



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

MERESHON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY STUDIES

Annual Report 2024 2025



Mershon Center

Team Bios



DOROTHY NOYES, PH.D.
Mershon Center Director
Arts & Sciences Distinguished
Professor of English
Professor of Comparative Studies

Dorothy Noyes (PhD, Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania) is University Distinguished Scholar, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of English, Professor of Comparative Studies, and Director of the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at The Ohio State University.

She studies the traditional public sphere in Europe, the careers of policy concepts, and performance and ritual in international relations. She is a past President of the American Folklore Society, and was awarded a doctorate honoris causa by the University of Tartu in 2018.

Among her books are “Fire in the Plaça: Catalan Festival Politics After Franco” (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); “Humble Theory: Folklore’s Grasp on Social Life” (Indiana University Press, 2016); and “Sustaining Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A Guide for the Academy” (coauthored with Regina Bendix and Kilian Bizer; University of Illinois Press, 2017). “Exemplarity in Global Politics,” coedited with Tobias Wille, will appear in November 2025 from Bristol University Press.



TERI MURPHY, PH.D.
Associate Director for
Peacebuilding Research

Teri Murphy has been actively engaged in conflict intervention and peacebuilding in international contexts for over 30 years.

As a scholar, her primary research interests concentrate on the dynamic interaction between peace processes, transitional justice, political and social reconciliation, and peace.

As a practitioner, she has most recently been supporting local peace and reconciliation efforts in contexts where there has been political violence including in Colombia, Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Nepal, and Burundi.

Teri leads the center's involvement in global peacebuilding scholarship, research, projects, and partnerships. She designs, leads, and conducts collaborative research with international, local, and Ohio State partners and directs the Transition from Violence Consortium. Additionally, she conceptualizes, develops, and field- tests peacebuilding models, frameworks, and tools.



KYLE MCCRAY

Business Operations Manager

Kyle McCray joined Mershon Center in November of 2006. He graduated from Ohio University-Athens in 2005 with majors in Finance, Business Economics, Business Law, and Real Estate.

In college, Kyle studied abroad for in Tartu, Estonia, developing a new business and marketing strategy for an Estonian hotel. He also has spent time traveling throughout the U.S. and internationally in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Baltic region, Canadian Rockies, Spain, Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands.



MEGAN LAWATHER

Associate Manager

Megan Lawther is a seasoned leader at Ohio State, where she has spearheaded global engagement initiatives, designed impactful programs that foster community between international and domestic students, and represented Ohio State at the BTAA Senior International Officer Staff Development Program on Internationalization to Germany.

Megan earned a B.A. in Political Science (minored in Pan-African Studies) from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. from Ohio State's Department of African American and African Studies. She received the University's Distinguished Staff Award and is an avid world traveler who lives by the motto, "Have passport, will travel." She is also an announcer for the Ohio State Homecoming parade.



MELISSA FERGUSON

Communications Associate

Melissa Ferguson is a marketing and communications professional with more than 20 years experience working in academia, health care, arts, and museums.

Melissa develops and executes strategic marketing and communications initiatives that support Mershon's mission of advancing substantive scholarly and policy conversations on vital security issues. She earned a B.A. from Denison University and a J.D. from Case Western Reserve University.



EDA AYAYDIN

Visiting Postdoctoral Scholar

Dr. Ayaydin is a political scientist specializing in Arctic geopolitics, with a particular interest in questions of sovereignty, identity, and international cooperation. Her recent work examines the performative dimensions of sovereignty, especially in the context of Norway–Russia relations. Based in Paris, she is a teaching fellow at the University of London Institute in Paris, a researcher at the Jean Maurie Institute of Arctic Research, and a fellow of both the International Arctic Science Committee and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

At Ohio State, she worked with Alexander Wendt, Ralph D. Mershon Professor of International Security, on her monograph entitled “Performing and Reconstructing Sovereignty: Norwegian-Russian Relations in Contemporary Arctic Geopolitics” and published several international articles.



MARC LYNCH

Visiting Scholar

George Washington University

Professor Lynch received his B.A. in Political Science from Duke University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. He teaches courses on Middle Eastern politics and international relations. He is the director of the Project on Middle East Political Science, a contributing editor for The Washington Post's Monkey Cage political science page, editor of the Columbia University Press series Columbia Studies on Middle East Politics, and a nonresident senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Lynch is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) at George Washington University. In February 2025, he and Mershon published the policy brief “POMEPS Studies 54: Debating American Primacy in the Middle East.”

A scholar of Middle East politics, Arab media and public opinion, Islamist movements, and public diplomacy, he is a frequent contributor to Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Good Authority, and other public forums, and is known for coining the term “Arab Spring.”



Post-doctoral Scholars

Julia Marino, Helen Murphey, Nicholas Nyachego

A reflection of Mershon's multidisciplinary approach, post-doctoral scholars come from a variety of social-scientific and humanistic disciplines. During these two-year positions, post-doctoral scholars pursue their own research, offer support and input to research and programming initiatives, and participate in the activities of the center.

Our 2024-2026 postdocs were Julia Marino, Helen Murphey, and Nicholas Nyachego. Collaboratively they organized [Mershon Mondays](#), Mershon community events featuring a forum for relaxed sharing of field stories, work in progress, and reflections on methods and emerging areas of research. A [Postdoc Blog](#) highlighting Mershon Mondays shared through our website, social media platforms and newsletter allowed them to engage researchers across the campus, across the nation, and across the globe.

[Check out](#) what else our current and former post-docs accomplished.

2024 2025 Highlights

From weekly research exploration through programs such as Mershon Mondays to deep exploration through conferences like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Global Perspectives, the Mershon Center engaged students, scholars, and policy makers world-wide. On campus, our signature events - the Joseph J. Kruzal Lecture and Edgar S. Furniss Book Award - featured established and emerging thought leaders. See a complete list of our [2024-2025 events](#).



2025 Kruzal Lecturer Rt Hon Rory Stewart OBE

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Joseph J. Kruzel Lecture

The Rt Hon Rory Stewart OBE explored “The Age of Populism” on April 3 at the Blackwell Inn & Pfahl Conference Center. Stewart is Professor of Grand Strategy at Yale University; a former UK cabinet minister, diplomat and Member of Parliament; and co-host of the UK’s top podcast “The Rest is Politics.”



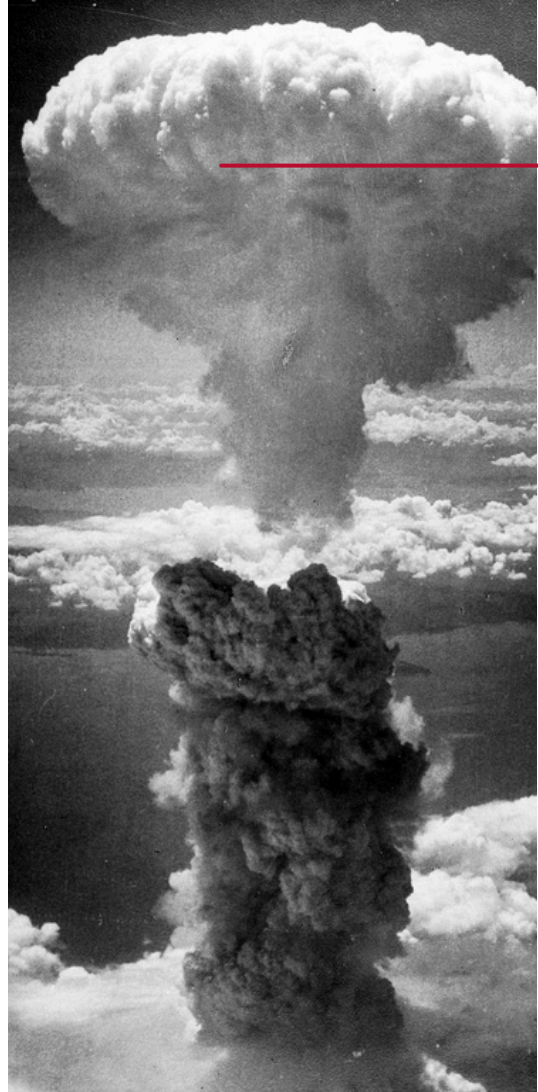
2021 Edgar S. Furniss Book Award

Rush Doshi, Assistant Professor of Security Studies at Georgetown University, Director of the China Strategy Initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations, and former Deputy Senior Director for China and Taiwan at the National Security Council, received the 2021 Furniss Book Prize for “The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order.”

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Mershon Mondays

Mershon Mondays are a forum for relaxed sharing of field stories, work in progress, and reflections on methods and emerging areas of research. For autumn 2024 - spring 2026, Mershon postdocs led speaker selection, programming, and conversations almost every Monday afternoon.



The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: A Global Perspective

Supported by the Stanton Foundation, this symposium assembled an international, multi-disciplinary group of specialists to assess the impact of 21st-century challenges on treaties and security institutions shaped for 20th-century risks. Recordings of the two symposium panels are available on the Mershon YouTube channel.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas dadas por Desaparecidas (UBPD) Alliance

Associate Director for Peacebuilding Research Teri Murphy was invited to Bogotá, Colombia to learn more about the UBPD and to explore ways that the UBPD, the Mershon Center, and The Ohio State University might collaborate.



The War for Chinese Talent in America

The Politics of Technology and Knowledge in Sino-U.S. Relations



The War for Chinese Talent in America

David Zweig, Emeritus Professor Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, National Tsinghua University, spoke on January 16 on the war for Chinese talent in America. The program was presented jointly by the East Asian Studies Center and the Mershon Center for International Security Studies.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Post Agreement Reconciliation(s) in Changing Political Eras: Comparing Northern Ireland, Colombia, and the Basque Country

Mershon's international research team for this project met at The University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain from May 30 through June 1 to review case studies and uncover consistent themes.



Melancholy Acts: A Book Talk with Nouri Gana

Nouri Gana spoke about his book “Melancholy Acts: Defeat and Cultural Critique in the Arab World,” which offers richly nuanced reflections on wide-ranging engagements with Arab thought, literature, and film in the aftermath of the 1948 dispossession of Palestinians and the 1967 military defeat of Arab armies, at a March 4 book talk in Dulles Hall.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

International History Seminar

Led by the Ohio State History Department, IHS is a year-long, in-person seminar designed to solidify and advance both the community and the reputation of international history at Ohio State by engaging with rising stars and emerging subjects, as well as established figures and broader work.



Jayita Sarkar | University of Glasgow



2025 **MILITARY FRONTIERS**
GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM



Military Frontiers Graduate Student Symposium

The keynote for the biennial Military Frontiers Graduate Symposium, which showcases the scholarship of graduate students, was Max Boot, speaking on his award-winning book “Reagan: His Life and Legacy.” Conference topics included Power and Theory in International Relations; Strategy, Intelligence, and Logistics in War; and War and Détente.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

2023 Edgar S. Furniss Book Award

Carly Goodman, assistant professor of History at Rutgers University-Camden, received the 2023 Furniss Book Award for "Dreamland: American's Immigration Lottery in an Age of Restriction" on February 3 in the Traditions Room of the Ohio Union.



Ukraine: Sheltering in Place Reception

On February 21, supporters gathered at the Lawrence and Isabel Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise Collaboratory, Sullivant Hall for "Ukraine: Sheltering in Place," a reception featuring poetry, music, and poster presentations marking the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighboring sovereign nation, Ukraine.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Quantum Social Science Bootcamp '24

By bringing together experts with capacities across different forms of quantum social science, the Quantum Social Science Bootcamp gives students with little or no background a sense of why a quantum social science might be needed, and what its basic elements would be.



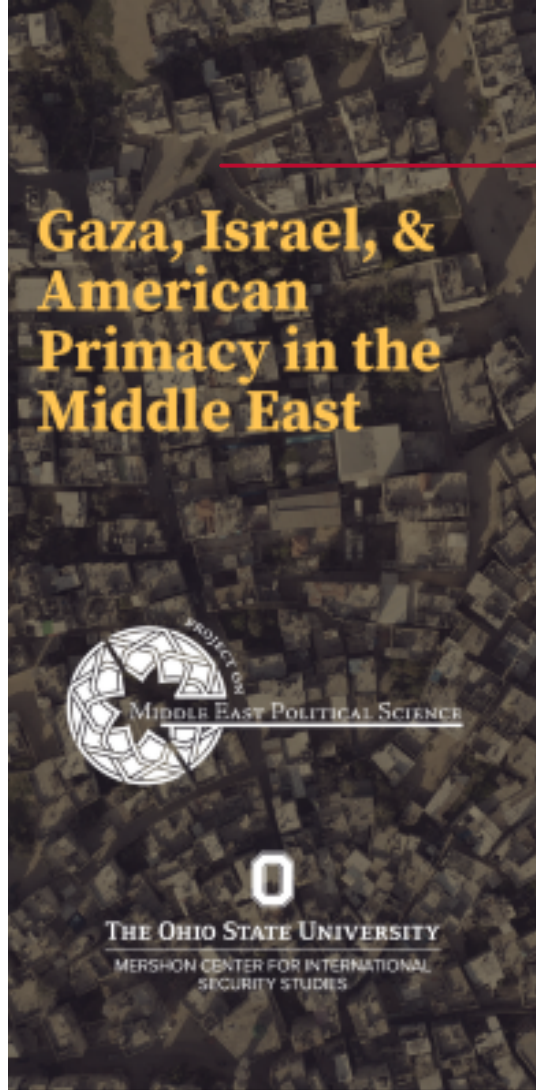
Presidential Election Process and Transition Preview

Cosponsored by the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, Moritz College of Law, and Mershon Center, this event on September 3 informed the community about the election ahead, outlined the process from Election Day through Inauguration Day, explained resolutions to contested elections and focused on the transition process.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Non-State Archive

Hosted at the Mershon Center, the Non-State Archive features digital copies of documents, oral histories, and other media related to non-state actors, as well as a finding aid for each collection. The archive provides access to researchers and organizations according to the terms of each collection's deposit.



Gaza, Israel, & American Primacy in the Middle East

This panel discussion conjoined regional expertise and theoretical insight to address the state of the Middle Eastern regional order. A subsequent publication, “POMEPS Studies 54: Debating American Primacy in the Middle East,” was published in February 2025 and is available on the [Mershon Center website](#).

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

What Do People Value in a Democracy?

Jonathan Chu of the National University of Singapore discussed his six country experimental surveys comparing and contrasting democratic views in the United States, Italy, Egypt, India, Thailand, and Japan at this September 26 event held at the Mershon Center.

What Do People Value in Democracies?

Jonathan Chu
National University of Singapore



Divided Community Project

Illustrations of Civil Rights Peacemaking & Conflict Resolution



Divided Community Project (DCP): Illustrations of Civil Rights Peacemaking & Conflict Resolution

In collaboration with Stanford Law School's Gould Center for Conflict Resolution and the National Association for Community Mediation, DCP hosted a virtual conversation illustrating civil rights peacemaking and conflict resolution on February 26, 2025.

2024 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Gaming and Learning in Security Studies Workshop

This workshop introduced participants to uses of gaming in human security challenges and featured guests Filip Ejodus, director of the Serious Games Lab at the University of Belgrade, and Cameron Hunter of the Ritual Deterrence Project at the University of Copenhagen.

Gaming and Learning in Security Studies Workshop



Strengthening the U.S.-Japan Economic and Security Alliance in Ohio

Featuring Vice Admiral Walter "Ted" Carter Jr. and other renowned speakers, this October 7 conference at The Ohio Union provided an opportunity for community members to deepen their understanding of the importance of U.S.-Japan national security and economic and business relations.

The Mershon Center Thanks You!

Thank you to the donors who generously supported the mission and vision of the Mershon Center for International Security Studies this year.



We are grateful for your contributions, which are crucial to our ability to support vital research and present programs, workshops, and conferences that explore seminal national and international security issues. Thank you for being a part of our Mershon community.



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