

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

51<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention

New Orleans, February 17 – 20, 2010

### **Call for Papers**

**Thomas G. Weiss, President**

**Elizabeth R. DeSombre, Program Chair**

### **Theory vs. Policy? Connecting Scholars and Practitioners**

In world politics, the supposed division between two groups – those who observe and analyze a subject and those who practice it – is something of a shibboleth. To most scholars, the development of theory, regardless of its relevance outside academia, is highly valued. Simplification and generalization are of the essence. Social scientists ask the “so what” question, but they do so often in the context of theory-building; some scholars might even go so far to deny that theories and methodologies need be applied outside of the academy. The inappropriate use or misuse of scientific knowledge for the pursuit of political agendas is cited as one reason to assume the role of the detached critic who remains on the sidelines and away from the policy fray.

At the same time, for most policy makers and activists, the word “theory” is associated with abstraction and irrelevance for day-to-day activities. Every situation seems *sui generis*, and thus generalizations can cause more problems than they solve. Even if theories offer explanations for practitioners, the “unreal” assumptions and simplicity of many theories are not useful when events are unpredictable and do not follow the neat patterns that are thought to be necessary to qualify as “parsimonious.” Often practitioners worry about the sources that form the basis for some theoretical propositions; if these sources are unreliable, flawed conclusions follow. The seemingly ever unresolved character of academic debates and knowledge – about, among other things, the democratic peace, climate change, the use of force, social capital, terrorism, gender equity, economic development – makes theoretical findings difficult to apply in practice.

Despite these stereotypes, visible scholars of international studies (from Henry Kissinger to Condoleezza Rice) have changed academic robes for prominent policy-making or decision-making positions. Moreover, scholars sometimes take on occasional consultancies, and most certainly, they have strong views about the conduct of their own local and national governments. Those who leave practitioner jobs may retire to positions in universities and think-tanks, increasing the connection between the two worlds.

The 2010 ISA Annual Convention aims to assess the current state of the divide between scholars and practitioners. Do the prevailing stereotypes make sense, or are they simply wrong? Given different professional incentives and priorities, how much is involvement in practice possible or even desirable for academics? To the extent that ISA members have participated in both worlds, has exposure to practice improved research? Has the influence of scholars in the policy world increased or decreased in the last decade? Do decision-makers routinely make use of academic research? Are there innovative teaching methods and strategies to emphasize case study components in international studies without sacrificing theoretical rigor?

We will explore the theory-vs.-practice division across the various issues taken up by sections within ISA. To what extent do academic ideas lead to policy changes in UN global developmental and environmental institutions? To what extent do human rights, human development, and human security norms matter? Does social science have a role in humanitarian action and intervention? What role do academics have in combating global terrorism? In peacekeeping, peace-building, and peace-enforcement? In foreign-policy decision making? In regulating international trade, investment, and finance? How useful are extant theories of revolution and contentious politics in understanding contemporary local and transnational resistances to the neoliberal order? What are the practical and normative implications of research that suggests democracies do not go to war with one another? Are existing theories of democracy relevant to constitutional design and state-building in democratizing and post-conflict societies? Are there theoretical and practical lessons that regional groupings in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East can learn from the regional integration experience of Europe? What are the implications for the study and practice of international politics from the rises in economic power and international influence of China and India? Can alternative theories of international affairs be developed out of non-Western trends and practices?

In connecting scholars and practitioners, we should also think about connections between the theory and empirics across different subfields. Do international security experts, geographers, and environmental activists have useful things to say to one another about climate change and conflict? How can scholars, military leaders, defense strategists, and aid workers, and journalists in conflict zones learn from one another about the changing nature of warfare? Are the notions of global governance and even world government palatable to sovereignty-minded national politicians? What can we learn from an intellectual history of prominent scholar-practitioners or practitioner-scholars?

We invite panels and papers that not only bring different theoretical perspectives to these questions but also that bridge different substantive and policy experiences. We encourage joint authorship of papers from individuals of different communities – academic and policy. We invite participants from institutions of both North and South – universities, colleges, research institutes, governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the media.

The theory and practice of international studies today encompass more kinds of people from a wider variety of backgrounds than in the past, and a richer range of activities bring scholars and practitioners together in structured and informal ways. We are thus interested in exploring achievements in bridging theory and policy, and in concrete and substantive examples where the connection of theory and policy has been especially fruitful as well as where it has not.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009**

Contact Information for panel and paper proposals:

Elizabeth R. DeSombre  
Wellesley College  
Department of Political Science  
106 Central Street  
Wellesley, MA 02481  
Email: [isa2010@wellesley.edu](mailto:isa2010@wellesley.edu)

## **Guidelines for Convention Participants**

This document has been prepared by the Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities to answer basic questions about the convention and to help you as you prepare for your convention participation:

### **I. Composition of the Program**

I.1 Panels may be organized according to a variety of formats, ranging, for example, from the traditional oral presentation of research papers to poster presentations to more innovative means of presentation that utilize computer software, film, or demonstrations of teaching techniques.

I.2 The numbers of roundtables on the program should not be increased at the expense of the number of panels.

I.3 Panel proposals from ISA sections are subject to review by the program chair(s) using the same standards of quality and suitability that are applied to other proposals.

I.4 Joint panels and roundtables organized collaboratively by two ISA sections are particularly encouraged and should be given special consideration by the program chair(s).

*Rationale: Scholars can participate in the program in a variety of ways: by chairing a panel or roundtable, by delivering a formal paper or prepared remarks on a given topic, or by serving as a discussant. The primary purpose of program activities are to encourage the full presentation and active discussion of theories and research findings, as well as to explore topics of interest from a wide range of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. The specific format used in panels and roundtables to accomplish these goals may vary as deemed appropriate by panel chairs and the program chair(s).*

### **II. Composition of Paper and Poster Panels**

II.1 Panels may range between four and five papers, and might have one or two discussants. Only under the most extraordinary circumstances should a panel have more than five papers or a roundtable have more than six participants.

II.2 Approximately thirty minutes should be reserved for discussion from the floor and among the panelists. The panel chair has the right and responsibility to enforce this norm.

II.3 Panel organizers should strive for a good mix of participants. The best panels often include scholars from different countries, a range of institutions, and different career stages. The best discussants are often scholars with significant experience in the field. In general, graduate students should not fill this role.

II.4 Poster sessions for the conference will be organized into poster panels, a set of between four and six posters grouped on a related theme. Each poster panel will have a discussant, who will give feedback on the papers and their posters to the authors.

*Rationale: There is no ideal composition for the panels. The number of formal papers and the time allocated for their presentation should be based on the scholarly objectives of the panel. In all cases, including roundtables, adequate time should be reserved for a full and active discussion after the formal presentations.*

### **III. Responsibility of Panel and Roundtable Chairs**

By proposing and accepting responsibility for chairing a panel or roundtable, the chair accepts these obligations:

III.1 To inform the program chair(s) of all changes in the composition of the panel or roundtable prior to the publication of the final program. And, similarly, to inform all other participants of such changes well before the meetings begin.

III.2 To inform the program chair(s) of any panelist who fails to attend the panel without providing advance notification of those extenuating circumstances preventing their participation.

III.3 If chairing a roundtable, to circulate a detailed memo regarding the issues to be discussed by the participants well in advance of the meeting.

III.4 If chairing a panel, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the discussants receive advance copies of papers, even in draft form. Five working days prior to the commencement of the meetings is the absolute minimum acceptable lead-time.

III.5 To hold participants to agreed-upon time limits for their presentations, so that at least thirty minutes are available for general discussion.

*Rationale: Stimulating scholarly interchange requires that panelists attend their panels and roundtables, and that adequate time be set aside for discussion among panelists and the audience. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide accurate information about the nature and composition of a particular panel or roundtable and to provide sufficient time for the participants and audience to interact.*

#### **IV. Responsibility of Panelists and Roundtable Participants**

By proposing and accepting formal participation, participants accept these obligations:

IV.1 To inform the panel chair, discussant of your paper, and program chairs(s) at the earliest possible date of any changes in the status of your work, your availability, or travel funding which will or is likely to prevent your participation. Failure to show up for your panel without having previously notified the panel chair, discussant, and program chairs(s) could adversely affect the likelihood of your being included on the program in future years.

IV.2 If giving a prepared paper, to circulate copies to discussants and other panelist in advance of the meetings, and at least five working days before the commencement of the meetings. Paper presenters are also responsible for providing copies of their paper to other attendees and uploading their paper to the online paper archive.

IV.3 If serving as a discussant, to read carefully each of the papers that you receive at least five days prior to the conference and comment upon these papers in a constructive manner.

IV.4 To abide by the panel chair's stipulations regarding the length of presentation and comments.

IV.5 Unless you are a co-author and the other author(s) are presenting your paper, you have an obligation to attend and fulfill the responsibility for which you applied. This year, like last, we had far more people applying than we had space for in the program, and literally hundreds of worthy applicants were turned away. In turn, ISA's Governing Council imposed a deadline of no later than **November 1st**, by which time you could still cancel your participation (and the program chair could substitute another worthy participant); of if you failed to cancel your professional obligation by that date, you would be penalized by not allowing you on the program for future conferences.

IV.6 If you are a co-author, and you are not planning on attending, and your co-author is presenting your work, please notify us immediately so we may plan for this and not spend resources unnecessarily. You can notify us by e-mail at isa@u.arizona.edu.

*Rationale: The quality of scholarly interaction among panelists and the audience increases when panelists receive copies of papers in advance of the meeting and when members of the audience have access to the papers. The inability of attendees to purchase papers is a source of considerable frustration. Panelists have a professional responsibility to make copies of their papers available to convention attendees.*

## **V. Participation of Scholars from outside North America**

V.1 Panel and roundtable chairs are encouraged to invite the participation of relevant scholars outside of North America.

V.2 Letters confirming the participation of scholars from outside North America should be sent by the program chair(s) at the earliest possible date and, whenever possible, in advance of the publication of the preliminary program.

V.3 If participation of a scholar from outside North America is contingent on funding from ISA or other sources, that fact should be made clear when the proposal is submitted.

*Rationale: The participation of scholars from outside North America is in keeping with the purposes of the Association. Their participation is most effective if North American members have ample opportunities to interact with them as panelists and discussants and vice versa. Early indication of the need for funding will allow the program chair(s) and section organizers to provide the potential participant with the appropriate application.*

## **VI. Frequency of Appearances**

VI.1 Participants are allowed to present no more than two papers with a total of four maximum participations, including acting as discussant and chair. ISA's conference website will limit a participant's submissions.

VI.2 The limitation on the number of appearances will be waived for participants serving on a panel that is honoring an ISA member, or for other exceptional circumstances identified by the program chairs(s).

*Rationale: Minimizing the number of appearances by any one participant increases the opportunities for participation by others.*

## **VII. Proposal Submission**

VII.1 Scholars who submit proposals for panels or roundtables must not place an individual on the proposed panel or roundtable without his or her consent.

VII.2 Scholars wishing to participate in the program must adhere to the submission deadline. Proposals received after the deadline stipulated by the program chair(s) are unlikely to be included in the program.

*Rationale: The fact that some scholars submit multiple proposals without informing the program chair(s) and other appropriate personnel creates serious difficulties in preparing the program. Accurate information on multiple submissions will assist the program chair(s) in making the most efficient use of available sections. Adherence to the submission deadline facilitates timely completion of the program.*

## **VIII. Notification of Unsuccessful Proposals**

VIII.1 It is the responsibility of the program chair(s) and section organizers to ensure that scholars who cannot be accommodated on the program are notified by letter of that fact prior to the publication of the preliminary program. Acceptance letters and notifications for those who submitted proposals will be sent by e-mail from ISA in late September.

*Rationale: Not informing scholars that their proposals are unsuccessful until publication of the preliminary program is a professional discourtesy.*

## **IX. Registration and Membership**

IX.1 Pre-registration is required for all participants to be listed in the program.

IX.2 Membership in ISA is not required for participation in the annual meetings.

Nonetheless academic participants are strongly encouraged to join the Association.

## **X. Paper and Panel Proposal Deadline**

X.1 The deadline for paper and panel proposals is **June 1st**, all proposals may be submitted online using the MyISA conference management system.

## **XI. Travel Grant Deadline**

XI.1 The travel grant application deadline is **September 9th**. For more information on the grant application process, please see the website located at the following URL: <http://www.isanet.org/travelgrants/>

*Rationale: We ask that you submit your travel grant application prior to receiving your participation confirmation, this allows us to carefully consider the many applications received before awarding the limited funds available.*

## **XII. Participant Pre-Registration Deadline**

XII.1 The pre-registration deadline for convention participants is: **October 15th**. Participants who do not register by this date will not appear in the Convention Program.

*Rationale: We request that participants pre-register for the program. If you fail to do so we will assume that you will not be participating and we will rearrange the program by removing your contribution and adding those who have currently been placed on a considerably long waiting list. In previous years, some participants have been, for various reasons, unable to meet their professional commitments to present at ISA meetings. In an attempt to limit these occurrences to only those with legitimate reasons, this new procedure was instituted. We hope that this will help ensure full participation in the ISA Annual Convention.*