Feb. 7 Russia and the Near Abroad
Speakers: Mariam Dekanozishvili, Ph.D. / Gordon Smith, Ph.D.

Years after the end of the Cold War, the question of whether Russia is a stabilizing or destabilizing power, globally and in the post-Soviet region, has yet to be answered. This presentation will focus on Russia’s actions in its “near abroad,” including invasions of Georgia and Ukraine.

Feb. 14 Privacy in the Digital Age
Speaker: William M. Jones Jr., Ph.D.

The challenge of securing private information is not new to the digital age; however, the extent of the federal government’s use of digital technology in the age of terrorism has revealed an intelligence collection program the broadness of which most Americans are unaware. This presentation will focus on the challenges to liberty and privacy in the digital age with the threat of terrorism and need to provide for public security.

Feb. 21 Sectarianism in the Middle East
Speaker: Samih Baalbaki

As 2014 drew to a close, much of the Middle East was in turmoil. The promise of the Arab Spring represented the challenge of a new generation demanding political reform and democracy, but the promise remained unfulfilled. This presentation will focus on the new threats to regional stability in the Middle East coming from new insurgents like ISIS and the rise of political Islam by Hamas and other terrorist groups.

Feb. 28 Human Trafficking in the 21st Century
Speaker: Dorothy Douglas Taft

Human trafficking in its diverse forms constitutes a serious challenge to humanity, affecting millions of women and men, as well as girls and boys, in numerous countries irrespective of region and development level. This presentation will address the role of government and non-government international organizations in combating human trafficking.

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