



# MERSHON CENTER for International Security Studies



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## FACULTY GROUP RECEIVES \$175,000 MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT



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Eight Ohio State faculty members including five affiliates of the Mershon Center, have received a \$175,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to organize a John E. Sawyer Seminar on the Comparative Study of Cultures. Mershon affiliates who collaborated on the grant are [Theodora Dragostinova](#) (History), [Yana Hashamova](#) (Slavic Studies), [Pranav Jani](#) (English), [Scott Levi](#) (History), and [Mytheli Sreenivas](#) (History). Others include Brian Joseph (Linguistics, Slavic), Jessie Labov (Slavic), and Andrea Sims (Slavic).

The grant collaborators will organize a year-long series of events in 2013-2014 focusing on the intersection of language, politics, and human expression in two geopolitically key regions of the world – the Balkans and South Asia. The unique yet similar interplay of language, nationalism, ideology, and religion with literature, film, and other forms of expression within each of these regions compels a comparative approach. The juxtaposition of the Balkans and South Asia will offer academics and policy-makers a transnational perspective on the relationships between culture and politics.

This Sawyer Seminar draws on a historically strong program in Balkan studies at Ohio State and a rising program in South Asian studies, and involves a large number of faculty across several departments and disciplines who contribute in these areas. The eight-member group involved in the seminar planning spans both regions and a variety of disciplines and departments, with expertise in cultural studies, film, history, literature, linguistics, and women's studies.

The grant money will be used to support:

- A two-semester course in which the collaborators, other faculty on campus, graduate students and undergraduates are invited to participate;
- Visits by leading scholars from around the country and the world;
- Two doctoral fellows and a postdoctoral fellow whose research is related to the topic of the seminar and who will participate in seminar activities;
- A conference, organized in summer or early autumn 2014;
- A website of resources and materials.

The Mellon Foundation's Sawyer Seminars program supports comparative research on the historical and cultural sources of contemporary developments. The seminars bring together faculty, foreign visitors, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students from a variety of fields mainly, but not exclusively, in the humanities and social sciences, for intensive study. This program aims to engage productive scholars in comparative inquiry that would (in ordinary university circumstances) be difficult to pursue, while at the same time avoiding the institutionalization of such work in new centers, departments, or programs. Sawyer Seminars are, in effect, temporary research centers. For more information: [Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Program](#).

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