

# int'l

Fall 2023

also inside:

Q&A with Jennifer Rexford

The Digital Witness Lab

Schwarzman Scholars

# DEMOCRACY

# IN CRISIS

## Read

'Making the Viking Age'  
in a New Princeton  
Humanities Course.



PHOTO: Tori Repp/Fotobuddy

**On this page:** Students participating in the spring break trip "Making The Viking Age" in Demark, experimented with hands-on learning at the Blacksmith of Trenton. The 2023 humanistic studies course included workshops on metalworking, ceramics, woodworking and felting in order to understand Viking tools and ways of life. Pictured is Blacksmith Daniel Lapidow, left, working with Wendi Yan '23 to forge a facsimile of a metal tool from the Viking Age.

**Back page:** "Southern skies" by Calvin Kenjiro Grover '27

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# Letter from Princeton International

We live in a globalized and unequal world — one with great opportunities and massive constraints. Princeton University students and scholars are eager to understand this world and to embrace a better future. As this magazine highlights, over the past year they have participated in internationally engaged research, teaching, travel and service. In doing so, they have learned from the creativity and bravery of those around the globe and collaborated with international colleagues to advance a more democratic, inclusive and sustainable world.

At the same time, we have much to understand and redress, including climate change, health crises, wars, democratic backsliding, economic precarity and social injustices, among other issues. This issue of the magazine shines a particular spotlight on contemporary challenges to democracy. Princeton has organized and hosted many initiatives that tackle this core issue, and *Princeton International* is building on that work by featuring a special section on this critical political issue.

We invite you to explore the magazine's special section on challenges to democracy, along with the other feature articles that include interviews with University leaders, reporting on student opportunities abroad, University programming and much more.

As we go to press, there are breaking events that are not covered in this magazine, including escalating conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. We pause here to consider these ongoing political and humanitarian crises. As a community, we seek to understand the outbreak and escalation of conflict, grieve the loss of lives and contemplate peaceful ways forward. If ever there was a time for international expertise, engaged scholarship, rigorous teaching, humanitarian service and open dialogue, this is it.

## Read

President Christopher L. Eisgruber's remarks on the war in Ukraine



and the Middle East



*Deborah Yashar*

**Deborah Yashar**  
Donald E. Stokes Professor of Public and International Affairs;  
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**Aly Kassam-Remtulla**  
Vice Provost for International Affairs and Operations, Office of the Provost

# Princeton's Novogratz Bridge Year Program Expands to Six International Locations

By Emily Aronson, Office of Communications

Princeton's innovative Novogratz Bridge Year Program expanded to six countries this fall, offering more incoming students the opportunity to participate in the tuition-free global service-learning program.

New partnerships with communities in Cambodia and Costa Rica have been established, alongside Bridge Year's existing partnerships in Bolivia, India, Indonesia and Senegal.

"The incredible generosity of Princeton alumni, and in particular Mike and Sukey Novogratz, has made this expansion possible, and we are thrilled to offer Bridge Year to more students at Princeton," said Bridge Year Director John Luria.

The 2023-24 cohort comprises 33 Bridge Year participants.

In Battambang, Cambodia, students explore topics including wildlife conservation, activism in sports and the arts, and the country's ongoing process of truth and reconciliation following the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979.

In San Isidro, Costa Rica, students engage with Costa Rican youth, as they explore issues of environmental conservation and climate justice, among other concerns.

"Princeton partners with on-the-ground organizations that have a history of facilitating meaningful, community-based learning experiences and a strong track record for managing student health and safety," Luria said. Bridge Year works with Amigos de las Americas in Costa Rica and Where There Be Dragons in Bolivia, Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Senegal.

Bridge Year has provided transformative, service-learning experiences to over 370 Princeton undergraduates since launching in 2009. Students spend nine months learning new languages, building relationships within partner communities and gaining an understanding of local community concerns. Locations have changed and expanded throughout the program's history.

Former Bridge Year students now on campus say the program changed their perspectives, unlocked new passions and better prepared them for college life.

"From rural homestays to the busy capital city, my Bridge Year experience has demonstrated the value of being comfortable with being uncomfortable, trusting others and seeking out different perspectives," said Claire Espinosa '27, who participated in Bridge Year Senegal. "These months have shaped the way I reflect on myself and my surroundings, whether through conversations challenging conventional ideas of 'development' or discovering ways to find joy and gratitude in my everyday life."

"Bridge Year was the first opportunity I had to learn who I was outside of an academic context," said Lena Hoplamazian '24, a Bridge Year India participant. "I was given the chance to learn about myself and another part of the world before diving into the Princeton experience, and I couldn't imagine the last three years of my life without that change in perspective."

Even after Princeton, alumni still feel the impact of their Bridge Year experience.

Agnes Cho '14 was among the first cohort of Bridge Year students. Now she works as a housing policy consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area.

"When I went on Bridge Year, I held a lot of assumptions about what my impact on the world could be. Underlying many of those assumptions were beliefs I had around what kinds of solutions people needed and what development should look like," Cho said. "I learned how critically important it is to be able to challenge my own assumptions. It is so vital to listen deeply to people and to understand there is not a linear or direct path to helping people."

*Michelle Tong, Office of International Programs communications manager, contributed to this story.*

The 2023-24 Novogratz Bridge Year Program cohort.



# Fung Global Fellows Program Celebrates 10th Anniversary

By Pooja Makhijani, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies

In May, the Fung Global Fellows community gathered on campus to mark the program's 10th anniversary, to recognize achievements, and to celebrate with academic, arts and social events. Marquee events included remarks by Deborah Yashar, Donald E. Stokes Professor of Public and International Affairs, and by Mark Beissinger, Henry W. Putnam Professor of Politics, as well as interdisciplinary panels on the research topics pertinent to the fellows' interests. Participants were

also treated to a performance of "Feuillets d'Hypnos," a collaborative translation project between Sandra Bermann, Cotsen Professor in the Humanities and 2020-21 Fung Global Fellows director, and 2020-21 Fung fellows Fabrice Langrognet and Jernej Habjan, and Princeton undergraduates.

The Fung Program, administered by PIIRS, has brought together exceptional international research scholars from all disciplines around a common topic. It is funded by a portion of a \$10 million gift

from Princeton 1970 alumnus William Fung of Hong Kong and is designed to substantially increase the University's engagement with scholars around the world and to inspire ideas that transcend borders. "There are few resources for up-and-coming academics or junior faculty to come to Princeton and meet each other, participate in the larger Princeton community and benefit in their areas of research," said Fung, who was unable to attend, in recorded remarks. "This is a very noble cause."

Laavanya Kathiravelu was a 2015-16 Fung fellow and is now associate professor in the School of Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. "The fellowship provided the impetus to think of my work at the intersections of migration and ethnic studies," she said, reflecting on her time at Princeton. "It was useful to explore a new research area and to be given the time and space to think and talk to peers. Those types of opportunities are rare when in a tenure-track trajectory." She thought it was "fantastic to see some of my cohort, some of whom I had not seen for many years," she added. "I enjoyed hearing about their research and I made connections that I hope to follow up on."

*From left, 2022-23 fellow Nithya Joseph, program manager Nicole Bergman, and 2022-23 fellow Veda Vaidyanathan. Celebrants enjoyed an American-style BBQ dinner and live bluegrass music to close out the festivities.*





▶ The afternoon's "Global Visions/Processes" panel brought together alumni fellows across three cohorts to explore commonalities and conflict across and within borders to examine how certain policies spread to nations around the globe.



▶ Kristin Surak, center, a 2018-19 fellow who is currently associate professor of political sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science, speaks on the topic of "International Society and Interdependence."



▶ Deborah Yashar, center, served as the director of the Fung Global Fellows Program in 2015-16 and is the current director of PIIRS. In her welcome, she stressed that it has never been more important to consider global engagement and scholarship, to tackle global challenges and to celebrate community.



**Watch** William Fung's full remarks, as well as interviews with former directors and alumni of the Fung Global Fellows Program.



# Looking Back to Pave the Way Forward

## A Reflection on 75 Years of Scholarly Excellence

By Emily W. Babson, Executive Editor, World Politics

**W**orld Politics, a scholarly journal based at Princeton, celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2023. The Latin *anniversarium* contains a form of *versus*, which means “to turn” or “bend.” Appropriately, when we celebrate an anniversary, we do not turn away but toward the event in the past, to reminisce and to understand, to learn — all while looking toward the future. Much like Janus, the Roman god of endings and beginnings whose two faces point behind and ahead, we must look back to pave the way forward. To consider *World Politics'* future, *Princeton International* spoke to some of its former editors about its past.

### A brief recounting

Since its inception at Yale University in 1948, *World Politics* has been a preeminent journal of international relations. In its first issue, published in October 1948, *World Politics* included a pivotal research note by leading scholar Frederick S. Dunn on “The Scope of International Relations” as a field of scholarly inquiry and teaching. By the late-1950s, the journal had established itself as a prominent publication for international relations and comparative politics. Within these subfields, the journal published primarily qualitative work in the early years, said long-time editor and Princeton professor emeritus, Richard Falk. It wasn't until the late 1970s and 1980s that *World Politics* began to publish quantitative research in political science, largely because

“epistemological questions weren't really discussed [in the academy] until the '70s,” Falk said.

In 1951, not long after its founding, *World Politics* moved from Yale to the newly formed Center of International Studies (CIS) at Princeton. This move also played a role in what *World Politics* published. Michael Doyle, who was both the director of CIS and chair of *World Politics'* editorial committee, explained that the *World Politics* founders had felt that Princeton was a better fit not only for their own outlook on scholarly research but also for their outlook on world politics. The founding editors “brought forward this idea that there was a semi-autonomous world of world politics that had to be understood on its own,” he said.

At Princeton, the journal took a more scholarly focus, as opposed to being policy-prescriptive, but it remained a broad-interest journal — something that has perhaps always distinguished it from many of its counterparts. As former editor Henry Bienen said: “It was an eclectic journal. We didn't turn ourselves into one thing.” And while the journal editors were Princeton based, Bienen explained that the editorial process remained undiluted. “There is no *Princeton* way of thinking about these issues.”

*World Politics'* editorial process was one-of-a-kind, Doyle explained. Even after a full career in academia and government, Doyle described *World Politics* as one of

the most democratic institutions he has ever been a part of — all editors participated and articles were published based on consensus. This democratic process remains today and distinguishes *World Politics* from its peers. Bienen and Doyle chaired *World Politics* at different times, but both oversaw the journal when it was central to CIS. Some years after Bienen and Doyle had moved on, CIS became PIIRS — the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies.

### An enduring legacy

*World Politics* sits within PIIRS today. On Oct. 5, the chair of the *World Politics'* editorial committee, Grigore Pop-Eleches, and senior editor Mark Beissinger brought together experts on Ukraine and Russia to discuss “The Politics of Russia's War against Ukraine,” at the

inaugural event in a series to celebrate the journal's diamond jubilee. Pop-Eleches' presentation drew on Russia Watcher, a survey project that he runs with a group of Princeton graduate

students, which collects data at high frequencies on Russian public opinion about the war in Ukraine. “Given Russia's increasingly repressive context, it is important to capture public opinion among ordinary citizens and to use these data to understand how military and political developments inside the country might influence mass political attitudes and behavior in real time,” Pop-Eleches said. Collecting such data is important,





◀ From left, Bernard C. Cohen, Gabriel A. Almond and Klaus E. Knorr of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs (now SPIA) in 1951.

▼ From left, Percy E. Corbett, William W. Kaufmann and Frederick S. Dunn of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs (now SPIA) in 1951.



PHOTOS: Historical Photograph Collection, Campus Life Series; Princeton University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library

as former editor Oran R. Young recalls: "[during the Cold War] the science community [had to keep] channels of communication open when diplomatic channels were not working well."

A month later, on Nov. 2, members of the journal's editorial committee James Raymond Vreeland, professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton, and Kristopher Ramsay, professor of politics at Princeton, convened the second anniversary event: "Rise of China." A day later, editor Rachel Beatty Riedl convened the final event in the series, "Democratic Backsliding and Resilience." Riedl, the John S. Knight Professor of International Studies and a professor of government at Cornell, convened her event with her Cornell colleague and *World Politics* editorial board member, Kenneth Roberts. Nancy Bermeo, Nuffield Senior Fellow at Oxford University and long-time *World Politics* editor chaired Riedl and Roberts' panel. Bermeo reminded the audience that "Democracies [have been and] are being disassembled but they can often be defended and reassembled too."

The academic events bookended a meeting of the editorial committee, the first in-person meeting of the group since pre-pandemic times. The editors, panelists and other affiliates of the journal also gathered for a celebratory dinner on Nov. 2. At the events, the

*World Politics* community looked both behind and ahead. Panel discussants recalled the past to understand and speak to the current contexts in countries around the world. The editorial committee engaged in a lively strategic discussion of the journal's future. And at dinner, all were regaled with stories of the journal, now and then.

But while we today might feel tempted to focus only on the nostalgia or glamorize an imagined past, "scholarly research," as Pop-Eleches said, "must continue to explain, through robust theoretical discussion and rigorous empirical analysis, how things work and why things happen." *World Politics* will do just that.

**The founding editors "brought forward this idea that there was a semi-autonomous world of world politics that had to be understood on its own."**

– Michael Doyle, director of the Center of International Studies and chair of *World Politics* (1998-2001)

These stories and information about global travel and research opportunities can be found at Princeton International; just scan the QR code!



## PIIRS, Princeton Community Celebrate Global Japan Lab

By Pooja Makhijani, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies

**O**n Feb. 16, the Global Japan Lab (GJL) invited the Princeton University community to learn more about its multidisciplinary research, teaching and training initiatives on contemporary Japan, in the atrium of the Frick Chemistry Laboratory.

"There are several Japan studies centers around the country, and we wanted this to be something a bit different," said James Raymo, the Henry Wendt III '55 Professor of East Asian Studies and professor of sociology; Raymo is also the director of GJL. "We want to focus on contemporary Japan today — the issues that are on the front page of Japanese newspapers — and to think about Japan in the future and in a global context." To this end, GJL promotes and supports research across multiple disciplines, organized under three primary themes: population aging and decline; climate change and natural disasters; and international relations, particularly relations with China. "These issues are of profound importance in Japan, and Japan's responses to related challenges, successful or unsuccessful, may be relevant and informative to other countries," Raymo said.

GJL is supported by the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS) and will receive funds from PIIRS over the next three years to support research, conferences, course development and more. GJL currently has nine core faculty members, including Nobuhiro Kiyotaki, the Harold H. Helm '20 Professor of Economics and Banking; Ryo Morimoto, assistant professor of anthropology; and Amy Borovoy, professor of East Asian studies; as well as five affiliated graduate students from anthropology, East Asian studies, SPIA and sociology. The lab has already outlined a number of scholarly activities for the near future. These include a speaker series related to areas of lab interests; the establishment a pan-East Asia research community in collaboration with Paul and Marcia Wythes Center on Contemporary China; and a forum for Princeton graduate students to hone their interdisciplinary, Japan-focused research.

GJL will collaborate closely with the UTokyo Center for Contemporary Japanese Studies (TCJS) as part of Princeton's longstanding strategic partnership with the University of Tokyo. "[The partnership] is separate from the lab, but there are places in which our interests and activities intersect," Raymo said. For example, the lab's inaugural speaker was Kikuko Nagayoshi, associate professor at the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo, whose research focuses on the integration and assimilation of immigrants to Japan.

*Left: GJL affiliated faculty member Ryo Morimoto, assistant professor of anthropology. Right: GJL affiliated faculty member Nobuhiro Kiyotaki, left, the Harold H. Helm '20 Professor of Economics and Banking speaks to Lynn Hirose, a graduate student in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.*



PHOTO: Shelley Szwast



PHOTO: Shelley Szwast

# The Project on Democracy

**A Princeton-Humboldt project brings together U.S. and German students to examine the crisis of democracy**

*By Carrie Compton, Princeton International*

**W**hen Politics Professor Jan-Werner Müller and Sociology Professor Kim Lane Scheppele began the Constitutionalism Under Stress project (aka CONSTRESS) half-way through the 2010s, “it wasn’t quite so obvious yet how topical, alas, this was going to become,” Müller said. Authoritarian leaders in Hungary, Poland and Turkey have since consolidated their power and far-right movements in France, Italy and Germany have gained momentum. CONSTRESS, as a Princeton-Humboldt partnership initiative based in PIIRS, examines these cases as well as democracies in crisis beyond the U.S. and Europe. “Our students come from around the globe and have important perspectives to add to the conversation,” said Mueller.

This summer, the CONSTRESS project united Princeton grad students and their German peers for an intensive seminar and workshop for one week at Humboldt University in Berlin. The process was repeated in the fall, with Princeton hosting Humboldt students.

Chelsea Guo, a graduate student in the politics department and CONSTRESS participant, was drawn to the seminar for the transatlantic perspective and the chance to learn more about the rule of law.

“It used to be the case that autocratic leaders roll into town in tanks. But modern autocrats are elected into office, and once they’re there, they legally tweak laws and the constitution



*Princeton and Humboldt students jointly toured the German Bundesrat — one of the two chambers of the German Parliament. From top left, Atticus Carnell (Princeton), Paul Görnhardt (Humboldt), Douglas Deer (Humboldt), Kritika Vohra (Princeton) and Friederike Augustin (Humboldt); lower row from left, the Bundesrat tour guide and Princeton students Chelsea Guo, Andrew Hahm, Joe Wilson and Daniel Browning.*

to stay in power,” she said, citing one of several powerful case studies she encountered during the seminar.

In addition to the class work, Princeton students toured the upper and lower houses of the German parliament, spoke with a member of the state constitutional court of Berlin and visited the Berlin Wall.

Müller also directs the Academic Freedom Initiative run out of the University Center for Human Values (UCHV) and sees parallels between the projects.

“Autocratization often starts out with hijacking courts, and once they have the courts, they can diminish media pluralism and they can go after universities,” he said. “And then they can dictate what is and isn’t taught.”

Müller believes the Princeton-Humboldt partnership has created important opportunities for his CONSTRESS graduate students. “Generations of grad students have gone through CONSTRESS seminars and kept in touch with colleagues in a different academic culture. It’s never just been: ‘Oh, one summer, and that’s it,’” he said.



*Humboldt President Julia von Blumenthal and Princeton President Christopher L. Eisgruber renew the partnership between the two universities on Oct. 3.*

**Humboldt University President Julia von Blumenthal** and a delegation of professors and staff traveled to Princeton for two days in October to formalize another five years of collaboration between the two universities and to reflect on the impact of the partnership, which began in 2012. The Princeton-Humboldt collaboration has so far yielded nearly 30 other projects — of which CONSTRESS is the most recent — across a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, history, gender studies and material science. Von Blumenthal met with her Princeton counterpart, President Christopher L. Eisgruber to sign a formal memorandum of understanding, and both presidents participated in a forum hosted by the UCHV’s Academic Freedom Initiative. The delegation also gathered with Princeton professors who have mounted past partnership projects to reflect on the achievements of the collaboration to date and also to discuss potential directions for the partnership. “I am very pleased we were able to renew this special partnership,” said von Blumenthal. “We stand strong in our common values, and I’m looking forward to continuing our dynamic collaboration in research as well as student and staff exchanges.”

# Center for Global India Brings Princeton's South Asian Community Together to Discuss Law, Citizenship and Dissent

Alexandra Jones for Princeton International



On March 2 and 3, 2023, visiting scholars, practicing lawyers, and Princeton faculty and students convened to discuss a new Indian law that links citizenship with religious identity.

"India is often celebrated as the world's largest democracy, but there cannot be democracy without dissent," said Divya Cherian, assistant professor of history and co-organizer of "Law, Citizenship, and Dissent," a series of roundtables. "In recent years, as many organizations around the world have observed, the space for dissent in India has shrunk," Cherian said.

The event was part of the ongoing "Power, Inequality, Dissent" series, organized by Cherian and Harini Kumar, postdoctoral research associate in the Department of History and M.S. Chadha Center for Global India (CGI). The event was sponsored by CGI, the Program in South Asian Studies, the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice and the University Center for Human Values.

"The point of the series is to create a space for reflection at a time when such spaces are shrinking because of the

various ways institutions have been silenced," Kumar said.

"These discussions point us toward understanding how the social fabric of Indian society is undergoing changes and, importantly, how it is being remade through the law."

India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) enacted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in late 2019 fast-tracks Indian citizenship for members of certain religious groups, including Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and Christians, who have come to the country from neighboring nations. The law does not offer these protections to Muslim migrants. When deployed alongside the planned creation of the National Register of Citizens, which introduces a high bar for the verification of claims to Indian citizenship, the CAA paves the way for decades of harassment and added persecution of the nation's 200 million-strong Muslim minority. Indian Muslims already face discrimination in housing, employment and education. Opposition to the CAA has been met with repression from the state, which has arrested peaceful protesters on terrorism charges, detained journalists and demolished the homes of Muslims who dissent.

"The shift happening now is a remodeling of the law rather than a suspension of rights," said Shahrukh Alam, a Supreme Court of India advocate who headlined the first panel, "Reconfiguring Citizenship in Contemporary India." The state, she argued, is reshaping the law through language used in legal arguments and redefining political mobilization and dissent as attacks on the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

Farrah Ahmed, professor at Melbourne Law School and Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Faculty Fellow at Princeton, noted in her response that the Indian government has invoked secularism in defense of the CAA. "How can an exclusionary citizenship on the basis of religion be secular?" she asked. The CAA, she argued, is just an instance of a larger strategy to reconfigure constitutional values like secularism to suit the state's purposes. "We need to pay attention to the ethno-nationalist features of the version of secularism that the government is now promoting," she said.

The government's handling of protests against the CAA is enabled by recent amendments to anti-terrorism laws, which have become more draconian. In the second panel,

*"The point of the series is to create a space for reflection at a time when such spaces are shrinking because of the various ways institutions have been silenced. These discussions point us toward understanding how the social fabric of Indian society is undergoing changes and, importantly, how it is being remade through the law."*

– Harini Kumar, postdoctoral research associate  
in the Department of History and  
M.S. Chadha Center for Global India



# हिंदू भाव से आजादी

*On March 2 and 3, 2023, visiting scholars, practicing lawyers, and Princeton faculty and students convened to discuss a new Indian law that links citizenship with religious identity.*

"Terror Trials: Life and Law in Delhi's Courts" author Mayur Suresh, senior lecturer in law at SOAS University of London, described how defendants charged under anti-terrorism laws advocate for themselves, share tactics and learn the intricacies of the law to strengthen their cases over years or even decades in a legal system bent against them.

"The moment the state speaks in law or on paper, you can turn that discourse against those who utter it," he said. "I want to show how these mundane rules or interpretations of the law are an avenue for a human voice to emerge."

The BJP's Hindutva ideology — a Hindu nationalist political movement — reaches far beyond India's borders. Just 20 miles

from Princeton, the town of Edison, New Jersey, has one of the highest concentrations of South Asian immigrants in the United States. Incidents of anti-Muslim imagery and harassment, such as the inclusion of a piece of bulldozer-like equipment symbolizing BJP violence in an Indian Independence Day parade last summer, have intensified in the region since the CAA was enacted.

"There was a deafening silence among people I know in South Asian and Indian circles in the U.S., in response to anti-Muslim violence and oppression in India," said Sadaf Jaffer, New Jersey assemblywoman for the 116th district and a Princeton researcher and lecturer, at the panel "Hate Symbols and Challenges to Solidarity in the U.S. and India" on day two.

With screenshots of social media posts attacking her for her background, examples of political smear campaigns and photo evidence of anti-Muslim harassment and pro-BJP propaganda, Jaffer showed how the rise of Hindutva in India has divided communities in the South Asian diaspora. "It ultimately comes down to whose humanity we value," she said. "As long as Muslim lives don't matter, people will continue to just brush it off."

Neeti Nair, professor of history at the University of Virginia, provided crucial historical context during the final session, "Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia." Her book of the same name examines how language intended to entrench secularism in India's constitution has been weaponized by majority religious groups since Partition divided the subcontinent in 1947.

"Who belongs where has always been essential to secularism in South Asia," Nair said. "It seems like we're back to a very polarized discourse on boycotting Muslims and questioning their belonging to India."

# An Urgent Plea From the Amazon

Indigenous leader Davi Kopenawa Yanomami shares his plight with the Princeton community

By Carrie Compton, Princeton International

The urgency of the crises unfolding in the Amazon cannot be overstated: Illegal gold miners have contaminated the forest's waterways, causing so many deaths — by malnutrition and other maladies — among the Indigenous Yanomami people that Brazil's new president has opened a genocide probe. And there are consequences for all of us, too — as these miners despoil the Amazon rainforest, they diminish one of the planet's largest natural carbon sinks and a crucial bastion of biocultural diversity.

This was the message of Yanomami leader Davi Kopenawa, who visited Princeton on Jan. 31. Kopenawa, who has been advocating for his people's rights since the '70s, is a renowned shaman and Indigenous leader. He is the author of the seminal 2013 book "The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman" and the president of the Hutukara Yanomami Association.

The Yanomami (meaning "human-beings") are a group of 35,000 who live across 250 villages deep inside the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil and parts of southern Venezuela. In 1992, after years of struggle against commercial encroachment, the Yanomami won a major victory when the Brazilian government preserved more than 37,000 square miles for the tribe to continue not only their way of life, but also their stewardship of the forest's integrity.

Then, in a campaign speech in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right candidate who became Brazil's president from 2019-22, boldly promised to open the Amazon for commercial exploitation. According to Brazil's National Institute of Space Research, his four-year term saw 17,800 square miles of forest razed, an area approximately the size of Taiwan. "Kopenawa's historic visit speaks to the fatal effects of Bolsonaro's political-economic campaign of decimating the Indigenous foundations of livelihood ... that ultimately sought to replicate Native North American genocides," Susan Dod Professor of Anthropology João Biehl said in his opening remarks to a large audience overflowing Chancellor Green Rotunda and to over 500 viewers on the Brazil LAB YouTube Channel.

"I'm in mourning," Kopenawa said at the beginning of his remarks. "My people are dying. Our children are getting sick

*"The whole world knows the importance of the Amazonian rainforest. The forest is important ... to the entire world. I'm talking about protecting the globe. For we are living here, on this Earth. It's the only Earth we have for everybody. We are one people on Earth."*

— Davi Kopenawa, Yanomami leader and shaman

with diseases brought by the white men destroyers." Kopenawa went on to describe how Brazil's new president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who took office last January, has promised to remedy the "absolutely urgent" situation.

Kopenawa described the implications that the struggle of the Yanomami has for humanity. "The whole world knows the importance of the Amazonian rainforest. The forest is important ... to the entire world," he said. "I'm talking about protecting the globe. For we are living here, on this Earth. It's the only Earth we have for everybody. We are one people on Earth."

The evening event was kicked off with a reception held in Prospect House, where President Christopher L. Eisgruber welcomed Kopenawa and a group of Yanomami artists, activists and art curators. "Davi said to me that he comes from the people of the forest here to the 'city' to explain to us about other worlds and the obligations of care we have to the world that we all share," explained Eisgruber. "And I said, in this 'city,' what we do is to bring together many worlds." During the reception, Kopenawa also explained the Yanomami plight and exchanged ideas of solidarity with Amaney Jamal, dean of the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, and Aly Kassam-Remtulla, vice-provost for International Affairs and Operations.



*Amazonian Indigenous leader Davi Kopenawa, center, and a group of Yanomami visitors were welcomed by President Eisgruber, right, and others in a reception at Prospect House. Professor of Anthropology João Biehl is left.*

Kopenawa and fellow Yanomami were in the area for the Feb. 3 debut of “The Yanomami Struggle,” an exhibition at The Shed cultural center in New York City organized with the Instituto Moreira Salles and the Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain. The show explored the decades-long collaboration between photographer Claudia Andujar and the Yanomami people. The exhibition juxtaposed Andujar’s iconic work with drawings, paintings and videos by Yanomami artists André Taniki, Ehuana Yaira, Joseca Mokahesi, Orlando Nakuxima, Poraco Hiko, Sheroanawe Hakihiwe and Vital Warasi. PIIRS’s Brazil LAB and the Department of Anthropology organized student trips to see the exhibition.

“The unprecedented collective effort to bring Davi Kopenawa to Princeton and to learn about the Yanomami struggle speaks to the University’s growing effort at Indigenizing academia,” said Biehl, who also directs the Brazil LAB at PIIRS. In 2021, the University committed to building up its engagement with Native Americans and Indigenous

communities, an effort that has so far resulted in measures such as a land acknowledgment, an Indigenous Studies professorship, a pre-college summer program for prospective Native American students and a seminar series.

During Kopenawa’s visit, Noah Collins, a graduate student in anthropology from the Cherokee Nation and White Mountain Apache Tribe in Oklahoma, kicked off remarks at both the reception and the keynote event.

“It’s one of the great privileges of being Indigenous to have relations and relatives all around the world and to be able to share these experiences that are mirrored in the United States and other countries,” he said at the reception welcoming the Yanomami delegation. “I think the way that we do things is what makes us special and unique and beautiful.”

Following Kopenawa’s keynote, Deborah Yashar, professor of politics and international affairs and PIIRS director, noted that “he forces us to think about the challenges posed not only by climate change but also by greed and by politics in a fundamental way ... what is, what is good and what can be.” In replying to Yashar’s question about the relationship between Yanomami activism and art making, Kopenawa said, “before our Amazonian forest ends, we are drawing it ... That’s why the Yanomami began drawing. For the sons and daughters, grandchildren and kin to see the beauty, to value our art and our struggle to protect the lungs of the Earth.”

During a lively Q&A session at the conclusion of the historic event, a student asked Kopenawa what she could do to help the Yanomami cause. The Indigenous leader replied with a request that Princeton students write directly to President Joe Biden. “We need him to understand our fight, to have the willingness to give us value and be an ally.”

*Shaman and Yanomami Indigenous leader Davi Kopenawa speaks at a Princeton panel discussion Jan. 31, 2023.*



# Challenges to Democracy: Backsliding and Autocratization

By Deborah J. Yashar, Donald E. Stokes Professor of Public and International Affairs and director of PIIRS

Democracy is under stress in long-established democracies and authoritarian politics is on the rise.

This trend contrasts with recent history. The world experienced its longest and deepest democratic wave in recorded history, at various points in the second half of the 20th century. In the post-World War II period, Europe transitioned to a democratic region following the challenges of fascism and traditional authoritarian regimes in much of that region in the interwar period. In turn, the world began to experience the third wave of democracy in Europe's Iberian Peninsula in the mid-1970s, with geographic spread throughout the globe during the rest of the 20th century: Latin America in the late 1970s to early 1990s, affecting the entire region, save Cuba; parts of Africa, where many countries transitioned to competitive multiparty elections; and political openings in Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the early 21st century, the world also witnessed the short-lived Arab Spring in parts of the Middle East. Liberal democracy was ascendant, and some optimists proclaimed that we were at the end of history.

Recent political developments in the Global North and Global South are sobering and highlight the increasing challenges to democracy. Indeed, democratic backsliding has become more common — oftentimes hollowing out democracy from within, as professor emerita Nancy Bermeo noted early on in her now classic 2016 *Journal of Democracy* article, "Democratic Backsliding." The Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) has become an unparalleled resource in tracking regime politics around the world, using a four-part scale of regime type: closed autocracy, electoral autocracy, electoral democracy, liberal democracy. In V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023, they have shown that liberal democracies peaked in 2012 and have since returned to 1986 levels. According to V-Dem, "Advances in global levels of democracy made over the last 35 years have been wiped out."

Indeed, if liberal democracy seemed ascendant in the 1980s and 1990s, autocratization (both through electoral and coercive means) is ascendant today — posing existential

political challenges around the globe. V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023 indicates that countries are evenly split, with 89 democracies and 90 autocracies in the world. Yet these numbers belie several important facts.

**First**, even within the democratic camp, the number of liberal democracies is on the decline. Today only 13 percent of the world's population resides in a liberal democracy.

**Second**, most of the world's population now lives in autocratic countries, since autocratic countries are far more populous than democratic ones, with 72 percent of the world population — 5.7 billion people — living in closed or electoral autocracies, according to V-Dem.

**Third**, if both electoral and closed autocracies are on the rise, the latter is more common, with a plurality, some 44 percent of the world, living under such a regime.

**Fourth**, autocrats are often deploying and capturing traditional democratic institutions to make autocratic moves. For example, anti-pluralist parties are often driving autocratization, according to an earlier 2022 V-Dem Democracy Report, in places like Hungary, India, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, El Salvador and Brazil (although Brazil's 2022 election reversed this authoritarian course). In these cases, governing parties have taken the lead in eroding liberal institutions and challenging freedom of expression by slowly and steadily attacking the courts, censoring the media and repressing civil society organizations, academics and cultural organizations. These concerns have also manifested in longstanding democracies, most notably the U.S., where the Jan. 6 insurrection emphasized the coordinated (if unsuccessful) challenges to democratic institutions and norms.

Indeed, news of illiberal politics and coercion are once again common in today's news: insurrection in the United States, with copycat efforts in places like Brazil; violation of civil rights in the Philippines; invasions by Russia into Ukraine;

delimitation of court powers in Israel; military coups in Gabon; imprisonment and exile of dissidents in Nicaragua; the list goes on. The political imaginary includes those who advance democratic and autocratic ambitions, sometimes using elections in both cases to advance such goals.

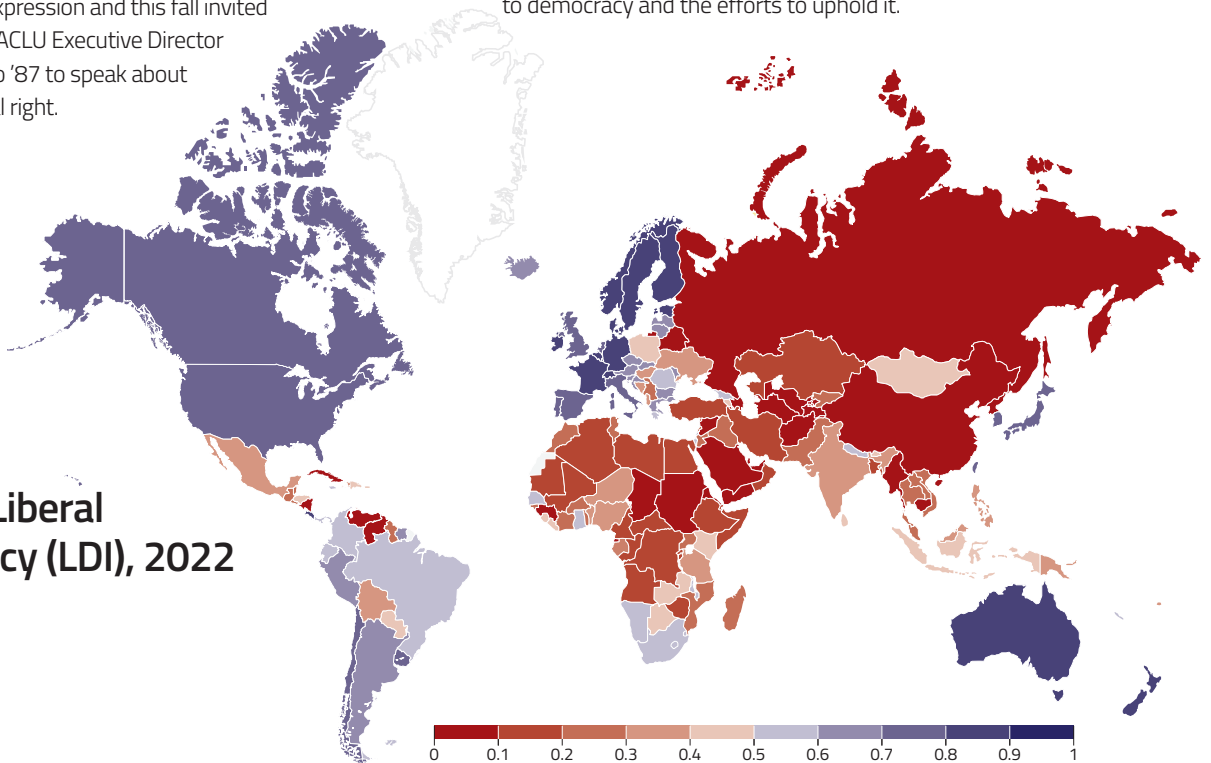
To understand these challenges, Princeton faculty, fellows and students came together this past year — via scholarship, courses and public events. As reported in this magazine, Princeton has hosted many related events to address democratic backsliding and autocratization, including through PIIRS’ Global Existential Challenges Seminar series and Brazil Lab as well as SPIA’s Afghanistan Lab. The Constitutionalism Under Stress project (CONSTRESS), supported by the Princeton-Humboldt Strategic Partnership, has also organized graduate training and workshops to explore these challenging issues, especially in Europe. (See Page 9.)

At Princeton, there have been efforts to understand how we can hold up the guardrails of democracy and claw back against autocratic moves. On the latter, we take inspiration from leaders such as Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa ’86, who, as a leading journalist and founder of Rappler.com, has written and spoken about the centrality of freedom of expression and the need to stand together against dictators who violate such rights. Her recent book was assigned as the Pre-read for incoming students (see Page 30 for an excerpt). Indeed, President Christopher L. Eisgruber has placed a premium on freedom of expression and this fall invited both Ressa and ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero ’87 to speak about this fundamental right.

Dora Maria Tellez (PLAS-PIIRS-SPIA visitor in summer 2023) has also demonstrated the courage to fight against dictators — starting in the 1970s she heroically fought against the Somoza family’s 43-year dictatorship in Nicaragua and later worked to forge a democratic alternative to her former Sandinista comrade and now autocratic president, Daniel Ortega. As a result of that activism, Tellez was placed in solitary confinement before being stripped of her of her nationality and citizenship, as were over 200 other political opposition leaders. Her colleague, Sergio Ramírez, a politician and novelist now living in Madrid, has also visited Princeton on several occasions; importantly, he has bequeathed his archives to the library for future generations to learn about the art of politics and culture in forging a more democratic future.

We have much to learn from those who have the courage to stand up in the face of coercion and uncertainty — speaking out and organizing publicly to defend freedom of expression, the integrity of the vote, the centrality of the rule of law, among other democratic freedoms and rights. This issue focuses on how Princeton has set out to understand challenges to democracy and the efforts to uphold it.

## State of Liberal Democracy (LDI), 2022



# In Conversation with Jennifer Rexford

*Interview conducted and condensed by Pooja Makhijani, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies*

When Jennifer Rexford '91, Gordon Y.S. Wu Professor in Engineering, was an undergraduate, she made a point of having "eclectic experiences," she said. "I was interested in Slavic studies, so I took Russian, Soviet politics and Russian literature. I loved that I could take two liberal arts classes every semester as an engineer. I didn't have to pick a side." Now, as Princeton University's new provost, she is excited to move the needle on interdisciplinary projects. "Many of the big initiatives on campus — American studies or bioengineering or quantum science or AI — crisscross disciplinary boundaries," she said. "It's something Princeton does well, and there's room for more."

*Princeton International* caught up with Rexford and spoke to her about her research, collaborating across borders and the paradoxes created by new technologies.

## **What excites you about your new position?**

Many faculty and researchers want their work to have impact outside of the so-called "Orange Bubble," and beyond traditional scholarly forms, whether in international engagement, entrepreneurship or public humanities. They are also excited about interdisciplinary scholarship. When I was chair of the computer science department, interdisciplinary work was big — the applications of computer science to genomics, neuroscience and psychology, and looking at computer sciences' intersection with public policy. I gained insight into how we connect across the University, and now I'm eager to make it easier and more effective to come together.

In terms of undergraduate academics, Princeton does many artisanal or "boutique-y" things — one-on-one senior thesis advising, small classes, precepts. In my time as chair, the computer science department grew from a few dozen majors per class to more than 200. How does Princeton expand the number and diversity of students while maintaining its unique character? This is an interesting and complicated question.

Lastly, I'm intrigued by the role of organizational structures. My background is in the architecture of computer systems and how to organize their parts in efficient and sensible ways. Academic planning and governance are not radically different; I'm delighted to be a part of those conversations.

## **In your short time as provost, what has struck you about international activity at the University?**

Princeton now has an increased role in Mpala; the center is a fantastic and amazing resource. I'm curious to what extent we can move beyond work in ecology, perhaps into the creation and managing of infrastructure, which can be an object of research in and of itself — telecommunications, environmentally sustainable buildings, electricity, water and internet. This opportunity to make Mpala a more effective facility could also broaden the community of scholars who might consider Mpala as a place for their research. I am also very excited about the University's activity in and around India, Brazil and China, for example.

## **To what end has your personal experience shaped your hopes for international at Princeton?**

I lived in multiple regions of the world a lot growing up — Korea, Japan, Hawaii, the D.C. area. There's a cognitive dissonance in experiencing other cultures — but in a good way. You learn so much; you have rich relationships with people. I feel fortunate that I had that in my childhood. International should be a necessary piece of a Princeton education. There is so much value in living somewhere else. I think about the barriers that Princeton students face in undertaking new or different experiences. I hope to reduce the administrative,

PHOTO: Phil McAuliffe



advisory and financial roadblocks to international study, work or research.

**What are the challenges and opportunities posed by international collaboration and learning?**

Faculty and research staff are concerned about the integrity and security of research, which are integral to international collaboration. People have trouble thinking about positive advances in technology without worrying about its negative uses. AI, for example, is widely used and critical across disciplines, but there are national and economic security concerns around embracing the technology. The University is committed to managing that risk and reassuring the community that they are supported and not policed.

In addition, while celebrating the renewed possibilities for in-person research collaboration, we need to make online collaboration more productive: Zoom is OK for a business meeting; it's not great for ideation. Finding creative solutions to that challenge while also taking advantage of international travel promises to open up tremendous new opportunities for our international work.

**“I think about the barriers that Princeton students face in undertaking new or different experiences. I hope to reduce the administrative, advisory and financial roadblocks to international study, work or research.”**

– Jennifer Rexford, Provost and the Gordon Y.S. Wu Professor in Engineering and Professor of Computer Science

# Watching WhatsApp

## The Digital Witness Lab will investigate how misinformation affects elections

By Carrie Compton, Princeton International

**A**cross the globe, social media and modern hyperconnectivity has had indelible and often insidious repercussions for democracy. Princeton's Center for Information Technology Policy (CITP) has been scrutinizing tech's societal implications since 2005. Last year, CITP launched the Digital Witness Lab, which will contribute to and translate its academic findings to create new tools, technologies and lines of inquiry to help journalists report on the tech sector.

Surya Mattu, a data engineer and journalist who leads the lab, says he wants to jumpstart the public imagination around algorithms the way Upton Sinclair exposed conditions in slaughterhouses a century ago. "We are the photojournalists on the streets of algorithm city — I'm trying to build the imagery of what the algorithm does. Humans drive everything, and so I want to bring the culpability back to the people creating them," he said, adding: "The lab's work is also meant to show how technology can be built with civic values versus corporate ones."

Around 2014, Mattu began critiquing technology as an NYU student, interrogating through art the privacy pitfalls of smart devices. In *UnFitbits*, Mattu and collaborator Tega Brain lampooned the logic of reducing health insurance fees based on Fitbit data by showing how easily the metrics were spoofed when attached to a drill or a wheel.

About that same time, he joined the investigative news outlet *ProPublica* to analyze the algorithm of a criminal risk-assessment tool used by U.S. courts that purported to predict recidivism. The reporting team's stories — which landed them among the finalists for a 2016 Pulitzer Prize — revealed that pervasive racism baked into the algorithm resulted in harsher consequences for Black defendants. Mattu also worked for

the nonprofit tech watchdog The Markup where he created the Citizen Browser Project. Using about 1,000 paid panelists, Mattu observed their Facebook feeds and found that the social media giant continued promoting divisive content, despite its post-Jan. 6 promise to stop.

At CITP, Mattu will focus on the encrypted messaging platform WhatsApp, owned by Facebook's parent company Meta, specifically in India and Brazil. "The tech and algorithmic accountability conversation needs to be a global one," said Mattu. "Some of the worst harms take place where there is less regulation and scrutiny than in the West."

The 2019 presidential elections in India and Brazil were both marked by rampant misinformation campaigns on WhatsApp, Mattu said. The app is monolithic in both countries: India has the largest national base of consumers — more than 500 million users in a country of 1.4 billion; Brazil is second, with about 140 million users in a population of about 216 million.

In India, users have for years been repeatedly exposed to incendiary rhetoric, provoking religious tensions between

Hindus and Muslims and using rumors to spark vigilante mobs.

In Brazil, a 2021 *Guardian* analysis showed the extent of the app's reach during its last presidential election season: Of about 12,000 right wing messages that went viral, approximately 42 percent contained false information favoring the since-ousted strongman Jair Bolsonaro.

While Facebook can moderate user-posted content, WhatsApp's encrypted platform is more elusive. Mattu's team will begin its investigation by studying the efficacy of WhatsApp's new forwarding limits, which caps each post to five recipients. (In 2019, a user had unrestrained sharing capacity.)

They will also delve into whether AI-generated content affects the volume of misinformation. India has a presidential election in 2024, and Mattu is eager to see how it compares to 2019. (Brazil's next presidential election is in 2026.)

Above all, Mattu said, he wants to help people understand they are entitled to a healthier online ecosystem. "There's a world where we could build technology in a way that doesn't rely on the venture capitalist model with unending growth as a measure of success," Mattu said. "*Sesame Street* feels different to Cartoon Network, right? That's something we have a sophistication for because we've been exposed to it. Civic and capitalist models will continue to exist online, but we need to help people decipher between the two."



Surya Mattu leads Princeton's Center for Technology Policy's Digital Witness Lab.

# Out of Harm's Way

## Physics Research Program Supports Ukrainian Students Displaced by War

By Alaina O'Regan, Office of the Dean of Research

**I**n March of 2022, 18-year-old Ukrainian student Oleksandr Shelestiuk emailed the Princeton physics department. He received a response from Chris Tully, Princeton professor of physics and researcher at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in France.

"I saw a great opportunity to help get students out of harm's way," said Tully, who has hosted students at CERN through summer programs for over two decades. "I realized that the best way I could help them ... was to try to get them to CERN."

Around the same time, Peter Elmer, senior research physicist at Princeton and executive director of IRIS-HEP, a software institute funded by the National Science Foundation to develop innovative software upgrades for experiments at CERN, began leveraging his own summer program to provide remote research opportunities for Ukrainian students.

Having realized their overlapping goals, Tully and Elmer applied for a grant from the Simons Foundation to support displaced students. Soon, Tully found housing for three Ukrainian students near CERN, and later, welcomed a fourth student with support from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Shelestiuk, Mariia Tiulchenko and Fedir Boreiko, who all attended Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, left their homes in April 2022 hoping to further their science and engineering skills to someday help rebuild their country.

"I had to leave my family not knowing when I would see them again," said Boreiko, whose hometown, Odesa, underwent heavy attacks just before he left. "But I think of the chance I was given and of my responsibility to all of those still in Ukraine, and I'm inspired to pursue my education."

The Simons Foundation funded four in-person students and internships for 20 remote students who remained in Ukraine doing research with IRIS-HEP.

Tully said each of the students made valuable contributions to his group's research projects over the summer. "They ended up solving problems in different ways than I thought they would, and they were able to communicate what they did," he said.

The students attended lectures on cosmology, high energy physics and computer science.



Three students left their homes in Ukraine to escape the war and pursue research at the Large Hadron Collider, under supervision from Princeton University faculty. Left to right: Mariia Tiulchenko, Oleksandr Shelestiuk and Fedir Boreiko.

CERN was founded by European countries that united despite global conflicts after World War II and functions as a space for international researchers to collaborate for the benefit of humanity.

"A huge part of the concept behind CERN is that we can abstract away from national politics and essentially connect scientists in ways that are entirely separate," Elmer said.

Tiulchenko, Shelestiuk and Boreiko were accepted by a program run by the University of Michigan that provided them with funding to continue their studies at CERN throughout last fall and spring. Tiulchenko and Shelestiuk remain at CERN working with Chris Tully again, and Boreiko is in New York City working on a machine learning project as an intern with the Simons Foundation. Tiulchenko was recently offered transfer admission by Cornell University with a full tuition package.

### Read about

14 Ukrainian and Russian at-risk scholars who visited Princeton last academic year.



# A History on How Worlds Collapse

**A new book co-edited by SPIA researchers and alumni examines the rise and fall of societies and their relation to our own precarious times**

*By Amanda Drumm for Princeton School of Public and International Affairs*

**H**ow *Worlds Collapse: What History, Systems, and Complexity Can Teach Us About Our Modern World and Fragile Future* (Routledge) presents more than 20 essays from scholars around the world, giving readers a wide range of viewpoints.

A grant from the Office of the Dean of Research supported the formation of Princeton's Global Collaborative Network on Historical Systemic Collapse, a group of sociologists, scientists, historians and physicists from around the world who explore the current and future implications of past societal dissolutions, along with the far-reaching impacts of globalization. According to Miguel Centeno, the Musgrave Professor of Sociology and a professor of sociology and international affairs, who led the effort, examining these issues in such a cross-disciplinary way is a novel approach.

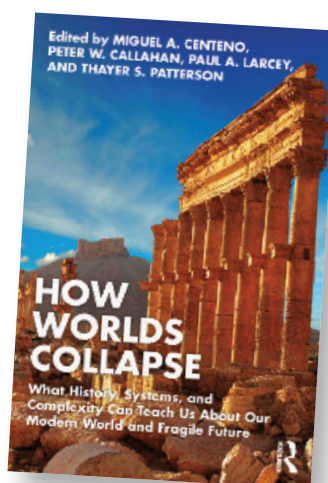
The book's 25 chapters include an introduction to societal collapse and an explanation of what it entails. More than a dozen case studies of varying types illustrate the concept.

"They are interesting perspectives, including an entomologist explaining the collapse of pollinator colonies, how it really thins out bees," said Centeno, a co-editor of *How Worlds Collapse*. "They gather less, use reserves, and you get less out of them. After a while, bees, people — they run out of what they need, whatever it may be."

But what exactly is the failing of a society? Will the average person know it if they are experiencing it? Probably not, the scholars agree. Rather, it is a breakdown, characterized by a slow, collective decline.

"Collapse is not necessarily everything falls down all at once," Centeno said. "It is about the parts of a whole not communicating with each other. We were after finding out if — paraphrasing Tolstoy — all failed societies are alike or if each one fails in its own way."

"The real question we can't address is, why do we find societies who, by these predicates, should be collapsing but don't?" Centeno said. "It is the question of what makes for a resilient society?"



Other contributors agree that basic societal tenets begin to falter over time preceding a collapse. History also tells us that complete societal collapse is not instantaneous but gradual.

"The collapse of the Roman Empire took 250 years of history and seven to eight generations who lived it," said John Haldon, the Shelby Cullom Davis '30 Professor of European History emeritus, and a professor of history and Hellenic

studies, emeritus. "It can't simply be written in a single sentence. Collapses are complicated, happen in different ways and to different special extents."

Oversimplifying the fall of a society is a common tendency, he said, but more significant is to grasp the intricacies and slow changes that led to failure.

"We miss the phenomenon, the understanding of how and why and why not in others," Haldon said. "The understanding of how those things might affect how we think about the present. We need to understand it better than just seeing it as a big bang sort of collapse."

The project and subsequent book are not about providing advice or a roadmap to avoid collapse. Rather, the purpose is to garner a greater understanding of the past, to provoke discussion about how and why societies falter or flourish and to use that knowledge to discover ways to improve current conditions and side-step future failure.

"We live in times where we think things and systems will just work," Centeno said. "People can take what they will from it. It is not about what is right or what is wrong, but what is coming. If we look at all these cases from history and what can we learn from them, then we can choose what to do. We are scholars here recognizing potential dangers. Once those are recognized, we need to decide if should we do this or do that. But we have to recognize we might be in trouble."

# Insight Into China

## Schwarzman Scholars deepen their knowledge and understanding of China among a global cohort

By Michelle Tong, Office of International Programs

As China's economy and global presence continues to grow and evolve amid escalating geopolitical tensions, there is an increasing need for future world leaders to better understand the country and its interactions with the rest of the world. In response to this need, the Schwarzman Scholars program, founded in 2016 by Stephen A. Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, selects students from around the world and supports them in a yearlong program to pursue a master's degree in global affairs at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Scholars gain a unique insight into China through coursework, language training, cultural immersion and networking opportunities. The program also foregrounds leadership skills and making positive impacts in the world.

The Schwarzman Scholars Class of 2024 includes four Princeton graduates from the Class of 2023. They join a cohort of 151 scholars representing 36 countries and 121 universities. As one of this year's scholars, physics major Elisabeth Rülke '23 looks forward to learning more about China through the lens of technology. "I want to learn more about Chinese culture and to apply it to understanding the geopolitical landscape in the technology and innovation ecosystem to unlock ways in which disruptive technology can create sustainable and positive impacts in the future," she said.

For politics major Benjamin Bograd '23, the opportunity to immerse himself in China includes a personal connection. "Being biracial and half Chinese, I have always been fascinated by China," he said. "I've taken Mandarin classes throughout the majority of high school and college, but there is no better way to understand a country than by going and living there."

Justin Curl '22, a graduate of the Schwarzman Scholars Class of 2023, shared how the program deepened his understanding of China especially outside the classroom through "Deep Dives," a unique program component that gives scholars the opportunity to participate in a weeklong field trip to explore a facet of Chinese society in-depth. For Curl, this included the opportunity to shadow the Xi'an municipal government. "We got to meet the mayor and were paired with different bureaus within the Xi'an government where we then shadowed officials for a week," he said. "And I think that is something that I would never have access to, especially as a foreigner, in any other capacity."

The personal connections that Curl made and the interactions outside of the classroom also shaped how he now views intercultural relationships, as well as reaffirmed his belief in the importance of fostering these connections.

"China is a very network-based country," Curl explained. "I think what that taught me about global relationships is that a lot of it is personal, and you can have entirely different conversations with people if you have some shared understanding."

The Schwarzman Scholars program not only provides its participants with the opportunity to better understand China and its global impact, but also promotes the importance of fostering worldwide connections and building trust between different countries and cultures. As a Schwarzman Scholars adviser, Associate Professor of Politics and International Affairs Rory Truex noted: "Given the deterioration of U.S.-China relations, the Schwarzman Scholarship is one of the only ways for U.S.-based students to get meaningful educational and cultural experiences in China. It has become an invaluable program for training the next generation of China experts."

"I am excited to be surrounded by a community of students from 36 different countries," said Bograd. "At Princeton I learned just as much from my peers as from professors — I expect the same will be true through Schwarzman."

Rülke added, "I grew up in Europe and went to college in the States, but I know that the world is so much larger than the cultures I knew growing up, and I hope to understand and interact with the world as a more global citizen through this program."

*Justin Curl '22, center, with members of the Schwarzman Scholars Class of 2023 during graduation at Tsinghua University.*



# Liberal Arts Take Center Stage

STEM majors explore their artistic practice while studying abroad

By Michelle Tong, Office of International Programs



From left, Albert Zhou '24, Tanaka Dunbar Ngwara '24, Taylor Akin '23, Nina Shih '24 at the Royal College of Music.

When Aneekah Uddin, a senior majoring in computer science, was exploring semester-long study abroad opportunities, she initially browsed program offerings that were related to her major. However, she ultimately committed to a program that would not only immerse her in a different country — an experience she already had as a Novogratz Bridge Year Program participant in Indonesia — but also allow her to pursue a different passion: acting.

From creativity and innovation to problem-solving and critical thinking, the benefits STEM students receive when exploring the arts are invaluable especially in an ever-evolving

and interdependent world. In line with Princeton's commitment to the liberal arts, the Study Abroad Program provides a wide range of opportunities for undergraduates of all majors, including STEM, to not only immerse themselves in different parts of the world, but also to explore and build on skills outside of their major through interdisciplinary programs.

This fall, Uddin, who is also pursuing a certificate in theater, is studying abroad at the world-renowned London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), a drama school where students take immersive classes in acting, voice, movement and historical dance.

"I looked at the actors who have studied at LAMDA and I said to myself, I want to be in those same hallways," she explained. "This was an opportunity to pursue something that I will never have access to again. It's something that I'm really passionate about and an art form that I want to grow as a person with."

Albert Zhou '24, a molecular biology major and viola player, spent the fall 2022 semester studying abroad at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London, an institution that was on his radar even before coming to Princeton.

"I was torn between majoring in music performance, or something related to biology or chemistry. Knowing that there was this option to spend an entire semester as a conservatory student — even as a STEM major — ended up being a large factor in my decision to come to Princeton," he explained. "I primarily wanted to see how much I could grow musically, but there was also the draw of London being considered by many the music capital of the world."

Recent graduate Taylor Akin '23, a computer science major and a bassoonist, also spent fall 2022 abroad at the RCM. "The main things I had hoped to gain were the experience of living abroad, immersing myself in music and the opportunity to do something completely different," he said.

In place of problem sets and lab experiments, Zhou and Akin's coursework at the RCM included a heavy emphasis on individual lessons in their area of musical specialization or "principal study," alongside performance practice and masterclasses.

In addition to major differences in coursework between the STEM and the arts, the overall structure of the program was a surprise for Zhou.

"There was a lot of 'free time,' but much of that was blocked out for us with the assumption that we



*Taylor Akin '23, right, in a studio class with Roberto Giaccaglia, bassoon professor and principal bassoon with the BBC Philharmonic.*

would practice on our own or have the initiative to pursue personal projects," said Zhou. "I found it very different from STEM programs which tend to have more explicit time commitments and expectations."

However, Zhou found that adapting to a different pace helped him develop skills that would also play an important role upon returning to STEM work noting that the "less structured approach helped me to better structure my time, which is something that has been transferable to my STEM coursework," and that this was "applicable to my independent work, as conducting laboratory research efficiently requires a lot of long-range planning to ensure that there is enough time to run each experiment, and to slot tasks or other procedures into the waiting periods in my 'main' experiment for the day."

Similarly for Akin, focusing on music helped him develop a new perspective on how he views his work in technology.

"The time spent in the practice room is quintessential to a musician; you have to continually shift your focus, stay on task and consistently hone your practice," he said. "It helped me as a technologist by looking at the bigger picture and zone in on details when I needed to, but also being able to look back at the progress of the entire journey."

For STEM students, pursuing opportunities to immerse themselves in a completely different field of study is beneficial in that it allows them to pursue interests outside of their discipline, and also leads to broadening their skills beyond what they acquire solely through STEM.

Uddin said, "I think that's the ethos of a liberal arts education; it's about expanding your mindset to make it more interdisciplinary and gain tools to solve a problem, learn to approach a problem differently and get to an answer that someone might not have been able to see if they had a very strict engineering mindset. And that's how innovation happens."

"To a fellow STEM student, I would encourage them to view a study abroad program in the arts as a way to broaden their horizons," said Zhou. "Studying abroad allowed me to focus on something outside my major that I love doing and to grow in something that isn't STEM while also gaining insights and experiences living on my own in another culture on the other side of the globe."



*Taylor Akin '23 and RCM students in the woodwind section during a full orchestral recording at Angel Studios in Islington, London.*

# The Transformative Power of Art Against Oppression

A Global Seminar explores resistance to authoritarianism in Chile — and how its artists have reshaped history

By Alexandra Jones for Princeton International

Princeton University students enrolled in an immersive, six-week Global Seminar in Chile received more than an in-depth study of the country's artistic and political movements over the last half-century. Many came away with a greater understanding of the United States' role in global politics — and a new appreciation for the importance of actively maintaining democracy worldwide.

The seminar, "Images in Transition: Art and Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," centered on the relationship between politics and art in the South American nation since

dictator Augusto Pinochet's 1973 coup ousted President Salvador Allende.

"Our focus was the resistance by artists, writers and filmmakers during those years to torture, oppression, authoritarianism and censorship," said Javier Guerrero, associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese and a scholar of Latin American studies, visual culture and sexuality. "We were mainly talking about the '70s and '80s, but at the same time, we were talking about the present — not only in Chile, but here in the United States and all over the world."

*The 2023 PIIRS Global Seminar in Chile, "Images in Transition: Art and Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," centered on the relationship between politics and art in the South American nation since dictator Augusto Pinochet's 1973 coup ousted President Salvador Allende.*





*Global Seminar students visit the Atacama Desert to stargaze.*

In addition to classroom sessions and Spanish-language lessons at the Universidad Diego Portales in Santiago, Princeton students visited galleries, museums, archives and urban public spaces used by notable Chilean artists. They also took excursions to the coastal cities of Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Ritoque and Isla Negra, and to the

Atacama desert, the driest nonpolar desert on Earth — and the site where 26 men were executed by Pinochet's "Caravan of Death" in 1973.

"It was truly a life-changing experience, not just talking about what we read but also witnessing it in person," said Dana Serea '26, who plans to major in English with a certificate in Spanish language and culture. As the child of parents who lived under Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, she saw similarities between what they endured and what happened in Chile under Pinochet. "We must acknowledge the grim history that Chile encountered and raise awareness for future generations, so none of this could ever occur again."

The Global Seminar's curriculum included lessons and analyses on Chile's history since the coup through multimedia art like films, photographs, novels and nonfiction works created in response to the Pinochet government's systemic terror and oppression. His regime targeted artists, leftists, socialists and others opposed to the military dictatorship. Tens of thousands of people were jailed, tortured or "disappeared," and the Chilean government acknowledges around 3,000 executions during Pinochet's 17-year rule.

Featured speakers included public figures from Chile's cultural and political spheres, including renowned actor Alfredo Castro — whom Guerrero likened to Chile's Al Pacino — and Jorge Arrate, former minister of state under three Chilean presidents, including Allende. Contemporary artists including the feminist collective LasTesis, whose song against sexual violence, "Un Violador en Tu Camino" (A Rapist in Your Path), went viral in 2019, and feminist anthropologist Rita Segato also spoke to the group.

For Luke Carroll '26, a student in the School of Public and International Affairs, the curriculum presented a rigorous study of history and politics through sociology and art. "People often disregard art and abstract thinking as irrelevant to politics, when what we were seeing was one of the purest and most effective forms of political communication," he said. "Art played a big role in bringing democracy back in 1990 in Chile."

This Global Seminar didn't benefit only Princeton undergraduates. Students at the Universidad Diego Portales studied alongside their American counterparts, creating the opportunity for language and cultural exchange.

Tamara Maldonado, a student from Paraguay who is finishing a degree in creative literature at UDP, saw the Global Seminar as a chance to take an academic approach to her own family's history. "My mother's side is Chilean, and they left the country during the dictatorship because they were Communists. We didn't talk about what happened," she said. "Now that I'm an adult, I find it fascinating how differently they approach it here. They decide to remember everything and not forget, because forgetting is like committing a second form of violence."



*Global Seminar students take an excursion to Atacama Desert, the driest nonpolar region on Earth.*

Learning together with Chilean undergraduates helped Princeton students develop a stronger understanding of their own country's history and its role in world events — including the United States' role in fomenting the coup. "They were very surprised to learn the connection between the United States and Chile and the influence of the Nixon administration on the coup d'état in the '70s," Guerrero said, referencing U.S. interventions to undermine Allende out of fear that other countries would want to emulate a successful socialist government. "Part of the Global Seminar is learning how the world works and how everything is interconnected."

"It's very important to talk about how fascism is taking over politics, not only in Chile," said Guerrero, citing the rise in authoritarian movements around the globe. By learning about the struggles of the past and building connections with those still fighting oppression in the present, his students returned home with an expanded worldview — and a greater sense of how fragile freedom and equality can be. "We have to pay attention, because when democracy is in peril in one territory, it's in peril everywhere."

int'l the democracy issue

# A Home Away From Home

My experience as an Iranian-American in Tunisia

*By Bitā Jalalīn '25*



As the last academic year came to a close at Princeton University, I was enveloped by a sense of homesickness. Although I was raised in Georgia, this homesickness stemmed from a deep part of my identity beyond the United States. I am Persian-American, and my yearning extended to Iran — a home that I had once visited regularly but now felt untouchable. For nearly five decades, Iran has been plagued by corruption, human rights violations and freedom of speech suppression. When protests erupted after the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, travel to Iran became even riskier and left my family and me feeling severed from our home when it needed us most. Surprisingly, during this difficult time, my summer internship in Tunisia through the International Internship Program (IIP) helped heal these wounds.

I interned at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), an intergovernmental organization with locations in 20 countries that works to reform and enhance democratic institutions across the globe. As a public and international affairs major hoping to obtain a certificate in French, working for International IDEA in Tunisia, a largely French speaking country, was a dream opportunity for me.

Upon arriving in Tunisia, I was reminded of Iran almost instantly. The streets were filled with large roundabouts with *medinas* (outdoor markets) in nearly every city. The food evoked memories of home with warm tea and sugary baklavas at every restaurant. Even the people reminded me of Iranians, with their humble generosity and gracious invitations into their homes. During my eight weeks there, I attended a wedding dressed in traditional Tunisian clothing and learned traditional Arabic dances. Tunisia is a majority Muslim country, and the more conservative style of dressing and *adhans*, or calls to prayer, played over public speakers five times a day also recalled memories of Iran.

Significantly, however, I held onto one stark distinction: I rarely felt discomfort as a woman in a tank top or a skirt in Tunisia. I was not attacked for showing my hair in public nor was I arrested or jailed. In this sense, Tunisia felt like a liberated Iran — an Iran where women have vastly more freedom, an Iran my family and I have dreamed of.

When I first began my work with International IDEA, I immediately felt valued and welcomed. The head of the Tunisia office, Khomeyl Fenniche, made my presence known to all workers and allowed me to participate in all office meetings. As a result, I met Kevin Casas-Zamora, secretary-general of International IDEA, and Zaid Al-Ali, the senior adviser in constitution building in the Arab region for International IDEA. After I worked with Khomeyl on translations of International

IDEA memos from French to English, Zaid invited me onto the Yemen team where I studied that country's conflict and conducted research on topics such as including peace guarantors, religion in peace agreements and security governance in Yemen. This research was later used in a series of meetings Zaid conducted with leaders of Yemen's political parties and other key activists in attempts to reach peace. As a former refugee from Iraq, Zaid facilitated these deliberations by foregrounding humanity, and as a student of law, diplomacy and international affairs, I was inspired by his work and learned a lot from him in a short period of time. My time on his team enhanced my research abilities and deepened my understanding of the principles underlying constitution building and diplomacy.

My IIP concluded on a note that felt like the completion of a full circle. During the last week of my internship, Khomeyl approached me with a project related to Iran. International IDEA hoped to create a new initiative aimed at spreading democracy within the country, and, knowing of my interest and passion for the topic, Khomeyl entrusted me with leading this pursuit. I was tasked with creating a concept note for a new dialogue peace initiative in Iran — a 10-page document aiming to persuade global organizations such as the United Nations and European Union to back the project. Feeling more inspired than ever,



*Bitu Jalalian '25, third from right, standing, with the International IDEA Tunisia office team.*

I worked on the new Iran initiative, a project that stands as the most meaningful work of my life. I researched and described internal divisions and conflict in Iran and detailed a distinct solution through International IDEA's dialogue initiative, noting its plans to promote constructive engagement and national reconciliation in the country. This opportunity helped me learn to derive and describe outcomes, outline project proposals and develop a theory of change in a clear, concise and persuasive manner. Notably, it enabled me to think like a policymaker, visualizing solutions to Iran's national crisis while also contributing to a democratic world.

While in Tunisia, I had the opportunity to see what a representative Iran would look like, and, at last, I had a hands-on opportunity to fight for just that. Thus, I left this journey with a rekindled hope for a more democratic Iran and an unwavering sense of a newfound home away from home.

# A Time of Growth

## The Mpala Research Centre's 10-Year Plan Expands Opportunities

*Interview conducted and condensed by Carrie Compton, Princeton International*

**T**he Mpala Research Centre in northern Kenya has been an important international Princeton partner since 1994 when George Small '43 set up a research center on what was a cattle ranch. The center comprises 48,000 acres of semi-arid savannah and has allowed students and researchers, from Princeton and beyond, to study countless facets of its vibrant ecosystems.

Last January, the center appointed biologist and elephant conservationist Winnie Kiiru as its executive director. Kiiru — who has a doctorate in biodiversity management from the University of Kent in England — was previously the director of government relations for the Elephant Protection Initiative and senior technical adviser to the nonprofit Stop Ivory, in addition to serving on many nature conservancy boards. She spoke to *Princeton International* six months into her tenure about entering the role at a time of growth and renewal and what the center has to offer students and researchers.

### What drew you to the role at Mpala?

I had been working in policy and advocacy roles for the better part of my professional life before Mpala, and I yearned for a more hands-on role. I had recently been appointed to the board of the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI), which is a vital partner organization collaborating with Mpala and is dedicated to advancing wildlife research in Kenya. In the course of my role at WRTI, I noticed there were very few Kenyan professionals engaged in wildlife research administration. When this job came up, I thought this could be a place where I can bring more Kenyans into the research space. My journey to Mpala was driven by a deep-seated desire to empower Kenyan leadership in the critical research spaces to help shape the future of research and environmental stewardship.

### What are the most important lessons Mpala has to offer Princeton students and researchers?

Mpala is a living laboratory. It's a special place where students and faculty members can spend time observing animals in the natural world. In Mpala, researchers have the privilege of witnessing real animals engaged in authentic behaviors. If you're studying birds in the wild, you can't schedule when they lay their eggs or when they migrate. Mpala provides an unfiltered look at the way the natural world truly operates. This is a fantastic place for studying nature and using insights from this research to inform conservation and management of our natural world.

Building on its long history of biological research, Mpala is becoming a place of increasing interest for research and teaching by social scientists, engineers, humanists and artists.

### You came to Mpala at a time of an unprecedented drought. How has that affected your time there so far?

I arrived in Mpala on Feb. 1, 2023, in the middle of a devastating three-year drought. On March 15, a downpour drenched the arid landscape, and the Mpala community, alongside visiting Princeton students, could not contain their joy. We all danced in the life-giving rain.

I arrived in the middle of a crisis, and I was thankful for the wisdom of those who were at Mpala years ago. They had laid the foundation for resilience by developing water reservoirs and dams that served Mpala very well during the drought. Over the last year, the Mpala team has built two new dams capable of holding about 340,000 cubic feet of water. Thankfully, we received adequate rainfall to fill these new dams. We are now concerned about the resilience of the neighboring communities without access to adequate water. Digging boreholes remains a key priority and fundraising efforts are underway, with a special focus on schools and health centers in the surrounding areas.

Mpala's infrastructure will continue to grow and improve: In the last two years, Princeton has sent five delegations of faculty and staff to lend their expertise on strategic projects, to help us stay resilient in times of drought and to improve information technology infrastructure and to help us harness green energy. As we continue finalizing the strategic plan, I expect engagement with Princeton will increase further.

### **You mentioned digging wells. What else does Mpala do to foster community engagement?**

We have the George Small Scholarship Program where we help young people continue with their high school education. We also support the schools near us through feeding programs and a project where we are building classrooms and providing desks and equipment.

We also began a pilot program to fund two Kenyans who will receive tuition, field-work costs at Mpala, room and board and a stipend for their two-year master's degree program. If this pilot is successful, we hope to use the model to raise funds for an endowment to support not only African students, but also African researchers at Mpala.

**"Mpala is a living laboratory. It's a special place where students and faculty members can spend time observing animals in the natural world. In Mpala, researchers have the privilege of witnessing real animals engaged in authentic behaviors."**

– Winnie Kiru, executive director  
of Mpala Research Centre

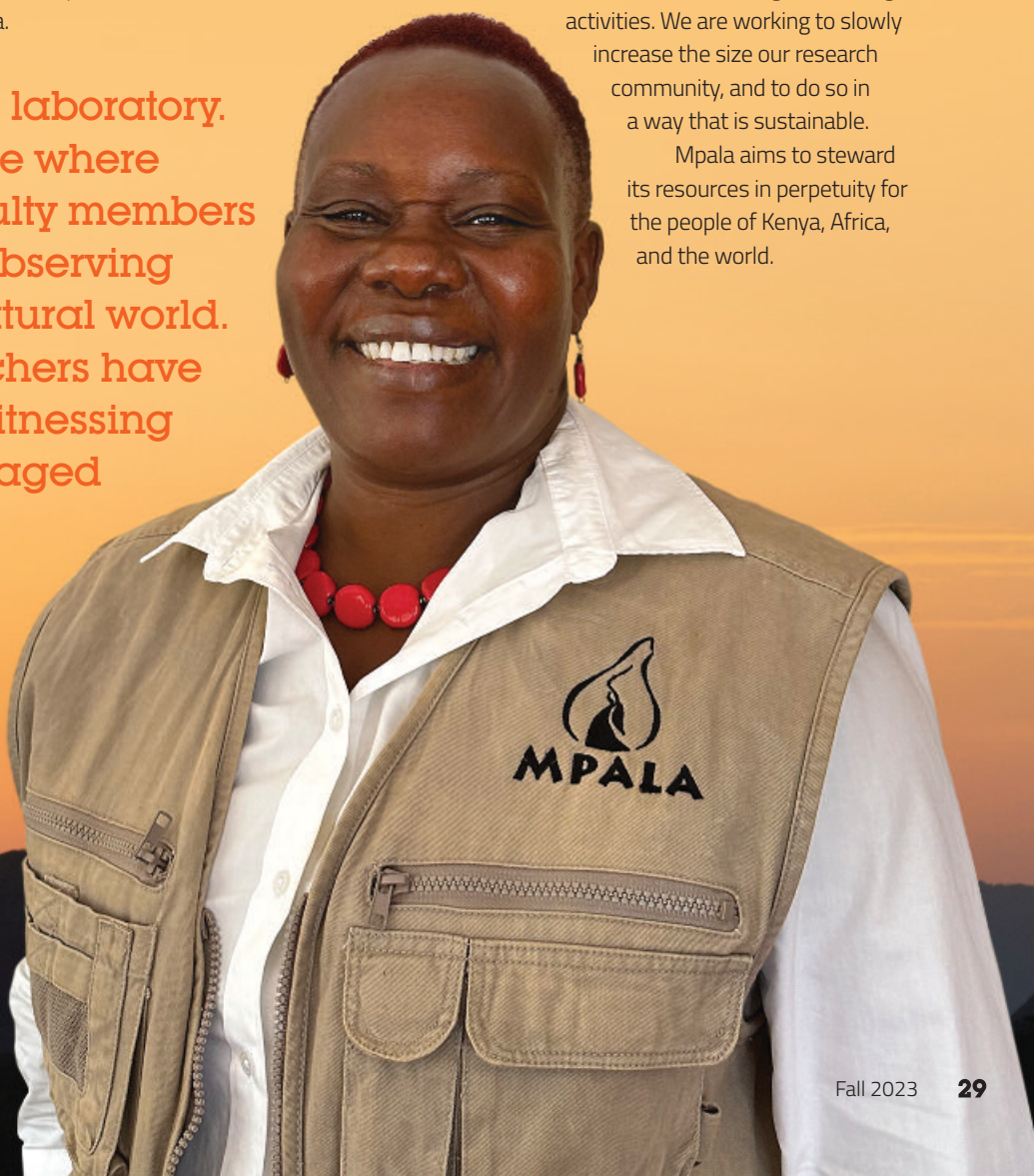
On the research side, some of our results are very useful for the community. Since we have a research herd of cattle, we've had long-term studies on grazing management, and we use that information to support communities around us. We often give local pastoralists space within Mpala to raise their cattle during difficult times. We are always growing our community and outreach work.

### **What about the strategic plan, and what's in store for the future of Mpala?**

This is a time of great progress at Mpala. We are almost done with a 10-year strategic plan that will set the center's priorities. Broadly speaking, the strategic plan has three pillars:

1. Assemble one of the world's most inclusive research communities, with a particular investment in African scientists and scholars; 2. Take a multidisciplinary approach to studying society's most consequential issues, such as climate change, and then disseminate results to locals as well as policymakers; and 3. Complete a first-ever campus plan, which will call for sustainably expanding housing, creating new labs, installing a solar field and increasing fundraising activities. We are working to slowly increase the size our research community, and to do so in a way that is sustainable.

Mpala aims to steward its resources in perpetuity for the people of Kenya, Africa, and the world.



# Facing Down Despots

*How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for Our Future*, was the Class of 2027 Pre-read

Maria Ressa '86 received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 for her efforts to safeguard freedom of expression in the Philippines. Perhaps no one better understands that democracy is a fragile institution, one that can be dismantled by disinformation.

The Class of 2027 explored the tenuous threads that keep democracy woven together as they considered Ressa's book, *How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for Our Future*, this year's Princeton Pre-read selection. The book traces Ressa's journey from CNN reporter to CEO and executive editor of the Philippines-based online news organization Rappler.com, and her coverage of the Philippine government, which made her an enemy of the former authoritarian President Rodrigo Duterte.

The Pre-read is a Princeton tradition that introduces first-year students to the intellectual life of the University by offering opportunities to engage with a book that is made available to students, faculty and staff. After arriving on campus, first-year students came together to discuss the book with its author and President Christopher L. Eisgruber during Orientation. "The entire information ecosystem will be transformed," Ressa told students at the assembly in Jadwin Gymnasium in September. "News will be transformed. How you get information will be transformed. And you're going to be part of how we fix this."

*Maria Ressa, left, in conversation with President Christopher L. Eisgruber, who called her "one of the world's great advocates for free expression."*



PHOTO: Sameer A. Khan/Fotobuddy

## *An excerpt from the book:*

In 2021, I was one of two journalists awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The last time a journalist received this award was in 1935. The winner, a German reporter named Carl von Ossietzky, couldn't accept because he was languishing in a Nazi concentration camp. By giving the honor to me and Dmitry Muratov of Russia, the Norwegian Nobel Committee signaled that the world was at a similar historical moment, another existential point for democracy. In my Nobel lecture, I said that an invisible atom bomb exploded in our information ecosystem, that technology platforms have given geopolitical powers a way to manipulate each of us individually.

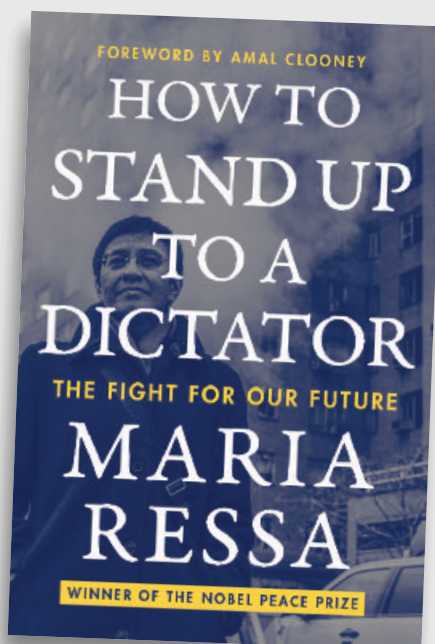
Just four months after the Nobel ceremony, Russia invaded Ukraine, using metanarratives it had seeded online since 2014, when it invaded Crimea, annexed it from Ukraine, and installed a puppet state. The tactic? Suppress information, then replace it with lies. By viciously attacking facts with its cheap digital army, the Russians obliterated the truth and replaced the silenced narrative with its own — in effect, that Crimea had willfully acceded to Russian control. The Russians created fake online accounts, deployed bot armies, and exploited the vulnerabilities of the social media platforms to deceive real people. For the American-owned platforms, the world's new information gatekeepers, those activities created more engagement and brought in more money. The goals of the gatekeepers and the disinformation operatives aligned.

That was the first time we became aware of information warfare tactics that would soon be deployed around the world, from Duterte to Brexit to Catalonia to Stop the Steal. Eight years later, on February 24, 2022, using the same techniques and the same metanarratives he had seeded to annex Crimea, Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine itself. This is how disinformation, bottom up and top down, can manufacture a whole new reality.

Less than three months later, the Philippines fell into the abyss. May 9, 2022, was election day, when my country voted for a successor to Duterte. Although there were ten candidates for president, it came down to two: opposition leader and vice president Leni Robredo and Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., the only son and namesake of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who declared martial law in 1972 and stayed in power for nearly twenty-one years. The first of the kleptocrats, Marcos was accused of stealing \$10 billion from his people before finally being ousted in a People Power revolt in 1986.

The evening of the election, Marcos Jr. took an early, commanding lead and never dropped it. At 8:37 p.m., with 46.93 percent of precincts transmitting, Marcos had 15.3 million votes compared to Robredo's 7.3 million. At 8:53 p.m., with 53.5 percent transmission, Marcos was at 17.5 million, Robredo at 8.3 million; by 9:00 p.m., with 57.76 percent, Marcos was at 18.98 million, Robredo at 8.98 million.

*This is how it ends*, I said to myself that evening. The election was proving a showcase for the impact of disinformation and



relentless information operations on social media that from 2014 to 2022 transformed Marcos from a pariah into a hero. The disinformation networks didn't just come from the Philippines but included global networks, like one from China taken down by Facebook in 2020. They helped change history in front of our eyes.

Starting with my Nobel Peace Prize lecture at the end of 2021, I had repeatedly stated that whoever won the election would determine not just our future but also our past. You can't have

integrity of elections if you don't have integrity of facts. Facts lost. History lost. Marcos won.

Compared to others in hiding, in exile, or in jail, I am lucky. The only defense a journalist has is to shine the light on the truth, to expose the lie — and I can still do that. There are so many others persecuted in the shadows who have neither exposure nor support, under governments that are doubling down with impunity. Their accomplice is technology, the silent nuclear holocaust in our information ecosystem. We must treat its aftermath the way the world did after the devastation of World War II: creating institutions and agreements like NATO, the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, we need new global institutions and a reiteration of the values we hold dear.

We are standing on the rubble of the world that was, and we must have the foresight and courage to imagine, and create, the world as it should be: more compassionate, more equal, more sustainable. A world that is safe from fascists and tyrants.

This is my journey to doing that, but it is also about you, dear reader.

Democracy is fragile. You have to fight for every bit, every law, every safeguard, every institution, every story. You must know how dangerous it is to suffer even the tiniest cut. This is why I say to us all: we must hold the line.

This is what many Westerners, for whom democracy seems a given, need to learn from us. This book is for anyone who might take democracy for granted, written by someone who never would.

What you do matters in this present moment of the past, when memory can be so easily altered. Please ask yourself the same question my team and I ask every day:

What are *you* willing to sacrifice for the truth?

**From the book HOW TO STAND UP TO A DICTATOR: The Fight for Our Future by Maria Ressa. Copyright © 2022 by Maria Ressa. Reprinted by permission of Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.**

# Picture This!

## The 13th International Eye Photo Contest focuses on undergraduate international programs and activities

The Office of International Programs, in collaboration with the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, celebrated the winners of its 13th annual International Eye Photo Contest. Each year, Princeton undergraduates capture their experiences as they participate in international study, internships, research and service projects around the globe.

This year, 21 photos were selected from over 250 total submissions from 30 countries by students in all seven residential colleges and 28 different concentrations. Top photographs were chosen for best in show and best in category awards and were showcased during an on-campus gallery event. Katherine Bussard, the Peter C. Bunnell Curator of Photography at the Princeton University Art Museum, judged the main categories.

Entries represent a wide range of international activities including semester and summer study abroad, PIIRS Global Seminars, the Novogratz Bridge Year Program, Engineers Without Borders, the International Internship Program, senior thesis research and more.



### Nestled Windows

Banyuwangi, Indonesia

**Lilia Burtonpatel '27**

1ST PLACE, ABSTRACTION  
NOVOGRATZ BRIDGE YEAR

### Signed, Sealed, Divided

Nicosia, Cyprus

**Cecilia Quirk '24**

1ST PLACE, PIIRS GLOBAL SEMINAR  
PIIRS GLOBAL SEMINAR



### Sunset Safari

Laikipia County, Kenya

**Molly Sauter '23**

1ST PLACE, TIGERS ABROAD  
STUDY ABROAD



### regarding salmon rent

Castro, Chiloé

**Liam Seeley '23**

1ST PLACE, ARCHITECTURE  
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH



### Making chapati

Kalisizo, Uganda

**Katie Kopp '23**

1ST PLACE, CONNECTION & REFLECTION  
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH



### Nuns of the Plaza

Seville, Spain

**Thomas Bogaev '23**

1ST PLACE, PEOPLE  
STUDY ABROAD

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