

# Fall 2016 Brookings Scholar Lecture Series

All events will run from 6:00pm – 7:00pm and will be held in the Greenspun Hall Auditorium.

## "Sextortion: How Big a Problem is It?"

**Benjamin Wittes** *Wednesday September 21, 2016*



The word "sextortion" is a prosecutorial slang for a new kind of cybersecurity problem: the extortion of sexual conduct online by victims—often a great many of them—by means of threatening the release of sexually explicit images. A recent Brookings study reveals that sextortion is remarkably prevalent. We identified a large number of cases nationwide encompassing many thousands of victims. The Justice Department has identified sextortion as the most important and fastest-growing cyber threat to children, but many victims are also adult women. A discussion of recent research into a little-discussed cybersecurity threat: The ability to conduct sexual coercion at scale against very large numbers of victims and across state and international borders.

## "Access to Quality Teaching: Myths, Facts, and Potential Policy Solutions for the Future"

**Michael Hansen** *Thursday September 29, 2016*



Many believe the public schools serving the most affluent students have a monopoly on quality teaching, and schools in high-poverty areas perform poorly due to its lack. Yet a variety of research studies in recent years have challenged this myth. This research shows teacher quality varies much more within the same school than it does across schools, even looking across schools serving students from very different backgrounds. Access to quality teaching is not equal, though it is not nearly as formidable a challenge as previously believed. A variety of potential policy solutions will be presented to enhance the access of disadvantaged students to high-quality teaching.

## "The Partisan Politics of the Congressional Budget Process"

**Molly Reynolds**

*Tuesday October 4, 2016*

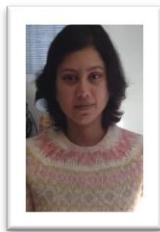


Observers of Congress often cite the budget process as evidence of the institution's contemporary dysfunction. Indeed, in the past ten years, the House and Senate have failed to agree on a budget resolution six times and Congress has failed to pass nearly all of its appropriations bills before the October 1 deadline. This inability to fulfill one of its basic responsibilities is often blamed on increasingly polarized congressional parties attempting to leverage the process to their advantages. Is this claim accurate? How have partisan dynamics in the budget process changed over time? How can we make the process work better in light of current levels of partisanship and polarization? Will the 2016 elections have consequences for the budget process? In this lecture, I will address these and other related questions, relying in part of new data on the use (and possible abuse) of various procedural aspects of the budget process, especially in the U.S. Senate.

## "Cleantech Innovation in U.S. States and Metropolitan Regions"

**Devashree Saha**

*Tuesday November 15, 2016*



The public lecture and presentation will provide an overview of the cleantech innovation landscape in states and metropolitan regions across the nation, with a special focus on how Nevada compares with the rest of the country. Achieving deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is going to require radical innovations involving far-reaching changes in clean technologies. In this regard, the granting of patents and venture capital investment provide useful indicators of the innovation performance of cleantech firms that will provide the basis to assess the nature and location of U.S. cleantech innovation.

## "U.S.-Russia Relations: A Reset in 2017?"

**Steven Pifer**

*Tuesday November 29, 2016*



Will a new reset be possible in 2017 that could lift U.S.-Russian relations from their current post-Cold War low? Barack Obama's reset in 2009 scored early successes, such as the New START Treaty, but the bilateral relationship subsequently turned downward. This lecture will explore the key drivers of Russian foreign policy and the implications for U.S. national interests. It will identify potential flash points between the two countries and possible areas for cooperation. It will conclude with recommendations for how Washington might better manage its complex relationship with Moscow.