INDIANA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FALL, 2016
INCOMING GRADUATE CLASS
Maryum Alam

Subfield: International Relations

I was born and raised on Long Island, NY, where I received my BA with honors in Political Science and Biology from Hofstra University in 2016. Fascinated by small wars and political violence, I completed a BA thesis entitled "When Does Counterinsurgency Work? An Analysis of Counterinsurgency Campaigns After 1945," which won Hofstra’s Undergraduate Library Research Award for the Social Sciences. My primary research interests revolve around international security with an emphasis on the organization, tactics, and strategy of non-state armed groups (i.e. insurgencies and terrorist movements) and the interaction and dynamics of these groups with state actors in the international system. I am also interested in the efficacy of state counterinsurgency and counterterrorism policies in asymmetric warfare, with a regional focus on armed conflicts in Central and South Asia (particularly Afghanistan and Pakistan), as well as the greater Middle East. In my free time I enjoy biking, travelling, experimenting with new recipes, and watching documentaries.

Samuel Bestvater

Subfields: International Relations/Comparative Politics

Sam completed a bachelor’s degree in History and Politics at Covenant College in 2013. Since then, he has lived and worked in Bloomington, and will be beginning graduate study in the Department of Political Science at Indiana University. Sam’s research interests center around conflict, social movements, and high-risk collective action, with a particular focus on how terrorist organizations overcome collective action barriers to mobilization.
Renzo de la Riva Augero

Subfield: Public Policy

Renzo is a Joint Public Policy Ph.D. student, with a concentration in Public Policy, Comparative Politics, and Public Management. He has 8.5 years of experience in various areas of public sector development, including governance and rural poverty reduction through his work in the Peruvian public sector and the World Bank, with field experience in rural areas. He has advised and led projects in senior management positions in the Peruvian government, from the highest decision-making body (Prime Minister’s Office) and ministries to the local government level. He has also been a Manager in the Public Sector Consulting Division at Deloitte Peru and has recent experience at a leadership position in a presidential campaign in Peru.

At Deloitte he led consultancies on quantitative policy analysis and design of public management reform interventions. In the Prime Minister’s Office, Renzo was Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Technical Secretary responsible for the management, organization and reform of the Viceministers’ Coordination Commission (an inter-sectoral body for high-level decision-making), among other key duties. In the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, he was responsible of the design of an inter-institutional system for the management of integrated social development interventions as well as co-director of a multisectoral rural development commission for integrated planning, budgeting and implementation of public sector interventions for improved access to income-generating opportunities of rural households in poverty. As a World Bank consultant based in Washington, DC he was assistant manager of land administration, land access and small producer competitiveness strengthening projects in Latin America. He has also lived in rural Cusco and Puno, Peru where he conducted an evaluation of a rural development project (funded by the Government of Peru and IFAD) and the policies of rural local governments.

He has a Master of Public Policy with a specialization in international development from Georgetown University (Washington, DC), and a BA in Political Science and Development from St. Olaf College (MN).
Belkisa Hrustanovic

Subfields: Comparative Politics/International Relations

My name is Belkisa Hrustanovic. I attended Ball State University and received my B.A. in Political Science and Philosophy with a minor in French. I stayed at Ball State University and received my M.A. in Political Science with a focus on International Relations. As a graduate student, I became interested in the relationship between gender and political conflict as well as using quantitative methods in order to conduct research. I also had the opportunity to present my paper, “The Role of Gender Diversity on the Choice of Nonviolent Tactics among Organizations,” at the 73rd annual Midwest Political Science Association Conference Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL. Through research, I aim to understand the ever-increasing threat of political violence around the world and offer original perspectives on the causes of conflict and their prevention. I am most interested in studying the impact that gender has on political conflicts as well as studying the causes for using violent tactics instead of nonviolent tactics to achieve political ends. Additionally, I am interested in studying the roles that ethnicity, religion, and nationalism have on explaining political conflicts, especially, in Eastern Europe.

Tonya Kenny

Subfield: Comparative Politics

My name is Tonya Kenny. I am from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I received my bachelors and master’s degrees in Political Science from Louisiana State University. My research interests have always fallen into the comparative subfield. As for future research, I would primarily like to focus on African Politics. While I am not technically from Indiana, I have been visiting family here at least once a year for as long as I can remember. And I have always loved Bloomington, in particular. I also have a puppy! He just turned one a couple of weeks ago.
Min-Hyeok Kim

Subfield: Political Philosophy

Min-Hyeok Kim intends to develop his academic interest in democratic governance. Specifically, his research focuses on the interaction between deliberative democratic theory and new institutional theory as a way to understand multiple senses of collective actions and cooperation in society. By linking the normative and empirical theory of democratic participation, his project will help to deepen democratic politics in the modern state. After finishing his Master’s degree at Seoul National University (2011), he served in the Korean Air Force as an officer and worked in the National Assembly of Korea as a policy assistant. Taking charge of environmental policy, he wrote policy reports on various environmental issues such as an air pollution regulation system, toxic chemical safety control, and waste management. Currently he is also interested in public safety issues and effective safety control system.

Monica Komer

Subfield: Comparative Politics

I graduated summa cum laude from Miami University in 2016 with bachelor’s degrees in International Studies and Journalism and minors in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies. I’m a previous National Security Language Initiative scholar in Morocco, William Jefferson Clinton Scholar at the American University in Dubai, and Critical Language Scholar in Morocco. I served as an intern at the Middle East Institute and the U.S. Embassy in Manama, Bahrain. My research interests include female political participation, new media technologies, and formal and informal modes of political engagement in the Middle East.
Dima Kortukov

Subfield: Comparative Politics

Dima was born in Ukraine in 1986 and lived in Israel since 1996. He received his B.A (2010) and M.A (2012) from Tel Aviv University and also studied in Hebrew University and Masaryk University. Dima is primarily interested in comparative political institutions, competitive authoritarian regimes and contemporary political theory. He hopes to conduct research on parties, legislatures and electoral systems in post-Soviet region, especially Russia and Ukraine.

Matthew Lucky

Subfield: Political Philosophy

Matthew Lucky acquired a B.S. in Political Science, a B.A. in History, and a M.A. in Political Theory while studying at Arizona State University. His major field of interest for his continuing academic career at IU Bloomington is political philosophy. Matt is specifically interested in studying how politics is impacted by technological progress. For example, he is curious about how political philosophy will respond in coming years to the integration of emerging innovations such as machine learning algorithms into existing and future governance structures. His broader interests include a fondness for studying history and the history of political thought.
Yana Mommadova

Subfield: Comparative Politics

Born in Turkmenistan, the outskirts of the Soviet Union. At the age of 19 I embarked on a long and enriching academic journey. I attended the American University in Bulgaria where I double-majored in Political Science and Economics, the former degree was conferred with honors. Afterwards I moved to one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, Budapest, Hungary, where I received my MA degree at the Central European University (CEU). At CEU I also received the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award for high GPA and successfully defended Master’s thesis in which I attempted to decipher propagandistic messages that emanate from TV screens in Putin’s Russia. I am very much interested in contemporary propaganda, not only in Russia, and its modern applications in today’s politics. I am also keen on the post-Soviet region and the way it has been developing after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I can be quite a nerd and a bookworm, and I am fascinated by English literature with Jane Austen, James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov (who wrote wonderfully in English) among my personal favorites.

Godfreyb Ssekajja

Subfield: Public Policy

Ssekajja Godfreyb is a Joint Public Policy Ph.D. (International Relations, Environmental Policy & Public Policy) at Indiana University-Bloomington’s School of Public & Environmental Affairs and the Department of Political Science. His research interests are in international environmental policy, particularly:
(1) the institutions and norms concerning international environmental policy,
(2) the international security ramifications of climate change and
(3) the implications of the emergent concept of the geosphere on the theories of international relations. He attained a Master of International Development at the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public & International Affairs; focusing on Human security and International Political Economy. He attained his BA (Social Sciences) at Makerere University’s College of Humanities & Social Sciences, majoring in International Relations and minoring in Sociology.
He was born (and spent his formative years) in Uganda. As an undergrad student, he worked as a secondary school teacher of European and African history. He later worked for the Ministry of Education in the war-torn Unity State of South Sudan as a supervisor of government schools. Then he got military training from the Ugandan Army and worked as a private security contractor with the US army in Iraq. Before joining grad school, he worked as a supervisor of security personnel in the UAE at the Dubai International Airport, the Dubai & Khalifa Ports.
Yannick Vogel  
**Subfield: American Politics**

My name is Yannick Vogel and I will be studying Political Science at IU Bloomington during the academic year 2016-2017. I am usually a student at the John-F.-Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin in the Master's program in North American Studies. My focus areas are political parties and elections in the United States. I received my Bachelor's degree in North American Studies in 2015 after studying in Berlin for two years and in London for the final year of my BA. In my Bachelor's thesis, I did wrote about the work of political consultants and how it has influenced campaigning activities of parties in the U.S. context. During my time at IU, I am looking forward to taking part in seminars that are focused on American politics, and especially on elections, voters and political parties.

Salih Yasun  
**Subfield: Comparative Politics**

Salih Yasun recently graduated from Sabanci University's political science graduate program. He previously obtained Bachelor's degrees in economics and international relations from Cleveland State University's Honors Program. Salih is mainly interested in political behavior, with the emphasis on how political parties can lead opinions and how changes in institutional and socio-economic dynamics influence political participation. Salih has written a Master's thesis entitled "Can Political Parties Lead Opinions in Religious Matters? Experimental Results on Partisan Cue Taking in Turkey." In addition, for his formal modeling term project Salih has developed an extension for Stokes et al. (2013)'s "A Model of Rent Seeking Brokers". Salih has co-authored a policy brief about educating Syrian refugees in Turkey, which has been published by Istanbul Policy Center.