



## Balkan Studies Seminars 2005 In Olympia

July 19, 2005



For the fourth consecutive year, the Kokkalis Foundation concluded its summer seminars in ancient Olympia on July 19th, 2005. This year, the seminars were organized in collaboration with Harvard, Yale, and Duke universities, as well as with the municipality of ancient Olympia and the Interscientific and Intercultural Center of Olympia.

The program of the two-week seminars included two thematic units. The first was entitled "Violent Conflict: Past, Present and Future" and was coordinated by Yale professor Stathis Kalyvas. The seminar investigated the causes of political conflict in all its forms, ranging from terrorism, civil conflict and wars. Four main findings were reached at this seminar: a) the terms "terrorism", "civil conflict", "war", and "genocide" are politically charged and are often misleading.

It is urgent that undergoing research, especially the research of important current social problems, avoids misusing the terms; b) in today's times, there is a significant decline in the number of conventional inter-state wars but conversely there is a transfer of the locus of political violence into the domestic arena in the form of civil conflicts; c) the research of political violence necessitates both an interdisciplinary method and a full-fledged understanding of the logic of collective action at all levels, of individual and social action but also action at the levels of group, state, and international system; and d) traditional research approaches to the study of conflict, including research on the Greek civil war, are obsolete and have reached a deadlock, which can only be overcome by research that is both systematic and uses a comparative perspective.

The second seminar, entitled "International Journalism, Communications, and the Media" and coordinated by Duke professor Ellen Mickiewicz, examined the relationship between mass media and democracy, focusing in particular on Eastern Europe after 1989. The basic conclusions of this seminar included: a) after 1989, in Eastern Europe the free press has developed under an environment dominated by oligopolistic groups and by media anarchy; b) the broadcast media of the post-communist states of the region fall short from the British prototype, despite occasional political efforts in this direction.

Summer program director professor Dimitris Keridis stated that the goal of the seminars is the in-depth study of contemporary issues of public interest from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective in the inspiring setting of ancient Olympia, a symbolic reminder of the ideals of peace and cooperation.

(i) More than 60 students, researchers and journalists from 25 countries ranging from China to Colombia, completed the seminars, which in addition to a curricular program included local excursions to archaeological sites and museums. Location: Olympia, Greece

Tags: edu summer



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