PATRICIA BLUMERIS
ENGINEERING EVERYTHING FROM PROSTHESES TO COMMUNITY AT TUFTS

JUMBO IN THE SUMMER
WHERE ARE STUDENTS SPENDING THEIR SUMMER VACATIONS?

IN THE SWIM
THE TUFTS SWIMMING AND DIVING TEAM REFLECTS ON ITS HISTORIC SEASON

DATA SCIENCE
LEARN ALL ABOUT TUFTS’ NEWEST ENGINEERING MAJOR

TOP 10
OUR FAVORITE INSTAGRAM POSTS FROM THE ACADEMIC YEAR

ADMISSIONS ADVICE
WE BREAK DOWN THE CONCEPT OF DEMONSTRATED INTEREST
During her research sabbatical last year, Professor Greenhill devoted her time to learning about the idea of “fake news.” As she continues to ask questions, she encourages her students to do the same.

“What the heck?”. This question was the recurring theme behind my conversation with Associate Professor Kelly Greenhill and, as I learned during our conversation, the question that also spurred her research. Professor Greenhill’s academic interests lie in her core topic: “politicized disinformation”—a term she never felt secure about in certain geographical areas.

Professor Greenhill is fascinated by the insidious patterns that occur throughout our global history and affect our present reality, and her research is concerned with tying together the threads in those patterns. Her current research (and upcoming book) is part of a continuation of her 2019 book, Weapons of Mass Migration, which examined the use of forced migration as an instrument of foreign policy and coercion. This time around, Greenhill is concerned with the ever-present reality of what she calls “extra-factual information”—what the public might not know but “they need to know.”

Greenhill was fascinated by this subject area long before the term “fake news” commonly began circulating across our screens and newspapers. Initially, her interest in this issue was sparked by a New Yorker article entitled the public interest that unfolded with the rise of “fake news literature” during the Whitman housing crisis, the peak year of the academic sabbatical. Greenhill devoted much of her time to discovering the ways in which public perceptions of threats are often not driven by facts. In her research, Greenhill dove into specific moments in history, such as the United States’ attitudes toward Japan in the late twentieth century, but also looked at the post-WWII environment in which we now live. Through her research, Greenhill has found that the public’s beliefs, fears, and anxieties are not organic, but willfully manipulated to outside sources to achieve something—like their status as a political tool, or weapon.

The idea that “information is always in flux” is reflected in her classes, including courses like “Migratory, Religious, and Citizenship in a Globalized World and the Future.” Extra-factual Information in International Politics, Greenhill says, that she is constantly rethinking her syllabus to reflect this reality—what she believes is an essential state of evolution. The challenge is one on a different level of complexity when examining alongside other political patterns throughout time, allowing Greenhill and her students to find the root of present problems in the past. By exploring patterns that are relevant to today and Greenhill makes her classes a space where students are encouraged to ask, “What the heck?”

“Thinking about her students, Professor Greenhill has said that their “mindset is not the same as what we have taught. She appreciates that her students ask questions and challenge the ideas by challenging the ideas, but are always “willing to take on an ongoing conversation and move it to the next level, or explore tangential ideas and opinions from required readings to find some broader implications.”

This is in the spirit of the courses she teaches, which concern themselves with asking good questions about the world, and the big questions that might not yet ready available answers. Professor Greenhill says, “It’s challenging, but in some ways it also sets itself: Why should I care about political science?” She answers her Nothing is quite quite with a laugh. “Because it’s happening! And it’s going to affect us all in the end.”

—JENNA FONGECA '20