Harvard University Press](#)

Faculty Highlights



Sarah Z. Daly

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Dr. Daly led three grants administered through ISERP. Funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Folke Bernadotte Academy supported research on postwar parties and elections. The study examines how parties guilty of violence against the civilian population seek that population's votes and when and why a victimized population would elect its tormentors to govern it. These grants supported fieldwork across Latin America and the Balkans, an original survey of victims and non-victims with embedded experiments in Colombia, natural language processing of social media and party manifestos, and the construction of a new cross-national dataset on all belligerent parties globally that transitioned from war between 1970 and 2015.

Mass migrant flows around the world have led to increasing xenophobia. Researchers use municipal data combined with a survey experiment to understand why individuals reconstruct their identities in response to immigration and when, in particular, nation trumps ethnicity.

The international community advocates and implements transitional justice around the world. However, the underpinnings of transitional justice have not been tested. Specifically, it is unknown whether truth, punishment, and reparations have the desired influence on victims' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors related to politics and reconciliation. With a seed grant from ISERP to support multi-media surveys and focus groups, researchers are exploiting the institutional features of Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace and launching a field experiment to study the causal effects on victims of being 'treated' with transitional justice.

At times, gangs fight bloody turf wars and, at other times, they form truces. Leveraging a change in Wisconsin law that altered gang access to guns in Chicago, researchers apply rationalist bargaining theory to explain variation in gang relations and escalation of violence across 604,296 block-month observations in Chicago as a result of gun deregulation.



Marwa Elshakry

Associate Professor of History

With the help of ISERP workshop funding, Columbia's new Center for the Study of Muslim Societies ([CSMS](#)) helped to organize and host a series of events, workshop series and conferences as well as to activate and realize new academic and artistic collaborations. Formally approved by the university in the summer of 2018, CSMS was conceived and coordinated

by Marwa Elshakry, Manan Ahmed, Kathryn Spellman Poots, Avinoam Shalem and Brinkley Messick as a center for collaborations in innovative and integrated research, programming, teaching and public outreach on Islam and Muslim societies. We organized a range of events in 2019 and 2020, from a conference on Iraqi Studies and another on gender and governance in Islam to discussions of early and modern fiction in Arabic and Urdu as forms of historiographical alterity (see [here](#) for more). We also hosted a virtual music concert last summer, “New Moon Rising: American Muslim Artists Perform” (listen to the playlist [here](#)).

In November 2019, through an ISERP conference funding, Marwa Elshakry and Anupama Rao also organized a two-day conference on “1919: Remaking Worlds” as part of a series of centenary reflections. Working alongside Elleni Centime Zeleke and others, we are currently preparing podcasts, interviews and interactive websites as well as a special issue for the journal on Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East ([CSAAME](#)) to both continue and expand the conversation. To that end, we have invited numerous academics and artists to reflect on the ever-present work of revolutions to “remake worlds” across the globe.

Jennifer Lee

Professor of Sociology

Affirmative action has faced an onslaught of challenges in the past decade from Fisher v. University of Texas (2016) to Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2019) to the Department of Justice’s investigation of Yale. The battle over affirmative action has been ensuing for decades, but only recently have Asian Americans been thrust into the spotlight as the latest victims of the policy who ardently oppose it. Despite their centrality, we know little about their attitudes, and even less about the drivers of their opinion. Jennifer Lee’s research fills this void.

With funding from National Science Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, Lee systematically compares Asian Americans’ attitudes toward affirmative action to those of Whites and Blacks—who have historically evinced the most polarized positions of the policy. Moreover, she draws on a novel framing experiment to test how the “mere mention of Asians” in affirmative action frames affects their support for the policy. She finds that despite the popular rhetoric, Whites (not Asians) are the most opposed to affirmative action. Moreover, Asians’ attitudes are malleable: the mere mention of Asians in an affirmative action frame boosts their support, and especially after they are primed about their past experiences with discrimination.

Disaggregating Asians by nativity and ethnicity reveal significant differences in attitudes. Foreign-born Asians and Chinese Americans express the most ardent to affirmative action, which is assuaged when they perceive Blacks as competent, revealing the conditional nature of their support.



With support from the Social Science Research Council, Lee is extending her research to study the impact of Covid-19 on Asian Americans. In particular, she examines whether Asian Americans' attitudes toward affirmative action have shifted since the outbreak of the coronavirus, and the resultant rise in xenophobia and anti-Asian hate. These experiences may buttress support for affirmative action, particularly among Chinese Americans, and especially when they are primed about Covid-19.



Elliot Lipnowski

Assistant Professor of Economics

Professor Lipnowski and his collaborators have been studying credibility in the provision of expertise, using mathematical models of advised decision making.

One project, with Doron Ravid, traces the limits of informative communication when an expert has a transparent agenda. For instance, a seller may better know which of her various products suits a buyer's needs, but she would benefit from upselling. A channel that Lipnowski and Ravid uncover for credible communication is that an advisor can judiciously degrade the quality of her own advice, keeping any one recommendation from being too appealing. If a seller is less likely to make a sale at all when she recommends the pricier product, she faces a tradeoff that might keep her honest.

In follow-up work, with Doron Ravid and Denis Shishkin, Lipnowski studies institutions whose role is to disseminate information. While many governments commission research (e.g., quantifying inflation) whose results can influence foreign investment, countries may differ in the degree of autonomy such institutions enjoy—their credibility. Lipnowski and his collaborators show “productive mistrust” can occur: Lower credibility may benefit information's consumers. Intuitively, an institution may make its bad news more extreme, to help credibly provide good news; and making bad news more extreme carries useful information.

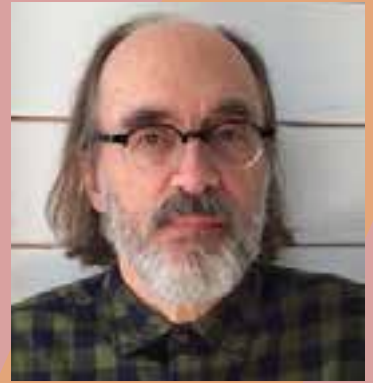
Another project, with Aditya Kuvalekar and João Ramos, asks to what extent an ongoing relationship can lend credibility to expert advice. While an advisor should lose future trust if caught lying, Lipnowski and his collaborators show a sustained relationship can keep an advisor honest even with no possibility of such detection. The reason is simple: The relationship can suffer when the advisor recommends options that tend to personally benefit her. In this sense, different possible recommendations can be “priced” to induce good-faith advice.

Brinkley Messick

Professor of Anthropology and of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies

In 2018, Professor Brinkley Messick published *Shari'a Scripts: A Historical Anthropology* (Columbia University Press), a book about Islamic Law that brings together two categories of written Arabic sources: books of doctrinal jurisprudence, which he refers to as the "library," and handwritten court case records and various types of contracts, which are the "archive." The place in question was highland (formerly North) Yemen and the period the twentieth century, up until the Revolution of 1962. This part of Yemen was not colonized, unlike the former South Yemen, and in his study period had yet to become a nation state, features which made it possible to study a shari'a system that had not gone through the transformations typical of modernity. Crossing the "library" and "archive" genres with a focus on their discursive relations, Messick's readings also are informed by both his lengthy ethnographic experience Yemen, and on retrospective oral histories. The book develops methods for a new type of humanistic social scientist: the anthropologist as reader.

Messick is currently at work on a follow-up book that addresses "truth" and "justice" in an Islamic mode of conflict resolution. Moving now from the methods of written composition to the techniques of litigation, he is focusing on procedure, evidence and interpretation in the shari'a court (maḥkama), and on the key roles of litigant, witness and judge.

**Samuel Roberts**

Associate Professor of History and of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health

Professor Roberts, the leader of the Research Cluster in the Historical Study of Race, Inequality and Health located in the Center for Science and Society, co-developed and led the spring 2020 course *Marginalization in Medicine*. This interdisciplinary course examined issues at the intersection of public health and the carceral state. Notably, the course incorporated a collaborative investigation of behavioral health services available in New York state to individuals returning home from incarceration and their families. Students compiled a directory of these behavioral health services for the Harlem-based Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ), an advocacy organization dedicated to criminal justice reform and the provision of support to individuals, families and communities impacted by mass incarceration.



In response to the coronavirus pandemic, Professor Roberts launched the Bearing Witness: The Covid-19 & Inequality History Documentation Project in spring 2020. This project is an ongoing effort to document and interpret the events associated with the novel coronavirus epidemic in the United States as it pertains to racialized minorities. Dr. Roberts' Research Cluster is actively collecting data related to covid-19 events, including data events, political events, policy events, and scientific events. These events are displayed in interactive timelines and the website also includes a bibliography of primary and secondary sources to contextualize the current moment. These sources include reports, academic and non-academic studies, hearings, news articles, opinion pieces, various audiovisual sources, and others. The Cluster anticipates that the Bearing Witness project will have several important applications, including assisting historians and others to think about Covid-19 as an unfolding drama and aiding high school and university instructors to develop interactive teaching units related to coronavirus, health disparities, mass incarceration, and social determinants of health.

Professor Roberts also serves as an editor of the Columbia University Press series in Race, Inequality, and Health, which has signed three authors this past year.



Eric Verhoogen

Professor of Economics and of International and Public Affairs

Eric Verhoogen has been studying how firms behave in the context of developing countries and how industrial policy might help to stimulate innovation and growth. With co-authors, he has studied why soccer-ball producers in Pakistan are slow to adopt a new waste-reducing technology. The main answer has to do with conflicts of interest within firms: given the payment scheme, the employees who would actually use the technology had no interest in adopting it, and many managers didn't

figure out that they needed to adjust the payment scheme. The key point is that technologies are likely to be adopted more quickly when there is buy-in from employees. The research team is also conducting an experiment to study how firms in the sector respond to changes in the prices of high-quality imported inputs.

With other co-authors, Verhoogen has been working with the Tunisian government to conduct a large-scale experimental evaluation of an export-promotion program. In addition to providing matching grants for expenditures related to exporting, the program has added a novel "pay for performance" element, where firms receive a larger grant if they are successful in exporting to new countries (a policy objective of the government). The evaluation is ongoing and final results are expected in 2021.

In Mexico, Verhoogen and co-authors are conducting another experiment to evaluate how beneficiaries of government matching-grant programs are chosen. Governments face an expertise vs. bias trade-off: the people best able to judge firms' proposals are often the ones most embedded in their respective industries, who may have conflicts of interest because of their social connections to other people in the sector. Verhoogen and co-authors' project is investigating the bias that arises from relying on embedded experts to allocate government funds.



ISERP Resources

The Columbia Experimental Laboratory for Social Sciences ([C.E.L.S.S.](#))

CELSS is an interdisciplinary venue for researchers to conduct computer-based experiments. This includes both experiments physically located in the lab, as well as web-based experiments. CELSS's goal is to enable students and faculty to run lab experiments in a controlled setting and to facilitate researchers' experimental research more broadly. We also aim to provide subjects with a fun — and rewarding — paid experience in the experiments they participate in.

Statistical Consulting

ISERP offers [statistical consulting](#) to Columbia faculty and students who are engaged in social science and public policy research. Statistical consultants are available to help with how to conduct statistical analysis for your research. They can also give advice on experiment or survey design, regression models, or possible biases in your analysis. For more information or to arrange a consultation, please email iserp-stats@columbia.edu.



Data Use Agreements

Investigators and students in departments supported by ISERP who require a signed [Data Use Agreement](#) to access data for their research should contact iserp-funding@columbia.edu. Any DUA requiring signature will be processed by Research Administration. If any of the data is human subjects data, Columbia will require an approved IRB protocol before signing.

Computing Resources

Columbia University has a large selection of [computing resources](#) available to researchers. For computing consulting or to utilize these resources, please email iserpsa@columbia.edu.

ISERP's new computing resources include:

- Electronic Lab Notebook - LabArchives: A cloud-based data management software, Electronic lab notebooks are designed to replace paper books, manuals, field research, and data repositories. LabArchives enables collaboration between group members regardless of location and enables central cloud storage of high sensitivity data, so is a great option for work with confidential or sensitive data, including personally identifiable data or health information.
- Qualtrics: A web-based software that allows users to create surveys and generate reports without any previous programming knowledge. This is a powerful tool for collecting data, running experiments, getting feedback, and user polls using a variety of distribution means.
- SFTP Server: ISERP houses temporary, 30-day SFTP accounts, after which all data will be deleted (an extension can be requested.) You will get a server address, username, and password to share with your parties. Servers are protected by strict firewalls, only approved IP addresses can connect.

ISERP also maintains the following for use by affiliates:

- CUIT Shared High Performance Computing
- CUIT LionMail Drive
- Secure Data Cold Room
- The following resources are available with additional costs:
- Secure Data Enclave: a virtual environment used to work with secure data sets, approved by the IRB as a certified server for even the highest security data granting agency requirements.
- CUIT Virtual Servers
- Amazon Web Services (AWS) through CUIT

Centers and Workshops

Applied Statistics Center

The Applied Statistics Center is a community of scholars at Columbia organized around research projects in the human, social, and engineering sciences, as well as basic statistical research. In addition to coordinating existing projects and seminars, the Center supports visitors and research fellows, facilitates the development of new projects, and connects Columbia students in statistics and quantitative social science as part of research teams in data-rich projects, providing topics for M.A. and Ph.D. theses.

Center for the Study of Development Strategies

The Center for the Study of Development Strategies (CSDS) provides a forum at Columbia to support rigorous field based research on major questions in the political economy of development. Research at the center focuses on democracy and governance, peacebuilding, and aid effectiveness.

Center for the Study of Wealth and Inequality

The Center for the Study of Wealth and Inequality (CWI) takes as its mission the investigation of income and wealth, along with exploring the dimensions of societal inequality in these household resources. The Center's interests encompass issues of poverty, labor market behavior, public transfer programs and tax policy, in that each has a clear relevance to economic inequality, family resources, and to living standards.

ISERP Centers

Center on African American Politics and Society (CAAPS)

CAAPS provides an intellectual infrastructure for social science research on the political, social, and economic conditions affecting black communities. It aims to support theoretically sophisticated and policy-informed research among Columbia faculty, using a variety of methods and approaches that intersect various disciplines, including political science, psychology, sociology, law, economics and urban studies. With its emphasis on policy-relevant research, CAAPS aims to bridge the center's research with the needs and concerns of policy and community-based actors who work within and on behalf of black communities.

Center on Organizational Innovation

The Center on Organizational Innovation (COI) promotes research on organizational innovation as well as new forms of collaboration, communication, and coordination made possible with the advent of interactive technologies.

Columbia Justice Lab

The [Justice Lab](#) seeks to foundationally reconceive justice policy through actionable research, community-centered policy development, and the sustained engagement of diverse constituencies. We envision a community-centered future for justice in which healing and resiliency, rather than punishment and surveillance, are used to solve social problems often rooted in racial and economic inequity.

The Justice Lab uses four key strategies: designing and conducting research to inform justice policy development and advocacy, serving as a convener to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and bridge-building among diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives, disseminating new ideas for justice policy and practice, and working with young people, especially those with direct experience of justice involvement, to build the next generation of researchers, advocates, practitioners, and policymakers.

The AI Model Share Project

The project's mission is to generate the tools needed to assist students, faculty, and the wider data science community to bring machine learning innovations to all manner of end-users. The initiative received Start Up Center grant funding from ISERP in July of 2019 to build a platform (Python library + integrated website) that will act as the world's trusted academic repository for machine learning model prediction APIs.

The platform now enables faculty, students, and the wider data science community to launch machine learning models into scalable production ready prediction REST APIs using a single Python function. Details about each model, how to use the model's API, and the model's author(s) are deployed simultaneously into a searchable website at Columbia. Data scientists (faculty, students and otherwise) have individual model detail pages listing information about all deployed models. Each of these pages includes a fully functional prediction dashboard that allows end-users to input text, tabular, or image data and receive live predictions. Moreover, documentation for prediction API usage via Curl, Python, and R code are also available.

In a matter of seconds, data scientists can launch a model into this infrastructure and end-users the world over will be able to engage their machine learning models. A developer version of the platform is currently being used by Columbia students, faculty, and staff to test and improve platform functionality through the spring semester of 2020. The site will be publicly launched in summer 2020. With this foundation in place, we will continue to contribute innovate, but practically useful value-added tools into the machine learning model building workflow such as collaborative team oriented model building and model meta-data tracking functionality.



Center for Pandemic Research

In May 2020, as a part of our COVID-19 pandemic response, ISERP launched a new [Center for Pandemic Research](#) to coordinate new work by Columbia social scientists on COVID-19. The center is modeled on ISERP's "start-up center" program -- i.e. not something permanent, but a structure to facilitate fast, flexible, interdisciplinary initiatives.

In FY20, the center put out a call for pandemic-related seed grant funding and supported a number of new research projects:

"Columbia Labor Lab"

Investigators: Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Suresh Naidu, Adam Reich
Departments: SIPA, Economics, Sociology

"The COVID-19 Pandemic and Anti-Chinese Sentiment on Social Media"

Investigator: Douglas Almond
Department: Economics and SIPA

"Incentivizing Un(der)banked Households to Socially Distance Through Conditional Digital Loan Forgiveness"

Investigators: Harrison Hong, Jack Willis, Neng Wang
Departments: Economics, SIPA, and Columbia Business School

"Model Minority No More? Changing Perceptions and the Social and Economic Impact of Rising Anti-Asian Racism Fueled by COVID-19"

Investigators: Yao Lu and Neeraj Kaushal
Departments: Sociology, Columbia School of Social Work

"Using Machine Learning to Collect a Digital Archive of the COVID-19 Pandemic"

Investigators: Matthew Connelly, Wilmot James, Derek Kravitz
Departments: History, ISERP, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism

To support these timely research projects and offer opportunities to Columbia students during the period of pandemic lockdown in New York, ISERP also awarded student summer research grants. Through this program, ISERP continued Columbia's commitment to student-engaged research through this unprecedented time.

Webinar: Leadership and Decision-Making during Pandemics*June 8-12, 2020*

The Center for Pandemic Research hosted a week-long executive education webinar course, “Leadership and Decision-Making during Pandemics,” led by two of Columbia’s leading experts, Wilmot James and Lawrence Stanberry. The course was designed to empower leaders of business, government, and non-profit organizations in these unprecedented times, provided the critical perspectives and immediately-useful skills leaders need to succeed in managing high-risk situations such as COVID-19. The focus was on the character of interventions required to stop outbreaks from becoming epidemics and pandemics, and on the redesign of institutional and corporate life as we recover from COVID-19.

Lecturers and speakers featured in the Leadership and Decision-Making during Pandemics course.



The program featured distinguished local and national leaders from around the world, representing the health, private/commercial and government sectors. Each virtual session hosted on Zoom lasted 2 hours, with a 4 hour session for Friday’s participatory exercise:

Monday: History and Dynamics of Modern Pandemics

What we can learn from a century of pandemics and why every one of them is a surprise.

Lecture: Lawrence Stanberry

Panelists: Stephen Morse, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health; Madeleine Thomson, Wellcome Trust

Tuesday: The US Response to COVID-19

What the US did wrong, did right and what needs to be done when the menace comes around again.

Lecture: Lawrence Stanberry and Beth Cameron, Nuclear Threat Initiative

Panelists: Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-03); Wafaa El-Sadr, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health; Jeffrey Shaman, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health; Irwin Redlener, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Wednesday: Governance of Pandemics

What successful leaders do to persuade millions of human beings to support their health professionals and change their behavior to stare down and defeat COVID19.

Lecture: Wilmot James and Matthew Connelly

Panelists: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (pre-recorded input); Hon. G. Naledi Pandor MP, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa; Hon. Jenny Durkan, Mayor of Seattle; Andrew C. Weber, Senior Fellow, Council on Strategic Risks, and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs

Thursday: Don't Snap Back to Old Ways: Building Innovation into Recovery

Don't waste a crisis: Building new ways of working and living to create a safer future for our children.

Lecture: Wilmot James and Marc Grodman, Genosity and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Panelists: Ryan Morhard, World Economic Forum; Stanley Bergman, Henry Schein Inc.; Mukesh Chawla, World Bank; Jessica A. Bell, Nuclear Threat Initiative

Friday: Desktop Exercise: COVID in Fall 2020

Get ready for making hard decisions about peoples' lives as the SARS-COV2 virus comes around again in the future.

Led by Jennifer Nuzzo, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Health Security

With support from Wilmot James; Lily Wendle, Columbia World Projects; Gregory Eirich, QMSS

The international audience was made up of scholars, civil society and nonprofit leaders, and officers from a number of intergovernmental agencies such as the WHO. Participants were able to register for the full week or individual daily sessions. About 30 participants attended the full course, with individual sessions seeing audiences of up to 65.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
INSIGHTS FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

LEADERSHIP & DECISION-MAKING
during **PANDEMICS**

VIRTUAL COURSE JUNE 8-12 REGISTER NOW

ISERP
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND POLICY

LEADERSHIP & DECISION-MAKING during PANDEMICS
Guest Speakers and Lecturers



HISTORY AND DYNAMICS OF
MODERN PANDEMICS:
Stephen Morse, Columbia
Madeleine Thomson, Wellcome Trust

The US RESPONSE TO COVID-19:
Beth Cameron, NTI
Wafaa El-Sadr, Columbia
Irwin Redlener, Columbia



GOVERNANCE OF PANDEMICS:
Matthew Connelly, Columbia
Hon. G. Naledi Pandor MP, Minister of
International Relations and
Cooperation, South Africa
Hon. Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor of Seattle

DON'T SNAP BACK TO OLD WAYS:
BUILDING INNOVATION INTO RECOVERY:
Marc Grodman, Columbia
Ryan Morhard, World Econ. Forum
Stanley Bergman, Henry Schein
Mukesh Chawla, World Bank



CASE STUDY EXERCISE:
Jennifer Nuzzo, Johns Hopkins Ctr. for
Health Security
Lily Wendle, Columbia World Projects
Gregory Eirich, Columbia

ISERP Workshops & Seminars

ISERP supports programmatic workshops each year to bring together scholars from within and across disciplines to focus on matters of common interest.

The Center for the Study of Muslim Societies (CSMS) Workshop enables the CSMS to gather and focus its community of scholars: the individuals scattered across schools and disciplines at Columbia who concentrate on Islamic studies and the study of Muslim cultures and societies.

Organized by Brinkely Messick, Marwa Elshakry, and Manan Ahmed.

Critical Media and Digital Studies brings together scholars interested in interrogating the sociocultural and political implications of digital technologies' growing scope and indelibility upon the public sphere, in particular, its impact upon marginalized communities. Currently, digital technologies are advancing in their capabilities and reach at a far faster rate than conversations and policies that challenge its implementation and effects, both short and long-term.

Organized by Shamus Khan and Desmond Patton.

The Digital Mapping and Discourses of Space and Place: A Seminar Series on Teaching with Emerging Methods Across Disciplines brings Columbia faculty together with scholars engaged in work using digital mapping and spatial research for a series of conversations on pedagogy. In particular, it stages a conversation between discourses of place and space and the use of digital mapping and Geographic Information Systems in the classroom.

Organized by Sandra Black, Elizabeth Ananat, Belinda Archibong, and Anja Benshaul-Tolonen.

Diversifying the Social Sciences: The Women in Economics Working Group allows women from across the NYC/Northeast area to have a space to meet, discuss research, present work in progress, and receive constructive feedback in an environment that allows junior and senior scholars to interact. Given the low numbers of women economists in the profession, the seminar group is an important avenue to address pipeline issues by supporting and creating a safe space for female scholars throughout their research careers.

Organized by Mae Ngai, Gergely Baics, Rebecca Kobrin, Laura Kurgan, and Leah Meisterlin.

The Sociology of Gender and Sexuality workshop brings together students and faculty from across the disciplines whose work engages the heterogeneity of issues related to gender and sexuality in the social world. It helps train interested graduate students from across the arts and sciences in the foundational methods of data collection and analysis specific to empirical and theoretical approaches to gender and sexuality.

Organized by Tey Meadow and Shamus Khan.

Time and Temporality in the African Past undertakes a systematic exploration of the function of time—both the newly fashionable future and the under-appreciated *longue durée*—in the conceptualization and writing of African history. The workshop is organized around the theme of time in African history in its diverse and multi-disciplinary manifestations.

Organized by Gregory Mann and Rhiannon Stephens.

ISERP also supports workshops and seminars held by each social science department through our block grants.

Department of Anthropology:

Franz Boas Lecture Series
Sheldon Scheps Talks
Politics, Society, Environment and Development

Department of Economics

Economic Theory Workshop
International Economics Workshop
Applied Micro and Labor Workshop
Development Workshop
Political Economy Workshop
Money and Macro Workshop
Industrial Organization Workshop
Econometrics Workshop
Student Colloquia:
Econometrics
Development
Industrial Organization
International Trade
Microeconomics
Applied Micro Methods
Monetary Economics
Micro Theory
Economic Fluctuations
Financial Economics



**Departmental
Workshops &
Seminars**

Department of History

Iraqi Studies: Past, Present, Future
Manuscript Workshops
Making and Knowing Workshop
Writing History Workshop
Siyagh Middle East Writing Workshops
Intellectual and Cultural History Dissertation
Workshop
Latin American Workshop
International History Workshops
Medieval Workshops
New York Metro Seminar in Environmental
History
Russian/Eastern Europe Workshop
Graduate History Association Workshops
Nahuatl Seminar

Department of Political Science

American Politics Seminar
Comparative Politics Seminar
Columbia University International Politics
Seminar (CUIPS)
Political Psychology Workshop
Twentieth Century Politics and Society
Workshop

Department of Sociology

Sociology Colloquium
Race, Ethnicity and Migration Workshop
Wealth and Inequality Seminar
Networks and Time Workshop

**Shared Political Science and Economics
Workshops**

Political Economy (COPECIA) Seminar
Political Economy Colloquium

ISERP Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Seminar

IGSS is a yearlong ISERP-sponsored seminar that seeks to foster a conversation across the social science communities at Columbia to discuss the diverse ways in which interdisciplinarity can be mobilized. The ultimate goal of the seminar series is to explore how interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to and enrich traditional disciplines and what such interdisciplinarity demands from them. This year, the IIGSS committee decided to choose a different theme for each semester. The themes were selected for their relevance to current affairs and their potential to involve research across disciplines. The theme for Fall 2019 was Globalization: Causes and Consequences and the theme for Spring 2020 was Inequality.

The ISERP Interdisciplinary Graduate Seminar Series held the following seminars this year, consisting of a 30 minute presentation, a 30 minute Q&A, and a 1 hour reception. IIGSS received 27 total proposals from social science graduate students. Presenters were chosen by the IIGSS Committee based on the following attributes: relevance to theme, interdisciplinarity, quality of research. Most seminars attracted about 15 attendees.

“Religious or Political Cycles? How Religion Regulates Service Provision in the Muslim World”
Ahmed Ezzeldin Mohamed, September 28th, 2019. (Political Science)

“Elites and Land Titles: Evidence from Colombia”
Elena Barham and Zara Riaz, October 25th, 2019. (Political Science)

“Becoming Guerrillas? Global Imaginaries, Violence, and European Revolutionary Lefts, 1968-1978”
Luca Provenzano, November 15th, 2019. (History)

“Support for the Far Right: Why Local History Matters for Understanding a Global Phenomenon”
Berenike Schott, December 6th, 2019. (Sociology)

“Youtube as a Tool for Transnational Activism: The Case of Kazakh Advocacy for Xinjiang”
Colleen Wood, February 7th, 2020. (Political Science)

“Property Formation, Labor Representation, and State Capacity in Imperial Brazil”
Jorge Mangonnet, March 6th, 2020. (Political Science)

“Empire of inequality: the politics of taxation in the French colonial empire 1900-1950s”
Madeline Valerie Woker, scheduled for April 3rd, 2020 but canceled due to the pandemic. (History)

The 2019-2020 committee members were:

Anthropology: Margaux Fitoussi

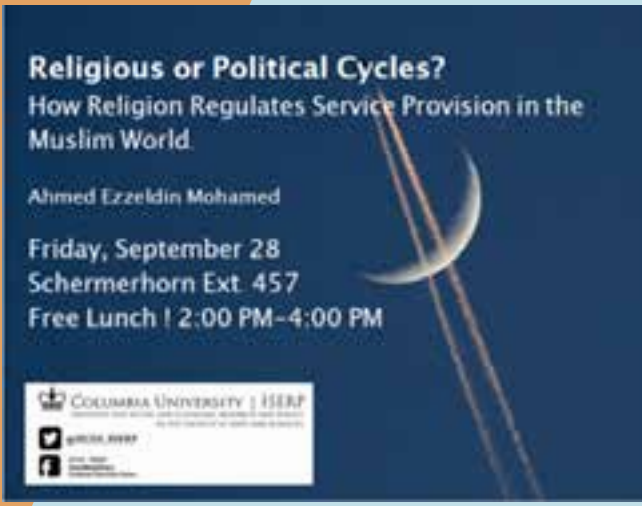
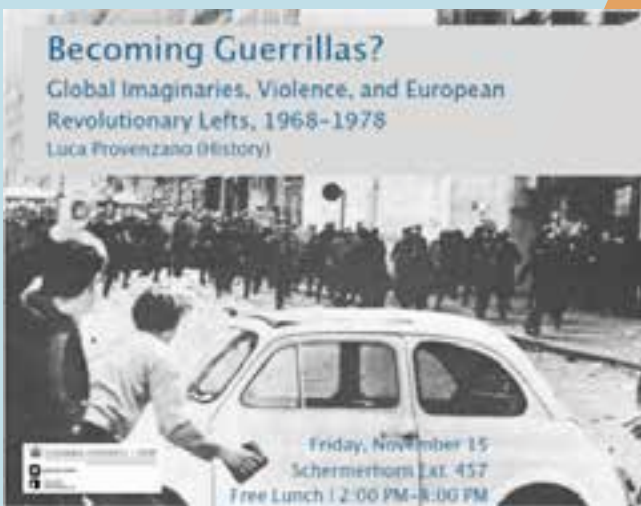
Economics: Wendy Morrison

History: Divya Subramanian

Political Science: Ki Young Kim

Sociology: Mireia Triguero Roura

Posters for each IIGSS Seminar, created by committee members



History as a Data Science Workshop

In January 2020, ISERP managed a workshop titled “History as a Data Science,” funded by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and led by the [History Lab](#). Project manager Raymond Hicks and PI Matthew Connelly led the two-week workshop for historians interested in conducting data-driven research on documents from History Lab’s FOIArchive and other digital archival sources.

The workshop curriculum included in-class lectures on basic data science concepts, lab exercises for hands-on experience with R, Python and SQL, as well as lunchtime seminars with leading digital historians (Lara Putnam, Kellen Funk, Cameron Blevins, and Ben Schmidt) for broad-ranging discussions on the use of digital technologies in historical research. Workshop participants represented institutions from the U.S. (7), UK (3), and France (1) and a wide range of research specialties, from international relations and U.S. diplomatic history to modern African and Latin American studies. The group included five current graduate students, three early-career researchers, and three faculty, representing a diversity of technical familiarity. Feedback was extremely positive, with workshop participants planning to use FOIArchive documents and collections for future teaching and research endeavors.



 **History as a Data Science** 

**Free Two-Week Research Workshop
at Columbia's History Lab**
January 6, 2020 – January 17, 2020



Digital history is thriving. The increasing volume of digitized and “born digital” collections of books, articles, and archives also presents tremendous new opportunities for original research.

This workshop offers a very practical introduction to getting direct access to archived data and analyzing it with algorithms.

For more information, see the **Call for Applications**



*History as a Data Science
Workshop participants,
instructors, and staff.*

ACLS funding provided covered operating costs (e.g. venue fees, catering, etc.), travel aid for workshop participants and guest speakers, and support for ISERP program coordinator Harlowe Wang, who managed and oversaw all planning and logistical coordination for the event. ISERP developed the program schedule, coordinated travel arrangements for participants, managed the application process, and conducted outreach activities to humanities research communities, so as to publicize both the workshop and the larger FOIArchive project. Workshop organizers distributed web-fliers, announcement posts, and other descriptive material to a wide range of scholarly forums and venues, such as the American Historical Association and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAHR).

During the workshop period, the History Lab staff engaged participants in a series of qualitative studies so as to better understand the user experiences and needs of humanities researchers: nine structured one-on-one user interviews and a focus group session. These studies collected user feedback on the History Lab website interface and prototypes of the and library interface, and gauged opinions and research use cases for online primary sources and digital archives more broadly.

Programs

Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences



Dr. Gregory Eirich, Director

The [Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences \(QMSS\)](#) program is an interdisciplinary social science MA degree program, focused on the design of social research, advanced statistical methodologies and data science. The program integrates perspectives and research strategies of six disciplines: economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology and statistics. QMSS was established in 1999 through the leadership of professors Andrew Gelman, Seymour Spilerman and Gregory Wawro. QMSS joined the Institute for Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) in 2002.

The Fall of 2019 found QMSS starting off with its largest cohort of students (126) and largest number of applicants to date (over 600). The QMSS MA program continues to grow in size, scope and programming. The QMSS students come from approximately 20 countries, with dozens of undergraduate majors, and our most recent graduates can be found working as data scientists, analysts and academic researchers at many of the world's premier institutions, such as IBM, Citibank, Verizon Media, Wells Fargo, Morgan Stanley, TikTok, LinkedIn, the United Nations, and Doctors Without Borders, or earning their Ph.D.s at places like Duke, USC, MIT, and the London School of Economics, among others.

Throughout the last year, QMSS offered an even larger set of elective courses, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Time Series and Forecasting, Bayesian Statistics, Advanced Analytic Techniques, Data Visualization, Applied Data Science, Modern Data Structures, Data Mining, Social Networks, Machine Learning, Advanced Machine Learning-Deep Learning (new), and a Practicum on Large-Scale Data Analysis. These courses are taught by dedicated lecturers for QMSS or by adjunct faculty with strong connections to the New York tech community and/or to academia. QMSS elective courses have become quite valuable to the larger Columbia community, where now approximately 1 in 3 students in QMSS elective courses are not QMSS students.

Like the rest of Columbia, QMSS quickly transitioned to remote learning in the Spring semester. QMSS made it a priority to still find ways to build and maintain our unique community. From synchronized Netflix parties to cohort-wide Town Hall sessions, from Zoom Research Seminar speakers on data ethics to paired programming coding events, from Monday morning yoga sessions to remote team assignments, we found ways to connect with each other. The students, faculty and staff were absolutely amazing in handling this unprecedented set of challenges. QMSS was also able to hold a very moving virtual graduation ceremony in May. Despite everyone being physically separated, it was possible to feel very close to everyone that day.

Likewise, the QMSS student group, QASR - the Society for Quantitative Approaches to Social Research, offered a rich variety of advanced programming for the MA students, including technical workshops on numerous topics like cloud computing, team coding in Google CoLab, technical data science interview preparation, and a day of service for Girls' Science Day and other socializing programs (like a Thanksgiving celebration and young alumni picnic). The students continued to connect throughout the whole of the Spring semester as well.

QMSS has created a variety of focuses of study for students to engage in, including in data science, economics and experiments. These focuses -- forged through strategic partnerships with other departments and schools, like the Data Science Institute -- help to define students' interests so they achieve their goals in the shortest period of time possible. QMSS is also famous, however, for the flexibility it offers its students, and so reflecting its strong interdisciplinary spirit, QMSS students took over 125 unique courses last year from dozens of departments and schools at Columbia.

Multi-Industry Advising Panel 2019





QSSS successfully moves activity online using Zoom.

QSSS continues to build strategic relationships across the University and beyond. We have a partnership with the Center for Public Research and Leadership, which allows a select number of QSSS students to work with education and public sector organizations via interdisciplinary teams under the guidance of experienced former PK-12 managers and consultants, to improve education and public policy. QSSS continues to work with the Data Science Institute Working Group on Data Science Education, which involves pushing forward data science education at Columbia. QSSS was also one of the only MA programs to join the massive new international initiative, the Consortium on Analytics for Data-Driven Decision-Making (CAnD3), based at McGill University, where a chosen QSSS student will learn (virtually) beside Canadian Ph.D. students in epidemiology, demography and biostatistics to be trained in the innovative skills necessary for proper analytics to support evidence-informed decision-making for an aging society.

Moreover, during the height of the pandemic, QMSS established the QMSS Innovation Lab, with the goals of generating bold ideas; providing an interdisciplinary perspective; developing valuable methods and processes; and working with data for the public good. The Lab was also designed to have strong student-focused elements. In our first few months, we have already begun working with a number of organizations on critical projects, including IBM, the United Nations, JUST Capital, KPMG, Columbia World Projects, Data.org, and the Opportunity Project.

Lastly, the QMSS Research Assistant program continues to provide research opportunities and support for students and faculty. The program provides valuable research experience and financial assistance to participating students and precious research assistance to faculty. Last year, QMSS supported over 30 faculty research projects, on a great variety of topics, even after those projects went virtual in the Spring. As it has done for the last 20 years, and during this pandemic, QMSS will continue to look for ways to add value to the experiences of the MA students in the program, and also for ways to support advanced quantitative research among the larger Columbia community as well.



QMSS Executive Education Courses

During summer 2019, the Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences program joined the Columbia School of Professional Studies to offer two executive education courses, open to the public as well as all Columbia affiliates.

Data Analysis with Python

Instructor: Gregory Eirich

This course is meant to provide an introduction to regression and applied statistics for the social sciences, with a strong emphasis on utilizing the Python software language to perform the key tasks in the data analysis workflow. The chief goal is to help students generate and interpret quantitative data in helpful and provocative ways, and become competent at reading statistical results in social science publications and in other media. The hope is that by trying to measure the social world, students will see their thinking become clearer and their understandings of concepts grow more complex.

Machine Learning for the Social Sciences

Instructor: Michael Parrott

Social scientists need to fully engage with machine learning approaches that are found in computer science, engineering, AI, tech and in industry. This course provided a comprehensive overview of machine learning as it is applied in a number of domains. Every effort was made to draw comparisons and contrasts between this machine learning approach and more traditional regression-based approaches in the social sciences, and to synthesize these two approaches.

Program for Economic Research

Harrison Hong

Executive Director, Program for Economic Research

Sophia Johnson

Assistant Director

Lauren Close

Program Manager

The [Program for Economic Research](#) ran the following events and activity during 2019-2020.

What is Suffering Worth? Perspectives Across Disciplines on the Treatment of Victims, September 10, 2019

This interdisciplinary symposium held at the University's Maison Française explored a crucial but little-studied issue with growing importance today: what is the value of harm suffered by victims, whether of terrorism, crime or natural disasters.

This symposium was co-sponsored by the University Paris-1 Panthéon Sorbonne, CNRS, Maison Française, Columbia Department of Economics and Center for Contemporary Critical Thought.

Poster: What Is Suffering Worth?



The Third Annual Columbia Conference on Economic Theory

September 13-14, 2019

This iteration of the CCET conference featured discussions on a variety of topics, including monopoly regulation (Yingni Guo, Northwestern), survey design (Sylvain Chassang, NYU), and free information in trade (Doron Ravid, U Chicago).

The conference was sponsored by Columbia University's Program for Economic Research (PER) and the Microeconomic Theory Initiative (MTI). Faculty organizers included Yeon-Koo Che (Columbia) and Evan Sadler (Columbia).

PER Mini Course with David Blei

September 26-27, 2019

In this two-day Mini Course titled "Variational Inference: Foundations and Innovations", Professor David Blei (Columbia) discussed probabilistic modeling and Bayesian statistics' importance in the computation of probability distributions.

Capitalism, Conflict and Cooperation: A Celebration of the Work of Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis

October 4-5, 2019

This conference celebrated the work of Samuel Bowles (Santa Fe Institute, UM Amherst, University of Siena, CORE) and Herbert Gintis (Santa Fe Institute, Central European University), American economists known for their contributions to the study of the U.S. education system.

This conference was sponsored by Columbia University's Program for Economic Research (PER), the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISERP), and the Center for Development Economics Policy (CDEP). Faculty organizers included Suresh Naidu (Columbia), Eric Verhoogen (Columbia), and Michael Reich (UC Berkeley).

The Center for Environmental Economics and Policy's Inaugural Conference

October 18, 2019

Following a keynote by James Stock (Harvard), current and former students presented research findings in the four focus areas of the CEEP: (i) Climate Change, (ii) Ecosystem Services, (iii) Health, and (iv) Policy Design.

This conference was sponsored by Columbia University's Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP), Program for Economic Research (PER), and School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Conference faculty organizers included Douglas Almond (Columbia) and Wolfram Schlenker (Columbia).



Poster: An American Dilemma for the 21st Century

An American Dilemma for the 21st Century

October 30, 2019

Seventy-five years ago, Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal published the influential work, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. For Myrdal and his collaborators, the central dilemma was the unresolved tension of the “American creed”—the celebration of ideals of equal opportunity and democracy, in the face of deep and enduring racial discrimination and inequality. The dilemma has changed, but it has not receded. This anniversary of *An American Dilemma* offers an occasion to revisit and reassess the “American creed.”

This event was sponsored by The Social Science Research Council; the Program for Economic Research, Department of Economics, the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, the Division of Social Science, and the Center on African American Politics and Society at Columbia University; Carnegie Corporation of New York; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Institute for New Economic Thinking; and Russell Sage Foundation.

Leveraging Big Data to Manage Extreme Weather Risks?

November 12, 2019

Extreme weather episodes such as Hurricane Sandy of 2012 and California Wildfires of 2018 led to significant human displacement and billions of dollars of economic damage spread across

utility, real estate and other commercial sectors. Scientists predict that climate change will lead to more frequent and extreme weather risks. This evening panel was the first in a series of events on the economic and financial applications of alternative data sponsored by Capital Fund Management (CFM) and Columbia University's Program for Economic Research (PER).

The Seventh Columbia University Conference in Political Economy

December 13, 2019

This year's Columbia University Conference in Political Economy featured discussions on racial integration and busing programs (Ethan Kaplan, Maryland), sequential vote buying (Ying Chen, Johns Hopkins), and political engagement in the time of protest movements (David Yang, Harvard).

We are grateful to Columbia University's Institute for Social and Economic and Research and Policy in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (ISERP), Program for Economic Research (PER), Economics Department, and Political Science Department for financial support. This year's faculty organizers were Alessandra Casella (Columbia) and John Marshall (Columbia).



CFM-PER DATA INITIATIVE

Leveraging Big Data to Manage Extreme Weather Risks?

Tuesday
November 12, 2019
5:00 PM

Columbia
Maison Françoise
515 West 118th Street
(Basell Hall)

Registration Required
econ.columbia.edu

Extreme weather episodes such as Hurricane Sandy (2012) and California wildfires (2018) led to significant human displacement and billions of dollars of economic damage spread across utility, real estate and other commercial sectors. Scientists predict that climate change will lead to more frequent and extreme weather risks. This evening panel was the first in a series of events on the economic and financial applications of alternative data sponsored by Capital Fund Management (CFM) and Columbia University's Program for Economic Research (PER). A number of distinguished speakers and analysts will discuss various strategies to manage these risks, and how they can be used to inform investment decisions and risk management.

FEATURES

- Panel discussion with speakers: Alessandra Casella, John Marshall, Ying Chen, Ethan Kaplan, David Yang
- Keynote by Professor David Maliar (Santa Clara University)
- Panel discussion with speakers: John Marshall, Alessandra Casella, Ying Chen, Ethan Kaplan, David Yang
- Panel discussion with speakers: John Marshall, Alessandra Casella, Ying Chen, Ethan Kaplan, David Yang

FACULTY DISABLER

CFM

PER

CFM

PER

CFM

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PER Mini Course with Serguei Maliar

February 26-27, 2020

In this two-day Mini Course titled “Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning Solution Methods for Dynamic Economic Models”, Professor David Maliar (Santa Clara University) discussed techniques for analyzing dynamic economic models (including deep learning networks). The course also showed how to establish functions suitable for deep learning and how to implement AI solution frameworks using Matlab and Python.

THE KENNETH J. ARROW LECTURE SERIES

NATURAL STRATEGIC THINKING IN THE LAB, BRAIN AND FIELD

6:00PM | THURSDAY | MARCH 5TH
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUILDING | ROOM 1501
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ABOUT
This lecture will discuss game theories in which not all agents fully think through what other agents are likely to do. These “cognitive hierarchy” models include level-k and consistent with a wide variety of simple and more complex lab and field experiments, some data on neural activity, and have also been usefully applied in basic areas of economics including industrial organization and macroeconomics.

FEATURED

COLIN F. CAMERER
Robert E. Royce Professor of Behavioral Economics, Director, TEG Center for Decision and Economic Neuroscience

DISCUSSANTS:

JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ
2001 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, University Professor, Columbia University

ROSEMARIE NAGEL
Professor, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Research Professor at ICREA and Barcelona School of Economics

KARLA HOFF
Visiting Professor, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Director, Center for Economic Research, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

REGISTER

<http://www.columbia.edu>

The 12th Annual Kenneth J. Arrow Lecture

March 5, 2020

This annual lecture in honor of Professor Kenneth J. Arrow (1921-2017), 1972 Nobel Laureate and the Joan Kenney Professor of Economics and Professor of Operations Research at Stanford University, was given by Colin F. Camerer (CalTech), Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics and Director of the T & C Chen Center for Social and Decision Neuroscience at the California Institute of Technology.

Discussants for this lecture included Karla Hoff, Visiting Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University and former Lead Economist, World Bank; Rosemarie Nagel, Professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Research Professor at ICREA and Barcelona School of

Economics, Director of BESLAB, Universitat Pompeu Fabra; and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, University Professor, Columbia University.

Camerer’s lecture focused on game theories in which not all agents fully think through what other agents are likely to do. These “cognitive hierarchy” models (including level-k) are consistent with a wide variety of simple and more complex lab and field experiments, some data on neural activity, and have also been usefully applied in basic areas of economics including industrial organization and macroeconomics.

This lecture was co-sponsored by the Center on Global Economic Governance, the Program for Economic Research, and Columbia University Press.

PER Mini-Course

Serguei Maliar
Associate Professor in Economics
Santa Clara University

Part I: Wednesday, February 26, 2020
1:00-3:00pm (Uris 332)

Part II: Thursday, February 27, 2020
12:00-2:00pm (Uris 301)

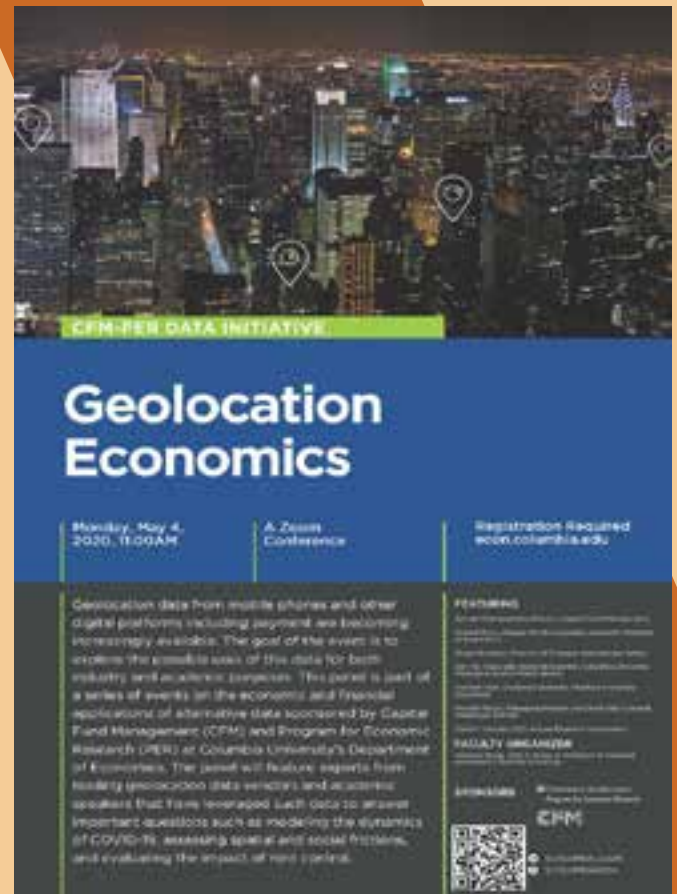
Artificial intelligence and deep learning solution methods for dynamic economic models

Geolocation Economics

May 4, 2020

Geolocation data from mobile phones and other digital platforms including payment are becoming increasingly available. The goal of the event is to explore the possible uses of this data for both industry and academic purposes. This panel is part of a series of events on the economic and financial applications of alternative data sponsored by Capital Fund Management (CFM) and Program for Economic Research (PER) at Columbia University's Department of Economics. The panel featured experts from leading geolocation data vendors and academic speakers that have leveraged such data to answer important questions such as modeling the dynamics of COVID-19, assessing spatial and social frictions, and evaluating the impact of rent control.

This was PER's first digital conference (held via Zoom and YouTube livestream). Over 250 people attended this event virtually from 13 countries.



PER Weekly Visitors

Andreas Kleiner,
Arizona State Univ.

Simon Jäger,
MIT

Kyungmin (Teddy) Kim,
Emory University

Alex Frankel,
Univ. of Chicago

Luciano Pomatto,
CalTech



PER Faculty Lunch Series

José Scheinkman,
Thursday, September 12, 2019

Stephanie Schmitt-Grohe and Martin Uribe,
Thursday, March 5, 2020



Conferences and Events

ISERP Conferneces

The Making and Knowing Project Co-Writing Workshop for a Digital Critical Edition

Sept. 5-10, 2019

Organizer: Pamela Smith

Ecologies of Remembrance: The Material Afterlives of Unidentified Death along the Central Mediterranean Migration Route

Sept. 11-12, 2019

Organizers: Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Brain Boyd, Zoe Crossland, Ayten Gundogdu, J.C. Salyer

Capitalism, Conflict, and Cooperation: A Celebration of the Work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis

Oct. 4, 2019

Organizers: Suresh Naidu, Eric Verhoogen, Michael Reich (UC Berkeley)

Inaugural Conference of the Center for Environmental Economics and Policy

Oct. 18, 2019

Organizers: Douglas Almond, John Mutter, Wolfram Schlenker

Workshop on Data Science and Conflict

Oct. 25, 2019

Organizers: Tamar Mitts, Data Science Institute

An American Dilemma for the 21st Century

Oct. 30, 2019

Organizers: Brendan O'Flaherty, Fredrick Harris, Suresh Naidu, Rajiv Sethi, Joseph Stiglitz



Global 1919: Remaking Worlds

Nov. 1-2, 2019

Organizers: Marwa Elshakry, Rashid Khalidi, Anupama Rao



Inaugural EXiT Convening and Conference

EXiT: Executives Transforming Probation and Parole

Dec. 10, 2019

Organized by Bruce Western, Vincent Schiraldi, Kendra Bradner

Political Economy Conference at Columbia

December 13, 2019

Organizers: Alessandra Casella, John Marshall, the Program for Economic Research

Development Nano-Conference

December 13, 2019

Organizers: Michael Best, Jack Willis, Jonas Hjort



New Political Economies of the French Empire: 19th-20th Centuries

February 28, 2020

Organizers: Gregory Mann, Emmanuelle Saada, Madeline Woker

After the COVID-19 pandemic spread in New York, many of ISERP's sponsored conferences for spring 2020 were either postponed or reformed into virtual events. We are looking forward to supporting more conferences once health allows, but are grateful to the organizers who were able to adapt their plans and host to following virtual events:

Multilevel Regression and Poststratification Conference

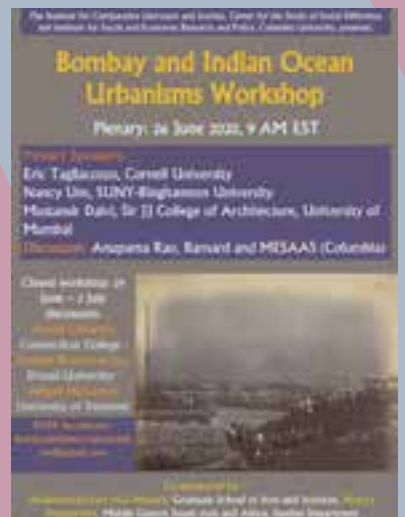
April 3-4, 2020

Organized by Andrew Gelman, Lauren Kennedy, the Applied Statistics Center

Bombay and Indian Ocean Urbanisms Workshop

June 26, 2020

Organizers: Amy Chazkel, Anupama Rao, Sohini Chattopadhyay, Laura Yan



Large audience at Celebrating Recent Work by Rashid Khalidi

New Books in the Arts and Sciences



The New Books in the Arts & Sciences is a series of panel discussions celebrating recent work by the Columbia Faculty. The series is jointly presented with The Heyman Center for the Humanities, and the Divisional Deans of Social Science and Humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and ISERP manages events for faculty in the Division of Social Sciences.

Each panel highlights a recently published academic monograph written by Columbia faculty, and invites discussion from departmental colleagues as well as scholars from the rest of Columbia University and the broader academic and professional communities. Topics span the wide range of faculty research, and display the diverse interest and work of the Columbia community.

In addition to a celebration of the work, these events are opportunities to focus on the impact of these works within and across fields, and a change for the public to engage with these recent publications. Each panel discussion draws a diverse crowd of faculty, students, staff, and community members. Events drew as many as 100 participants, and included distinguished guest speakers including the President Emeritus of Harvard University, Drew Gilpin Faust.

Dorothy Ko, Nara B. Milanich, Maya Jasonoff, Emanuelle Saada



The following social scientists had celebrations for newly published books in 2019-2020:



Celebrating Recent Work by **Nara B. Milanich**

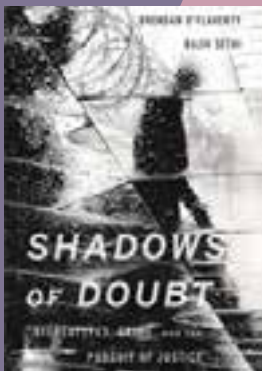
Paternity: The Elusive Quest for the Father

Sept. 26, 2019

Moderated by Dorothy Y. Ko

Featuring panelists: Maya Jasanoff, Emmanuelle Saada

Co-sponsored by Barnard College



Celebrating Recent Work by **Brendan O'Flaherty and Rajiv Sethi**

Shadows of Doubt: Stereotypes, Crime, and the Pursuit of Justice

Nov. 14, 2019

Moderated by Miguel Urquiola

Panelists: Carla Shedd, Suresh Naidu, Valerie Purdie Greenaway

Co-sponsored by Barnard College



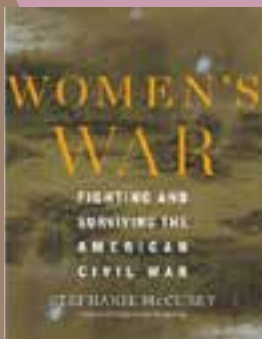
Celebrating Recent Work by **Gil Eyal**

The Crisis of Expertise

Dec. 2, 2019

Moderated by Shamus Khan

Panelists: Peter B. de Menocal, Diane Vaughan, Steven Shapin



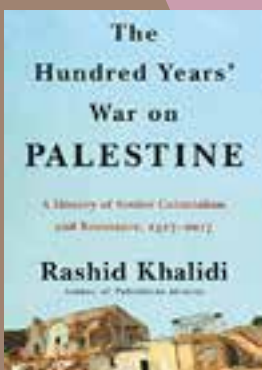
Celebrating Recent Work by **Stephanie McCurry**

Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War

February 20, 2020

Moderated by Christopher L. Brown

Panelists: Drew Gilpin Faust, Camille Robcis, Jeremy Kessler



Celebrating Recent Work by **Rashid Khalidi**

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017

March 4, 2020

Moderated by Nadia Abu El-Haj

Panelists: Manan Ahmed, Gil Hochberg, Rosie Bsheer

Co-sponsored by the Center for Palestine Studies

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Greg Wawro, Director Emeritus at the QMSS Anniversary Celebration



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Matthew Connelly addresses the
ISERP Winter Holiday Party



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ARTS AND SCIENCES