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SCHOOL of INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

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International Economic Relations  
International Economics

## Fall Newsletter 2014



*IER Students Emily Kaput and Sudhanshu Neema with Prof. Arturo Porzecanski at the Fall 2014 Welcome Reception*

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## Catching Up with Damon Brenner, IER '05



Damon Brenner '05 is currently Managing Director for Global Client Services at global consultancy Control Risks in Chicago, IL. "We advise and assist clients with political, security, and integrity-related risks. Our advice can help sway a company from making a poor multi-million dollar decision, determine whether they invest in a specific country, or, in terms of our response capabilities, save lives," Brenner explains. "Not many jobs offer these avenues to help make a difference on behalf of a client."

Recent projects Brenner has been involved with include assisting a multinational company in the development of its anti-corruption and compliance program; providing an outsourced solution for a manufacturing company needing to establish an analytical and intelligence capability for its global operations; and working with a Fortune-500 pharmaceutical company in the development and successful global roll-out of its crisis-management program, including workshops and training at multiple client sites.

Although Brenner says he considered obtaining an MBA with a concentration in economics, his strong and continuing interest in global affairs led him to SIS, which he cites as key to his professional growth. He knew at the outset that he wanted a career in political risk analysis, and, after graduate school, reaffirmed that decision by seeking and landing a position in the field immediately upon graduation.

Prior to joining Control Risks, Brenner spent four years developing travel programs and conducting sight inspections for INTRAV, Inc., a US-based luxury tour operator. He advised clients on travel to numerous locations around the world including South East and Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. During this time, Brenner traveled to nearly 60 countries.

Brenner's IER capstone was on the ten countries admitted into the European Union in 2004 and their self-imposed timelines for adoption of the euro. That specialty led to enduring fascination with the Eurozone, and he presently cites its potential deflation as a particular topic of interest.

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## Career Transition for Joan Shipps, IER '07



IER alum Joan Shipps has applied the economic policy education she received at SIS both at home and in the international sphere since her graduation in 2007. Recently, after the birth of her first child, Shipps transitioned from a career with the U.S. Department of Commerce to work as the editor of both a financial and a community publication.

Upon graduation from SIS, Shipps worked with the U.S. Department of Commerce, first as an intern with the Bureau of Industry and Security, and thereafter as an Economic Development Specialist in the Economic Development Administration and an International Trade Specialist in the Office of Competition and Economic Analysis. Her primary work involved analysis of foreign countries' tariff policies and proposals during WTO accession negotiations, with an eye toward U.S. economic competitiveness in high-trade or otherwise "sensitive" industrial sectors. "Essentially, I crunched a lot of numbers and wrote a lot of talking points and research papers to inform trade negotiations for high-level U.S. government officials," says Shipps, who has worked primarily on China since the completion of a research project on Chinese fiscal policy for her SIS Capstone.

Shipps gave birth to a daughter, Ophelia, in June 2013, and began looking at academic and professional skills that could allow her to transition to a more flexible career. "I learned, very personally, the impact that unfriendly public policies on paid maternity leave and childcare options can have on professionally ambitious young women who also want to parent their children." She therefore applied her writing and policy-analysis skills to a freelance journalism career, primarily with *Inside Philanthropy*, a publication about financial issues in philanthropy and fundraising around the world.

Shipps also fell in love with local politics, and is the founder and creative director of *More Microphones*, a web-based project in citizen journalism intended to give voice to the grassroots movement advocating social justice, human rights, and statehood in Washington, DC. She also writes on local issues for the *Huffington Post*. "Democracy matters!" she says, "Good governance matters! And nowhere do I feel more capable of influencing these ideals than in my surrounding community." To this end, Shipps also

served as volunteer coordinator for a local DC Council campaign and ran for the DC Democratic State Committee with a campaign centered on housing costs in the city.

"International Economics is a broad field," says Shipp. "The intellectual base I worked to develop [at SIS] helps me contextualize economic trends, domestically and internationally, to this day."

## Alyson Slack, IER '06 Applies Trade Expertise to New York State



For IER alum Alyson Slack '06, continuing at SIS after completing her Bachelor's degree was an easy decision. "I felt I still had so much to learn from the faculty. The IER track was a perfect fit for my desire to fully understand the workings of our international trade and financial institutions, grasp the development lessons of East Asia, and cultivate a professional capacity to foster long-term peace and prosperity across the Pacific. The choice certainly paid off for me: my career to date has been the outgrowth of the knowledge that I acquired as an SIS student."

After graduating, Slack began utilizing her skills and fluency in Mandarin as a research associate in Asia Security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). After a few years, she moved to upstate New York with her husband, where she is currently a Special Projects consultant with the Center for Economic Growth in Albany, NY, working on the implementation of Governor Andrew Cuomo's "Global NY" initiative, which seeks to boost exports from across the state and inbound foreign investment.

"It's a rewarding project from a personal perspective," she says. "I'm passionate about playing a role in raising the region's profile on the international stage and positioning it to take greater advantage of global opportunities." Slack also maintains a China- and Korea- focused freelance business consultancy named Battenkill Pacific, which involves projects like facilitating visits from Chinese delegations,

research, speaking engagements, and grant-writing concerning U.S.-Asia economic and security relations.

Her enduring interest in East Asian economics, which was strengthened during her Master's in a small reading group of peers focused on the topic, remains alive and well. To Slack, the most exciting thing to witness in the region has been the emergence of a regional currency swap arrangement among the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the People's Republic of China (including Hong Kong), Japan, and South Korea, on which she wrote her Substantial Research Paper. "I wrote it almost a decade after the devastating Asian financial crisis when the first idea for such a fund had been roundly dismissed," she said. "When East Asian countries finally came together to establish the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) Agreement in 2010, I was fascinated that they had done so around a contributions model almost identical to that in my recommendations."

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## Noted Political Economist Affiliates with IER



"What is the most efficient and just means of governing an interconnected world?" asks Miles Kahler, IER's new Distinguished Professor. Dr. Kahler, a seasoned economic-governance teacher and scholar, has built his career around seeking the evolving answer to this question. That answer, which touches every aspect of international relations, grows more complex and pressing with each passing year, and Dr. Kahler brings a depth of insight on it to SIS.

Come January, Dr. Kahler will be offering his inaugural graduate course for IER, SIS-753, "Global Financial Governance" in reflection of his work on international monetary and financial issues, as well as global and regional governance. His research agenda is focused, of late, on the BRICS and other so-called "rising powers" as well as a wide range of other issues including: "The negotiation of the so-called mega-regional trade agreements (like TTP, TTIP and RCEP), which are taking over center-stage from the stalled WTO negotiations; the risk of future financial crises and global measures to prevent such crises; and the ongoing reform of international institutions to accommodate rising powers and urgent issues, such as global health emergencies and climate change."

Dr. Kahler's career has given him no shortage of opportunities to build expertise on these issues. He

became interested in the Pacific region and in international relations during the Vietnam War. "It did get me interested in the question of imperialism, and why great powers or superpowers get involved in wars with much weaker powers," he recalls. When he eventually prepared his doctoral dissertation at Harvard, he focused on decolonization in Great Britain and France, but his deepest connection is to China. He went to Shanghai to teach just as the country was beginning to open to the international economy and an increasingly globalized world, and returned in 2009 for another teaching stint.

Prior to arriving at SIS, Dr. Kahler was Rohr Professor of Pacific International Relations and Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) and the Political Science Department at the University of California, San Diego. He has been a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (2012-2013), at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (2007-2008), and at the Council on Foreign Relations (1994-1996 and again currently). He is also a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *International Organization*.

By way of advice to IER students thinking of a productive future, Dr. Kahler advises that students prioritize the development of "...essential skills (written and presentational, but also quantitative analysis) and substantive knowledge or expertise." He also recommends Neil Irwin's book *The Alchemists: Three Central Bankers and a World on Fire*, which centers on the efforts of the financial community to mitigate the effects of the global financial crisis of 2008-09.

## Dr. Jerry Schiff of the IMF Returns to Academia with IER



IER's newest adjunct professor, Dr. Jerald (Jerry) Schiff, is taking time from his 25-year career at the International Monetary Fund to come and teach at SIS. As a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Managing Director during the global financial crisis, he feels fortunate to have been exposed to financial crisis response issues and vehicles. He says it left him "...acutely interested in broader issues of global governance and how to improve the ways that countries cooperate in designing their individual economic policies."

Currently the Deputy Director of the Asia and Pacific Department, his work is more focused on one

region. "I've recently been leading our efforts to help Myanmar navigate its way out of many decades of isolation and economic stagnation," he says. He has also led the IMF's work on Japan and Singapore closely, and supervised its work on the ASEAN countries. "And before that, I did similar work with a number of European countries making the transition from communism to capitalism. In fact, I'm looking forward to teaching a course on this subject come January." This type of work has left Dr. Schiff with "an appreciation for the complexities of economic reforms, and the importance of politics, history and culture in finding the right path."

Before starting his long and distinguished career at the IMF, Dr. Schiff began as an academic: he was a professor of economics at Tulane University during 1984-89, and then came to Washington DC to work at the Fund.

Recently, Dr. Schiff co-edited and contributed to a book on the policies of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, titled "Can Abenomics Work?," which will be out shortly. Other than that, "the most interesting issues for me have involved countries seeking to undertake transformational change. Most recently, I've been leading the Fund's work on Japan, which has embarked on a pretty fundamental change in policies in an effort to escape from nearly two decades of deflation and very low growth. The jury is very much still out on whether this will work."

Dr. Schiff acknowledges that his own career, carried out in largely one institution, may be of little example to students graduating in the current economy. "All I can say is that what worked for me with the IMF was to always look for new positions in which I could learn something new and stretch myself to do things that made me somewhat uncomfortable -- but for which I still felt at least somewhat qualified! I was lucky enough to find many such assignments, which is probably why I stuck around so long. Perhaps turning back to teaching after such a long time is another example of this tendency."

This first semester with us, Dr. Schiff is teaching a senior capstone seminar titled "The Rise of China and the Global Economy," providing an overview of China's economic reforms as well as their impact on regional and global growth, employment, income distribution and inflation, the battle for natural resources, the structure of world trade and capital flows, and the process of global economic policy-making.



## Prof. Stephen Silvia Wins Research Funding

Prof. Stephen Silvia has been awarded a research grant from the Hans Böckler Foundation for a new project: "The United Automobile Workers and Employee Representation in German Automobile Producers in the United States."

The project builds on Dr. Silvia's 25-year expertise in comparative industrial relations and German labor in general, as well as the research for a recent book, "*Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the Postwar Era*." It investigates the impact on personnel management and employee participation when multinational enterprises operate in countries with industrial relations systems that differ significantly from those in their home country.

Specifically, the project focuses on the three German automobile producers with operations in the United States: BMW in Spartanburg, South Carolina; Mercedes Benz in Vance, Alabama; and Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The research will produce qualitative case studies of the evolution of personnel management and employee participation in the three plants. It will also discuss the larger implications for personnel management and employee participation in multinational enterprises, transnational cooperation among unions, and industrial relations practice in the United States.

The Hans Böckler Foundation is a German nonprofit which aims to contribute to the improvement of people's working lives by supporting in-house research on employment, living environment, and the economy, as well as commissioning outside projects like that of Prof. Silvia. Its primary focus is on co-determination in the economy, meaning the set of rights that gives employees the possibility to actively participate in the shaping of their work environment.

Congratulations, Prof. Silvia!

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## Fall Highlights



IER alum Stefan Hirche '01 visited AU from Frankfurt, Germany, where he works for KfW, a development bank. He shared his experiences and industry knowledge with SIS students.





IER's Dr. Randall Henning, left, assisted in hosting Ms. Malgorzata Kaluzynska, Director of the Department of Economic Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, at the IER-sponsored "Poland: An Assessment of its First Decade in the EU." The event served as a launch of the Ministry's new report, "Poland's 10 years in the European Union."



Dr. Tara Rice, AU alum and current Chief of Global Institutions at the Federal Reserve Board, joined IER students to discuss the functioning and hiring processes of the Fed and its banks. Dr. Rice also offered general advice on course selection and skills development.



From left, IER students Gabriel Hernandez, Sarah Krech, and Jen Harkins at the 2014 Fall Welcome Reception.

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## CIER Young Alumni Panel



*Above, left photo, from left: Jen Harkins, David Parker, Shannon Mockler, Khrystyna Kushnir, and Ben Duncanson*

*Above, right photo, from left: alums Khrystyna Kushnir and Shannon Mockler, both '09, with IER students Leticia Donoso, Tetyana Sydorenko, and Sudhanshu Neema*

On Friday, November 21, 2014, the Council for International Economic Relations (CIER), the IER student group, hosted a panel of young alumni for a dinner talk about career strategies, the international economic policy field, and what they've learned along the way. President Jen Harkins moderated a four-member panel introduced by Prof. Arturo Porzecanski, consisting of:

**Ben Duncanson**, IER '14, Policy Analysis and Development Director, U.S. Farm Credit Council

**Khrystyna L. Kushnir**, IER '09, Analyst, The World Bank

**Shannon Mockler**, IER '09, Economist, U.S. Federal Government

**David Parker**, IER '13, Research Associate, Simon Chair in Political Economy, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

We're indebted to all alumni who have helped us out this semester, both within this panel and by other means!

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**With questions or concerns, please contact our Program Coordinator, Shannon Hilsey, at:**  
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