



MERSHON CENTER for International Security Studies

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EVENTS & DEADLINES

- Apr 17** **Mary Habeck**
04/17/2014, -
Director's Speaker Series
- May 06** **Interdisciplinary Studies of Political Behavior: From Elections to Protests**
05/06/2014, -
Conference
- May 07** **Interdisciplinary Studies of Political Behavior: From Elections to Protests**
05/07/2014, -
Conference
- May 14** **Climate Change Threatens our Security**
05/14/2014, -
Columbus Metropolitan Club event
- May 19** **Cultural Resilience Reading Group Meeting**
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Mershon Research Network in Cultural Resilience

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SEARCH

EVENTS CALENDAR

Director's Speaker Series

GEOFFREY PARKER FACULTY DINNER

"Global Crisis: War, Climate Change, and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century"

Wednesday, March 19, 2014, 6:00PM - 8:00PM
Mershon Center for International Security Studies
1501 Neil Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

[Please click here to watch the panel video in Windows Media Player.](#)

[Please click here to watch the panel video in RealPlayer.](#)

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Geoffrey Parker studies the social, political and military history of Europe between 1500 and 1650, with special reference to Spain and its empire. He is author, editor, or co-editor of 37 books and more than 100 articles and book chapters. For a full bio, please see his [faculty page](#).

Abstract

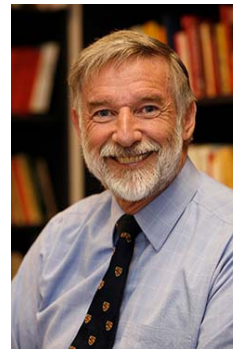
This event will serve as a panel session, intended to create dialogue between the author, Geoffrey Parker, and three guest critics, who will be discussing Parker's latest book, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (Yale University Press, 2013). This book sidesteps the current debate over the causes of global warming, and instead looks at the effects of global cooling in the 17th century, which has direct relevance to the impact of climate change on humanity in the 21st century.

Global Crisis examines how a fatal synergy between climate change and human inflexibility eradicated one-third of the planet's human population and unleashed an unparalleled spate of wars, invasions, and revolutions. Personal accounts and scientific data alike show how extreme weather disrupted growing seasons and destroyed harvests, bringing hunger, malnutrition, forced migration, and disease, and then, as material conditions worsened, economic chaos, political anarchy, and social collapse.

Only Japan "got it right." Episodes of extreme weather that killed half a million people convinced the Tokugawa shogun to create more granaries, upgrade communications infrastructure, and avoid foreign wars in order to accumulate sufficient food reserves to cope with future disasters. Although extreme weather persisted, Japan enjoyed peace and prosperity under the Tokugawa for two centuries.

Although humans played no part in causing climate change in the 17th century, they still suffered and died from the primary effect: a 2° C fall in global temperatures. The fact that today we face an increase of 2° C will not reduce the extreme weather events associated with changes of this magnitude or the adverse consequences for humanity.

The Global Crisis of the 17th century killed tens of millions of people. A natural catastrophe of similar proportions today – whether or not humans are to blame – will kill billions, produce dislocation and violence, and compromise international security and cooperation. Unlike our ancestors who faced the challenges of climate change 350 years ago, today we possess both the resources and the technology to mitigate the consequences through good policy and legislation. The consequences of inaction, in the 21st as in the 17th century, are intolerable: We can either pay to prepare now – or pay much more to repair later.



Geoffrey Parker
Andreas Dorpalen
Professor of History
The Ohio State
University



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