Following developments around the globe: Check out the IR Program BLOG for faculty and expert commentary on unfolding global events

With events in the Eurozone—and Greece in particular—unfolding by the minute, from new bailout plans, to harsher austerity measures, to national strikes, and riots, the IR Program has asked some faculty to provide their insights, as well as share with us other analyses they have come across. We will periodically add new commentary, links, and video over the coming days and weeks.

Professor Susan Napier talks about the power of popular culture

IR Core Faculty member, Susan Napier, currently is Professor and Director of the Japanese Program in the Tufts Department of German, Russian and Asian Languages and Literatures.

Just a couple of weeks ago, on February 4, I was standing in a massive auditorium in Tokyo, preparing to deliver a presentation at something called the World Civilization Forum. I was the only woman and the only American at the Forum. My other panelists included a former Swedish Finance Minister, a Professor from Beijing who specialized in Confucian Philosophy, and the head abbot of the Todaiji Temple in Nara. What was my subject? Cartoons. Or, more specifically, Japanese cartoons, usually known as anime.

How can cartoons stack up against religion, philosophy and finance? Very well, in fact, if you think of them as representing a larger cultural force—the role of popular culture in exercising “soft power” around the world. Soft power, as we know from Joseph Nye’s famous book, is the power to persuade rather than coerce, and in the last decade it has come to be seen as an important tool in addressing the many problems that the twenty-first century faces. In our increasingly wired global society popular culture is a way for different races, ethnicities and generations to interconnect in a positive fashion.

My current research interests involve the role of fantasy as a therapeutic instrument that can be particularly helpful in giving perspective and hope to the younger generation. In the case of the forum in Tokyo I was talking mainly about the great film director Hayao Miyazaki, arguably the world’s greatest living animator whose animation studio, Studio Ghibli, is beloved not only in Japan but globally as well. Miyazaki is a world builder who invites us into sumptuous realms of adventure and excitement but his work is far from being simply escapist. Instead, I argue that Miyazaki presents challenging and even traumatic situations which his protagonists—usually young and often female—are forced to confront without adult help or hindrance. In films such as Princess Mononoke, My Neighbor Totoro, Spirited Away and also in the works of Miyazaki’s partner Isao Takahata, who created the anti-war film Grave of Fireflies, Studio Ghibli presents us with a kind of template of young people working through or processing deeply traumatic circumstances, from the aerial bombings of World War II in Grave of Fireflies to a seriously ill parent in My Neighbor Totoro.

For a full rundown of all Eurozone-related posts, visit tuftsir.tumblr.com/tagged/eurozone. Alternatively, this page is accessible from the IR homepage.

How can cartoons stack up against religion, philosophy and finance? Very well...

-Susan Napier

REMINDER for IR FACULTY: Don’t miss the IR Core Faculty Dinner on Monday, March 5. If you have not already responded, please RSVP to John Taylor (john.taylor@tufts.edu) ASAP!
**Associate Professor Hugh Roberts, Edward Keller Professor of North African and Middle Eastern History, Department of History**

**Research Interests and Short Bio:** Hugh Roberts, a specialist on North African history and politics, has taught at the Universities of East Anglia, Sussex and London (SOAS and LSE) in England and also as a visiting professor at the University of California Berkeley. But he joins Tufts from Cairo, where he directed the International Crisis Group’s North Africa Project from 2002 to 2007 and again from January to July 2011. His research is primarily concerned with Algeria, including the history of the war of liberation, the post-independence period and the history of Kabylia, Algeria’s main Berber region, since the early 16th century; his other interests include the history of Islamism in North Africa and 20th century Egypt and Libya.

**What are the origins of your interest in history?**
In my case an interest in history has originated in a curiosity to know why this or that has recently happened or is currently happening that pushes me to look for the answer in the past. There have also been intellectual influences. At Oxford I had the great good fortune to be taught Politics by two remarkable specialists on France who demonstrated the indispensability of a grasp of French history for an understanding of contemporary French political life. I applied this lesson to my study of Algeria early on and found it paid enormous dividends, enabling me to identify Algeria’s own national political traditions and the unwritten rules of Algeria’s notoriously ‘opaque’ politics today. The other element of my interest in history derives from my critical stance towards the present condition of the countries I study and my consequent involvement in policy debates about this condition. Rather than transcend this in an ideological and teleological fashion, positing a superior future defined – frequently by external commentators - in an arbitrary and utopian manner, I seek to ground my critical understanding of the present – in Algeria, in Egypt, in Libya, etc. - in an appreciation of the past, since what a country inherits from the past in terms of its values and experience and its society’s repertoire of purposeful collective action will go a long way towards defining what its potential - and options - for positive change may be.

**Visit Prof Roberts’ faculty profile page for more info on his research interests and major publications:** [http://ase.tufts.edu/history/faculty/roberts.asp](http://ase.tufts.edu/history/faculty/roberts.asp)

**Courses current and upcoming:**
- HIST 71: Middle East since WWI (Spring 2012)
- HIST 70: Middle East to WWI (Fall 2012)
- HIST 177: The Maghreb since 1945 (Fall 2012)

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**Power of popular culture continued from pg 1:**

Sometimes Miyazaki’s work is eerily prescient. *Ponyo*, Miyazaki’s most recent film and the one that I particularly singled out in my lecture, was made in 2008 and depicts a gigantic tsunami overwhelming a Japanese fishing village. Even though *Ponyo* was created three years before the disaster of March 11 last year, it resonates on many levels with the real life tsunami. But Miyazaki is at pains to show his very young characters coping remarkably effectively with a world in which natural disasters seem to be accumulating and the older generation cannot always solve the problems. Trauma, grief, yearning and loss are all part of Miyazaki’s portfolio and these complex emotions and situations are treated with unusual detail and gravity for what are essentially family oriented films. At the same time, however, Studio Ghibli’s oeuvre consistently evinces a deep seated faith in the psychological resources of young people and a belief their potential to deal with the complicated legacies they will inherit from the current generation.

As should be clear from the above summary, my research interests are highly comparative and very international. While even today there are academics who scoff at popular culture as trivial and escapist, I hope that my research will help to show that this is far from the case. I truly believe that culture can be a powerful force in its own right and one that can change the world for the better.
Reflections from Current IR Majors

“The world is your playground.”

As an International Relations major at Tufts, this sentiment underscores the imagination and curiosity that has fueled my academic pursuits and experiences over the past four years. In the summer following my freshman year, I taught at an orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS in Jamaica. In my junior year, I studied abroad at the University of Ghana, followed by a summer research project on informal finance practices in Ghana as a Borghesani Scholar. For my Tisch Scholars Project this year, I am leading a research project focused on uncovering alternative energy practices in rural Zimbabwe. The breadth of the IR major has opened up opportunities across a global landscape and in typically Tufts fashion – I eagerly pursue every chance to try something new.

Kristen Johnson, A12

Internship leads to job offer

Like many first years, I was undecided about my major. But after trying out various classes, I chose to pursue Economics and International Relations with a concentration in International Finance. Though I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the private sector, I was unsure of the exact field I wanted to enter.

While looking for summer jobs and internships during my sophomore year, I stumbled upon an opportunity at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute located in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, which is also my hometown. I accepted the internship and was lucky enough to work with a group that takes the health and safety findings of the Research Institute and applies them to the business practices of Liberty Mutual’s corporate customers. I learned a great deal about the business environment, and was able to utilize many of the research skills I had obtained through my coursework as an International Relations major.

The summer after my junior year I returned to the Liberty Mutual Group as an intern in the Product Management division in Boston. In this role, I had to employ quantitative reasoning skills as I worked with a research team to create a predictive model on how consumers purchase insurance products and how they react to changes in the product and price. This role gave me a greater understanding of how a company functions both domestically and internationally, and how it must be knowledgeable of market differences in order to be successful.

Upon graduation, I will be continuing with the company in the Corporate Strategy group. I am excited to work with this division and learn more about various areas of the business and problem solving. I am especially pleased with this position because the group works on the company’s international expansion, which will allow me to learn more about international markets and the role that multinational private actors play.

The International Relations major has allowed me to have a greater understanding of international economics as well as the local cultures that have large impacts on how markets function. Many of my classes have developed my research, writing, and presentation skills, which make me very confident in moving forward professionally. I’ve been very fortunate to study at Tufts, and I am excited about the future.

High-Yellow, Blue-Black Birds premieres April 4, 7:30pm and 9:30pm in Barnum 008

High-Yellow, Blue-Black Birds

A play that shared with the rest of the students, alumni, faculty and other that we are highlighting the blogs of the past IR student with a blogroll. Please contact John Taylor (john.taylor@tufts.edu) if you would like the IR Program to feature your blog. All blogs will be reviewed for professionalism, relevance, and thoughtful content before being added to the blogroll.

IR Blogroll link: http://tuftsir.tumblr.com/blogroll
2011-2012 IR Senior Thesis Research Projects

The IR Program is pleased to announce that 15 IR seniors this year are well on their way to completing senior honors thesis papers.

Here is a closer look at some of these students and their research topics. Students not pictured are:

Allison Fisk (International Relations) is producing a documentary about primary school education in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for her senior thesis. While abroad, Allison filmed at three very different schools in Dar es Salaam - a struggling public school on the outskirts of the city, an English-medium private Catholic school, and a relatively well-resourced urban public school. By focusing on one child per school, Allison is exploring what an education means to each child, what struggles they face, and what opportunities they create for themselves. This project has been made possible through the support of Professor Jeanne Penvenne and Howard Woolf, the Tufts Undergraduate Research Fund, the Summer Scholars Program, the Schwartz-Paddock Scholarship in the Visual and Performing Arts, and the International Relations Research Scholarship.

Amanda Chuzi (International Relations and Environmental Studies): Framing Environmental Change

Vittoria Elliott (International Relations and Psychology): NGOs and Voluntourism: The Politics of Practice


Sho Igawa (International Relations and Political Science): The Liberalization of Japan’s Immigration Policy: Obstacles and Prospects

Richard Ammerman (International Relations and Economics) is examining the politics of liberal Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries during Giovanni Giolitti’s tenure as Prime Minister. He hopes to use this period of “imperfect democracy” as a case study for a variety of political-economic theories of democratization. Employing primary sources such as census records, parliamentary minutes and newspapers of the period, he hopes to gain new insights on why certain features of democracy developed in pre-war Italy, while others were absent or weak.

David Maas (International Relations) David’s thesis explores the rise of the radical right in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. First, David is examining how the turbulence of the 1990s allowed for radical right groups and their ideas to emerge in the country. From here, David’s thesis will investigate Vladimir Putin’s response to the phenomenon: the Russian government in the 2000s has attempted to both suppress the movement while also adopting many of its tenets. David hopes to identify why the government has acted in this way, and how policies have helped shape the radical right today.

Emma Holliday (International Relations and Sociology) traveled to Cotacachi, a small town in the Ecuadorian Andes, to interview English-speaking expatriates from the United States and Canada about why they moved to Ecuador and their experiences finding a community and creating a new life. Emma’s research explores the growing trend of retirees moving to Latin America for economic reasons and for the adventure of living abroad. It also examines how expatriates in Cotacachi interact with and affect the existing Ecuadorian community over time.

Renee Gagne (International Relations) is writing her thesis on the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the development of European environmental policy. She is analyzing multiple environment-related cases brought before the Court by a variety of actors within the EU. Renee hopes to better understand how environmental policy development relates to the overall development of the EU, specifically the hierarchy between Member State courts and the Court of Justice. Renee also hopes to identify how the Court chooses to balance economic and environmental interests for the EU.
Christopher Walczyszyn (International Relations and Political Science) is writing his thesis on the contemporary Polish gay rights movement. Specifically, Christopher is examining how gay rights activism in Poland has been shaped by European integration and an anti-gay campaign adopted by Poland’s Law and Justice party. Christopher seeks to determine the extent to which politicized homophobia, pervasive in the national political discourse between 2005 and 2008, has changed and continues to shape the methods utilized by activists to promote gay rights. Christopher will also examine the role of the EU in tempering the impact of Law and Justice’s homophobic platform on LGBT rights.

Stephanie Phoutrides (International Relations and International Literary and Visual Studies) is writing her thesis on the relationship between education and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. Stephanie is doing case studies of Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Egypt, with special emphasis on the role of the Arab Spring. Stephanie travelled to Tunisia on a research trip with Tufts NI-MEP (New Initiative for Middle East Peace) over winter break and was excited to get firsthand opinions from students and professors on the state of education before and after the revolution.

Kathryn Russell (International Relations) is focusing on the compatibility of these norms with the rights that Middle Eastern Muslim women are demanding today, and analyzing the implications of this compatibility for U.S. foreign policy, especially looking forward after the Arab Spring revolts. Katie is focusing on case studies of Egypt and Turkey, and will be analyzing theological and historical sources as well as current women’s movements in the Middle East as part of her research.

Zachary Laub (International Relations) Presidents undertaking nation-building campaigns and counterinsurgency operations premised on the Hearts and Minds approach have tended to vastly underestimate the costs and risks they would incur, and overestimate their prospects for success. Drawing largely on archival sources, Zach is analyzing the sources and nature of these misperceptions. Zach’s focus is on the ways in which decision-makers may have been misled by the very historical analogies—presumptive “lessons of the past”—they used to advocate for their foreign policies.

Eddie Gallese (International Relations and Russian Studies) Scholars and news sources alike tend to attribute the root causes of the insurgency in Russia’s North Caucasus to a mixture of nationalist sentiments, poor governance, corruption, and radical Islamic teachings. However, a deeper looks into these causes are generally hindered by a lack for empirical data to back them. Eddie hopes to bring fresh perspective to the subject by looking at the statistical relationships between insurgent attacks and factors that are influenced by these root causes. Eddie believes that this analysis will highlight the success and failures of the Russian counterinsurgency campaign, as well as provide suggestions moving forward.

Paulina Ziolek (International Relations) is writing her thesis on the different energy dependency situations between former Soviet Union republics and Russia. By looking at Estonia and Ukraine, Paulina will compare successful and failed energy management and determine what conditions lead to better or worse energy conditions. Paulina will question theories of national identity, analyze the power of oligarchy and study transitional reforms in both case studies. Why is a country that is less dependent on Russian gas continuously involved in conflict? Russia makes varied deals with their natural gas customers and Paulina hopes to find the driving force behind these different relationships.

Come and show your support for Thesis Writers!

April 21 - Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Symposium
Olin Center

April 25 - Thesis Exchange
Asean Auditorium, Cabot Center

Photo courtesy of the JFK Library.
Spotlight on a Tufts IR Alum

A first-row seat to the unfolding events in Egypt: Michael Kremer, A11, reflects on what life is like living and working in Cairo

In Egypt, the questions change with the seasons. In the summer, everyone obsessed over how to build a country from the ground up: new constitution or elections first? civil or religious state? In the fall, the topic on everyone’s minds was the military: have the generals betrayed us? In the winter, the focus shifted to elections: was this the opportunity to lead the country that the Muslim Brotherhood had been waiting for for the past eighty years? Now in the spring, a nervous angst is spreading: will the military really transfer power as promised in June? How many more young Egyptians will die in clashes with police between now and then?

There’s no escaping the debate about the revolution. Every day dramatic headlines are splashed across the front page of the papers, taxi drivers are eager to expound on their newly formed political involvement, and anytime you step outside it is impossible to miss the revolutionary graffiti – some breathtakingly artistic, some vulgar – covering nearly every public wall in Cairo. As an American living in Cairo, I have tried to find a way to observe the political developments as closely as possible without becoming caught up in them. It has not been easy.

I arrived in Cairo in late May, 2011, precisely one week after graduating from Tufts, to spend a year as a fellow at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA), an intensive Arabic program jointly run by the University of Texas and the American University in Cairo. In a normal year, CASA fellows immerse themselves in studying classical Arabic and Egyptian dialect through a mixture of literature, film, and discussion.

But the 2011/2012 version of CASA has been anything but normal. Throughout the summer and fall, Tahrir Square was both the place we went to class and attended massive protests on a weekly basis. I found myself mingling in the square with Egyptians on most Fridays, chatting in Arabic about politics or listening to speakers from the variety of parties and interest groups present in the square as they tried to speak over the general din of the protest. I also attended several calmer discussion group at a local think tank that brought together youth from all over the political spectrum to discuss fundamental issues such as writing a new constitution and understanding the newly-released electoral laws. I have always enjoyed following politics, but I had never been party to the kind of discussions that I frequently had with my Egyptian friends. How often, after all, does someone earnestly ask you: “We are starting from scratch, so how do you think we should go about building our country?”

As a foreigner (a tall, blonde foreigner, moreover) I don’t really have the option of blending into the crowd. That immutable fact has its drawbacks and its benefits. Wherever I go, dozens of eyes instantly latch on to me and follow my every move. On the flipside, however, I become a magnet for people interested in either asking my opinion on the situation in Egypt, effusively praising President Obama, or sharply criticizing U.S. foreign policy, Israel, etc. (just verbally, of course, without any physical threat). I also relish the opportunity to butt heads with someone who does not share my political views. For example, much as I agree with the political principles championed by secular Egyptian parties (civil government, a respect for women’s and minorities’ rights, etc.), I make a special effort to engage in conversation with supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and hardline Salafi Islamist party. In fact, some of the most rewarding relationships that I have formed throughout the year have been with people who voted for the Muslim Brotherhood; people whom I think are completely qualified to assume leadership positions and move the country towards a brighter future.

In the end, most of the questions from the summer, fall, winter, and spring still remain unresolved. Talking to five different Egyptians is likely to yield five completely different points of view, but, in a certain sense, that diversity of opinion is a beautiful thing. Egypt has a long way to go before it can shed the demons of its past, many of whom remain as strong as ever even a year after the downfall of the old regime that spawned them. At the very least, however, people now feel that they have a say in determining their own future. Even though I’m not a direct participant in that process, watching it from a first-row seat has been a thrill ride in and of itself.

Michael Kremer (A11) majored in International Relations with a minor in Economics. While at Tufts, Michael wrote an IR senior honors thesis, graduated with magna cum laude honors, and received the prestigious John S. Gibson Award.

Check out the new IR Blogroll where you can read Michael Kremer’s blog among others:

http://tuftsir.tumblr.com/blogroll
IR Events and Tips from the IR Office

IR Events

IR Majors’ Week Event
Balch Arena Lobby in the Aidikman Arts Center

Students interested in the IR major attended the IR Majors’ Week event on February 28th. This was a great opportunity for interested students to meet IR faculty and staff as well as mingle with current IR majors. Students enjoyed light refreshments while learning about study abroad strategies, choosing advisors, and developing their skills as IR majors. If you missed the event, feel free to visit the IR office in Cabot 605. We’re happy to meet with students and answer your questions.

IR Core Forum Spring 2012 Schedule
Thursday Evenings, 6pm-7pm, Braker 226

The Core Forum is open to all IR majors. Its primary purpose is to identify and explore the intellectual themes that cut across the disciplines within International Relations and assist students as they make the connections. The following speakers are experts in their fields and start each meeting with a topic for discussion. Then the group engages in open dialogue. Meetings are very informal and include a light dinner.

Mar 1  Sam Sommers – Psychology
Mar 8  Enrico Spolaore – Economics
Mar 15  Open Discussion
Mar 29  Xueping Zhong – Chinese
Apr 12  Cathy Stanton – Sociology
Apr 19  Amahl Bishara – Anthropology
Apr 26  Richard Eichenberg – Political Science

If you are interested in attending the Core Forum, contact John Taylor (john.taylor@tufts.edu) to RSVP. You will be given access to Trunk, where updates, podcasts, and articles are posted weekly prior to each meeting.

Here’s a quick RECAP on Core Forum meetings that have already taken place this semester:

On Feb 2, Prof Ken Garden (Religion) talked about the lack of progress toward democracy in Egypt since the Arab Spring, and particularly the military stronghold on that state that has existed for decades.

On Feb 9, David Proctor (History) talked about the Treaty of Versailles and the interwar period, specifically the liberal internationalist response combined with criticism from realists during this period.

On Feb 16, David Denby (Philosophy) talked about the concept of hedonism, and whether happiness is the only intrinsically valuable good for which people strive.

Tips from the IR Office

Important Deadline: IR Research Scholars Award
Application Deadline: Thursday, March 15

The IR Research Scholars Award supports original, high-quality undergraduate international research. The award consists of financial support and faculty mentorship for intensive summer research work. This competitive award is aimed at IR majors (sophomore standing and above) who anticipate producing an upper-level research paper in their senior year or other high-level research.

Important Reminder: Fall 2012 registration begins April 9!
Here are some tips on getting prepared for registration:

• Look for the Fall 2012 IR Course Announcement available on the IR website at the end of March—via the IR homepage. Click on “Curriculum,” then “Courses.”

• Meet with your IR advisor to discuss the best strategy to complete your IR major requirements. Plan early for study abroad and research opportunities. Use the IR planning sheets (available on the IR website) to help keep track of your plans.

• If your IR advisor is on leave, make sure you know who is assigned to “release you for registration” BEFORE your registration day. Contact your advisor’s home department with questions if you have not heard from your IR advisor. If you are not sure who is filling in for your IR advisor, contact the IR office as soon as possible.

• SPECIAL NOTE for IR Advisors: If you are on leave (or plan to go on leave), please arrange for a colleague to look after your advisees during your leave. Please e-mail your IR advisees with instructions on who to contact in your absence—especially for registration questions. If you need assistance, please contact Kathleen Devigne.

Important Notice: New nutrition courses are in the works to be added to Global Health, Nutrition and the Environment (TC3)!

The IR Curriculum Committee and TC3 faculty taskforce are hard at work in an effort to add new Nutrition courses to the TC3 curriculum. If the proposed courses are approved, TC3 students may see some of the new courses in the next IR course announcement. Stay tuned!
Save the Date!!!!

3rd Annual IR Barbecue
Monday, April 30
12:00-1:30pm
Tisch Library Roof

Open to the entire IR Community
(faculty, staff, majors)