

William L. d'Ambruoso

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Visiting Assistant Professor

2016-Present

Politics Department, Bates College

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of Washington

June 2016

Political Science

Major Fields: International Relations, Comparative Politics, Methodology

Ph.D. Committee: Elizabeth Kier (chair), Jonathan Mercer, Jamie Mayerfeld, Christopher Adolph

M.A. University of Washington

December 2010

Political Science

B.A. Saint Olaf College

May 2003

Mathematics, Theatre

RESEARCH

Research Interests: IR theory, security, asymmetric war, atrocities, norms, U.S. foreign policy

Book Project: *The Persistence of Torture: Explaining Coercive Interrogation in America's Small Wars*

Abstract: Why has the United States used torture in small wars over the last hundred-plus years? After all, torture is abhorrent, risky, and frequently ineffective as an interrogation method. I argue that the anti-torture norm has two features that can lead to torture. First, because it is difficult to separate torture from milder acts, the norm lacks specificity. This allows practitioners to portray their behavior as something short of torture and redefine torture to exclude their

behavior. Second, the anti-torture norm can, paradoxically, encourage torture by attracting those who believe unscrupulous methods confer advantages on those who use them. The two explanations interact as well: torture occurs because actors believe that torture is harsh enough to work, and the definition of torture is blurry enough that actors believe they can sell their methods as legitimate. Through extensive archival and bibliographic research, I confirm these patterns in three settings: the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), the Vietnam War, and the post-2001 war on terror.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“Norms, Perverse Effects, and Torture.” *International Theory* 7, no. 1 (2015): 33-60.

Other Publications

“How to Excuse Torture,” guest post on *Lawyers, Guns, and Money*, Weblog, 22 February 2016. Available at: <http://www.lawyersgunsmoneyblog.com/2016/02/how-to-excuse-torture>.

Book Review of Douglas Gibling, *The Territorial Peace* (2012: Cambridge University Press). *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no. 9 (2013): 1146-50.

Book Review of Michael Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War* (2010: Cambridge University Press). *Journal of Politics* 73, no. 1 (2011): 290-1.

Invited Talks

Bowdoin College, Department of Government	April 2017
Tufts University, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy	December 2016
MIT, Department of Political Science	December 2016

Conference and Seminar Presentations

“Norms and Torture in the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902” American Political Science Association Annual Conference University of Washington International Security Colloquium	September 2015 May 2013
“The Torture Norm’s Robustness Problem” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference	April 2014
“Cheating to Win: The Case of the CIA during the Cold War” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference	April 2014

“Off Limits: Non-democracies and the Normative Prohibition against Nuclear Weapons Use.”
International Studies Association – West

September 2007

Other Manuscripts in Progress

“Assassination, Torture, and the Decline of Violence”

“Counterinsurgency, Colonialism, and Security Commitments”

“Explaining Variation in Compliance: Cognitive Dissonance plus Constructivism”

Research Methodology Training and Experience

Archival Experience

Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA

National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

Methodology Classes

Qualitative Research Methods, Quantitative Research Methods (Introductory and Advanced),
Maximum Likelihood Methods, Analysis of Categorical Data, Visualizing Data

Statistical and Technical Writing Software

R Programming Language, LaTeX, STATA

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Ione E. Curtis Research Grant, University of Washington 2011
Awarded research funds to study why modern counterinsurgencies so often fail.

Richard B. Wesley Fellow in International Security 2011-2012
Served as chair of the University of Washington International Security Colloquium, which hosts scholars who present on international relations topics.

Nomination: UW Presidential Dissertation Fellowship 2015

Nomination: Morris Abrams Award in International Relations 2015

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

College Level

Instructor/Lecturer

Political Science
University of Washington, Seattle
Introduction to International Relations Summer and Fall 2015
Military Intervention Winter 2014
International Conflict Autumn 2012, Winter 2013
International Relations Writing Link 2009-2015

Teaching Assistant

Political Science 2008-2012
University of Washington, Seattle
Introduction to International Relations (2 quarters)
Introduction to American Politics (2 quarters)
Introduction to Comparative Politics (1 quarter)
International Conflict (1 quarter)

High School/Middle School

Teacher/Tutor

All High School Mathematics Subjects 2003-2008

SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIP

Journal Referee: *International Relations, European Journal of International Security*

Undergraduate Program Research, UW Political Science Department Winter 2016

University of Washington International Security Colloquium, Core Member 2008-present

Professional Affiliations:

American Political Science Association 2014-present

Midwest Political Science Association 2014-present

REFERENCES

Elizabeth Kier

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Political Science
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Jonathan Mercer

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