



# SIPA

# MAGAZINE

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### SIPA'S INTERDISCIPLINARY EDGE

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most complex challenges, locally and globally. p. 22



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Photo by Shahar Azran

# Dear Friends,

**W**e're living in a world in crisis facing complex global challenges, and the need for a school like SIPA has never been more urgent. This issue of *SIPA Magazine* represents the breadth and depth of our community's world-changing impact, and I couldn't be more proud.

One year in, the Institute of Global Politics (IGP) has made its mark as a vital platform for high-profile dialogue and a hub for policy research. March marked the launch of IGP's Women's Initiative, which is the core of the Institute's mission—every global challenge is a women's issue, and addressing these challenges through that lens is an urgent imperative for Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and me.

IGP has also created a space for two of SIPA's newest faculty, Camille François MIA '13 and Nobel laureate Maria Ressa, to start an independent Innovation Lab to help preserve democracy from AI's harmful effects. AI is also the focus of SIPA faculty member Daniel Björkegren, who is doing cutting-edge research on the potential uses of AI across the developing world. All three faculty are also teaching students in newly offered courses this academic year.

SIPA students continue to meet the moment with their passion to make meaningful change in service of the public good. In February I traveled to Paris with a group of 14 SIPA students for the annual Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) conference. A group of four MPA in Development Practice (MPA-DP) students received the runner-up award for their project on safeguarding the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Assam, India, against the devastating effects of floods. I'm excited for next year's GPPN conference, which will be held right here at SIPA!

An impressive roster of distinguished new faculty—including Jeffry A. Frieden, Patricia A. Kirkland, Robert Metcalfe, and former Ambassador Victoria Nuland—joined SIPA this fall. Our faculty continue to push boundaries in their interdisciplinary research, their teaching, and their impact on policy.

In a world of fast-paced technological change, our alumni are at the forefront of innovative policy solutions. Maryum Saiffee MIA '07 has been a brave voice to raise awareness about female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM or FGC) and is now helping the US State Department ensure that emerging technologies preserve human rights. Rebeca Moreno Jiménez MPA '15, lead data scientist at the UNHCR, has been leveraging big data and AI to improve humanitarian decision-making.

With our tremendous momentum, SIPA is poised—more than ever before—to train the next generation of future leaders. I have never been more excited by the work we are doing and by the promise of what lies ahead.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Keren Yarhi-Milo**

*Dean and Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Relations*



# InBrief

## ALUMNI & STUDENTS

### SIPA STUDENT TEAM WINS CYBER 9/12 STRATEGY CHALLENGE

SIPA's **Olivia Adams MIA '24**, **Seamus Boyle MIA '24**, **Aaron Gurley MIA '24**, and **Gunnar Wainwright MPA '24** won the 2023 Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge in New York City. The Atlantic Council and SIPA's Digital and Cyber Group (DCG) hosted the event at SIPA on October 13–14. The team, which responded to a fictional cyberattack against a Philippine telecommunications company, was coached by assistant professor **Erica Lonergan**.



L–R: Rob Sheldon of CrowdStrike, Olivia Adams MIA '24, Seamus Boyle MIA '24, Aaron Gurley MIA '24, Gunnar Wainwright MPA '24, Aaron “Jay” Stout MIA '24 of SIPA's Digital and Cyber Group, Alexander Beatty of the Atlantic Council

## Presidential Management Fellows Program Selects 8 SIPA Students and Alumni for 2024

Congratulations to the eight SIPA alumni selected to join the Presidential Management Fellows Class of 2024!

The prestigious program, which is overseen by the US Office of Personnel Management, received 7,193 applications from around the world. The 825 finalists for 2024 represent 102 different degree programs across 264 academic institutions worldwide.

This year's SIPA-affiliated fellows are **Bukuru Anastazie MIA '24**, **Reed Cohen MPA '24**, **Allison Dodakian MPA-DP '24**, **Roland A. Gillah MIA '24**, **Rebecca A. Hinkhouse MIA '24**, **Jude A. Jordan MIA '23**, **Benjamin N. “Ben” Ritter MIA '24**, and **Ishan Talukdar MIA '24**.



## Sai Priya Kodidala MPA '24 Receives Social Justice Mini-Grant

**Sai Priya Kodidala MPA '24** received a Social Justice Mini-Grant from Columbia's Office of University Life. Kodidala's project, “A Symposium on Intersectionality and Caste,” examined issues of caste-based discrimination and their intersection with other forms of oppression, such as those based on gender, religion, race, and socioeconomic factors. It will be structured as a series of panels and will provide a platform for educational discussions, presentations, and dialogues.

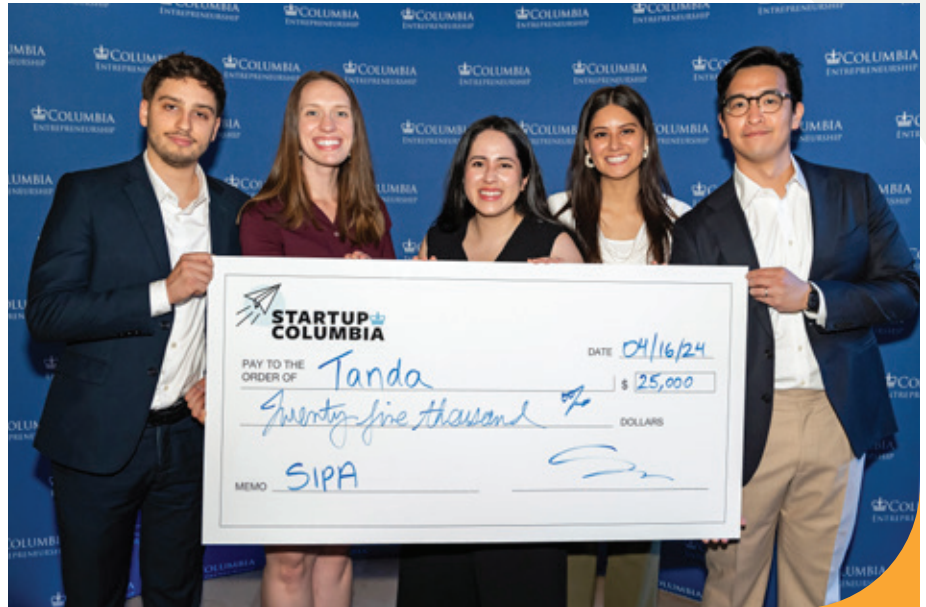




## TANDA Wins SIPA's Annual Global Policy Challenge

The winners of SIPA's 10th Annual Global Policy Challenge were announced at Columbia Entrepreneurship's campus-wide awards ceremony on April 16.

The winning team was TANDA, comprising SIPA students **Laura Cecilia Belk MPA '24**, **Franco Cristiani MPA '24**, **Sara Gómez Horta MPA '25**, **Isela Gutierrez MPA '24**, and **Felix Wang MIA '25**. Their venture aims to connect children of undocumented Americans to the appropriate financial institutions, and investment vehicles to help mixed-status families save for elderly immigrants' retirement and plan for their financial future.



L-R: Franco Cristiani MPA '24, Laura Cecilia Belk MPA '24, Sara Gómez Horta MPA '25, Isela Gutierrez MPA '24, Felix Wang MIA '25

## PROMOTIONS

**Maryam Banikarim '89BC, MIA '93, '93BUS** was appointed managing director of Fortune Live Media.

**Daniel J. Barker MIA '14** was appointed president and CEO of Halcyon.

**Ryan Berger MIA '15** joined the staff of the White House National Security Council as senior advisor to the deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technologies.

**Stephanie Copp MPA '23** was named associate director of strategy, policy, and communications and senior gender policy advisor at the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

**Alejandro Eder MIA '07** was elected mayor of Cali, Colombia.

**Mayada El-Zoghbi MIA '94** joined KIT Royal Tropical Institute as managing director of the knowledge unit.

**Mohammed Hadi MPA '03** was named deputy editor, business, at *The New York Times*.

**Jens Ole Bach Hansen MIA '03** was appointed ambassador of Denmark to Nigeria, with side accreditations to the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo.

**Johanna Hill MIA '01** was appointed a deputy director-general of the World Trade Organization.

**Binaifer Nowrojee IF '89, '89LAW** was named president of the Open Society Foundations.

**Rebecca Rhynhart MPA '01** was appointed senior vice president for finance, CFO, and deputy treasurer of Drexel University.

**Rema Serafi MIA '95** was appointed vice chair—tax at KPMG LLP.

**Tokumbo Shobowale MIA '99** was named Fordham University's CFO, senior vice president, and treasurer.

**Cheska Tolentino MPA '15** joined Tucker Ellis as an associate.

**Angel Vasquez MPA '15** was appointed as assistant secretary for intergovernmental affairs by Governor Kathy Hochul of New York.

**Benjamin Weiss MIA '15** was appointed CEO of Veracity Worldwide.

**Daniel E. White MPA '20** was named deputy assistant secretary for strategic integration and policy planning at the US Department of Homeland Security.

*For more alumni news and achievements, check out Class Notes on page 40.*

## SIPA Students and Dean Yarhi-Milo Travel to Paris for Annual GPPN Conference

Fourteen students—along with **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** and **Tsuya Yee**, associate dean for student affairs and SIPA's Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) focal point—represented SIPA at the GPPN conference in Paris. This year's conference, held February 22–23, was hosted by the School of Public Affairs of Sciences Po. In spring 2025 SIPA will host the GPPN conference, which will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the network.

The SIPA students were organized into four teams and competed among 31 overall teams from around the world. The team of **Ganita MPA-DP '25**, **Taylor Garner MPA-DP '25**, **Swathi Pottabathini MPA-DP '25**, and **Kim Vidal MPA-DP '25** received the runner-up award for their project, “Resilient Futures: Integrating Index-Based Flood Insurance (IBFI) for Climate-Resilient Agriculture of Smallholder Farmers in Assam, India,” which showcases an approach to safeguarding the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Assam against the devastating effects of floods.



L-R: Henry Woo MIA '03, Malick Gai MIA '25, Bingcong Zhu MIA '17

The SIPA community in Hong Kong got together in August 2023 to send off incoming SIPA students.



L-R: Michael Lerner MIA '00, Ruchita Brajabasi MPA '17, Lidia Cano MIA '17, Brian Berezovsky MPA '20, Gabriel Santamaría de Zulueta MIA '18

In December SIPA alumni reunited in Spain.



In June 2023 SIPA and **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** welcomed a group of 13 African women leaders to kick off the 2023 Leadership Forum, hosted by the Picker Center for Executive Education in collaboration with Fundación Mujeres por África.

Students from SIPA's Pan-African Network met with Vanessa Mounzar, the chief DEI officer at LVMH, for a thoughtful discussion on the topic “Global Cooperation and Africa's Development” in October 2023.





## KUDOS

*NYC Street Art: Creative Expression or Vandalism?*, a short film by **Ghaida Aldukhayel MPA-DP '25**, **Devashree Arora MPA-DP '24**, **Erin Hanley MPA '25**, and **Tamara Jeffries MPA-ESP '24**, won Best Cinematography at the 2023 Open Society University Network's Visual Storytelling for Civic Engagement film festival.

**Carlo Angeles MPA-GL '24** was one of the inaugural 10 inductees into the Democratic Innovators of the 21st Century Politicians' Hall of Fame by the Athens Democracy Forum.

**Suzanne Freeman MIA '16** received the 2023 Jeanne Guillemin Prize from the MIT Center for International Studies.

**Beatriz Fritschler EMPA '08** was recognized by *City & State* at its The Above & Beyond — Gen X: The Trailblazers & Leaders from the MTV Generation event in November.

**Yomna Gaafar MPA '22** was named among *Forbes Middle East's* 30 Under 30 2023.

**Lorena Isabel Miranda Gutierrez MIA '24** was selected as one of the 100 Leaders of Tomorrow by the St. Gallen Symposium.

**Karine Jean-Pierre MPA '03** was named Out South Florida's National Person of the Year for 2023.

**Rachana Kumar MPA '14** was named among *Technology Magazine's* Top 100 Women in Technology.

**Michael Lamon EMPA '15** received a 2024 Tony Award for coproducing the Broadway play *Merrily We Roll Along*, which won for Best Musical Revival.

**Jonathan Lesh MIA '24** was among a four-person Columbia University team that took first place in the US Department of Energy Geothermal Collegiate Competition.

**Kathy Liu MPA '18** was selected to speak at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos in January.

**Philip Yin Lu MPA '18** was named to the Committee of 100's Next Generation Leaders Class of 2024.

**Jennifer Mitchell MPA '00** and **Kevin Sullivan MPA '85** were named to *City and State's* 2023 Nonprofit Power 100.

In March *Time* featured *The Road*, a short documentary by **Mohsin Mohi-Ud-Din IF '11**, **MIA '12**, founder and CEO of MeWe International.

**Senthil Nathan MPA '18** launched the podcast *Business & Society with Senthil Nathan*.

**Manav Sachdeva MIA '04** received the Alumni Service Award at his undergraduate school, University of California, Riverside.

**Akshay Verma MPA '13** was honored among the *Times of India* 40 Under 40 Summit 2023 North Achievers.

**Semon Makar Zekry MIA '25** received the Spring 2024 Association of Women in International Trade (WIIT) Scholarship.

**Elise Zhao MIA '19** spoke about governments utilizing art and technology to increase public awareness at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Eduarda Zoghbi IF '22**, **MPA '22** was named among *Forbes Brazil's* 30 Under 30 2023.

For more alumni news and achievements, check out *Class Notes* on page 40.

## DRC Ambassadors — Both SIPA Alumnae — Connect in Kinshasa

In January the US Embassy in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), hosted a gathering of SIPA alumni, including US ambassador to the DRC **Lucy Tamlyn MIA '80** (center) and UK ambassador to the DRC **Alyson King IF '98**, **MIA '99** (third from left).







# InBrief

FACULTY &amp; STAFF

**Martín Guzmán,** William S. Beinecke Visiting Professor of Public Policy, met with Pope Francis on November 11 to discuss the problem of sovereign debt crises in the Global South, as well as the need for reform of the international corporate taxation system.



## Aidi Writes Documentary on Harlem Activist Sister Aisha

**Hisham Aidi**, senior lecturer in international relations, was a fellow at Columbia's Institute for Research in African American Studies (IRAAS) and for 10 years worked with the late historian Manning Marable studying the influence of Malcolm X across the world. Aidi's latest project—a documentary called *Sister Aisha: Queen Mother of Harlem*, about Harlem activist and community leader Aisha al-Adawiya—was funded through the Addressing Racism: A Call to Action for Higher Education initiative of Columbia's Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement.



**Read more  
and watch  
the film.**



Jason Bordoff (right) meets with climate leaders—including NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (center) and US special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry (second from right)—at COP28. Photo courtesy of NATO (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

## CGEP Experts Attend COP28

Center on Global Energy Policy experts, including founding director **Jason Bordoff**, provided informed insights and fostered discussions at COP28 from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai.



[Read Bordoff's "Reflections from COP28."](#)

## At Munich Security Conference, IGP Experts Discuss Role of Universities in Navigating Election-Year Geopolitics

The Institute of Global Politics (IGP) hosted a side event at the Munich Security Conference on February 16 addressing a wide range of global policy issues, including mis/disinformation, the clean energy transition, and the current conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. **Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton**, professor of international and public affairs and IGP Faculty Advisory Board chair, moderated the panel, which included **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo**; **Maria Ressa**, IGP Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow and Nobel laureate; and **Jason Bordoff**, IGP Faculty Advisory Board member and Center on Global Energy Policy founding director.



L-R: Jason Bordoff, Maria Ressa, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo  
Photo by Felicia Goodman

## Denning Honored as Advance's 2023 Global Australian of the Year

**Glenn Denning**, a professor of professional practice who works on developing global food systems that promote sustainable agriculture to effectively feed the world's population, was named the 2023 Global Australian of the Year. Denning also gave a keynote address at the 2024 Gala Dinner of Advance: The Global Australian Network, where he called on Australia to step up and support regional food security.



## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

In March 2023 **Thomas J. Christensen** became a senior adviser at the US Department of State.

**Fernando Cirelli** received the Young Economist Prize from the King's Business School Qatar Centre for Global Banking and Finance.

**André Corrêa d'Almeida** received the International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award on behalf of his organization, All4Integrity.

**Caroline Flammer** was named vice dean for research and faculty affairs of SIPA.

**V. Page Fortna** was named director of SIPA's Arnold A. Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies.

**Camille François MIA '13** was named to the World Economic Forum's 2024 class of Young Global Leaders.

**Timothy Frye** was named to a five-year term on the Kluge Scholars Council at the Library of Congress.

**Ester Fuchs** was appointed to the New Arrivals Strategy Team (NAST) advisory board by the speaker of the New York City Council.

**Takatoshi Ito** was decorated by the Japanese government with the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon (honor in the third rank) for his contribution to education and research.

**Jacob J. "Jack" Lew** became US ambassador to Israel in November.

**Jon Lukomnik** received the International Corporate Governance Network Lifetime Achievement Award for exceptional achievements in the corporate governance field.

**Linda J. Mann** was selected as a Fulbright US Scholar for 2024–25 for the Fulbright Schuman Program.

**Tamar Mitts** received the American Political Science Association's Best Paper Award in the Conflict Processes Section for her paper "Information Operations, Territorial Control, and Perceptions of Power During Conflict" (coauthored with Asfandiyar Mir and Austin Wright).

**Sidney Nakahodo MIA '05** received the Prêmio Alumni USP 2023 from the University of São Paulo in the category Contributions in Innovation and Entrepreneurship for his space sector work and academic research.

**Anne Nelson** was inducted into the 2024 class of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

**José Antonio Ocampo** was named one of the International Economic Association's Schumpeter-Haberler Distinguished Fellows for 2024.

**Arvind Panagariya** was appointed chairman of India's 16th Finance Commission.

**Jeffrey Shrader** was appointed senior advisor for the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

**Ebonya Washington** was elected vice president of the American Economic Association (AEA).



Photo by Shahar Azran

## Inside the Situation Room Course Now Available Online

Co-taught by **Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton** and **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo**, this course engages learners with case studies and examines decision-making in historical and contemporary contexts, from the search for Osama bin Laden to the "red line" in Syria to negotiating with Iran. It is now available through Columbia+, the University's online platform to engage alumni and learners from around the world. All proceeds will benefit SIPA student financial aid.



[Learn more about the course.](#)

## SIPA Announces 2024–25 Dean's Faculty Grant Awardees

In May **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** announced the recipients of the 2024–25 SIPA Dean's Faculty Grants, which are designed to support projects pursuing basic social science inquiry, policy-related research, or innovative teaching initiatives, such as those that include research into public policy issues or other topics related to SIPA courses.

The recipients are **Douglas Almond, Daniel Björkegren, Fernando Cirelli, Wojciech Kopczuk, Tamar Mitts, Cristian Pop-Eleches, Anya Schiffrin, Yumiko Shimabukuro, Miguel Urquiola, and Eric Verhoogen.**



[Read more about the recipients.](#)



## SIPA Faculty Among Columbia Provost's 2024 Grant Awardees

In May Columbia University Provost Angela V. Olinto announced this year's recipients of awards and grants from the Office of the Provost's award programs. Among the recipients were the following SIPA faculty and staff: **Alexander Cooley, Glenn Denning, Jessica Fanzo, V. Page Fortna, Andrew Heinrich, Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Michael Littlejohn, Erica Lonergan, Eugenia McGill, Anya Schiffrin, Joseph Stiglitz, and Tsuya Yee.**



[Read more about the recipients.](#)



Photo by Sirin Samman

## Barrett Elected to National Academy of Sciences

**Scott Barrett**, Lenfest–Earth Institute Professor of Natural Resource Economics, was among five Columbia faculty elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Membership in the academy is considered one of the highest honors a scientist can receive.

Barrett is a leading scholar on such diverse transnational and global challenges as climate change, disease eradication, biodiversity conservation, and ocean governance. His research focuses on how institutions like customary law and treaties can be used to promote international cooperation.



## Dean Emerita Lisa Anderson Chairs Curriculum Review Steering Committee

In response to the changing competitive environment and the diverse and fast-moving demand for SIPA's graduates, **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** convened a curriculum review steering committee, led by **Dean Emerita Lisa Anderson**, in fall 2023.

"This is about creating a curriculum that meets the current moment and career opportunities of our students," Yarhi-Milo said.

After a year of rigorous internal review—which included consultations with employers, alumni, Capstone clients, and students—the faculty and staff steering committee has developed a proposal, which the School plans to implement in the upcoming year.

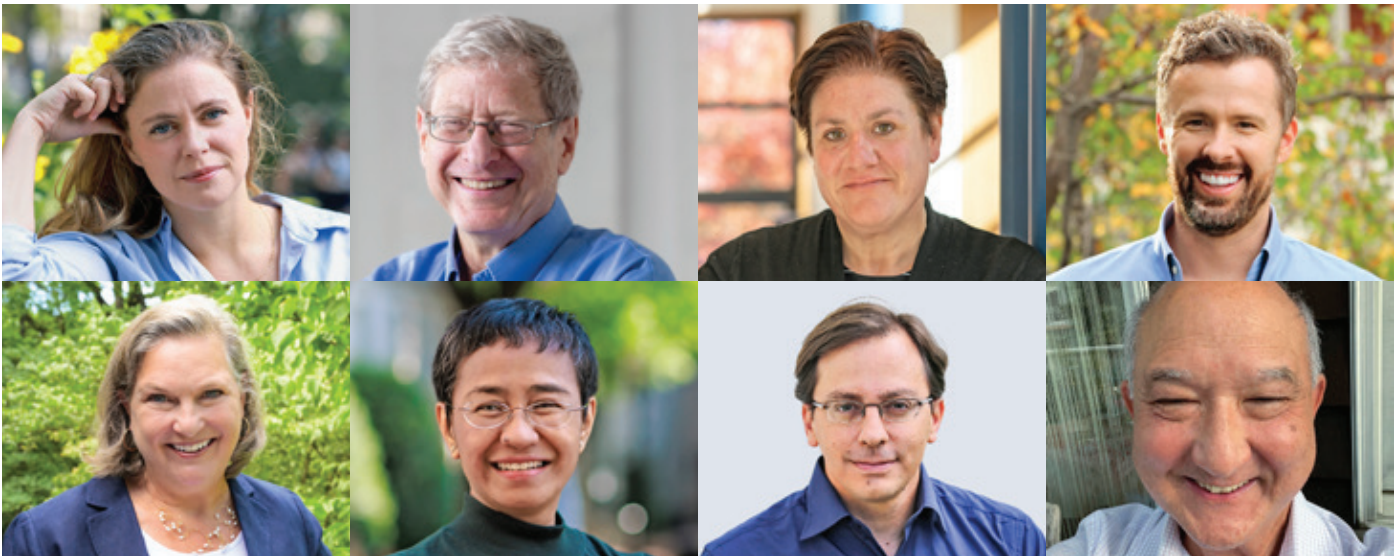


Photo by Chris Taggart



# School News

## SIPA Welcomes New Faculty and Research Scholars



Top, L-R: Camille François MIA '13, Jeffrey A. Frieden, Patricia A. Kirkland, Robert Metcalfe; bottom, L-R: Victoria Nuland, Maria Ressa, Nadav Eyal, Stephen Peter Rosen

### Teaching Faculty

**Camille François MIA '13** specializes in how organized actors use digital technologies to harm society and individuals, and she has developed and implemented a number of methodological innovations in the field of trust and safety. Her work to understand and mitigate digital harms spans from cyber conflict to online harassment. She joins SIPA as an assistant professor of professional practice, after having previously been a lecturer and senior researcher at the School. François coleads, with Maria Ressa, a new independent innovation lab on AI and democracy at SIPA's Institute of Global Politics (IGP).

*Read more about Camille François's research on page 22.*

**Jeffrey A. Frieden** joins SIPA as a professor of international and public affairs and political science and is a member of IGP's affiliated faculty. Frieden was most recently professor of government at Harvard

University and is a renowned scholar with a research and teaching focus on the politics of international economic relations. *The New York Times Book Review* called his 2006 book, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century* (W. W. Norton), "one of the most comprehensive histories of modern capitalism yet written." Frieden received his BA and PhD from Columbia University.

*"I have broad interests in contemporary and historical political economy, both international and comparative. Among my current research projects are an analysis of the sources of the current backlash against globalization and rise of populism, and an analysis of the socioeconomic impact of post-Civil War Reconstruction in the American South."*

**Patricia A. Kirkland** joins SIPA as an assistant professor of international and public affairs after having served as assistant professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University. Kirkland received her PhD in political science from Columbia University. She studies

American politics, with a focus on subnational politics and public policy. Her ongoing research leverages original data with a combination of experimental and observational methods to explore representation, public finance, and fiscal health in American cities.

*“I study representation and public policy in American cities and states. My work investigates business owners and executives as city politicians. I examine how voters view business candidates, why they run for office, and how they impact policy in cities. My findings suggest that candidates—not voters—are the key to understanding why Americans elect so many business owners and executives.”*

**Robert Metcalfe** joins SIPA as professor of international and public affairs, with a professorship of energy policy. Metcalfe, who most recently was a professor of economics at the University of Southern California, studies applied microeconomics, with a focus on energy and environmental markets, transportation, firm and labor productivity, and public policy. He holds a PhD from Imperial College London.

*“The objective of my research is to explore the behaviors of individuals and organizations in markets that influence the environment. Over the next 10 to 20 years, we will witness significant transformations in how energy is generated and used, and how society organizes itself around such changes. My aim is to contribute to the economic and policy science that ensures these changes are both efficient and equitable.”*

**Ambassador Victoria Nuland**, a US diplomat for more than three decades who served as undersecretary of state for political affairs for the last three years and as acting deputy secretary of state from July 2023 to February 2024, joins SIPA as the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor in the Practice of International Diplomacy. Nuland also directs SIPA’s International Fellows Program and is a member of IGP’s affiliated faculty.

*Read a profile of Victoria Nuland on pages 20–21.*

**Maria Ressa**, the Nobel laureate and Filipino-American journalist known for her pioneering efforts to protect media freedom in the Philippines, joins the SIPA faculty as a professor of professional practice. She served as an Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow at the School’s Institute of Global Politics in 2023–24. Ressa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021, along with Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov, for “their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace.” She is probably best known for the intrepid journalism of *Rappler*, a digital news site she cofounded in the Philippines.

*Read more about Maria Ressa’s research on page 22.*

## Research Scholars

**Nadav Eyal**, a prominent journalist and award-winning author, joins SIPA as a senior research scholar, with an affiliation at IGP. Eyal is a senior columnist for *Yediot Ahronot*, Israel’s most circulated newspaper, and the news website *Ynet*, where he writes a weekly column devoted to Israeli decision-making, regional affairs, and global politics. He is also a senior commentator for Keshet 12, Israel’s most watched TV channel. Eyal is a winner of the Sokolov Award, Israel’s equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize, and is the author of the bestselling book *Revolt: The Worldwide Uprising Against Globalization* (Ecco, 2021).

*“For the last quarter century, my job has been to cover decision-makers and policies—sometimes policies over life and death. It will be my privilege to be able to contribute to conversations on global affairs and provide fact-based analysis, drawing on my long experience covering senior decision-making.”*

**Stephen Peter Rosen**, one of the most renowned theorists of military innovation, joins SIPA as an adjunct senior research scholar, with an affiliation at IGP. Rosen is the Beton Michael Kaneb Professor of National Security and Military Affairs at Harvard University. He was the master of Winthrop House during the years 2003–09, also at Harvard University. For the term 2002–07, he was named a Harvard College Professor, an award given in recognition of excellence in undergraduate teaching. He is also the recipient of the 2002 prize for excellence in teaching, awarded by the Alpha and Iota Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and the 2017 Levinson Prize awarded by the students of Harvard College.

*“I study, and support the work of students with an interest in, the changing character of warfare caused by trends in digital information technology, shifts in economic power, and declining normative constraints on nuclear weapons use. Basic research into these trends and the different ways in which actors are responding to them will support the development of American strategies to defend our national interests.”*

**“SIPA is on a trajectory of momentous growth, with a world-class faculty of scholars dedicated to solving today’s most pressing policy challenges. The new cohort of incredible faculty joining us this year will build on our excellence across disciplines. I am thrilled to welcome them into our community, and we look forward to their many contributions.”**

**Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo**



MARYUM SAIFEE MIA '07

## From the Middle of Texas to the Middle East, a Diplomat Champions Human Rights

Maryum Saiffee MIA '07 has spent more than a decade in foreign service, highlighting issues like labor migration and gender-based violence.

BY AGATHA BORDONARO

**M**aryum Saiffee MIA '07 was going to be a doctor.

That was the plan, at least according to her parents, who had emigrated from India to the suburbs of Fort Worth, Texas, where they raised Saiffee and her brother.

But Saiffee had other plans.

Saiffee was insatiably curious about the world—and much more interested in exploring it than in applying to medical school. She enrolled in college at the age of 15, balancing premed courses with art history classes and extensive travel. She spent a semester abroad in Florence as well as a summer in Paris studying painting.

That introduction to a life spent living, learning, and working abroad ignited a passion in Saiffee and kicked off what is now a career of more than a decade in US Foreign Service focused mainly on human rights and women's issues. She has spent years in Egypt, Iraq, and Pakistan working with the US Department of State, and has held appointments at the Human Rights Foundation and the Truman Center for National Policy, among others.

In January 2023 Saiffee joined the State Department's newly launched Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy (CDP), where she is a senior adviser helping to modernize the department, educate diplomats on technology, address issues of cybersecurity, and

ensure emerging technologies preserve human rights.

"I didn't see myself in government," Saiffee says with a laugh. "I'm not a boxy bureaucrat, I'm a creative. But the beauty of the Foreign Service, for me, is you can reinvent yourself every couple of years. In the future the problems that we're dealing with are going to be more and more multidimensional and difficult, requiring a more holistic approach—one that includes all these different perspectives."

After graduating from the University of Texas at Austin in 1999, Saiffee figured she would apply to medical school sooner or later, but, being only 19, she decided to take time off first to travel. Before long, she had joined the Peace Corps, based in Jordan. It was there that she first learned about the human rights and labor issues affecting domestic workers in the region, an experience that would become pivotal in terms of her career aspirations and was the reason she applied to SIPA—to learn more.

Once at SIPA Saiffee reveled in the breadth of courses offered, studying labor migration and sustainable development, among other topics.

"These kinds of courses rewired how I think about the world," Saiffee says, "and it really opened my eyes to history that just isn't as known."

She took the Foreign Service officer test thinking that the State Department

could offer her one route to living and working overseas.

"I ended up in Cairo," she says of her first State Department assignment in the summer of 2009, just a year or so before the Arab Spring. Soon Saiffee found herself designing programs to engage youth on transitional justice and political participation immediately following the ousting of Egypt's longtime president Hosni Mubarak.

Saiffee fell in love with her very hands-on, challenging, fulfilling work. Her next assignment brought her to Iraq.

"I was processing visas of Iraqis who had worked for the US government in some way, either as translators or civil engineers, and because of their affiliations to the United States, they had been targeted and their lives had been threatened. It was very harrowing," she says, recalling one case where the face of the individual she was interviewing was visibly disfigured by a gunshot wound. "For me, it was a wake-up call that we need to put the humanity part first, and whatever the circumstances, we need to do our jobs very well, no matter what."

Back in Washington, DC, Saiffee has dedicated herself to shining a light on important social issues and working on solutions for the betterment of society. One of the issues close to her heart is that of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM or FGC).

As an undergraduate she had taken an anthropology seminar in which FGM was discussed, and it immediately stirred up a long-suppressed personal memory of her own. When she was seven years old, Saifee and her brother were sent to stay with relatives in India. Her aunt, a medical doctor, had performed the ritual on Saifee during that trip without her parents' consent.

When Saifee suddenly recalled this experience as a young woman, she knew she had to use her voice to raise awareness of the practice and do what she could to advocate for girls' and women's rights. In 2016 she had her chance. As a senior policy adviser in the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, she published her personal story in *The Guardian* and amplified the voices of other survivors to help lead the US government's response to and policy on the practice. She created embassy tool kits

and secured \$1 million in funding to help diplomats combat FGM in the United States and abroad.

At CDP, Saifee oversees a new fellowship for technology and tech policy courses that embeds 15 diplomats, State Department officials, and civic and Foreign Service workers in schools across the US, including SIPA. "If our diplomats are smart on technology, this could be our superpower as the State Department," she says.

"My North Star throughout has been, How do you have a positive impact, even if the situations are suboptimal? That's what's kept me in the job as long as I have been."

*Maryum Saifee participated in this interview in her personal capacity, and her views do not necessarily represent those of the US Department of State or any other institutional affiliation. ●*

Photo by Brian Miller



**“In the future the problems that we’re dealing with are going to be more and more multi-dimensional and difficult, requiring a more holistic approach — one that includes all these different perspectives.”**

**PRAKHAR BHARTIYA MPA '20**

## Healing a Broken Society

Prakhar Bhartiya MPA '20 seeks to transform his country's political leadership through his Indian School of Democracy.

BY BRETT ESSLER

A recent report from the Brookings Institution noted that “it is increasingly rare for an authoritarian to come to power via a coup. Instead, democracies in decline usually experience a slow but steady erosion.”

Democratic backsliding is occurring globally, but the Center for American Progress notes that in India, the world's largest democracy, “several” of the hallmarks of this global trend toward authoritarianism are at play: “the breakdown in political pluralism, a decay in independent state institutions, and a clampdown on political dissent.”

Concerned that established politicians were no longer seen as role models for Indian youth, Prakhar Bhartiya MPA '20 cofounded the Indian School of Democracy (ISD) with Hemakshi Meghani in 2018. ISD's mission is to organize short- and long-term programs for young people who are working in politics across the geographical, political, and ideological spectra.

“How do we create a community of people who are wanting to bring political change in the country?” Bhartiya asks about his native India. “It is becoming more and more difficult in the country to work in politics.”

In 2008 Bhartiya founded Youth Alliance, an organization that, in the 10 years he led it, helped launch more than 50 social ventures from young

Indians. “That gave me a lot of belief that it is possible to set young people on a trajectory of inner transformation, and on a leadership journey doing something tangible,” he says. “While I was doing that, I was always keenly interested in politics.”

Bhartiya found that the barrier to entry for Indian politics was nearly impossible for young, middle-class citizens lacking family or financial connections. He cofounded ISD on the same principles as Youth Alliance's to empower young people from a plurality of backgrounds to “create leadership journeys.”

First, Bhartiya embarked on a leadership journey of his own. He arrived at SIPA in 2018—as the United States was grappling with the Trump administration's move toward illiberalism—to further his knowledge of how democratic institutions are constructed and nurtured. At SIPA he found a mentor in Dean Emerita Lisa Anderson, an expert on state formation, regime change, and democratization in developing countries.

“She was one person who made me believe that what you're thinking about principled politics is important,” Bhartiya says. “She literally nudged me, inspired me. And her class was where I would really understand what's happening in the Middle East, how democracy is shaping across the world.”

While Bhartiya steeped himself in academic discourse at SIPA—tackling courses on a wide variety of subjects, including Gandhi and political philosophy—he was simultaneously working with Meghani back in India to fast-track the work of ISD. The school's approach is holistic, focusing on the hard skills of politics, like fundraising, understanding the constitution, election management, and networking, while also cultivating “inner transformation”—students learn “hardcore campaign management” and practice daily mindfulness.

“SIPA played a very crucial role in my defining thinking,” Bhartiya says. “Before [attending SIPA], I would say, ‘If you're a good human being, you can do anything.’ I think being a good human being is the foundation, but you have to have the skills needed. You have to have the intellect to understand, What does the constitution say? You have to have the understanding of, How do we build a team? How do we raise resources to be in politics?”

By working with young politicians at the local level, ISD hopes to instill “moral courage and imagination” that will inform the next 30 to 50 years in Indian politics, breaking down barriers of ethnicity, religion, and caste to redefine public leadership. With three cohorts of 40 each year, ISD now boasts an alumni network of 300. Some of the school's initiatives include Democracy



**“Before [attending SIPA], I would say, ‘If you’re a good human being, you can do anything.’ I think being a good human being is the foundation, but you have to have the skills needed.”**



*Photo by Ian DiSalvo*

Express, a nine-day immersive political-learning journey across four of India’s states, and She Represents, which aims to work with women leaders who want to be in politics.

“We have at least 55 to 60 percent of people who come from disadvantaged communities,” Bhartiya says. “In the last decade, the social fabric of the country has been shaken—this division doesn’t work long term in a country which is as pluralist as India. It will take at least two generations to heal that.”

With India’s democracy at an inflection point (as of this writing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a third straight term but failed to secure a parliamentary majority), Bhartiya returned to SIPA this spring to reconnect with

faculty like Anderson and a new pipeline of civic-minded leaders whom he hopes will choose public service over the private sector. ISD does not take funding from outside India, so building a robust knowledge and financial network within India is key to the school’s growth.

“I think India defied a lot of the West, who said, ‘India is not one country; it’s so diverse, it is impossible to hold it together,’” Bhartiya says. “And we survived that. But now I feel that we are at a stage where there’s so much

hatred at the ground level. How do we heal a society that’s so broken?”

ISD’s work, he says, “will be completed when India’s democracy will work for all its citizens and not just a few.”

In a country of nearly 1.5 billion people, the Indian School of Democracy’s alumni network of 300 may seem small, but as Gandhi said, “The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without—it has to come from within.” ●

# IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE HELPING OR HURTING THE POOR?

BY LIONEL M.  
BEEHNER MIA '02

**T**he jury is still out on whether AI will revolutionize the pace of development across the Global South or leave much of the region behind. But Daniel Björkegren is among the world's leading researchers seeking answers. He first took an interest in machine learning back in 2000 as an employee at Microsoft, coding apps on the company's first smartphone. But it was through an experience on a summer volunteer trip to Los Angeles in 2002 working with homeless people that he first grappled with the social impact of technologies. He thought, If we make computers more capable, what does that mean for humanity? Now an assistant professor at SIPA, Björkegren is doing cutting-edge research to understand the potential of AI across the developing world.

*The following conversation with SIPA Magazine has been condensed and edited for clarity.*

**Tell me how you got interested in applying economics to new technologies like artificial intelligence in parts of the world where data, resources, and infrastructure are scarce?**

What was most impactful for me was working with development economists at Harvard and MIT. This is a field that uses math and data to better understand what policies can help the poor. But one perennial issue is that we don't know much about the lives of the poor—they're not interviewed in many surveys, and they don't interact with many formal institutions.

**Tell me about some of your early research work—for example, I know you did your dissertation research**

**on mobile phones and network effects in Rwanda.**

My work has been based on the observation that as information technology spreads, it documents—and changes—the lives of the poor. My thesis considered how we might learn about these changes from peoples' interactions with mobile phones. I used a dataset of about 5.3 billion mobile phone



Photo by Jeff Berens

calls placed in Rwanda to understand how phones grew from a tool used by the wealthy in cities to one used by the poor even in remote villages. Here the issue is that a phone is only useful if the people you want to call also have phones. When you start from having almost no phones in the country, there's a chicken-and-egg problem. But if you can get one person to adopt, that may trigger others to adopt.

To understand adoption, you need to understand these linkages, which are called network effects. That's also a central problem in social media and many of the other digital networks that increasingly define our lives. My thesis came up with a method to disentangle what drove adoption for a mobile phone network. I found that simple policies

could have further improved access. For example, a big concern in regulatory circles now is how to discipline digital networks. It's easy to describe advantages of competition, but networks can become less useful when they are split up. I developed a way to estimate these countervailing effects in the Rwandan mobile phone system and found that adding a competitor could have reduced prices and increased incentives to invest in rural towers. Overall, allowing competition could have increased welfare by the equivalent of 1 percent of GDP. That's enormous—it demonstrates that good policy can have huge effects.

**How does AI factor into some of the similar research projects you're working on now?**

One that I'm excited about is a study of a chatbot for teachers in Sierra Leone made by an organization called Fab Data. It's simple. Teachers already use WhatsApp to chat with their friends and family. So TheTeacher.AI links WhatsApp to GPT to let them chat with an AI. We find that they use it for planning lessons, creating content, and managing their classrooms. The questions they ask reveal that they are hungry for advice to better serve their students, which is hard to access in remote schools. We see teachers asking for advice on transitioning their discipline strategy away from corporal punishment. The chatbot offers other approaches and can respond to their specific needs. Once they start using it, the usage persists. Especially on small screens, it's more natural to chat, and you can ask an AI things that you might be uncomfortable asking a person, who might be impatient or judge you.

**Last year you wrote an article in Foreign Affairs that called on**



**institutions like the World Bank to do more “to build applications aimed at the poorest people.” What specifically should these institutions be doing to help the world’s poorest?**

Tech firms are investing enormous resources into AI development, but those investments are targeted at the needs of wealthy countries. Many low-income countries have budgets that are too small to translate these innovations to meet local needs. So there is a need for cross-cutting institutions to raise funds, research what works, and spread learning across places. I’m working with the World Bank on an AI for People initiative to improve the potential of these technologies to serve human capital.

**Tell me about the course you’re teaching at SIPA.**

The idea is to get students to really understand machine learning from the ground up so they see how it works, how it can be useful, and how AI is likely to evolve over the coming years.

It’s a tough course: I ask students to write all the algorithms from scratch. That process forces them to grapple with the many decisions that go into developing these tools. That allows them as graduates to ask smart questions when they interact with data scientists or with tech firms. It’s easy to get tricked by fancy methods or buzzwords, but our students develop a deep conceptual understanding, allowing them to cut through the BS that is so common in these conversations. This foundation also allows them to understand when these tools may exacerbate—or reduce—biases, and how to develop systems better tuned to social needs.

Students work on a final project, and it’s been exciting to see how students apply the technical concepts to the causes they care about. This year students applied machine learning to immigration court proceedings, US elections, and many other important policy topics.

As attention pivoted to AI last year, it quickly became clear that there were few people who deeply understood both the technology and its societal implications. We’re training graduates to have both—to help our societies prosper in this new age. ●

**“Tech firms are investing enormous resources into AI development, but those investments are targeted at the needs of wealthy countries. Many low-income countries have budgets that are too small to translate these innovations to meet local needs.”**







Photo courtesy of ITU/Wood (CC BY 4.0)

# BRIDGING TECHNOLOGY AND POLICY

**Alumna Rebeca Moreno  
Jiménez MPA '15  
fights for the displaced  
using big data.**

BY BRETT ESSLER



**R**EBECA MORENO JIMÉNEZ MPA '15 has always identified with migrants.

Born and raised in Mexico, Moreno Jiménez straddled two worlds. Her paternal grandmother was from Chiapas in southeastern Mexico and spoke an indigenous language; her mother's family was Spanish-speaking and from northern Mexico. Her family eventually ended up in Ensenada, near the California border.

The family was middle class, but, in 1994, when Moreno Jiménez was 10, they were evicted from their house during Mexico's peso crisis (often referred to as the "Tequila Crisis"). They found themselves in what she calls "urban poverty." "It was a very traumatic experience for my family not being able to pay your rent and then you're out of the house," she says.

The experience shaped Moreno Jiménez's worldview and work ethic.

"I think that's why I care very much about migration issues, because besides being a migrant myself here in Switzerland, I've been a migrant for a lot of time internally [in Mexico]," she says from her office in Geneva, where she is the innovation officer and lead data scientist at the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

She received a nearly full scholarship to Tecnológico de Monterrey, where she earned a BA in international relations and an MPP. After a stint at the World Bank in Mexico City as a public information officer, Moreno Jiménez received a Fulbright Scholarship, which led her to SIPA.

At Columbia she quickly charted her own course.

"Everything that I was doing at the beginning was statistics, macroeconomics, microeconomics—all the core courses," she says. "And then I took the Applied Peacebuilding class." A class project led her to Uganda, where she worked with GAPS Uganda, a grassroots nonprofit organization committed to advocating for transitional justice and the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. She helped the NGO improve Uganda's early warning and response

(EWR) efforts to prevent violence.

The experience transformed not only her time at SIPA but also her career path.

"I came back, and I was in another reality," she says about her newfound love for melding technology and humanitarian work. "This is what I want to do. I don't know how to, but I really want to help."

Moreno Jiménez met with her professor—Eugenia "Jenny" McGill MIA '00, director of the Economic and Political Development concentration—to essentially create a custom curriculum at the intersection of peacebuilding and data science.

"I think Professor McGill was worried about me—'I don't know what's happening with your curriculum,'" she recalls McGill saying, worried that Moreno Jiménez would not fulfill her requirements. "I [said], 'Trust me on this one.' I started to be very, very adept at seeing things that are related to technology and emerging tech at SIPA." She also designed her own Capstone workshop supporting Syrian refugees in Jordan.

"Our most successful Capstone workshop projects are often those that students help design," McGill says. "That was certainly the case in the 2014–15 project with the World Food Programme in Jordan, which Rebeca initiated with a Jordanian classmate."

"The flexibility of SIPA allowed me to do that," Moreno Jiménez says.

Moreno Jiménez made the most of her time at SIPA, participating in student groups like the Latin American Student Association (LASA), being a finalist in the SIPA Dean's Public Policy Challenge with her team's startup, and serving as a volunteer for New York City's participatory budgeting process. She estimates that she attended over 300 events both on and off campus during her two years in New York.

After graduation in 2015, Moreno Jiménez ended up at UNHCR as its first ever female data scientist and has been there ever since. Her work leverages data science, big data, and AI to enhance protection and decision-making in the humanitarian sector across the globe.

"The problem in humanitarian settings is that the data quality is not good," she says. "In some places, we don't even have what

we call 'humanitarian access,' meaning our colleagues cannot enter that zone because it's a war zone. So we don't really know how many people sometimes are in need of our assistance."

Moreno Jiménez and her team often rely on the "triple nexus"—the collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace actors—to gather, share, and analyze data. With the advent of AI, humanitarian agencies like UNHCR are having to quickly adapt.

"For the humanitarian sector, it's adapting our standard operating procedures and policies—all the human rights legal frameworks, the right to nondiscrimination, the right to avoid bias, et cetera—to AI and all the emerging technology," she says. "So that actually comes from my SIPA background because I'm a hybrid in the agency" at the intersection of technology and policy.

Moreno Jiménez's accomplishments and citations in the field are many, but she is especially proud of Project Jetson. Developed by her team at UNHCR's Innovation Service, Jetson is a machine learning-based app that provides predictive analytics about population movements in specific regions of countries and has had lifesaving results in Somalia and Brazil.

UNHCR estimates that as of May, 120 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide, so Moreno Jiménez's team is in even greater demand. Today she spends less time in the field and more time managing data projects from Geneva, speaking at conferences, and publishing her research.

"The privilege of being in UNHCR's headquarters is the teams that you work with," she says. "It could be Korea in the morning, and then in the afternoon, Paraguay telling you another thing. I absorb the knowledge through them. They're the real innovators, actually; I just facilitate their ideas and projects."

In many ways it's like her time at SIPA, where she absorbed every aspect of being a student and a citizen of New York City.

"I'm a hyper person, and I think New York just fit me perfectly," she says. "I'll take advantage of everything." ●

VICTORIA NULAND

# A Diplomat's Tool Chest: 'Pajamas, a Blanket, and Snacks'

Former top diplomat Ambassador Victoria Nuland joins SIPA with lessons from a 35-year career under six US presidents.

BY STEPHEN KURCZY

**O**n the eve of February 24, 2022, Victoria Nuland was holed up in her State Department office, prepared for the worst. For months, US intelligence had been monitoring the buildup of more than 100,000 Russian troops along the border with Ukraine. Invasion appeared imminent.

As the undersecretary of state for political affairs and the highest-ranking member of the US Foreign Service, Nuland oversaw day-to-day matters worldwide for the State Department. For nearly a decade, she had been focused on Ukraine, first by supporting the country's pro-democracy protests in 2013, then by condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and now in calling attention to the looming military conflict.

"We started warning the world, including the Ukrainians, NATO, and everybody else, what was coming and preparing in case Putin invaded," Nuland recalls. "Many people believed it wouldn't happen, that it was just a bluff. But as I've done many times in my career, I got ready to camp out in the office. I had two changes of clothes. I had pajamas, a blanket, and snacks. And, unfortunately, the night that Putin sent his forces into Ukraine, all of those things were needed."

What's needed to succeed as a diplomat is a topic that Nuland will now be addressing at SIPA, bringing with her three-and-a-half decades of experience with the State Department, including as its spokesperson, its ambassador to NATO, and its acting deputy secretary of state—considered the nation's No. 2 diplomatic post. She retired in March,

after accepting the position of Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor in the Practice of International Diplomacy.

Considered a chief architect of US policy on Ukraine, Nuland helped Kyiv repel what was widely expected to be a quick Russian victory by, in the words of Secretary of State Antony Blinken, "marshaling a global coalition to ensure [Putin's] strategic failure." Kyiv has since retaken more than half of the territory that was initially seized by Russia, and Blinken has said diplomats and students of foreign policy will for years be studying Nuland's "leadership on Ukraine."

At SIPA, Nuland herself will be leading such study sessions as director of the half-century-old International Fellows Program, which combines in-class lectures with field trips to meet with policymakers and diplomats. With Washington focused on a pivotal

US election and its potential fallout, Nuland intends for students to follow what's said about foreign policy on the campaign trail and to analyze each presidential candidate's positions.

"What I want to bring to students is a sense that this is a craft—the craft of diplomacy, the craft of strategy and foreign policy that is really about human beings, human behavior, nations and their sense of themselves, their sense of legacy, their sense of their place in the world," Nuland says. "It is not something you can do over the video screen. It is about blood-and-guts human beings."

"I also want to encourage students, whether they are American or international students, to understand this hinge moment that we are in," she continues. "The open, free, democratic system that has been preponderant since the end of World War II

**"What I want to bring to students is a sense that this is a craft—the craft of diplomacy, the craft of strategy and foreign policy that is really about human beings, human behavior, nations and their sense of themselves, their sense of legacy, their sense of their place in the world."**



is at a moment of deep challenge. We have to refresh it, redouble the investment, and bring more countries benefits from it—or the autocrats are going to run the table.”

Joining SIPA also gives Nuland the chance to reunite with her old boss and “longtime mentor,” former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who chairs the faculty advisory board for the Institute for Global Politics (IGP), of which Nuland will be an affiliated faculty member.

“It’s an opportunity not only to teach some of the best students but to rub brains with some of the best thinkers around the country and create opportunities for more creative thought than you often have time for with the daily grind, the inbox of government,” says Nuland, who is no stranger to academia as the daughter of the late Yale University professor, surgeon, and author Sherwin B. Nuland.

While Nuland had a global portfolio at the State Department and served around the world—including in Moscow, Brussels, China, and Mongolia—her expertise is on Russia, which was the original source of her interest in international affairs. As a teenager she fell in love with Russian literature after seeing the play *Three Sisters*, which led her down a rabbit hole of Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy. Then while studying history at Brown University, Nuland took the Foreign Service exam on a whim.

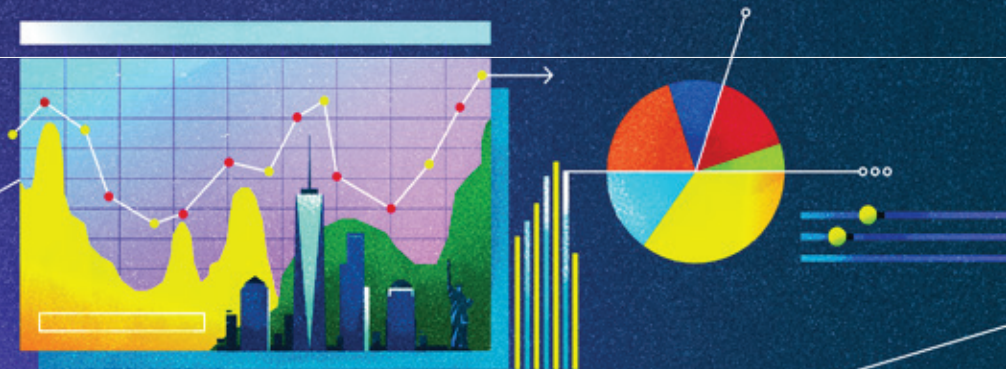
“It was something that everybody in the history and international relations major just did for fun on a Saturday morning,”

*continued on page 47*



*Photo by Ronald Sachs*





BY AGATHA BORDONARO • ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAN MATUTINA

# STAYING TWO STEPS AHEAD

## SIPA'S INTERDISCIPLINARY EDGE







**SIPA'S FACULTY DEPLOY CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH TO ADDRESS THE WORLD'S MOST COMPLEX CHALLENGES, LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY—PROTECTING DEMOCRACY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AMONG OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES.**

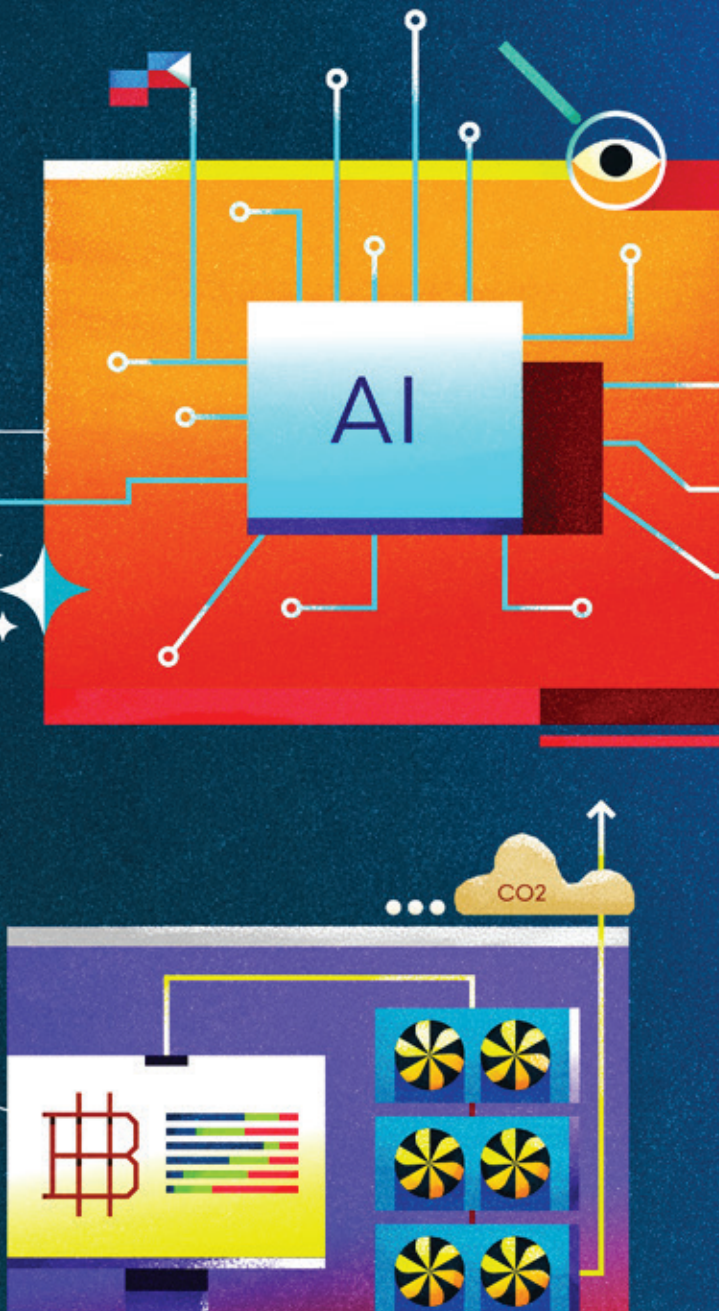
When Keren Yarhi-Milo became dean of SIPA in July 2022, she envisioned a school transformed not only to “confront challenges but to anticipate them to help decision-makers stay two steps ahead.”

To that end, Yarhi-Milo and her faculty colleagues framed the School’s research and engagement efforts around five global policy challenges: climate and sustainable development, democratic resilience, geopolitical stability, inclusive prosperity and macroeconomic performance, and technology and innovation.

“We are defining issues where SIPA can make the most difference: in our interdisciplinary research, in our teaching, and in our impact on policy,” Yarhi-Milo said in 2022. “And we bring to these issues not just new ideas but a basis in rigorous research and an appreciation for complexity. That’s how we can help leaders in government, corporations, and NGOs go beyond reacting to each crisis to also seeing the bigger picture and planning strategically for the future.”

Two years into Yarhi-Milo’s tenure, SIPA has doubled down on its commitment to leveraging partnerships with community organizations, governments, lawmakers, and industry leaders to identify, study, and ultimately create effective solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges. Case in point: the 2023 launch of the Institute of Global Politics (IGP), which has become a high-profile platform for critical policy dialogue and a hub for collaborative, cross-cutting policy research.

*SIPA Magazine* spoke with some of the School’s leading faculty researchers about projects that tackle the policy issues that matter most, locally and globally.





## REAL-TIME DATA TRANSFORMING LIFE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Columbia University’s medical school, the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, developed a survey intended to track the short- and long-term health impacts of the coronavirus in New York.

Survey administrators found they had a captive audience in hospital patients, who, with limited activities and mobility, filled out the survey consistently. But the response rate outside the hospital was nearly nonexistent, making tracking the effects of the virus nearly impossible. That’s when the medical school reached out to Ester Fuchs, professor of international and public affairs and political science, and director of the Urban and Social Policy concentration at SIPA.

“You have to have a dissemination plan,” Fuchs says. “You can’t just put a survey up and think people will respond.”

In the early 2000s, Fuchs had successfully brought together New York City government officials and hundreds of community organizations to redesign the city’s after-school system. “It was a politically contentious, difficult process, but we did it,” Fuchs says. “And everybody was pretty happy with the outcome.”

That experience had highlighted for Fuchs the importance of community engagement in crafting relevant policy and bringing about change. She recognized a similar situation now with the medical school’s COVID survey: To get significant participation and usable data, the community would need to be involved.

“Community organizations understand what’s going on, on the ground,” she says, “and they can disseminate because they’re trusted messengers.”

Fuchs reached out to her network of local leaders and nonprofits and began homing in on what data would be most useful to gather. Since hospitals and governments were now effectively collecting health information, Fuchs and her partners altered the survey to focus on the secondary impacts of COVID: “the impacts on people’s economic well-being and on their mental health and social condition,” she says. “What’s really needed is for us to better understand what’s going on with people in their lives. And then you can target resources to where the needs are.”

The resulting project, called Communities Speak, harnesses the power of real-time data to identify citizens’ needs and help cities create effective, evidence-based policies, budgets, and economic plans to address them.

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Communities Speak has employed more than 20 SIPA students for hands-on research, development, data collection, survey design, and community-relations roles since its inception. Fuchs even pulled in a former SIPA student of hers, Ashley MacQuarrie MPA ’17, to serve as project director. The success of the

project in New York has led Bloomberg Philanthropies to charge Fuchs with adjusting the model for other cities, including Reno, Nevada, and Kansas City, Missouri.

The Communities Speak survey is administered twice a year to ensure that the most accurate, up-to-date information is collected. “If you’re using census data and it’s two years old,” Fuchs says, “it’s actually not useful.”

For example, one of the needs identified by the community was access to affordable day care. During the height of COVID in 2020–21, as many as 20 percent of national childcare centers closed down, so that even in affluent areas where citizens could afford day care, there was nowhere to enroll their children. The Communities Speak survey identified the populations with the greatest need for childcare—in the Bronx, for example, a whopping 60 percent of respondents with children reported difficulty finding childcare—while also demonstrating how that need correlates with many other critical insecurities.

“Food insecurity, housing insecurity, inability to pay rent, and inability to get back to work are all connected to the inability to get affordable and accessible day care,” Fuchs says. “What this does is light a fire under policymakers. We can say, ‘If you focus on day care, you have a cascading positive impact on people’s lives.’”

In April SIPA’s newly launched Institute of Global Politics (IGP) and its Women’s Initiative held a special event, “The State of Child Care in New York City,” which brought together city council members with Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton. The event comprised two panels, the first of which was moderated by Fuchs and centered on day care; the second panel, moderated by SIPA adjunct associate professor Jeri Powell, focused on after-school programs.

“I think we figured something out that’s really valuable,” Fuchs says.

Ester Fuchs





Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo

## CREATING A TARGETED INITIATIVE TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION

Women's rights around the globe are backsliding, from the rollback of reproductive rights in the United States to the Taliban's ban on girls' education in Afghanistan to the calls in China for women to exit the workforce and focus on child-bearing. So there is an urgent need to launch a targeted initiative focused on women—one that provides evidence-based, actionable research and realistic policy proposals to advance women's full and equal participation in society.

That's where IGP's Women's Initiative comes in. Launched in March, the Women's Initiative has convened some of the world's leading policymakers, scholars, and advocates—including Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, IGP Carnegie Distinguished Fellow Stacey Abrams, Planned Parenthood president and CEO Alexis McGill Johnson, National Domestic Workers Alliance president Ai-jen Poo, and Girls Who Code founder Reshma Saujani—to discuss a wide range of pressing issues facing women and girls today, including reproductive rights, gender equity in the workplace, women and girls in conflict zones, and peace processes. A focus on women's issues was foundational to the very development of IGP, says Yarhi-Milo.

"We were determined to approach this, not as an afterthought, but rather as a core focus of IGP," she says. "Every global challenge is a women's issue, and addressing these challenges through that lens is an urgent imperative."

Clinton, who serves as IGP Faculty Advisory Board chair, added at the Launch Summit, "We need this IGP Women's Initiative because women are not free or equal yet."

To advance gender equality in the United States and around the world, the initiative develops evidence-based strategies tackling four key areas: women's economic opportunity; women's health; women's safety and security; and women's leadership, democracy, and human rights.

While many organizations taking on these issues have either a local or a global focus, IGP's Women's Initiative is unique in that it approaches the issues from all angles—local to global. Christina Shelby, executive director of IGP, adds that the goal is for IGP to engage with experts and partners across the University to address challenges holistically.

Clinton notes that she and Yarhi-Milo believe IGP's Women's Initiative is groundbreaking and different from other women-focused projects because of "world-class scholarship that will produce impactful policy recommendations; the convening of smart, inspiring women with expertise and experience to move us forward; the training of the next generation of women leaders; and men who believe in equality, too."

One example of Women's Initiative work is a report in partnership with Vital Voices Global Partnership on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), published this fall.

TFGBV—which encompasses a wide range of online harms, including distribution of nonconsensual intimate imagery (NCII), AI-generated NCII, and deepfake pornography—is an important issue that silences women's participation in public and civic life.

The Women's Initiative also held a July webinar on paid family leave featuring Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), who are cochairs of the Senate Bipartisan Paid Family Leave Working Group, and Columbia professors Jane Waldfogel and Sandra E. Black. The webinar covered the history of this issue, recent bicameral and bipartisan progress on national paid leave policies, and the work remaining for the 118th Congress and beyond.

## PRESERVING DEMOCRACY FROM AI'S HARMFUL EFFECTS

In addition to its Women's Initiative, IGP also announced a new, independent Innovation Lab that will tackle the challenges that AI poses to democracies around the world. Part of French President Emmanuel Macron's new *États généraux de l'information* program, the lab is helmed by Camille François MIA '13, an associate professor of practice at SIPA, and Maria Ressa, a Nobel laureate, professor of professional practice at SIPA, and seasoned journalist who knows first-hand about the dangers that technology poses to democratic principles. (Read more about François and Ressa on pages 10–11.)

The lab is providing a robust platform for researchers, policymakers, and technologists to collaborate on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that AI technologies pose to democratic institutions and norms.

Among the focus areas François and Ressa are studying are generative AI and disinformation, leveraging open-source





Camille François MIA '13 and Maria Ressa

AI, generative AI's impact on content moderation, and decoding red teaming (a process in which organizations test their own vulnerability to hacking).

"We want to help bridge the knowledge gap between experts on democratic theory and the developers at the cutting edge of AI technology," says François, who as former chief innovation officer at the cybersecurity firm Graphika oversaw the firm's analysis, investigation, and R&D teams. "Our goal is to translate these two groups' most urgent insights for wider audiences and to shape policies that encourage innovation while protecting vital democratic and social institutions."

## TRANSLATING ECONOMIC DATA INTO GREENER POLICY

"The beauty of being an economist in a school of public policy is it's just a very natural check on that sort of meta, talking-to-yourself type of conversation that academics are really good at," says Douglas Almond, a professor of economics and international and public affairs at SIPA who specializes in health and environmental economics. With the School plugged into the policymaking community, he says, "I think we have a skill set where we can provide evidence on topics that are very much at the forefront of DC debates."

Almond does just that through a powerful combination of economic research, a "modest dose" of science, and close relationships with policymakers.

As one example of how he seeks to address current policy challenges, Almond pointed to recent research he's done on Bitcoin, which is the top cryptocurrency in the world and is unique in that it has a limited supply and is decentralized — meaning Bitcoin can be bought, sold, and exchanged directly

without any intermediary, such as a bank. In 2021 the United States surpassed China to become the largest Bitcoin miner in the world. Because Bitcoin mining requires an extraordinary amount of electricity — up to 1.3 percent of global electricity production, or roughly the electricity demand of Portugal — Almond became interested in the climate impact of Bitcoin mining in the US.

In a recent working paper, he and his coauthors found that for a crypto miner in Pennsylvania, a \$1 increase in Bitcoin price leads to \$3.11–\$6.79 in external damages from carbon emissions alone. Almond and his colleagues are working now on a follow-up paper showing how high Bitcoin prices result in increased air pollution in areas of Pennsylvania, which in turn can adversely affect worker productivity and cause other negative effects.

These findings have real-world policy implications, as they inform any new cryptocurrency and crypto-mining regulations that the US develops.

"If what you're doing is related to something [lawmakers] are discussing, it's not a heavy lift to get them to be interested in your research," says Almond, who also serves on IGP's Faculty Advisory Board. "Then it can really have some serious impact."

In the past few years, Almond has published many other pieces of actionable research on pressing issues, including a 2020 article linking livestock processing plants with the spread of COVID, and a 2023 article demonstrating the continuing cost of motherhood for women's careers (sometimes called the motherhood penalty). He is now exploring the effects of moral licensing — the concept of behaving well in one area and giving oneself a pass to behave badly in another — on people's behavior with respect to sustainability and going green.

"If I've been good environmentally in one sphere, am I bad environmentally in another sphere?" he says. "If I have an electric car, then do I feel better about flying to China? It's very plausible to me that something like that would exist. And if so, What's the magnitude of that offset? It's a policy question, too, because it's like, What's the full effect of that 'good' thing?"

Douglas Almond







Eric Verhoogen

## FROM EMPIRICAL MODEL TO INDUSTRIAL IMPACT

Before entering the field of economics, Eric Verhoogen was working for a research organization that was looking into working conditions in Haiti. His work was a kind of follow-up to an exposé from several years prior that showed the conditions across Haiti's baseball factories were abysmal: Employees were overworked, vastly underpaid, and harassed and abused. When he tried to revisit these sweatshops to check on the status of the conditions, Verhoogen couldn't find the shops. "All the baseball factories basically had left," he says. Rather than improve, they'd simply relocated.

"That was not the ideal outcome," says Verhoogen, professor of international and public affairs and of economics at SIPA. "The question becomes, How do you both raise wages and improve working conditions, and attract capital at the same time? This concept is sometimes called a *high-road strategy*, where you pay higher wages and treat people well and that also ends up being profitable for the company. Understanding under what conditions that can work and what are the things that lead firms to pursue those sorts of strategies has been part of what I've been working on."

One of his most recent research projects on this topic involves the upgrading of stitching motors at leather goods factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Motivated by a real-world issue, the ever-increasing demand for energy and the climate impact of producing more energy, Verhoogen is studying ways in which to improve the energy efficiency of factories. While a much more energy-efficient motor for stitching exists—it's called a servo motor—most firms have not adopted it. So Verhoogen and his coauthors engaged in a randomized intervention to demonstrate the advantages of the servo motor to factory managers.

"The motor has some other attractive characteristics, too," Verhoogen says. "It makes less noise. It requires less physical force to operate. It doesn't generate so much heat. So workers like it, and it's saving electricity."

Not surprisingly, Verhoogen says many of the factories he and his research team educated about the servo motor adopted it. But one surprising result was that many of the factories in the study's control group—the group that did not receive the new motor or information about it—adopted the servo motor as well.

The team's research paper is focusing on these sorts of knowledge spillovers. "Parts of the neighborhood in Dhaka are superdense: A block will have 25 factories on it, and another block will have 15 factories," Verhoogen says. "So they see us going in and installing the new motor in one factory. And then the guys next door are like, What's going on? So the paper is quantifying these spillovers, sometimes called social learning. It's knowledge flow."

By revealing the factors that influence how technology is adopted, such as this social learning, and studying the extent of their effects, Verhoogen's research has the capacity to directly inform policies around sustainability and industrial development.

"Why do some places, and some industries, and some people tend to be more innovative than others? What can policy do to try to promote that sort of innovation and adoption of new technologies?" Verhoogen says, noting that being at SIPA encourages him to focus on such important real-world questions. "SIPA keeps me grounded in stuff that matters for the world."

## PREPARING US FOR WHAT'S NEXT

In 2019 then-President Lee C. Bollinger called upon the Columbia University community to embrace "the fourth purpose" (in addition to research, education, and public service): to leverage interdisciplinary scholarly knowledge in an effort to create societal and global impact in close partnership with government agencies, civil society organizations, industry, nonprofits, and community groups.

Yarhi-Milo and SIPA's faculty have taken this call to heart not only through their research—creating new knowledge in emerging areas like sustainable finance, food security, and the intersection of technology and conflict—but also through their dedication to civic engagement. Faculty members have recently served in roles in the Biden-Harris administration, the Finance Commission of India, and the Bank of England, to name a few.

The dean's mission for SIPA, and that of the fourth purpose, is to further thought leadership that meets the current moment—climate collapse, geopolitical challenges, democratic backsliding, and rapidly expanding technology—head on.

"While we're an academic institution, we're doing more than engaging with academic literature," Yarhi-Milo says. "We're creating knowledge that allows us to engage with problems around the world while seeing comparative trends and patterns that help prepare us for what's next." ●



# IGP's Inaugural Year in Review

SIPA launched its much-anticipated Institute of Global Politics (IGP) in October 2023. In the months that followed, IGP brought people together across geographic and political divides, created a space for open dialogue across ideological differences, inspired new ideas, and worked to advance necessary conversations and build the foundation for policy impact work addressing some of today's most pressing challenges.

## BY THE NUMBERS (October 2023–May 2024)

# 24

MAJOR  
EVENTS

# 14

CARNEGIE  
DISTINGUISHED  
FELLOWS HOSTED

# 36

STUDENT SCHOLARS  
FROM ACROSS  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# 3

Across the Aisle  
Conversations

# 6

Rapid Response Webinars  
and Conversations



# 13K+

Event  
Attendees



# 240K+

Event  
Livestream Views

# 23

Policy Roundtables  
& Skills Workshops

## KEY MOMENTS

- 1 IGP's Inaugural Summit launched with a full day of programming dedicated to conversations about the global economy, artificial intelligence and democracy, civil discourse, women shaping diplomacy, and more on October 3, 2023. *Photo by Shahar Azran*
- 2 In December journalist and *PBS News Hour* coanchor **Amna Nawaz** moderated an Across the Aisle event with former White House chiefs of staff **Mick Mulvaney** and **Ron Klain**. *Photo by Eileen Barroso*
- 3 IGP launched its Women's Initiative, dedicated to ensuring women's full and equal participation in society, with a major summit in March. *Photo by Nir Arieli*
- 4 Together with the Urban and Social Policy Concentration, IGP brought together nine members of the New York City Council to discuss the state of day care and after-school care at "The State of Child Care in New York City" in April. *Photo by Michael DiVito*



See Notable Events (pages 34–35) for more 2023–24 IGP event highlights.



## IGP STUDENT SCHOLARS

## The Next Generation of Local &amp; Global Leaders

The IGP Student Scholars Program prepares Columbia students to understand and find solutions to today's most complex global challenges.

*"IGP showed me the importance of listening and engaging with individuals from all over the world and with different views. When we do that, we can tackle age-old problems from unique perspectives and angles."*

**Natalia Kanos MPA '24**  
2023–24 IGP Student Scholar



## POLICY ROUNDTABLES

- 5 Policy roundtables give students unparalleled access to the IGP Carnegie Distinguished Fellows and other select guests who are directly engaged in addressing a host of global issues and challenges.

The "Reproductive Rights in the United States and Around the World" policy roundtable with IGP Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow **Michelle Bachelet**, former president of Chile and former United Nations high commissioner for human rights, uncovered the domestic and international barriers to advancing reproductive rights.

*Photo by Eileen Barroso*



## TEACHING &amp; TRAINING: SKILLS WORKSHOPS

- 6 IGP prepares students for careers in the policy world before they begin through hands-on skills workshops led by practitioners with unmatched expertise and deep knowledge.

**Kim Ghattas**, IGP Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow, Emmy Award-winning journalist, and author, convened a skills workshop to discuss the process of nonfiction writing with students who aspire to do the same. *Photo by Christina Shelby*

## 2024–25 IGP Carnegie Distinguished Fellows

IGP's Carnegie Distinguished Fellows add their perspectives to ongoing policy work, participate in major events, and engage with students in policy roundtables, office hours, and one-on-one sessions.

**CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR, CBE**  
Chief International Anchor, CNN

**MIRA MURATI**  
Chief Technology Officer of OpenAI

**HON. JANE HARMAN**  
Chair of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy; Former Congresswoman from California

**RESHMA SAUJANI**  
Founder and CEO of Moms First; Founder of Girls Who Code

**REID HOFFMAN**  
Cofounder of LinkedIn and Inflection AI; Partner at Greylock

**WENDY SHERMAN**  
21st US Deputy Secretary of State

**MARTIN KIMANI**  
Former Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN; Executive Director of the NYU Center on International Cooperation

**CHAD SWEET**  
Former Chief of Staff to the Second Secretary of Homeland Security; Cofounder and CEO of The Chertoff Group

**SUSANA MALCORRA**  
Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Argentina; President and Cofounder of GWL Voices

**HAMDÍ ULUKAYA**  
Founder and CEO of Chobani; Founder of the Tent Partnership for Refugees



Read more about the  
IGP Carnegie  
Distinguished Fellows.





Photo by Sarah Werner MPA '22

**“Their lives had become defined by performing their livelihoods to educate visitors, and in return we had reduced these livelihoods into what they believed visitors wanted to see.”**

THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE 2024

# In Words I Can Understand

BY ALICE LASSMAN MPA '24

**P**illowed pockets of fresh, steaming pita burning my hands, bagpipes deafening my ears, the slippery worn-out stones of the amphitheater bruising my legs. Jordan was teasing me, a playful game of collecting and embodying my senses one by one. We travel to learn: to smell, taste, feel the newness of the unfamiliar, to test our expectations and biases, and for the environment to test us in return.

But we were guests, not tourists. The Kraft Global Fellows were listening to a Bedouin tribe explain their livelihood, halfway through our two-week delegation to Amman’s Columbia Global Center. We sat there for an hour in the dusty silence of a desert sunset, posing questions to our hosts as we were expected to. Among my cohort, my friends, we looked to each other to raise a question when the dialogue lapsed. It was something we had become so accustomed to doing, ensuring our hosts knew how grateful we were to be welcomed as guests in so many places throughout our visit to Jordan.

In the geographic discipline, when we layer a space with a specific meaning we’ve ascribed to it, it becomes a place. In this place, so much meaning had been gouged: Waves of civilizations came and went, and rivers had dried up as eons brought new sediments to rock formations. Temporal and spatial planes truly converged here—a rich tapestry of human and natural meaning.

But threaded through time, something eternal. The nomadic indigenous Bedouin tribe still living as they have for centuries, in coexistence with the “middle-of-nowhereness,” the blues and oranges of Mars, the towering canyons.

Or so I had thought. Here we were, another jeep-load of tourists that cycle through these visits each day. The journey was clinical: Offload guests, fire up the open flame of the *saj* (domed iron griddle), sizzle the dough into *shraak* (bread). Our entire trip to Wadi Rum was a series of tightly scheduled and contained activities. Next, we were guided to see their animals, those of us willing with the chance to milk their goats. Another pair of unfamiliar foreign hands squeezing their teats, a bleating sound of a cyclical discomfort. The camels, with patchy fur and evident signs of strain, were overworked and in pain.

Outside the tent, in the hazy distance of the blistering sun: my friends, taking photos. I looked down at the tea I had been poured, the date biscuit crumbs in my lap, the same crumbs that had woven themselves into the threads of the rich-red embroidered carpet on which countless others had sat before me. The very experiences we had sought out for embodied learning, for newness in the unfamiliar, instead drew *more* distance with the unfamiliar. We weren’t there to participate, but consume and observe. After all, the trip required us to publish reflections each night.

I could suddenly see the true cost of our visit, and was drawing into question why we even choose to engage in travel at all. Their lives had become defined by performing their livelihoods to educate visitors, and in return we had reduced these livelihoods into what they believed visitors wanted to see. But who does this learning serve if

it doesn't allow them to live how they want to live, nor offer us the authenticity that travelers crave?

The relationship between visitors, the Bedouin, and their animals was a trio marred with a changing tension. The animals were now just props for this performance, the milk they produced immediately thrown out. The introduction of visitors had thrown off course their mutually supportive ecosystem, where animals and Bedouin sustained each other. They were now viewed through the economic lens of how they could be used through tourism, their only income source. When visitors stopped coming during COVID, they had to sell off the majority of their camels. In trying times, the Bedouin had no choice but to claim the role of master.

It wasn't the cohabitation of humans and nature I was so craving to see. No, they had offered us their voices and shown us their lives because they had no other choice. As a development practitioner, I was everything SIPA had taught me not to be: an agent of recolonization of their self-determination.

#### ABOUT THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Raphael Smith Memorial Prize is given in memory of Raphael Smith, a member of the Class of 1994 who died in a motorcycle accident while retracing his stepfather's adventure of motorcycling from Paris to Tokyo. The prize, established by his family and friends, is awarded annually to two second-year SIPA students for travel articles that exemplify the adventurous spirit of SIPA. The winners of this year's contest are Alice Lassman MPA '24 and Ben Ritter MIA '24.

We travel to experience comfortable discomfort, to have our expectations palatably and predictably challenged. But what if what we see is too uncomfortable?

We pay, and take time, to travel—and accordingly, we expect that our expectations will be fulfilled. We travel to be challenged *in words we can understand*. We travel to meet someone who spares their time and resources to work out a way to demonstrate differences between us that neatly fits into our frameworks of understanding. We travel to experience joy, for the production of others to be deemed worthwhile.

Night fell. As the darkness illuminated the stars above us, our voices floated to the carved stone boundaries of the desert and into the distance, not echoing back. While we spent hours lamenting our unchallenged expectations,

the canyons were just sitting there. They were passive, unresponsive, not disagreeing with our words. But for those very reasons, they were teaching us lessons they've held on to for millennia: that we didn't need a response that makes sense to us, or even a response at all.

We don't need to intellectualize, or even to understand, our encounter. Sometimes we just need to simply be, just as our hosts ask of us, instead of deciding what kinds of guests we must be. And this is what being a development practitioner is all about: observing without expectations in order to meet those in need exactly where they are, not where we think they should be. ●



Photos courtesy of Alice Lassman MPA '24

THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE 2024

# Borderline Lost: 85 Miles on the Rio Grande

BY BEN RITTER MIA '24

“Paddle left! Your other left! Hold on!”

Bracing against the side of the canoe and trying to hold the boat steady, I duck my head as we crash into the towering 10-foot wall of river cane overhanging the Texas side of the Rio Grande.

I cover my eyes with my arm and lean forward, wincing as dozens of bamboo-like branches lash against my life jacket. I hear the long *screech* and violent *thwacks* as our heavy canoe is dragged through this jungle by the swift pull of the current.

Suddenly, I feel the canoe lurch to the right as Dave digs his paddle into the riverbank and pushes our bow clear of the last thicket. I open my eyes and smell the familiar, sharp sulfuric scent of river mud. Rotting organic matter, dropped from above, now litters our hair, our cold-weather gear, our boat full of supplies.

“You good?” I shout, as I wrestle my hat back onto my head, wiping the mud from my face and scanning the river ahead for the next set of rapids.

Dave raises his paddle above his head, Viking-style, and lets out a whoop that echoes against the sheer canyon walls around us.

We quickly settle back into the wordless rhythm we’ve become accustomed to over the past week of paddling. I steer us ahead to catch up with Gavin, who, despite volunteering to take our second boat today—an inflatable

kayak now half-deflated and only marginally seaworthy—has been leading since we broke camp that morning.

“I wonder if all this was intentionally planted here to try to make it impossible to cross,” Dave muses during a quiet stretch of river that afternoon.

Since we first pushed off on this weeklong canoe trip down a remote 80-mile stretch of the Rio Grande this December, river “crossings” had become a regular topic of conversation.

Among our crew—a Northwest farmer, an NYC attorney, and a grad student—none of us brought any deep personal experience with immigration policy or the southern border. But throughout the trip, we faced regular reminders that our chosen paddling adventure was along a section of a major—and particularly tense—international border.



Photo by Brian Miller







Photos courtesy of Ben Ritter MIA '24

**“Throughout the trip, we faced regular reminders that our chosen paddling adventure was along a section of a major—and particularly tense—international border.”**

We stashed our passports deep within our dry bags in case of a wrong turn or a run-in with border authorities. Park officials and guidebooks warned us not to set foot on the right side of the river—Mexico—except in cases of emergency or injury.

Days earlier, hurtling along Route 90 in our borrowed, beat-up sedan, somewhere between San Antonio and Uvalde, I slammed the brakes as a pair of headlights suddenly leapt off the road ahead of us and pulled around violently. As we passed, peering out into the inky darkness, we spotted a white pickup truck with “US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PATROL” on its door. Over the next two miles, we saw at least a dozen more, their headlights peering out toward the road like the gleaming eyes of reptilian predators lying in wait.

An hour later, we slowed to a halt at a checkpoint, smiling at the Border Patrol agent as he asked me and Dave to confirm our citizenship. From the back seat, jammed between our mountains of gear—beef jerky, tents, charts, water, pans, beer, ice—Gavin casually leaned forward to confirm that he, too, was there and that he, too, was an American citizen. We were waved through without a hitch.

Back on the river, we soon forget the checkpoints and warnings from days before. Along this stretch of the Rio Grande, the terrain is dominated by soaring cliffs, deep slot canyons, and scorched flatlands for miles on either side. Many of the deeper canyons are overwhelming in their beauty, their stark geological features and alien landscapes preserved from some remote, distant past.

Our guidebook recommends stopping to explore local hot springs, noting one especially popular spot for local “fishermen, farmers, and Mexicans.” Given that these pools are all on the Mexican side, we laugh at the distinction.

Waking up in our cliffside campsite after our eighth and final night on the river, we are abruptly reminded of the importance of the distinction between left bank or right by the sounds of helicopter blades rapidly approaching. I glance around at our gear strewn out around us as we sit basking in the morning sun, steaming coffee cups in hand. Suddenly, the chopper banks around a bend in the river a few hundred yards downstream, flying surprisingly low.

Drowned out by the wash of its rotors, I recognize the now familiar words “US BORDER PATROL” in blue lettering blazoned along the fuselage. It passes us and quickly turns right, hard, headed back the way it came. Moments later, it’s back, hovering over us even lower as the pilot leans out and peers down at us through his black-visored helmet. We wave and raise our coffee mugs in greeting, blinking against the sun and dust.

“Close enough to see the color of our skin,” I say, only half-jokingly, when the noise finally recedes as it carries on its patrol up the river.

Ten miles downstream, we pull aside for the final time and haul our boats out of the river. Our kayak is dragged, fully deflated now, along with our soporific gear and bags of trash up to our takeout rendezvous point.

As we drive back into cell reception, I read headlines from the past week. In Eagle Pass, just a few miles downstream, a migrant attempting to cross the river drowned, allegedly in full view of border officials.

I begin to drift off to sleep in the back seat, warm and dry for the first time in eight days, and I can’t help but wonder whether my first trip to the southern border hasn’t provided me with more questions than answers.

One thing is certain—this grand river will forever hold starkly different associations for me and my crewmates than for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others just around the next bend. ●



# Notable Events

2023–24



01



02



03



04



05



06



07

Whether in our newly renovated event space on campus or live streamed around the world, SIPA's events bring our community face-to-face with some of the world's most influential leaders.

## 01

President **Santiago Peña Palacios** MPA-EPM '03 of Paraguay spoke about his recent election and his policy plans for the South American country during a visit for Columbia's World Leaders Forum on September 22, 2023.

## 02

The Right Honorable Dame **Jacinda Ardern**, former prime minister of New Zealand, joined **Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton** in a Spotlight Interview conversation at the Institute of Global Politics Inaugural Summit on October 3, 2023. (See pages 28–29 for more about IGP.)

## 03

**Tharman Shanmugaratnam** (left), president of Singapore, was joined by journalist and author **Fareed Zakaria** as part of Columbia's World Leaders Forum on November 28.

## 04

UN General Assembly President **Dennis Francis** (left) visited SIPA to discuss "Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity" with Professor **Daniel Naujoks** on December 5.

## 05

SIPA's Admitted Students Day on April 2 featured a keynote conversation between Ambassador **John J. Sullivan** (left), IGP Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow, and **V. Page Fortna**, director of the Arnold A. Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies.

## 06

The Columbia Global Energy Summit 2024, hosted by the Center on Global Energy Policy on April 16, offered thought-provoking discussions around the critical energy and climate challenges facing the global community, including remarks by **John Podesta**, senior adviser to President Biden for international climate policy.

## 07

On April 19 SIPA hosted the second annual conference in honor of the late Columbia political scientist Robert Jervis, titled "The Dark State? Government Secrecy and American Democracy." The event was presented by the Institute of Global Politics, the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, the Public Interest Declassification Board, and the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy. Among the panelists was **Carmen Medina**, former CIA officer and owner of MedinAnalytics.

Photos by Nir Arieli (8), Shahar Azran (2, 3), Eileen Barroso (1), Kevin Dale (9), David Dini MPA '14 (5, 7), Lucas Hoeffel (10), Victoire Mandonnaud (4), Andrew Werner (6)



## Constructive Conversations



08

“The political solution requires that we...have difficult conversations, allow ourselves to be a little bit uncomfortable, question our assumptions, and be in a dialogue with people we disagree with.”

— DEAN KEREN YARHI-MILO

In the wake of Hamas’s attack on Israel, Israel’s subsequent invasion of Gaza, and the ensuing protests that engulfed Columbia’s campus, SIPA organized several events focused on constructive dialogue.

08

**Amaney Jamal**, dean of Princeton University’s School of Public and International Affairs, and **Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** built upon their *New York Times* commentary, “The Discourse Is Toxic. Universities Can Help.” The November 30 event, “The War in Gaza: Constructive Campus Conversations,” was moderated by **Claire Shipman ’86CC, MIA ’94**.

Watch the full event.



09



10

09

SIPA hosted Ambassador **Deborah Lipstadt** on February 28 for a discussion on the rise of global antisemitism and its threat to democracy and stability around the world. Lipstadt has served since 2022 as the US special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism. The hour-long discussion was moderated by SIPA professor **Ester Fuchs**, who was appointed in November to lead the Columbia University Task Force on Antisemitism.

10

**Farah Pandith** (*right*), an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a former diplomat, joined SIPA professor **Kian Tajbakhsh** for an April 17 discussion on countering anti-Muslim hate. Pandith delved into a wide range of topics, including the roots and history of anti-Muslim sentiment, challenges of identity and belonging for Muslims today, and policies to prevent discrimination and violence.

## RAPID RESPONSE

Shortly after war broke out in the Middle East, IGP convened two Rapid Response webinars, “Assessing Israel’s Next Moves” on October 10, 2023, and “Assessing the War in Gaza” on October 19, 2023.



Watch IGP’s Rapid Response webinars.





# Alumni News



01

Watch  
Ian Bremmer's  
speech.



## Celebrating the SIPA Class of 2024

SIPA celebrated this year's Class Day on May 13, conferring degrees on 846 graduates in a twilight ceremony at the University's Baker Field Athletic Complex.

The site at the northern tip of Manhattan was a departure from the traditional location on the Morningside campus's South Lawn, but the graduates' high spirits were undimmed. Supporting them all were enthusiastic family members and friends, a few thousand strong.

Guests arrived in daylight and watched with pride as the festivities continued through the gloaming and into the evening as the graduates took their turns crossing the stage.

Leading political scientist Ian Bremmer, president and founder of Eurasia Group and GZERO Media, was the featured speaker. In his address to the graduates, he talked about a world riven by multiple conflicts—citing the war between Israel and Hamas but also the ongoing carnage in Ukraine, the overlooked war and famine in Sudan, gang violence in Haiti, and ethnic cleansing in Armenia. There are many claims on our attention, he said, and many failures of public policy to contemplate.

Bremmer, who is also an adjunct professor at the School, spoke pointedly about the war in the Middle East, which had roiled Columbia and other campuses throughout the country in recent weeks and months.

"Wherever you come from, I've no doubt that you—SIPA graduates—know well that this conflict is deeply complex, with historical roots well beyond the fighting this year," he said. "And yet the nature of this conflict makes it useful to powerful interests in this country—useful to generate clicks, to capture attention, to sell ad space, to secure political advantage in this instant, without any attention to the long, slow slog of work and compromise that is the only path to peace."

Student speaker **Orcun Dogmazer MIA '24** thanked his family and reminisced about his late father in a moving speech.

He also talked about the sense of "magic" he felt as a member of the SIPA community. Speaking directly to the Class of 2024, Dogmazer said, "We're a collective of dreamers, brought together by our shared ambition for a better future. As we stand on the brink of a new chapter, let us carry forward the spirit of dreaming big."

The celebration continued the following morning at a reception on Ancell Plaza outside the International Affairs Building. A sense of familiarity descended as the broad terrace and tents filled with happy chatter in multiple languages as the new graduates introduced friends to their families, spoke with professors, and took photographs. The morning was bright and clear—truly a day to remember as SIPA's Class of 2024 left the ranks of Columbia students and joined the community of 25,000 SIPA alumni around the world. ●

**01**

SIPA graduates embrace at SIPA's May 13 Class Day at Baker Field Athletic Complex.

**02**

**Dean Keren Yarhi-Milo** told the graduates, "If you find yourself in a room where everyone agrees with you, you are in the wrong room."

**03**

Professor **Michael Nutter** celebrates with graduates on Ansell Plaza.

**04**

Featured speaker **Ian Bremmer**.

**05**

**Muhamad Rizki Nugraha Darma "Deris" Nagara MPA '24**, the 2024 CAA Campbell Award winner, captures a moment with friends at the Ansell Plaza reception.

**06**

SIPA graduates wave their home country flags on Ansell Plaza.

**07**

SIPA's First-Generation Student Union (FGSU) celebrated its inaugural First-Generation Student Graduation Ceremony on May 12.

**08**

SIPA's Black Student Union hosted Black Graduation on May 10. Black SIPA graduates were celebrated and presented with kente cloth stoles.

**09**

Student speaker **Orcun Dogmazer MIA '24**.

**10**

SIPA graduates enter the Baker Field Athletic Complex on Class Day.

**11**

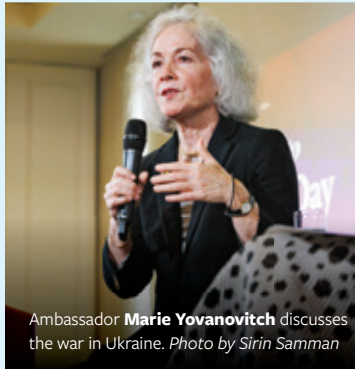
On May 15 the Empire State Building was illuminated in blue to celebrate Columbia graduates.

*Photos by Barbara Alper (2) Diane Bondareff (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10), David Dini MPA '14 (11), and Mark Hamer II (7, 8)*





Members of the SIPA Class of 2009 celebrate at Low Library.  
Photo by David Dini MPA '14



Ambassador **Marie Yovanovitch** discusses the war in Ukraine. Photo by Sirin Samman



**Carlos Cuevos '05CC, '12PH, MPA '12**, chair of the SIPA Alumni Association's Alumni Awards Committee, and **Quekan Anike Ibiidunni MPA '19**. Photo by David Dini MPA '14



2024 honorees included **Katie Napolitano MIA '08** and **Gabriela Rocha MPA-DP '13**. Photo by Sirin Samman

## SIPA Graduates Gather for Alumni Day 2024

Graduates from the 1970s through 2023 gathered on campus for the annual SIPA Alumni Day and Reunion Dinner on April 20. The program featured a keynote conversation with Ambassador **Marie Yovanovitch**, who represented the United States in Ukraine from 2016 to 2019 and was a 2023–24 Institute of Global Politics Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow, while **Katie Napolitano MIA '08** and **Gabriela Rocha MPA-DP '13** received the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Emerging Leader Award, respectively. Another highlight was the sold-out class reunion dinner in Low Library's Rotunda, attended by nearly 300 guests.



Nominate a  
SIPA graduate  
for an  
alumni award.

## 65 Alumni Return to Campus for Career Nights

New York area alumni from across industries returned to campus for two career networking events this year to share their advice and personal stories with current students. SIPA's Office of Alumni Relations and Career Advancement Center hosted these events—for the private sector in the fall and for the public and nonprofit sectors in the winter—to highlight the many different career options SIPA students can pursue after graduation.



Students and alumni enjoy the private-sector career night in October 2023. Photos by Brandon Vallejo



On April 19 the SAA Board hosted a reception for SIPA student leaders at Amity Hall. Photo by Michael Roberts

## SIPA Alumni Association Launches New Committees

The SIPA Alumni Association (SAA), chaired by **Habib Enayetullah MPA '91**, is governed by a group of dedicated alumni volunteers representing diverse graduation years, programs, and disciplines. Three new SAA committees have been formed to help advance the work and mission of SIPA: the Alumni Student Connections Committee, the Global Engagement Committee, and the Alumni Day Steering Committee.



Get involved  
with an alumni  
committee.

# Bookcase

Read a Q&A with  
Professor Shapiro.



“The big question that no one has an answer to is, What can be done to lessen the level of partisan conflict, which has escalated so it feels like being on steroids at an emotional level?”

**ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO**, on his coauthored book *Hate Speech and Political Violence: Far-Right Rhetoric from the Tea Party to the Insurrection* (Columbia University Press, 2024)

## FACULTY AND SCHOLARS

### Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton

*Something Lost, Something Gained: Reflections on Life, Love, and Liberty* (Simon & Schuster, 2024)

### Erica D. Lonergan (with Shawn W. Lonergan)

*Escalation Dynamics in Cyberspace* (Oxford University Press, 2023)

### Marcelo Medeiros

*The Rich and the Poor: Brazil and Inequality* (Companhia das Letras, 2023)

### Anne Nelson

*Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler*, rev. ed. (Bloomsbury, 2023)

### Arvind Panagariya

*India's Trade Policy: The 1990s and Beyond* (HarperCollins India, 2024)

### Natalia Pasternak (with Carlos Orsi)

*Que bobagem! (What nonsense!)* (Contexto, 2023)

### Ailsa Röell (with Thierry Foucault and Marco Pagano)

*Market Liquidity: Theory, Evidence, and Policy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2023)

### Robert Y. Shapiro (with Brigitte L. Nacos and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon)

*Hate Speech and Political Violence: Far-Right Rhetoric from the Tea Party to the Insurrection* (Columbia University Press, 2024)

### Joseph E. Stiglitz

*The Road to Freedom: Economics and the Good Society* (W. W. Norton, 2024)

## ALUMNI

### Victor Cha MIA '88 (with Ramon Pacheco Pardo)

*Korea: A New History of South and North* (Yale University Press, 2023)

### Paula Delgado-Kling MIA '01

*Leonor: The Story of a Lost Childhood* (OR Books, 2024)

### Yunis Gurbanov MPA '14

*Geopolitics and Energy Diplomacy in the Caspian Region: Developments After the Downfall of the Soviet Union* (transcript publishing, 2024)

### Jonathan Gyurko MPA '00

*Publicization: How Public and Private Interests Can Reinvent Education for the Common Good* (Teachers College Press, 2024)

### James Holtje MIA '90

(with photographs by Michael L. Horowitz) *Cathedrals of Industry: Exploring the Factories and Infrastructure That Made America* (Abbeville Press, 2024)

### Chris Pilkerton MPA '03 (with Ja'Ron Smith)

*Underserved: Harnessing the Principles of Lincoln's Vision for Reconstruction for Today's Forgotten Communities* (Post Hill Press, 2023)

### Julie Satow '96CC, MIA '01

*When Women Ran Fifth Avenue: Glamour and Power at the Dawn of American Fashion* (Penguin Random House, 2024)

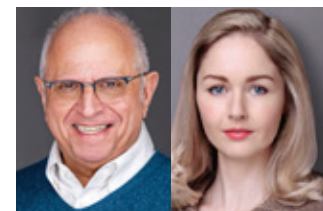
### Leonard V. Smith MIA '82

*French Colonialism: From the Ancien Régime to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

### Tokihisa “Andy” Sumimoto MIA '85

*Religion, State, and Political Culture in Japan: Implications for the Post-Secular World* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023)

Congratulations to Professor **Zachary Tumin** and **Madeleine Want MPA '21** on winning a bronze medal in the 2024 Axiom Business Book Awards' Emerging Trends/AI category for their book *Precisely: Working with Precision Systems in a World of Data* (Columbia Business School Publishing, 2023).







# ClassNotes



## What's your SIPA story?

Submit your SIPA milestones, achievements, and experiences for consideration to be featured via the School's social media, website, and publications. Class notes are published annually in *SIPA Magazine*.

### Save the Date — SIPA Alumni Day and Class Reunion Saturday, March 29, 2025

This annual event brings alumni from around the world together to celebrate their SIPA connections and learn how SIPA continues to advance solutions to critical global policy challenges. Return to campus for a day of guest speakers, panel discussions, and socializing with fellow alumni. In the evening, alumni and guests join the Class Reunion, where milestone years are celebrated.

## 1957

**DON BRONKEMA** retired from the US Environmental Protection Agency in 2012 and resides in Washington, DC. Bronkema is dedicating his retirement to preparing a comprehensive, 158,240-page file for the Columbia University Butler Library archives.

## 1964



Mark Juergensmeyer (left) with Alon Burstein, 2024 winner of the Mark Juergensmeyer Best Dissertation Award

**MARK JUERGENSEMEYER** retired from UC Santa Barbara as the founding

head of the global studies program and now teaches global conflict at Claremont McKenna College. Juergensmeyer's book *God at War* was updated by Oxford University Press with the title *Why War Needs God and God Needs War*, with references to Ukraine and Gaza. The International Studies Association honored him with the creation of the Mark Juergensmeyer Best Dissertation Award.

**JOSEPH RAMOS's** book *Belief or Unbelief: The Mystery of God in the Light of Reason* was published by Wipf & Stock in December.

## 1966

**SUSAN AURELIA GITELSON** is the author of *Giving Is Not Just for the Very Rich: A How-To Guide for Giving and Philanthropy*. Gitelson's book was showcased by Readers-Magnet at the Guadalajara International Book Fair from November 25 to December 3. This reference book explores the motivations behind philanthropy and offers guidance on making informed charitable choices.

## 1967

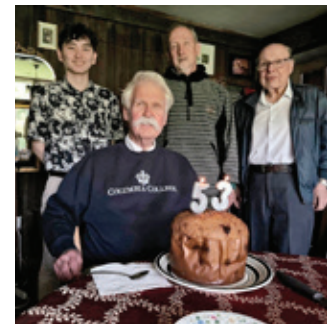
**WILLIAM PENDERGAST** created a website, *Classic Chansons Françaises*, featuring links and translations of 60 songs by 35 artists, along with bios and song histories. An International Fellow and a Herbert H. Lehman Fellow at SIPA, Pendergast had a distinguished career as a professor and dean of business schools in Brussels, Prague, Sarajevo, and California and now resides with his wife, Carol, in Carmel, CA.

## 1972



**BOYD BLACK** writes, "We are campaigning to have the UK Labour Party fight elections in Northern Ireland and give us our democratic rights."

## 1973



John Kuhn Bleimaier (front) celebrates 53 years since his enrollment in SIPA with friends.

**JOHN KUHN BLEIMAIER**, known as a farmer, essayist, poet, rally driver, and lawyer, celebrated 53 years since his graduation from Columbia College and his enrollment in SIPA. Over the years, he acquired Falkenhorst, an 18th-century New Jersey farm; published over 100 articles on subjects including theoretical jurisprudence, diplomatic history, classic cars, and sporting shotguns; won rallies held by the Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, and Sports Car clubs of America; and was designated poet laureate of the L. C. Smith Collectors Association. He has been practicing immigration law and private international law in Princeton, NJ, since 1976 and is a member of the board of directors of the Princeton Bar Association.



**MARY ANN P. GROSSMAN** writes: “Following my graduation from SIPA, I have enjoyed careers in international finance/consulting and non-profit development. I am now a graduate student/trainee in counseling psychology. In my next career phase, I plan to specialize in treating trauma and providing psychotherapy to immigrant families, adults, and older adults.”

## 1974

**PETER PODBIELSKI** delivered the Fiedorczyk-Wodarski Lecture in Polish American Studies at Central Connecticut State University in April, marking the 50th anniversary of the Polish Studies Program.

**TOM SLAYTON** was inducted this spring into the University of Idaho Alumni Hall of Fame for his work in the global rice market, including his role in stabilizing rice prices during the 2008 world food crisis.

## 1976

**JEFFREY KASHIDA** wrote the fantasy novel *Jupiter and Friends* (Mermaid, 2023), which imagines Shakyamuni Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad living during the same period and interacting. The story follows characters Eugene and Mohamed in their respective journeys of discovery and enlightenment.

## 1980

**CHRISTOPHER ZAVEL** volunteers with the New York City Audubon Society, participating in trips and outings.



## 1991

**MICHAEL PELLETIER** retired from the US Foreign Service in 2021 and is now executive director of the Institute for Global Engagement at the University of Houston, where he leads the university's efforts to educate, engage, and lead from a global perspective.

## 1984



**CLAIRE LABRUNERIE** raised four daughters and now works in international development, focusing on mobilizing capital for small businesses in Africa and Asia with an emphasis on gender and climate.

**BRIAN P. LANCASTER** writes: “Since graduating from SIPA, I’ve held a variety of public and private positions in capital markets, finance, and real estate, including senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Bank of England in London; managing director principal at Bear Stearns; chief investment officer, real estate, at Wachovia and Wells Fargo; and head of structured products research and analytics at Royal Bank of Scotland. I am now a full-time professor at Columbia Business School teaching finance, real estate, and capital markets courses in the MBA program. I am also a faculty adviser for the business school’s international study tours and

have led trips to Thailand, Rwanda, Tanzania, Argentina, Australia, and India to study inflation and real estate. In January 2025 I am leading a trip to Saudi Arabia and the UAE to study the hospitality industry.”

## 1987

**LISA BENNETT** is an author, speaker, and coach who focuses on helping leaders and teams develop a success mindset for a changing world. She aims to connect with others interested in addressing today’s challenges through creative problem-solving and positive future visions.

**ADRIENNE EDGAR** authored *Inter-marriage and the Friendship of Peoples: Ethnic Mixing in Soviet Central Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2022). Her book won the 2023 Heldt Prize from the Association for Women in Slavic Studies; was co-winner of the 2023 Joseph Rothschild Prize in Ethnicity and Nationalism Studies, awarded by the Association for the Study of Nationalities; and was named one of the Best Books of 2023 by *Foreign Affairs*.

## 1988

**RAFE EDWARD TRICKEY JR.** writes: “I’m excited, humbled, honored,

and very pleased to share that I was selected to serve as superintendent and president of the West Kern Community College District (Taft College). Thank you, Columbia SIPA and all of my wonderful SIPA MIA ’88 colleagues!”

## 1990

**SUSAN PRATT ARNDT** writes: “I am a senior operating leader at FareShare and the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission working to transform the UK food system to create a more sustainable and equitable food industry.”

## 1992

**DEBORAH LEIPZIGER** launched the Lexicon of Change, a guide to vocabulary around the UN Global Goals, which aims to promote sustainable development through new paradigms and ways of thinking.

## 1993

**MARY SWEERE**, CEO of Fluid Ice Family Office, received planning permission in the UK to build a tire-recycling plant designed to recover 25,000 metric tons of end-of-life tires. More than 99 percent of the materials from these tires will be



reintroduced into the circular economy as renewable products. The company plans to expand its capacity to 150,000 metric tons once the initial plant is operational.

## 1994

**JEFF VASSER** writes: "After SIPA I joined the public sector practice of Deloitte Consulting, where I focused on public facility projects such as stadiums, arenas, and convention centers. For the past 18 years, I have been with the New Jersey state government, first as president of the Atlantic City Convention Center Authority and now as executive director of the Division of Travel and Tourism. It's rewarding to be able to use my MPA degree along with my undergraduate degree in hospitality management."

## 1995

**LISA BALTER SAACKS** was appointed president of Trillium Surveyor, a leading provider of post-trade surveillance and best execution software.

## 1997

**JESSAMYN REICH ABEL** writes: "My second book, *Dream Super-Express: A Cultural History of the World's First Bullet Train* (Stanford University Press, 2022), was awarded the inaugural Modern Japan History Association Book Prize."

**JEREMY CRAIG** is involved in test preparation at Test Takers in Singapore.

**AARON FRANK** retired in June from a career in the private and public sectors in Europe and Canada and now lives in Ponta Delgada on São Miguel Island in the Azores.

## 1999

**LAURA DEDOMINICIS** writes: "SIPA gave me the leadership skills needed for my role as executive director of Nurturing Minds, an NGO providing quality education, life skills, entrepreneurship, and career development to help bright, at-risk girls in Tanzania become leaders in their communities. With our Tanzanian partner, SEGA, we reach over 2,500 adolescent girls annually through four programs. We are always looking for volunteers and interns and would welcome members of the Columbia community to join us!"



## 1998



**WESLEY JORDAN** writes: "Thirty years after starting one project in Ukraine, I have returned to Kyiv to launch another one. I relocated here at the end of 2023 for a greenfield investment with VisionFund, a micro-finance network, to offer financing to small entrepreneurs in support of economic recovery."



Jane Leu (bottom, second from right) with Five One Labs FEM entrepreneurs from Colombia and Venezuela

**JANE LEU** writes: "I'm loving my work as a board member for Five

One Labs, a nonprofit organization founded by **Alice Bosley '17** and **Patricia Letayf '17** with programs for local, displaced, and migrant entrepreneurs. Last year I got to spend some time with their Fundadoras Exponenciales Mastermind (FEM) group of impressive Colombian and Venezuelan female entrepreneurs. From a SIPA startup to a global organization, Five One is breaking down walls, building up entrepreneurial ecosystems, and highlighting the power of women on the move."

## 2000



Angela Chitkara (right) with Ambassador Eric Garcetti (third from left) and other panelists at Global Conference 2024

**ANGELA CHITKARA** moderated a panel at the Milken Institute Global Conference 2024 on the India-China relationship and its global implications alongside speakers including **Eric Garcetti '95**, US ambassador to India.

## 2001

**DAPHNE EWING-CHOW** joined the Food Culture Alliance as part of its lead group in May.

## 2002



**CAROLINA GUTIÉRREZ** relocated from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to Washington, DC, to join the World Bank as a consultant for the Independent Evaluation Group.



**JOANNA GREENBERG HILL** writes: "In the 20 years since SIPA, I studied national outcomes from resilience and well-being programs and worked at mental health nonprofits and in personal counseling. I wrote a book to share personal and professional stories and the

transformational information I had learned in order to reverse epidemics and raise families and communities with high levels of well-being—one person, one moment at a time.”

**ELENA LIAPKOVA-POZSAR** writes: “After leaving my successful career at Julius Baer Investment Management, I pursued my passion for creating value and found my calling in coaching. Following training in the UK, I established ELP Coaching, an executive coaching business.”



**BREMLEY LYNDOH**, CEO and founder of Ecofriend World, writes: “Ecofriend World has a mission to plant one billion mangrove trees before 2030. One hundred million mangrove trees have been planted in collaboration with Worldview

International Foundation, Worldview Impact Foundation, Worldview The Gambia, and other partners in Myanmar, India, Togo, Benin, and The Gambia that will draw down 100 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> within 40 years.”

## 2003

**LAUREN HADI** joined the Decolonizing Wealth Project as vice president of resource mobilization. She works toward healing the generational harms of colonization through reparative giving.



Iori Kato (center) inaugurating a UNFPA-supported “Women and Girls Friendly Space” in a cyclone-hit community on the island of Tanna, Vanuatu

**IORI KATO** writes: “Realizing a world where every pregnancy is a wanted one, every childbirth is safe, and there is no gender-based violence—that’s the mission of the United Nations Population Fund. I moved to Fiji in August 2022 as UNFPA director

for the Pacific and am overseeing assistance to 14 small island developing states (SIDS). We are also assisting member states in addressing the negative effects of climate change and pandemics on women’s and young people’s health, and analyzing demographic dynamics.”

## 2004



**FRANCISCO X. PINEDA** writes: “After returning from a Title 10 military deployment to Djibouti as a naval reserve officer, I resumed my roles as a Columbia School of Professional Studies faculty member and at the New York City Economic Development Corporation as its executive vice president. I lead one of the largest and most ambitious economic development and decarbonization initiatives in New York City.”

## 2005



**SIDNEY NAKAHODO**

is founder and general partner of Seldor Capital, a venture capital firm that invests in space technologies, and an adjunct faculty member at SIPA. In 2023 he received the University of São Paulo Alumni Award from his alma mater for his positive impact on society through innovation and entrepreneurship.

## 2006



**AMY BOLDOSSER-BOESCH** was appointed chair-elect of the board of directors of the Global Health Council (GHC), the leading membership organization devoted to advancing global health priorities. With a career spanning over two decades in health policy and advocacy, she is now a senior director at Management Sciences for Health, a global nonprofit dedicated to building resilient health systems, and serves as chair of the GHC board’s nominating committee and a member of UNFPA’s Global Advisory Council.

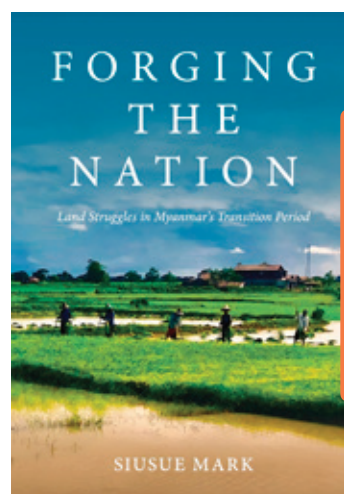


**JONATHAN**

**JACOBY** was appointed in September as CEO of GoodWeave

International, where he leads efforts to end child, forced, and bonded labor in global supply chains.

**CHRISTINA KELLY LOPES** cofounded FidoCure, the first AI-driven precision medicine platform that matches pet dogs with cancer to targeted therapies, in 2018. She coauthored research published in *Nature*, *Scientific Reports*, and other leading science journals showing how FidoCure can dramatically extend the life of canine cancer patients and accelerate the discovery of new drugs for humans. FidoCure, which is now available in thousands of veterinary clinics across the globe, has created the world’s largest database of canine cancer genomic data, and its work has been featured in *Wired*, *The Washington Post*, and elsewhere.



## 2002

**SIUSUE MARK**

authored *Forging the Nation: Land Struggles in Myanmar’s Transition Period* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2023), which discusses Myanmar’s democratization from 2010 to 2020 through the lens of land politics.





## 2009

### HONORING PAOLA ROLDÁN

**PAOLA ROLDÁN** passed away in March after a heroic battle with ALS. She was a global champion of human and environmental rights, and her public advocacy gained momentum as she engaged in a national conversation about euthanasia in Ecuador. To honor Roldán's work and dedication, her SIPA classmates established a fellowship fund in her memory. The Changemaker Fellowship provides support to SIPA students who have lived, worked, or studied in developing nations and who have demonstrably contributed to building a more supportive, compassionate, loving, and collaborative world to protect the most vulnerable. Please consider making a gift to honor Roldán's memory and to provide fellowship support to a SIPA student.



Give to the  
Changemaker Fellowship.

## 2008



Engin Yaşar (left) at a meeting with the National Bank of Ukraine in March

**ENGİN YAŞAR** writes: "After five years at Microsoft, I am now working as vice president, Eastern Europe, at Mastercard, where I'm responsible for 12 countries, including Turkey, Ukraine, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Even after 16 years, my SIPA education still helps me immensely. Feel free to connect at [enginyasar@gmail.com](mailto:enginyasar@gmail.com)."

## 2009

**GORAN FILIC** writes: "I completed my PhD at the University of Milan and my postdoctoral studies at the University of Bologna. I am now teaching international relations and political science courses at Franklin University Switzerland in Lugano and business A level at Swiss Academy Zurich. I am an avid cyclist, even better triathlete, and one superb soccer, basketball, and table tennis player. When I am not taking prisoners on the court, you can find me somewhere in the Adriatic Sea in Dalmatia or perhaps hiking in the Swiss Alps."



**HANNES KLÖPPER**, CEO of HelloBetter, writes: "HelloBetter, a leading company in the digital mental

health field, was selected by the World Economic Forum as one of 100 companies to be part of the 2024 'Technology Pioneers.' This recognition highlights the company's leadership in using digital technology to deliver effective, accessible, and scalable mental health solutions. The company's evidence-based digital programs are designed to empower individuals to proactively manage their mental health, addressing a critical need by providing cost-effective care anytime, anywhere, with no waiting times."

## 2010



**SHEIKH WAQAR AHMAD** leads institutional networking through active public policy advocacy and driving the sustainability agenda through partnerships and alliances with Nestlé Pakistan, which is committed to achieving net zero in alignment with the UN's SDGs. Also, as a pro bono CEO and founding director at the Collect and Recycle (CoRe) Alliance, the first multi-stakeholder packaging alliance in Pakistan, he is actively driving the circular economy agenda.

**NICHOLAS CHANG** graduated summa cum laude from the Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca in 2023. He studied on a scholarship from the Romanian



Ministry of Education, and his research centered on anglicisms in advertising discourse in Romanian, French, and Spanish.

**ISRAR MOHAMMAD KHAN** is head of Pakistan's Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD) and addresses issues including food security, climate change, poverty alleviation, community-driven disaster management, and rural development. He has worked extensively on the capacity building of service providers in these fields.

**MIKE LAWN** was named head of North American power research at Energy Aspects in March.



**ALEJANDRO ROSALES MAYR** joined the Latin America Real Assets Opportunities Fund (LARA) as an investment director in March. He focuses on sourcing real asset investments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## 2011

**MIGNA TAVERAS** is executive director of Schools That Can, an organization that promotes an education-to-employment pathway through career readiness programming that is culturally relevant, youth-centered, and prioritizes real-world experiences and connections.

## 2012

**KHULAN DAVAADORJ** writes: "I am the founder of Lhamour, Mongolia's first organic skin care brand with a purpose to nurture and encourage the power of love through our handmade, natural, eco-friendly skin care products. Lhamour produces more than 70 products, from body care to hair care to face care, and combines traditional Mongolian nomadic remedies with modern innovation. People with dry skin who are health conscious and care about the environment are the ones that love us the most."

**MARIO NASCIMENTO** has supported conflict-resolution and peacebuilding activities since 2006 with organizations like the Organization of American States, the World Bank, and the United Nations. He has worked in various posts in Colombia, Afghanistan, Washington, DC, and New York.



## 2013

### CHRISTIAN LOUBEAU

became the first chief strategy officer at Grand Street Settlement in New York City in January. He leads a team focusing on advocacy, government relations, and community affairs for the nonprofit, which is over 100 years old.



**JOYCE TANGPANJAPON** is in an external relations role with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) covering 38 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Her portfolio includes strategic partnerships and resource mobilization from various donors.

## 2013

**ALEXANDRE VINEL** is a policy officer at the European Commission working with the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union as of May.

## 2014

**DAVID EISLER** received the 2024 Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole Biennial Award for Distinguished Book in Veterans Studies for *Writing Wars: Authorship and American War Fiction, WWI to Present* (University of Iowa Press, 2022). The book explores the role of war fiction in shaping public perceptions of American conflicts.



## 2014

**CARLA PELLEGRINI** participated in a TEDx talk about food waste and climate change, discussing actionable steps individuals can take to tackle food waste.





**CHRIS ESHLEMAN** writes: “I’ve been working as a specialist (data scientist) for three years at Deloitte Consulting and in May was promoted to specialist master. I work almost exclusively with state government clients, most recently with California’s health insurance marketplace, Covered California.”



In 2017 **DARIELA SOSA** founded *Arepita*, a Venezuelan daily newsletter that won the award for excellence in newsletters, single newsletter, at the 2023 Online Journalism Awards. *Arepita* allows Venezuelans to bypass government censorship and access crucial information.

## 2015



**SISSI GOH** is a distinguished legacy planner based in Singapore, known for her extensive expertise in wealth management and her dedication

to family inheritance and succession planning. As an award-winning author and TEDx speaker, she has made significant contributions to the financial services industry, helping clients preserve and grow their wealth across generations.

## 2016



**RICHARD BROOKSHIRE**, CEO of Black Veterans Project, writes: “On June 12 I provided congressional testimony on the VA Housing Loan Forever Act—a bill that, if passed, would contend with the legacy of discrimination faced by Black World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam-era veterans largely denied access to VA home loans between 1945 and 1977. In April the reparations work of Black Veterans Project received national attention for a lawsuit conceptualized alongside Yale Law School Veterans Legal Services Clinic, *Monk v. United States*, which became one of the first reparations cases to survive a motion to dismiss in American history.”

## 2017

**CLIFFORD DUONG** founded Anjiro Initiative, a 501(c)(3) organization. The initiative has provided scholarships to over 1,000 students in Madagascar at the primary, middle, secondary, and university levels since 2014. In May Anjiro Initiative participated at the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi supporting intergovernmental efforts in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future in New York.

## 2018



**LUIGI BUTRON** grew up in Peru during a time of economic turmoil, which sparked his interest in economic policy and development. He has over 11 years of experience in macroeconomics and now works as the country economist for Brazil at the World Bank.

## 2019



**RAUL ALCAIDE ALONSO**, a vice president in Goldman Sachs’ sovereign and economic risk group, began a new position as an adjunct professor at Sciences Po in January.

**CORI FAIN-FORREST** was featured in *This Is Alabama* for founding Moxi, which aims to provide day care on

demand, offering a flexible solution that benefits both families and child-care centers.

**FELICIA HORWITZ**, a compliance officer at the USDA, was selected for a detail with the White House Council on Environmental Quality starting this summer.

## 2020

**CATHERINA GIOINO**, court reporter for *Rolling Stone* magazine, writes: “I covered the Trump hush money trial in New York Criminal Court since jury selection began on April 15. In addition to analyzing why a prosecutor or defense lawyer’s line of questioning was important, I was occasionally tasked with being the ‘hallway pool’ reporter, questioning Trump after the day’s proceedings.”

## 2021



**SOUVIK CHATTERJEE** is a senior analyst at the New York City Mayor’s Office, where he helps NYC agencies

## 2020

**VIRPRATAP VIKRAM SINGH** joined the International Institute of Strategic Studies as a research fellow, based in Singapore, for the Cyber Power and Future Conflict Programme, focusing on disruptive and emerging technology.



use PASSPort, a cloud software modernizing the city's finances. He assists with budgeting, invoicing, and payment approvals through the system.



**NUSRAT FAROOQ** accepted an offer of a fully funded PhD in international relations, American politics, and AI from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is developing a philanthropic fund focused on AI and digital safety.

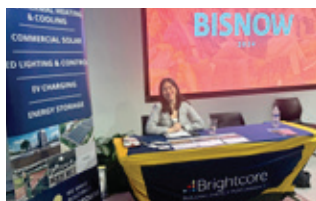


**XIN TONG**, who started as an intern, now manages a \$2 million project at the UNDP.

## 2022

**SEAN KEELEY** joined the US Foreign Service in July 2023 and, after a year of training, was posted at the US Embassy in Beijing.

## 2023



**NUTJAREE CHAMPLIN** writes: "SIPA was like a book that I began reading, uncertain of where its words would

lead, yet equally intrigued by the journey. I never thought I'd accept a role—let alone receive recognition for my work—in business development or in geothermal heating and cooling, but that's part of my curious and ever-changing adventure. I may have finished the book, but I now write my own chapters."



Aranzazú Jorquiera Johnson (second from left) and Sarah Lux-Le '16 (second from right) with colleagues at Mindr

**ARANZAZÚ JORQUIERA JOHNSON** writes: "I was hired by Mindr, founded by **Sarah Lux-Le '16**. We now work together with a team based in NYC to cultivate leaders at every level."

We express our condolences to the families and friends of these members of the SIPA community who have recently passed away. Should you have news of a classmate's death, please contact us at [sipaalum@sipa.columbia.edu](mailto:sipaalum@sipa.columbia.edu).

Jimmy Goff MIA '24  
Adil Karpikov MIA '23  
Marlon Layton MIA '08  
Hiroko Murase MIA '91  
Dean Pace MIA '82  
Paola Roldán MIA '09  
Susan M. Socolow  
CERT '65

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Nuland says. "I thought I would do five years in the Foreign Service and then go back to school and decide what I wanted to do with my life. But it just kept being an adventure."

Nuland went on to serve under six presidents, from Republican Ronald Reagan to Democrat Joe Biden, a bipartisan record that underscores her ideals of negotiation and compromise. Now, through the IGP's bipartisan dialogues series, Nuland wants to help students engage with leaders of both major parties, as she sees such conversations as essential "to knit the fabric of the country back together."

"Fundamentally, the people that I worked for in both parties wanted to make the world better, America a better global leader," Nuland says. "I also think that America's strength, when we're at our best, is that Democrats and Republicans can work together."

To the outsider, Nuland's career might appear to be an argument that one doesn't need to go to graduate school to serve in government, play a key role in international diplomacy, and influence history itself. But with hindsight, Nuland recognizes where she could have been more informed. Hinting at what she is likely to emphasize to students, Nuland says she found that her history courses proved most relevant to her diplomatic work in helping her understand a nation's psychology.

"As Keren Yarhi-Milo emphasizes, if you're going to be an active diplomat, it really is about the psychology of individual leaders, individual negotiators, and the group psychology and sense of memory of nations," Nuland says. "You have to know their national history, but you also have to know what motivates them, what calls them to a higher place, and about their worries, fears, and sense of risk."

That's a key to diplomacy. And it's also a key to untangling some of the biggest issues of today. Amid the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts, the US's ongoing tensions with China, and the existential crisis of climate change, SIPA graduates might feel as if they're walking into a hopeless mess. Nuland wants to embolden students to tackle even the most seemingly intractable problems.

"I think you can encourage students that they can make a difference if they roll up their sleeves and work on one or some of these things, that it's not so overwhelming, that they can be change agents," Nuland says. "That's what I hope to inspire." ●



# Catherine “Kitty” Mulder MIA ’81



**Catherine “Kitty” Mulder MIA ’81** was born in Lima, Peru, to a Swiss father and a Greek mother, who arrived in Peru in 1947. Mulder grew up in Peru, attending a British-Peruvian school in Lima and a prep school in Switzerland. She graduated from the University of Geneva with a degree in international relations in 1977. Upon her return to Lima, Mulder spent two years as a photojournalist covering Peruvian tourism and later mining and economics before moving to New York City to attend SIPA in 1980. After graduating from SIPA, she worked in banking and then in the family business, which she and her brothers managed.

In 2020 Mulder made a generous gift to SIPA establishing the Zinia Leadership Fund to provide financial aid support for SIPA students who have received undergraduate degrees from Peruvian universities, as well as support for SIPA faculty conducting research on Peru and for SIPA programs related to Peru.

The following conversation with *SIPA Magazine* has been condensed and edited for clarity.

## Why did you decide to attend SIPA and pursue a master of international affairs?

I was interested in international business and finance, so the opportunity to take classes at Columbia’s business school while studying at SIPA attracted me, as did the prospect of internships.

SIPA appealed to my pragmatic side. I am not an academician. I like studying and reading, but I also like executing and doing things. My SIPA internship with Marine Midland Bank allowed me to apply the theories I was learning. I recall an incredibly interesting experience during the internship: I was writing a paper on mergers and acquisitions and was allowed to consult historical documents in the bank’s library.

And, of course, the Master of International Affairs program offered everything that goes with Columbia and SIPA: friends, faculty, everything—New York City, Wall Street, the United States. A fantastic, enriching time.

## Why was it important to you to include support for need-based financial aid for students from Peru when establishing the Zinia Leadership Fund?

In 2018 the cash-out of one of our businesses was an opportunity to think about what else I wished to do. I had a vision: a strong desire to promote education, particularly

in the field of public administration and policy. This would contribute to good public sector decision-making and institutions in Peru, much like the private sector, which has good companies—small, medium, large—run by Peruvians and foreigners, professionals from leading universities or institutes.

It was satisfying and gratifying for me to help make graduate education a possibility for students and to be able to partner with SIPA in a way that could also benefit Peru.

There are no conditions attached to receiving the scholarship, nothing that requires the student recipients to come back to Peru. So it is open—they take advantage whilst studying at SIPA. Then, if they come back to Peru, well, welcome! If not, hopefully they will do something at some time that is in favor of their country. That is the philosophy behind it.

It is very important to educate and to include ethics, values, and talent development, all that goes with people who try to do better things for our society and our planet. That is my small contribution. As a friend says, “A little sand here, a little sand there—it makes a beach.”

## How do you see SIPA’s role in the world today?

Key. SIPA is in New York City, a vibrant city with an unshakeable energy. SIPA contributes to that energy in so many ways, while also benefiting. SIPA offers exposure to a diversity of people and ideas. You have people of different walks, cultures, religions, political opinions coming together to learn and discuss.

A great example of this happening at SIPA is the Institute of Global Politics (IGP). It provides the ideal environment for scholars, faculty, and others to grow, to exchange ideas, to debate. In today’s world, we have a hard time debating. It would seem we would rather choose a side, be polarized, as opposed to finding a common objective and going towards that common objective, which is building, presumably, a free and peaceful society.

I see in IGP’s structure—the faculty involved, the students participating, the speakers and guests invited—a space for exchanges. Perfect. It is a think tank with the possibility, as I said before, to offer and lead to practical solutions. Essentially, it is a forum for leaders, for different opinions, for knowledge, for growth, and for building. ●



IGP Institute of  
Global Politics



#### **WOMEN POWERING THE ECONOMY**

**Stacey Abrams**, voting rights activist, former minority leader of the Georgia House of Representatives, and 2023–24 Institute of Global Politics Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow, participated in the IGP Women's Initiative Launch Summit on March 4. Abrams was joined by Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo for a fireside chat on "Women Powering the Economy."



**Watch "Women Powering the Economy" from the IGP Women's Initiative Launch Summit.**





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## SUPPORT STUDENTS, TRANSFORM THE WORLD!

“Financial support from SIPA donors not only has allowed me the opportunity to pursue higher education but will allow me to extend this generosity and hope far beyond Columbia’s gates to every person with whom I connect. Generosity transforms the lives of those affected and helps to create impactful and empathetic leaders.”

**CARLOS OUTTEN MPA ’24**



Today more than ever, the world needs SIPA-trained leaders working toward peace and prosperity. Please consider a gift to SIPA today to support financial aid for the next generation of SIPA students.



Photo by Diane Bondareff