



MERSHON CENTER for International Security Studies

[ABOUT US](#) [RESEARCH](#) [NEWS](#) [EVENTS](#) [GRANTS](#) [PEOPLE](#) [CONTACT](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#)

You are here: [Home](#) ▶ [Events](#) ▶ Nick Cullather

EVENTS & DEADLINES

- Mar 02** Nick Cullather
03/02/2015, -
Woody Hayes Speaker Series
- Mar 11** Richard Zeckhauser
03/11/2015, -
Citizenship Speaker Series
- Mar 12** Barbara Koremenos
03/12/2015, -
Globalization Speaker Series
- Mar 13** Karen Dawisha
03/13/2015, -
2015 Midwest Slavic
Conference Keynote
- Mar 26** Kelly Greenhill
03/26/2015, -
National Security Speaker
Series

ARCHIVED EVENTS

Academic Year

Month

SEARCH

EVENTS CALENDAR

Woody Hayes Speaker Series

NICK CULLATHER

"Central Intelligence before the CIA"

Monday, March 02, 2015, 3:30PM - 5:00PM

Mershon Center for International Security Studies
1501 Neil Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

[Register for this event here.](#)

Nick Cullather is a professor of history at the University of Indiana Bloomington and a historian of United States foreign relations, specializing in the history of intelligence, development, and nation-building. The United States uses aid, covert operations, diet, statistics, and technology to reconstruct the social reality of countries around the world, and Cullather is interested in these subtle mechanisms of power. His most recent book, *The Hungry World* (2010), explores the use of food as a tool of psychological warfare and regime change during the Cold War. Cullather's first book, *Illusions of Influence* (1994), described the process through which a former American colony negotiated its conditional independence. In the 1950s, the Central Intelligence Agency developed a capacity to replace unsuitable governments, elected or otherwise, as he shows in *Secret History* (2006).

Currently, Cullather is investigating the early history of the CIA, and asking why a country so committed to pluralism and the marketplace of ideas staked its security on the novel notion of central intelligence. Putting vital information under control of a single authority has never fit comfortably with democratic ideals, and in a perennial political ritual, the "intelligence failure," Americans question and reaffirm the CIA compromise. His current project, *First Line of Defense*, follows this debate from 1947 to the present day.

Abstract

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free," reads the inscription in the lobby of CIA headquarters in Langley. But how does one produce truth, what constitutes knowing, and who, exactly, is Ye? These questions preoccupied early theorists of "central intelligence," an idea that gave rise to an agency. This talk will examine the mid-century modernist ambition for a streamlined, rationalized flow of information that would remove the guesswork from foreign policy. The CIA is often seen as culminating an espionage tradition going back to Nathan Hale, but its intellectual origins have a closer kinship to Esperanto, IR theory, University Microfilms International, and other utopian schemes for comprehending a complex and violent world.



Nick Cullather
Professor of History
Indiana University
Bloomington

[Back](#)

JEvents v3.1.23 Stable Copyright © 2006-2014

MERSHON CENTER

[About Us](#)

[Research](#)

[News](#)

[Events](#)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

[Office of International Affairs](#)

[Global Gateways](#)

[International Students](#)

[International Scholars](#)

AREA STUDY CENTERS

[Center for African Studies](#)

[Center for Latin American Studies](#)

[Center for Slavic & East European Studies](#)

[Polish Studies Initiative](#)

RESOURCES

[Current Events](#)

[Print Newsletter](#)

[Annual Report](#)

[Photo Album](#)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Grants | Study Abroad | East Asian Studies Center | Events Archive |
| People | Grants and Scholarships | Institute for Chinese Studies | Knowledge Bank |
| Publications | International Agreements | Institute for Japanese Studies | |
| Contact | | Institute for Korean Studies | |
| | | Middle East Studies Center | |



© 2013 Mershon Center for International Security Studies – Office of International Affairs

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614-292-1681 | Fax: 614-292-2407

[Request an alternate format of this page.](#)

