



**MERSHON CENTER**  
for  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

*International Interdisciplinary Scholarly*

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Areas of Expertise](#) [News](#) [Events](#) [Grants](#) [People](#) [Publications](#) [Contact Us](#)

[home](#) > [expertise](#) > [faculty spotlight](#) > richard herrmann

### [Faculty Spotlight](#)

[Use of Force and Diplomacy](#)

[Ideas, Identities and Decisional Processes that Affect Security](#)

[Institutions that Manage Violent Conflict](#)

[Graduate Student Research](#)

## Richard Herrmann

Richard Herrmann is director of the Mershon Center for International Security Studies. Since 2002, he has led the center's efforts to attract a world-class faculty, establish its reputation as a leader in security studies, and offer special opportunities to enhance the student experience.

Herrmann specializes in international relations, security and conflict studies, political psychology, and politics in the Middle East and Russia. He has written on the role of perception and imagery in foreign policy and the importance of nationalism and identity politics. He is the author or editor of three books and more than 40 articles in such journals as *American Political Science Review*, *International Organization*, *International Security*, and *World Politics*.

Herrmann is currently working on two projects. The first, "Ideology and Ideological Modes of Reasoning: A Theory of Contingent Preference Formation" with Paul Sniderman of Stanford University, uses experiments embedded in a national survey to examine the foreign policy preferences of conservatives and liberals in America.

Many international relations theorists believe that national interest rather than ideology determines Americans' foreign policy preferences - in other words, that Presidents Bush and Obama will seek the same foreign policy based on national interest. Herrmann's research, however, did not find this to be the case. Instead, he found that foreign policy preferences depend on how people see the situation and the values they apply to it.

While liberals are more likely to judge a foreign policy situation based on due process and applying a consistent standard, conservatives are more likely to judge the situation based on the character of the actors involved. This makes conservatives more likely than liberals to treat nations differently depending on whether they are friend or foe.

Herrmann's second project, "Multiculturalism and Nationhood in America: Is recognizing difference compatible with building unity?" examines the relationship between multiculturalism and a sense of nationhood.

Historically, Americans have built a common identity by assimilating people of diverse ethnic groups into one prototypical "melting pot." Since the 1960s, the dominant strategy for integration has been multiculturalism -- the idea that whites, blacks, Hispanics and Jews are all equally American. However, critics of multiculturalism fear that the more people identify with a particular ethnic group, the less they will support the



**Richard Herrmann**  
Director of the Mershon  
Center  
Social and Behavioral  
Sciences Distinguished  
Professor  
The Ohio State  
University

nation as a whole.

Herrmann's study finds little evidence to support this criticism. Drawing from the results of a large national survey, the study finds that the more people see America as multicultural, the more willing they are to integrate with others who are different from themselves. The study also finds that with a few exceptions, strong attachment to a cultural group is correlated with strong attachment to the nation. But to guard against the potential weakening in national unity, Herrmann recommends that political leaders who promote multiculturalism should also emphasize what Americans have in common.

This year, Herrmann was named Social and Behavioral Sciences Distinguished Professor, and last year he won the Faculty Award for Distinguished University Service. He is also finishing a three-year term as Joan N. Huber Faculty Fellow at the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

© 2006-09 Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Ave.

Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614.292.1681

Fax: 614.292.2407

Email: [mershoncenter@osu.edu](mailto:mershoncenter@osu.edu)