Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Ryan Barrett

M.A. in Political Science, August, 2015, The University of Missouri - Saint Louis
M.A. in International Relations, May, 2010, Webster University
B.A. in International Studies, May, 2006, The American University

Ukraine at the Crossroad in Post-Communist Europe:
Policymaking and the Role of Foreign Actors

Date: January 26, 2018
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: 332 Social Sciences and Business Bldg.

As the mounting protests from Maidan Square in Kyiv led to the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich, Ukrainians found themselves at an unavoidable fork in the road in their history. For years the country had become a new frontier of Western influence, forcing a decision between tightening economic and cultural ties with Western countries or with Russia. The basic question many Ukrainians now faced included choosing between their Soviet past or a potential liberal democratic future. Furthermore, the Russian takeover of Crimea became the first major invasion of a European country since 1968. This military maneuver stunned the international community and precipitated radically new relations between Western states and Russia.

From an academic perspective, modern Ukraine presents an excellent case to study in political science and international relations. This country and the recent events that have taken place there, lends itself to an almost infinite number of research questions on post-communist development, democratization, marketization, geopolitics, energy politics and foreign influence. The focus of this paper is to examine how Western versus Russian institutions and agents, influence a third actor, Ukraine, in the post-communist world. The following discussion will: 1) address the case of Ukraine within international relations and geopolitics of the region; 2) analyze the different ways in which the two sides exert influence; 3) and how those instruments shape policymaking in four policy areas: reform, economics, energy, and security.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Joyce Mushaben, Ph.D. (Chair)
David Kimball, Ph.D.
Kenny Thomas, Ph.D.
Jeanne Wilson, Ph.D.