

# EVENTS CALENDAR

Critical Research in International Politics Lecture Series

## PATRICIA OWENS



### *When War is Oikonomia by Other Means*

Monday, March 21, 2016, 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Mershon Center for International Security Studies  
1501 Neil Avenue | Room 120 Columbus, Ohio 43201

[Register here for this event](#)

Patricia Owens is professor of international relations at University of Sussex. She is author of *Economy of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Historical Rise of the Social* (Cambridge, 2015), and *Between War and Politics: International Relations the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Oxford, 2007) and co-editor of *European Journal of International Relations and Globalization of World Politics: an Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford, 2014).

She is a former fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, past Procter Fellow at Princeton, and Seton-Watson Fellow at Oriel College, Oxford. Owens holds graduate degrees from Cambridge and Aberystwyth.



Patricia Owens  
Professor of International  
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#### **Abstract**

In this talk, Patricia Owens will present a new history and theory of counterinsurgency with major implications for social, political and international thought. Retrieving the surprisingly neglected language of household governance, or *oikonomia*, she will show how the techniques and domestic ideologies of household administration are highly portable and play a remarkably central role in international relations. In two late-colonial British emergencies in Malaya and Kenya, U.S. counterinsurgency in Vietnam, and U.S.-led campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, "armed social work" was the continuation of oikonomia - not politics - by other means.

Though never wholly succeeding, counterinsurgents drew on and innovated different forms of household governance to create units of rule in which local populations were domesticated. Military strategists conceived population control as sociological warfare because the social realm itself and distinctly social forms of thought are modern forms of oikonomikos, the art and science of household governance. There is an important story to be told of when, where and why the social realm first emerged as the domain through which human life could be intervened in and transformed. Owens will present this story in terms of modern transformations in and violent crises of household forms of rule.

