

Master of Arts in Politics and Security



Scholars and practitioners from Austria, Denmark, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Switzerland, and the US have been teaching on the Masters in Politics and Security in Fall, 2011. Along with foundational courses, the students studied Conflict Management, Political Islam, Organized Crime, Russian Central Asian policy and International Human Rights, all taught by recognized experts from leading institutions

The OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier met with the students on 5 October.

Nicholai Kobrinets, Deputy Director of the Department of European Cooperation at the Russian MFA gave a lecture on 28 October.

As usual, extracurricular guest lectures and roundtables provided practical insights in the workings of policy communities and helped students define their career strategies. This Fall we welcomes our colleagues from the University of St Andrews for a roundtable "Presidential Elections in KG" chaired by Dr Mokhira Suiyarkulova (University of St Andrews). Experts invited to speak on the round table included Dr John Heathershaw (University of Exeter), MedetTulegenov (AUCA), Askat Dukenbaev (Soros Foundation), and Asel Doolotkeldieva (University of Exeter). Our guests from Scotland also shared their career advice with our students at a "Being a Central Asia expert: Career Paths and Choices" seminar on 8 November.

Dr. Erica Marat (American University) gave an insightful introduction to the policy process in Washington in her lecture "Washington Whispers: Why Kyrgyzstan Matters?" on 9 September. Dr. Rolf Krause from Andr ssyGyula University, Budapest, spoke on "The African Security



Master of Arts in Economic Governance and Development

The OSCE Academy is pleased to announce the launch of the Master of Arts in Economic Governance and Development. It is a two-year programme that offers an interdisciplinary curriculum in national and international economic policy, focusing on regional issues of economic development based on international standards of teaching. The Programme is intended for graduate students from Central Asia and Afghanistan and will enroll 22-24 students per year.

"The OSCE Academy MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme first Admission Process is finishing. We received 225 applications, 118 were selected for written tests and interviews, which took place in Dushanbe, Tashkent, Astana, Almaty, Kabul and Bishkek. The Academy accepted 24 students: 8 students from Kyrgyzstan, 4 from Kazakhstan, 3 from Uzbekistan, 4 from Tajikistan, and 5 from Afghanistan. The OSCE Academy would like to welcome all new students and wish them good luck!" - said Cholpon Osmonaliev, Academic Supervisor of the Masters in Economic Governance and Development.

The OSCE Academy Alumni

The Alumni Network was particularly active this Fall. The central event was the first Alumni Conference "Central Asia: Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development.", which took place on the 3rd of September. 15 alumni presented their papers within three panels reflecting the OSCE dimensions: Political-Military, Human and Economic and Environmental. Five opponents argued with the presenters, thus opened up group discussions. Sean McGreevy and Zeineplsakova from the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and Michael Unland from the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe chaired and excellently moderated the conference panels. The Conference was welcomed by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and Ms. Anne Marte B. Amble, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Astana. The Conference was followed by the Alumni Retreat in the Ala-Archa National Park. Alumni discussed the Network activities over the past year, brainstormed and drafted new ideas on how the alumni and OSCE Academy can help each other.



We happy to call our readers' attention to the first issue of our Alumni journal SalamAlum. SalamAlum highlights all OSCE Academy Alumni Network activities and describes alumni success stories, general statistics, Junior Public Officer's Programme, etc.

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek is glad to present you an **interview** with the OSCE Academy Fellow on International Relations - **Dr. Payam Foroughi**.

Could you please tell us a little about yourself?

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science (International Relations and Comparative Politics) at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. I hope to be finally done with my degree in 2012. My research interests are human rights and post-communist transition politics. I've worked in Central Asia off-and-on since 1995 with NGOs and international organizations in capacities of employee and consultant. A relatively recent assignment was during 2006-2009 when I served as the Human Rights Office with the OSCE mission in Tajikistan. I am an Iranian-American and given my upbringing and real world experience, I am a committed cosmopolitan. My students know that very well and I think many of them feel the same!



What influenced your decision to come and teach in Kyrgyzstan and why did you prefer the OSCE Academy to other institutions?

I had three issues in mind when I applied for the Research and Teaching Fellowship with the OSCE Academy. One, my research interests includes Kyrgyzstan and looking into where the country stands with regards to its progress with the U.N. Convention against Torture. Two, though in the past (in the United States) I had taught undergraduate students, I was eager to gain teaching experience on the graduate level as well. And three, I like Central Asia, its peoples and geography. Being accepted as a Fellow with the Academy, therefore, fulfilled a number of my academic and personal interests.

Was it hard to adapt in Kyrgyzstan? What difficulties have you faced?

In the ten months that I've lived in Kyrgyzstan, I have had no problems that I can associate with this great country and its kind people. I have mostly spent my time in Bishkek, where the Academy is located. Living, commuting and interacting with people in Kyrgyzstan has been a fun learning experience and trouble-free. The citizens of Kyrgyzstan are friendly and the city where I work has a lot to offer for the basic comforts that one seeks. All exaggeration or cajoling aside, I do believe that Kyrgyzstan is a unique place. Despite all the problems it has gone through, it is a very open society. I specially admire the fact that the country is open to educational institutions. Aside from the OSCE Academy, there are also two Turkish universities, the Russian-Kyrgyz Slavonic University and a number of private academic institutions, including the American University. This is a wonderful phenomenon, which has already had a positive impact on the country as a whole.

Students of the OSCE Academy come from different countries and with different educational and practical levels. Do you have a special approach to teach students of different backgrounds?

One policy that I have, be it at the OSCE Academy or anywhere else, is that I tell students to leave their mental passport (or nationality) outside the classroom. Thus in class they are encouraged to as much as possible to be objective social scientists and when relying on their real world experiences, students are encouraged to do so not from the perspective of a citizen of a given country but an intelligent observer who happened to live in this or that country at a given time. I have found students to be open to this approach and it helps them (and I, too) to analyze concepts and issues from a purely scientific and objective manner without the injection of the 'we' of whatever nationality. I take this approach not just because of my own real world commitments, but because I believe teaching and learning require one to step outside of one's personal and imposed shells, whether those shells are nationality, gender, race, religion, ideology, sexual preference or socioeconomic status.

What advice and wishes do you have for our students?

My advice to the students is, at the expense of repeating a few clichés: "Do what you love, the money will follow!" Students should first of all pursue what's interesting for them—both with regards to their thesis and afterwards with their professional choice. Money (or salary level) and status should not be a primary objective. Ironically, however, if one pursues one's interests (without regards to monetary gain), one can do a good job (as opposed to a job one is not really interested in), one will be happy and healthy and soon after likely earn sufficient psychic and material incomes as well. My other cliché advice is: "Think globally, act locally." We are living in turbulent times, where global threats are affecting all of us. One such threat is global warming. Regardless of what career

Students should thus not shy away from extra-curricular activities, such as recycling, caring for the environment or starting an Amnesty International club (which some have expressed interest in this semester) while at the Academy. Indeed a complete educational experience also has its non-academic outside-classroom component as well. My last piece of advice: “Keep it simple.” That motto should be applied to the MA thesis, which should be thought of as a longer term paper and not a particularly complex research project. Students should pose a basic but interesting question to research, one which would require the student to collect some primary data, but one which can be completed in reasonable amount of time. Simplicity does not mean lack of complexity or unoriginality. Thus an apparently simple topic and jargon-free thesis can also be an excellent read and an opportunity to publish one's work.

Professional Trainings, Dialogue and Research

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek developed a series of trainings on public policy for the governmental experts and civil servants. The first such 5-day training introduced participants from ministries and governmental research bodies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to key stages of policy process and common analytical and research tools. The thematic focus of the training was on the electricity sectors of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



Effective elaboration of the international trade policy priorities for Kyrgyzstan was the focus of the second 5-day training seminar for Kyrgyzstan's governmental officials on accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The training took place on 21-25 November and was organized jointly by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the National Institute of Strategic Studies. The training focused on the compatibility of the WTO and Customs Union regimes, the legal and economic implications of the accession.

Maxim Ryabkov, the Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, said: “This training was conducted by leading practitioners of international trade law and was focused on a crucial issue for Kyrgyzstan that is its possible accession to the Customs Union. The training was designed for a wider group of governmental officials and, among other, deals with such topics as the practice of international and regional trade regimes, negotiating and lobbying the country's interests, compatibility between regional arrangements and the WTO. We expect that this training will produce a lasting impact and raise efficiency of the activities, aimed at elaborating the accession policy, the most promising for all the organization's stakeholders”.

As the topic of the Customs Union became central in the policy discussions in Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE Academy jointly with the National Strategic Studies Institute conducted a macroeconomic study of the consequences of the accession to the Customs Union. The study was presented at an international conference on 23 November, where representatives of the Kyrgyz government, civil society, the Customs Union and experts from several countries discussed advantages and risks of Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Customs Union.



The OSCE Academy also participated in a political economy assessment of education in Kyrgyzstan, commissioned by the European Union with the research team headed by Dr. Tony Vaux. Maxim Ryabkov, who collaborated on this research, describes the findings as “showing that the contemplated improvements in the financial autonomy of educational service providers should be evaluated in the context of socioeconomic inequalities and the curriculum often detached from the needs of the market.”

On 19 December, the OSCE Academy hosted a seminar “Regional/Transboundary Cooperation in Energy” co-organized by the G8 French Presidency and devoted to the projects of trade in electricity between Central Asia and Afghanistan.