Ferraro to speak on Obama's foreign policy

Matt Rocheleau, Collegian Staff

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Mount Holyoke College professor Vincent Ferraro will tackle the question of whether President Barack Obama's foreign policies are realistic or idealistic during a lecture Tuesday night in Campus Center room 165 at 7p.m.

The Ruth C. Lawson Professor of International Politics at Mount Holyoke, Ferraro will speak about how the commander in chief has pursued foreign policy so far in his presidency.

Ferraro's talk will focus on the paradoxes of what some feel is a realist handling of policies in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Russia by Obama versus the president's more idealistic set of policies on Iran, China and North Korea.

"He will pretty much speak on what Obama has done already in terms of foreign policy and what Obama will do in the future," said Ashley Coulombe, a senior journalism major and press director for the UMass Democrats, which is hosting the event. "I'm looking forward to seeing him because I've been busy watching what's going on with the economy and what's going on domestically."

Ferraro is a specialist in changes in international relations since the end of the Cold War and American foreign policy.

"His expertise is foreign policy, but if the topic [of domestic policy] comes up, I'm sure he would share his thoughts," said Coulombe.

In 2007, Ferraro came to UMass to speak with former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, who was then serving as chief foreign policy advisor to Obama when he was a senator, and tonight will speak shortly about his support for the senator's bid for the White House.

"Everyone that was there just loved him," said Coulombe recalling Ferraro's previous visit to UMass. "He's really a great speaker."

Ferraro is completing a college textbook covering such topics as imperialism, balance of power, global poverty, causes of war, deterrence, terrorism and global environmental problems. The book will address changes in international relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union and will use a variety of case studies such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Third World debt and the Cuban missile crisis.

In 1977, Ferraro served as an academic consultant for the United Nations Association of the United States.

He also consulted for the UN's development program during the late 1980s. More recently, his expertise was tapped through the Pew Charitable Trusts faculty fellowship board, on which he served as a member from 1989 to 1995.

In 1980, Ferraro was the recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Grant for his research on political economy. During the war in the Persian Gulf, Ferraro served as a local expert for the Springfield ABC affiliate.

Ferraro is Mount Holyoke's lead faculty member on a project funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which is integrating Internet material into the international relations curriculum.

Ferraro's scholarly work in international relations includes several articles on global poverty, Third World development and global debt in such journals as the World Policy Journal, the International Journal of Social Economics and the Journal of Interdisciplinary History.

In 1993 he delivered a paper to the International Studies Association on the political economy of the International Monetary Fund.

He has also written articles on global interdependence and the politics of energy and served as a local media resource during the oil embargo.

Ferraro teaches world politics, American foreign policy and international political economy at Mount Holyoke, and world politics at UMass.

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Ashley Tue Mar 10 2009 08:48

Just to clarify to everyone, the event is in room 165 of the Campus Center basement, not 65. There had been a typo on the fliers.

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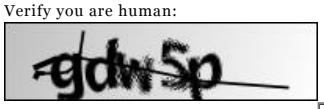

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