

ALIAS NOTES

NEWSLETTER FOR THE ACTIVE LEARNING IN
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SECTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT CAROLYN SHAW

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Greetings! I hope this newsletter finds you well. ALIAS is sponsoring a record number of panels at the Annual ISA Conference this year and I would encourage you to review the list below and the conference program to find those panels of special interest to you. Please note that the ALIAS Section Business Meeting is scheduled for Friday 7:30 - 8:30am. A light breakfast and coffee will be provided. The business meeting provides a great opportunity to network with other scholars who are passionate about teaching and learning, and gives you the full story about the activities of our section. I hope to see many of you in Chicago!

ALIAS membership has been growing steadily over recent years and we would like to continue this trend. We encourage our current members to renew their membership and invite their colleagues to join ALIAS as well.

WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

The ALIAS section has been active at the ISA Regional conferences and in Brazil this year, holding several workshops.

ISA Midwest

At ISA Midwest in St. Louis, ALIAS presented a workshop on Designing Role Play Exercises. The workshop was facilitated by Carolyn Shaw, Wichita State University and Bob Switky, University of Nebraska, Kearney. Approximately 20 participants learned about the conceptual considerations necessary for creating a simulation and then broke into small groups for a hands-on opportunity to design their own exercises. At the end of the session, participants had laid the foundation for three different exercises on the topics of Energy Security, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Experiencing Realism. The workshop provided an opportunity for those who were familiar with role playing to exchange ideas, as well as for first timers to acquire resources for designing their own simulations.

ISA West

Douglas Becker, University of Southern California, led a lively discussion of Active Learning Techniques in the Classroom at the ISA West Conference in Las Vegas. Discussion covered a range of topics including role playing, games, Model UN, film and others. Participants were able to share their 'best practices' with each other and take away new ideas to incorporate in their classes. We followed up the workshop with a roundtable on the impact of active learning techniques on gender in the classroom. ISA President J. Ann Tickner was one of the participants on this roundtable, which explored both the impact the techniques have on gender as well as the importance of gender-related topics as subjects for active learning.

ALIAS SECTION OFFICERS

- **President: Carolyn Shaw,**
Wichita State University
- Vice President/Program
Chair: Douglas Becker,**
University of Southern Cali-
fornia
- Secretary: Mary Pettenger,**
Western Oregon University
- Immediate Past President:
Matthew Krain, The College
of Wooster**
- WebMaster, Leanne
Powner, University of
Michigan**
- Member-at-large, David
Reilly, Niagara University**

WORKSHOP SUMMARIES (CONTINUED)ISA Northeast

At the Northeast Political Science Association conference in Boston, ALIAS sponsored a presentation on *Engaging the Millennials: Active Learning for a New Generation of Students*. Panelists introduced strategies for integrating case studies into the curriculum (Julie Mueller, University of New England), designing writing assignments that enhance students' critical thinking and reading skills (Rosemary Shinko, University of Connecticut), debriefing simulations and role-playing activities (David Reilly, Niagara University), and the scholarship, dissemination, and assessment of active learning approaches (Mark Boyer, University of Connecticut). An inquisitive audience, which included graduate students and seasoned faculty, participated in an enthusiastic discussion on the direction of higher education and the use of active learning approaches in international affairs courses.

Active Learning Workshop in Brazil

Three past presidents of the ALIAS section—Kent Kille, Matthew Krain, and Jeffrey Lantis from The College of Wooster—led a successful workshop on active teaching and learning for Brazilian international relations instructors in October 2006. The International Relations Institute of the University of Brasilia sponsored the workshop for 25 international relations professors and advanced students from universities across Brazil. The results were very rewarding for all. "I have never seen my professors so excited," said one participant.

The Brazil workshop presented a wide range of active learning tools, including the use of advanced instructional technologies, case teaching, debates, simulations, games, service learning, and teaching with visual media and alternative texts. The workshop also encouraged critical dialogue about teaching philosophy, recent innovations, and assessment.

The International Relations Institute in Brasilia reached out to us because of our experience in this area, and we enjoyed the opportunity to connect with teacher-scholars in Latin America. We were also pleased to find that many of the attendees had already been using some of these techniques, but wanted to learn more about new ideas and assessment of effectiveness.

Participants commented that the value of the workshop was in the "real experience in active learning, instructors with theoretical and practical experience in active learning, and excellent presentations." Another added: "you made me think about how I was using these techniques and how to improve their use." Many participants appreciated the way the workshop helped them build confidence to incorporate more active teaching and learning strategies into their classrooms. And they all recommended the workshop for their colleagues, graduate students, and even Brazilian diplomats.

We will present a paper that describes this experience in more detail at the upcoming ISA meeting in Chicago. Our paper, entitled "Active Learning Across Borders: Lessons from an Interactive Workshop in Brazil," discusses and assesses the workshop program. Encouraged by initial feedback, we are ready to get back on the road and share ideas with other groups. Our plans include workshops for graduate programs training young teacher-scholars, upcoming professional meetings, and additional international venues. For more information on workshops, please see <www.wooster.edu/ir/Active-TeachingIR>.

"The workshop helped them build confidence to incorporate more active teaching and learning strategies into their classrooms."

THE ALIAS WEB ARCHIVE

The ALIAS Web Archive is a place for section members to share lesson plans, working papers, class resources, links, and other items of professional interest. This secure file-sharing site is hosted on the University of Michigan's CTools course and project management platform. Users may log in anonymously or under their own names to post documents, browse resources, or participate in discussion threads.

The site boasts a large collection of professional links and a growing set of lesson plans, papers, instructional resources, syllabi, and class activities. Logging in is easy and secure. Simply go to the ALIAS section website <<http://www.isanet.org/alias>> and click on "The ALIAS Web Archive" on the left. Use the user name "alias.isa@gmail.com" (no quotes) and password "ISAsection" (no quotes, case sensitive) to log into the site as an ALIAS Guest. Or, to obtain a log-in under your own name, email the webmaster at <LPowner@umich.edu>.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING SESSION

You are invited to attend an Interactive Learning Session sponsored by the ALIAS section on Thursday afternoon (TC98) from 1:45-3:30 in the poster room next to the exhibit hall. This is a new twist on the traditional poster session where faculty can actually experience active learning techniques hands-on, not just by viewing a poster. Topics include: Teaching the Scientific Method Without Tears; Interactive Simulations in IR: What every discussant needs to know; Communicating Human Rights; Foreign Policy, Security and Human Rights; and Marxism and Legos: Teaching about North-South Economic Relations. Demonstrations will be conducted throughout the scheduled bloc time and presenters will be available to discuss their techniques. Come join us!

CALL FOR ALIAS OFFICERS

We will be holding ALIAS officer elections at our business meeting at ISA. If you are interested in being nominated, want to nominate someone else, or want to learn more about the positions, please contact Carolyn Shaw at carolyn.shaw@wichita.edu. The section is seeking nominees for Vice President, and two at-large positions (general and web master). We are interested especially in recruiting graduate students for an at-large position.

2007 ISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE PREVIEW

ALIAS PANELS

(note that the days/times are still tentative so check the final program at ISA)

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

WA37 8:30-10:15 – Nationalism, Case Studies, and Active Learning

WA40 8:30-10:15 – Science Fiction in the Classroom: Using Popular Fiction to Teach International Relations

WB24 10:30-12:15 – Experiences of People of Color in the International Studies Classroom

WC40 1:45-3:30 – Model UN in the Classroom

Thursday, March 1, 2007

TA16 8:30-10:15 – Teaching Ethics in IR: Effective Approaches to New Global Issues

TB25 10:30-12:15 – Gender in the Classroom

TC05 1:45-3:30 – Negotiating Global Environmental Politics in the Classroom

TC39 1:45-3:30 – Comparative Issues in International Education

Friday, March 2, 2007

ALIAS Business Meeting 7:30-8:30

FA30 8:30-10:15 – Learning IR Cross-Culturally and Among Enemies—Past and Present

FA37 8:30-10:15 – Multinational Corporations I: Theorizing the Political Dimensions of their Interactions with States

FA38 8:30-10:15 – New Perspectives on Creating Global Classrooms

FA48 8:30-10:15 – Teaching IR Across the World: Pedagogical Dilemmas

FB32 10:30-12:15 – Scholarly Responsibility and Undergraduate Teaching

FB37 10:30-12:15 – Multinational Corporations II: Policy Ramifications, Political Dynamics, and Responsible Scholarship

FC24 1:45-3:30 – Active Learning and the War on Terror

FD21 3:45-5:30 – The State of Active Education Worldwide

Saturday, March 3, 2007

SB35 Sat 10:30-12:15 – Surveying Learning Techniques and Strategies

SC07 Sat 1:45-3:30 – Re-Thinking Globalization and our Responsibility as Teachers/Scholars

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