

# GREAT DECISIONS 2016

## Speaker Biographies



**Ji Young Choi is associate professor in the Department of Politics and Government and affiliated professor in the International Studies Program and the East Asian Studies Program at Ohio Wesleyan University.**

He specializes in international relations history and theories, international and comparative political economy, and East Asian security and political economy. Choi completed his Ph.D. at Purdue University, where he taught introductory courses in International Relations and Comparative Politics as an independent instructor and won a Graduate Student Award for Outstanding Teaching in 2007. A native of South Korea, Choi earned a B.A. in Philosophy at Yonsei University and his M.I.S. (Master of International Studies) with top honors at Sogang University, both in Seoul, Korea.

Further, he went on to earn his M.A. in Political Science at the University of Kansas, where his M.A. thesis passed with honor. His research interests are in the rise and fall of nations or great powers, the politics of economic globalization, global financial governance, East Asian regionalism, the rise of China, and Korean politics and economy. He has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals including *International Politics*, *Pacific Focus*, *the Journal of International and Area Studies*, and the *Journal of Third World Studies*.



**Stephen Tull has been appointed as U.N. Resident Program Coordinator and U.N. Development Program Resident Representative for the Republic of Chad.**

Before this appointment, Tull was U.N. Resident Program Coordinator and U.N. Development Program Resident Representative for the Republic of Kazakhstan (2010-2015). Previously, he served with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva as Chief, Office of the Director, (2007-2010); Head of its country office in the Russian Federation (2004-2007); Chief, Policy Development Section, Geneva (2003 until 2004); and Desk Officer and Head of Field Office covering the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan (1999-2003). In 1998, he was the Political Adviser to the Head of the U.N. Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, and from 1996-1998 he was Chief of the Civil Affairs Liaison Office for the U.N. Transitional Administration in Croatia. Prior to his career with the United Nations, Tull pursued an academic career (1988-1996), and was a Visiting Research Fellow at Princeton University (1995-1996) and a Research Fellow and Teaching Assistant at the University of Michigan (1989-1995). He also spent time as a freelance journalist in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991-1993) and conducted extensive field research in the former Yugoslavia. In an earlier phase of his career, he was a program manager and analyst in energy and environmental policy, including the management of global climate change (1984-1988). Tull holds a B.A. in Mathematics and Philosophy from Ohio Wesleyan University, an M.A. in Philosophy from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Michigan. He speaks English, French, and Russian. Tull took up his new assignment in October 2015.



**Alam Payind, Director, Middle East Studies Center, The Ohio State University**

Alam Payind is Director of the Middle East Studies Center (MESC) at The Ohio State University and a professor in the International Studies Program and the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures department. He received his B.A. from Kabul University in Political Science and Islamic Studies and his Ph.D. from Indiana University in Political Science and Higher Education. Born and raised in Afghanistan, Payind served in the Afghan government as the Director General of Cultural and Foreign Relations, and was a professor at Kabul University before the Soviet invasion in 1979 forced him to seek refuge in the United States. He is still part of the faculty at Kabul University and is a consultant to the Afghan government. Since Sept. 11, 2001, he has visited the country 13 times. A 2013 publication is "Inside Afghanistan 23 Years After the Soviet Withdrawal" in the *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Payind is active on the national level in organizations such as the National Council of Area Studies Center Directors. He provides vital consultations to press and news agencies on Middle Eastern affairs and lectures widely. But he is devoted to teaching his courses on the Modern Middle East and Contemporary Issues in the Middle East and to advising Middle Eastern students adjusting to the American educational system and culture, and to American students majoring in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies.



**Melinda McClimans, Assistant Director, Middle East Studies Center, The Ohio State University**

Melinda McClimans has been Assistant Director of the Middle East Studies Center (MESC) at The Ohio State University since July 2003. She has an M.A. in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and is ABD (all but dissertation) for a Ph.D. in Global Education. She has lived and studied in Egypt and Saudi Arabia and studied Arabic in Cairo and Tunis. In 1994, she enrolled in Franklin College in the Italian-speaking area of Switzerland, obtaining her B.A. in 1997. After graduating, she served as an intern at the United Nations in Bangkok, Thailand. At the Middle East Studies Center, she organizes the annual study tour to Turkey for teachers, taught a class on Egyptian culture and took the class to Egypt, has organized and taught the Center's institutes for teachers, and has co-taught online courses for teachers with Dr. Merry Merryfield. McClimans directs the teacher training program and creates or edits teacher-created instructional materials. She has research ability in Arabic and French, and is fluent in Italian. She organizes the Center's outreach and engagement events, and oversees the Center's internship and volunteer programs.



**Miguel Martinez-Saenz, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Otterbein University.**

Miguel Martinez-Saenz, a Cuban-American, is Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Otterbein University. Martinez-Saenz earned his B.A. from Florida State University in religion and his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of South Florida. He held several faculty and staff positions at Wittenberg University, from teaching to Associate Provost. Just before coming to Otterbein, Martinez-Saenz was Dean of University College at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. He has written and presented on issues including but not

limited to international development, Jorge Luis Borges, Che Guevara, liberal education, and the birth of his son. Outside the university setting, he has worked with his wife, a former eighth grade public school Social Studies teacher, tutoring teens at or below the poverty- line, has conducted philosophy workshops with incarcerated males, and has accompanied student groups to build houses in rural communities in Nicaragua as part of trips organized by Bridges to Community. His interest in matters related to Cuba is quite deep and very personal. His grandfather, Joaquin Martinez-Saenz, remains inspirational to him in numerous ways. He “gave his life” for his country by initiating a clandestine group in 1930’s Cuba to fight a dictator, by working on Cuba’s Constitution of 1940, by serving as President of the National Bank of Cuba, and by serving significant years in prison.



**Robert J. Gitter, Joseph A. Meek Professor of Economics, Ohio Wesleyan University.**

Bob Gitter is the Joseph A. Meek Professor of Economics at Ohio Wesleyan, where he teaches courses in Labor Economics, Public Finance and Econometrics as well as Principles of Economics. Over the last decade much of his research has focused on immigration, especially from Mexico. He recently published an article in *The International Migration Review* with two Mexican economists on the impact of rainfall on migration from Mexico to the United States. They found that higher than normal amounts of rainfall reduced outmigration, most likely due to the increased levels of

precipitation leading to more crops and reducing the need to migrate. In an earlier piece, co-authored with his son Seth, a Delaware Hayes graduate and now an Associate Professor of Economics at Towson University, they found that Mexican migrants who returned to Mexico were as likely to be employed as similar Mexicans who never migrated. He delivered the 2012 Vogel Lecture at OWU on “La Travesia a Delaware y Columbus (The Journey to Delaware and Columbus): A Look at Mexican Migration to Central Ohio.” He has led a travel-learning class to Puebla, Mexico, on two occasions to examine the determinants and impact of Mexican migration to the United States.



**Marianne Gabel, Leader, Citizens’ Climate Lobby in Delaware**

Marianne Gabel is a longtime Delaware resident now retired from the practice of law. She served for 16 years on the Board of Education for Delaware City Schools and is active in the Rotary Club of Delaware, the Delaware County League of Women Voters and the Nature Conservancy in Ohio. Citizens' Climate Lobby is a national grass-roots organization that works to create the political will for a livable world by empowering

individuals to experience breakthroughs in exercising their personal and political power. Based on scientific evidence and economists' opinions, Citizens' Climate Lobby volunteers in its 310 chapters believe that a "[Carbon Fee and Dividend](#)" is the best first step to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate. Gabel will be joined by panelists from the CCL.



**Michael Houlahan, Foreign Service Officer (retired); Resource Speaker, Community Outreach Program, American Foreign Service Association.**

Michael Houlahan is retired from the Foreign Service after 28 years in the U.S. diplomatic service. He received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and earned a Masters in International Public Policy at The Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. Following a three-year tour in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps, he served 28 years as a Foreign Service Officer, where his overseas postings included Japan, Romania, New Zealand, Cyprus, Italy, India, the Philippines and Jamaica. Houlahan has published over 60 articles and reviews, most of them specializing on the Philippines, including guerilla movements, the Marcos regime, and World War II. After retiring, he was Coordinator of the Great Issues Lecture Series in Upper Arlington from 2002-2011 as well as a resource speaker for the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Lecture Series (2001-2010). Since 1997, he has been a resource speaker for the American Foreign Service Association's community outreach program.