

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
Government Department

Spring 2009

LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR:
KATE GRANNEY

Dear GO Majors --

Happy Spring ! After this long, cold, icy winter, it is nothing short of amazing to see the daffodils emerging, and the bikes under the huge pile of snow outside case re-appearing. I hope the sun and warmth will help power you all to a wonderful end to the spring semester.

We have a lot of exciting events coming up for our majors and especially our Senior majors -- Academic Festival, thesis defenses, Pi Sigma Alpha induction and the Honors Awards ceremony, and most important of all, the pre-graduation reception for our majors and minors and their parents (tell your parents to keep an eye out for the invitation !) We all always enjoy meeting your parents, so please plan to come, and to bring them.

We also have an exciting roster of courses for next fall, including a GO 365 Topics Course "Religion and Politics", which will be taught by our new two-year visiting assistant professor, Sumita Pahwa from Johns Hopkins University. Professor Pat Ferraoili's GO 224 American Indian Politics and Policy course will also be offered next fall, and has recently been designated to fulfill the all-college Cultural Diversity requirement. Given the ongoing developments between Native peoples and the New York State government, this is a great time to check out this course.

We will also be happy to welcome Professor Hoffmann back from India next fall, and we'll wish Professor Turner a fond Bon Voyage as he and his clan jump the pond to spend next fall at Skidmore's First Year in London Program.

Enjoy this newsletter and have a wonderful rest of the semester,

Kate Granney

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What's Your Favorite?

We thought it would be interesting to see which college classes were the favorites of our Government Professors.

SIMONE PEREZ '10

Professor Beau Breslin

Constitutional Law was my favorite class as an undergraduate. I remember that it was particularly rigorous, that the teacher was supportive but demanding, and that the material somehow resonated with me.

Professor Patricia Ferrioli

Microbiology—the information continues to be relevant to everyday life

Professor Roy Ginsberg

Comparative Economic Systems at Georgetown University because I learned how market economies and centrally planned economies differ; and *Diplomacy in International Affairs* at Bradley University because I learned the importance of 19th and 20th century post-war settlements that either succeeded due to good diplomacy or failed due to bad diplomacy.

Professor Kate Graney

I think it was a tie between an American Presidency course that I took with Prof. Paul Zernicke, Holy Cross's version of Ron Seyb (devastatingly charismatic and funny) and a tutorial that I did with a professor in the Religion department on comparative mysticism, where we read the works of great mystics in the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist traditions. I wish I could go back now and take many more English, Art History and Economics courses!

Professor Ron Seyb

The truth was (make sure that you have your "geek anti-matter machine" set on "high") that I had several favorite courses in college. If forced to choose, I would have to say that it was a course with the prosaic title, "The Growth and Decline of Empires." It was taught by a notoriously "quantitative" political scientist named Rein Taagepera, who boasted a thick Estonian accent and whose modal attire was a T-shirt with "Free Estonia" written in blood red ink and some kind of knock-off pair of Hager slacks, which were invariably in a color that had never before made an appearance outside of a McDonaldland commercial. Professor Taa-

gepera confessed to us on the first day of class that he "loved maps" and that, accordingly, the only books for the class would be two historical atlases: The Penguin Atlas of World History, Volume 1 and the Penguin Atlas of World History, Volume 2. He then told us to purchase a couple of pads of graph paper because we would be spending the first few weeks of the class "plotting the growth and decline curves of various ancient empires." Suffice it to say, this little plotting exercise prompted about half of the students to bolt, leaving behind the preternaturally smart and the extraordinarily stubborn. I fit securely into the latter category. When the class size had been reduced to ten, Professor Taagepera announced that now that he had "separated the wheat from the chaff" (causing me to think, of course, "am I wheat or chaff?") that we were going to start doing some "real history." I then proceeded to learn more in that course than in any other. I discovered that I actually enjoyed reading hundreds of pages filled with maps, dates, and illuminating descriptions of the slow accretion of events that is often the basis for "epoch making change." I also learned about entire civilizations whose names had previously struck me as little more than good tidbits to toss about if one were auditioning for the college bowl team. I sincerely believe that my interest in history was sparked by this class, an interest that has allowed me to torment generations of students with turgid presentations on the French and Indian war (which, by the way, was not fought between the French and the Indians).

Here is a list of my other "faves":

The Darwinian Revolution: This course introduced me to one of my favorite books, Carl Sagan's *The Dragons of Eden*
 French Politics: How many Republics were there again? No wonder they love Mickey Rourke.

Experimental Psychology: Six students and one indisputably brilliant professor. We did not run a single rat or a single freshman (there was not an implied preference ordering in that previous statement). The professor just lectured to us on experimental de-

sign, which turned out to be a remarkably fascinating subject. Thanks to Professor Birnbaum, I can now bandy about terms like "confound" without sounding like too much of a pinhead (though I remain, of course, a pinhead).

Professor Flagg Taylor

My favorite class as an undergraduate was a seminar on Rousseau. It was a small class and Professor Jensen was in total command of the texts. She guided us through the *Emile* with great skill. I remember her ability to extract intelligible contributions from a variety of students. It was the first class (my senior year!) where I really felt like I could read a difficult book and digest it on my own.

Professor Natalie Taylor

One of my favorite classes (there were so many good ones!) in college was a seminar on Rousseau's *Emile*, which was taught by Pamela Jensen. The seminar was devoted to a close, careful reading of this one work by Rousseau. It was taught by a kind, thoughtful teacher, who so evidently loved political philosophy and her students. Rousseau remains my favorite political philosopher and Mrs. Jensen continues to be my role model.

Professor Bob Turner

When I think about my undergraduate education, I can't identify a single class in shaping how I think about the world. I can still vividly recall critiquing race and gender in female house cleaners in Sociology of Women; talking about *the Deer Hunter* and the Black Panthers in American Studies: The Sixties; studying Nicaragua, El Salvador and Costa Rica in History of Latin America; Analyzing the complexity of the Zionism in History of the Middle East; analyzing the electoral success of the Swedish Social Democratic party in Comparative Politics of Western European Politics; reading Gogol and Pushkin in 19th Century Russian Literature; making a reality show about condiment usage in the dining hall for Video Art; and most importantly, studying in London for my junior year. My drinking buddies were all Marxists who believed the revolution was coming and capitalism was doomed.

Faculty News

SIMONE PEREZ '10

Professor Roy H. Ginsberg was interviewed by the newspaper *Pravda* for a Feb. 9 story on the topic of the Czech Presidency of the European Union. The national daily *Pravda* is published in the Slovak Republic and has a circulation of 100,000. Ginsberg recently chaired and served as discussant on panels dealing with "U.S.-EU Relations After Bush" at the 50th annual International Studies Association Conference in New York and is preparing, with Mihaela David '10, the second edition of his book, *Demystifying the European Union: The Enduring Logic of Regional Integration*, which has sold 3,500 copies since its 2007 release. The second edition will be available in March 2010.

Professor Natalie Taylor's essay on women's magazines is due out this spring. The title of the essay is "The Personal is Political: Women's Magazines for the 'I'm-not-a-feminist-but' Generation." It will appear in *You've Come A Long Way Baby: Women, Politics, and Popular Culture*, edited by Lilly Goren.

The Department of Government congratulates all of the members of the Tau Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, for earning distinguished grades.



Class of 2009

Michal Adut, Julia Bienstock, Stephanie Bloom, Christopher Bradt,
 April Bukoski, Paul Colmers, Kalle Condliffe, Juliet Cook,
 Benjamin Duggan, Laurie Graham, Rachel Kaplan, Patrice LaHair,
 Katerina Lint, Talia Markowitz, Katherine Morton, Alex Rindler,
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Jackie Shydlofski '09



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Skyler Parkhurst '09



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late proposals be accepted.

Summer 2009 Deadline
April 29, 2009

*Applications available online at The Dean of
Studies and The Government Department
websites*

ATTENTION JUNIOR CLASS GOVERNMENT MAJORS

If you are currently a junior who believes that he or she will be able to satisfy the GPA criteria (i.e., 3.0 cum and 3.5 in courses in the major) and you wish to earn honors in Government by pursuing a senior honors thesis next year, then you will need to develop a specific research question and compile a preliminary bibliography to present to your prospective thesis director prior to the end of classes on Tuesday, April 29th.

Skidmore Students at West Point

A Conference to Remember

MIHAELA DAVID '10

Plebe. Yuk. Cow. Firstie. Zoomie. Comm. CPOC. What am I talking about? These terms were just as mystifying to me before my participation in the Student Conference on United States Affairs at the West Point U.S. Military Academy. But I learned much more than some cadet slang during this unique experience. I got a chance to listen to distinguished speakers with diverse views on a plethora of US foreign policy issues, to engage in thought-provoking conversations with exceptional college students and cadets, and to familiarize myself with the challenges and rewards of cadet life. But let me tell you more about the merits of this conference, and why West Point is a remarkable place worth visiting.

To begin with, the conference was very well organized. While I did expect that given that a military institution was in charge, I was surprised how well-balanced and appropriate the schedule was. Unlike other conferences whose hectic strictly academic schedule drain one of energy, this one blended panel discussions and roundtable debates with receptions, banquets and optional activities. The campus tour, for instance, gave us a chance to explore the beautiful West Point campus and learn about the institution's history. I think that the extended opportunities for socializing, networking, sightseeing and relaxing contributed to an enhanced student performance in the academically rigorous discussions. Also, the institution receives credit for inviting the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Zalmay Khalilzad, to give the keynote speech, which I considered to be one of the main highlights of the conference.

In terms of the roundtable discussions, they were entirely conducted by the students with guidance, but little involvement, from moderators with expertise in the respective areas. This enabled ample interaction among the group members, from working together to brainstorm adequate policy suggestions to challenging each other on contradictory viewpoints. This was even more so the case in my particular roundtable "Globalization: Economics and Trade Issues," not only because nearly half of the students came from different countries and continents, but also due to the contentious nature of the issues discussed, ranging from trade protectionism and fair trade to the current financial crisis and institutional change. My biggest contribution to the group policy proposal dealt with the severe financial crisis that has spread globally.

We suggested a plan to reform and coordinate regulatory authority

in the US by setting up a more centralized and streamlined regulatory scheme that mirrors the current structure of the Federal Reserve. We deemed that such a structure would increase transparency of regulation and accountability in the system, standardize and clarify a unified national stance on regulation, and help to spread information about the status of markets. We also proposed that global financial leaders meet regularly in a forum to increase the flow of information and agree on synchronized action plans to address financial problems, even



in the absence of crisis. We suggested that a forum based on consensus would be a powerful tool to help foresee and prevent future crises, and a more viable solution than setting up a global regulatory regime. Even if these proposals never reached the office of then recently elected President Obama as we were pretending they would, the experience of simulating policy making was a worthwhile endeavor that enhanced my college education.

But what was truly unique about this conference was that I was immersed in a new fascinating environment. Cadet life is indeed much more different than that offered by a liberal arts education. Even if I was impressed by the cadets' tenacity in dealing with the physically rigorous and restrictive military instruction that pervades all aspects of their lives, I was most touched by the friendliness and camaraderie that all cadets showed. Whether it was just getting answers about cadet life around the dinner table or having a good chat at the Firstie Club, constantly interacting with fellow roundtable members and roommates made the experience much more exciting and memorable.

Without doubt, the roundtable discussions were rigorous and the task of making policy recommendations challenging, and waking up at 6:30am each morning wasn't easy either. But the conference ended in a relaxing and amusing way, as all the groups creatively shared their policy recommendations with the rest of the participants by performing short comic sketches. I must say they were all incredibly entertaining, and not only showed the extent of what had been accomplished at the conference, but also gave one a sense of joy for being part of it all. I can say that this conference helped me gain a deeper understanding of the issues discussed and of the complexity and difficulty of policy making, but also allowed me to immerse myself in a completely different college community. I recommend government students in their junior and senior year to apply to attend this prestigious annual conference, as it is an unparalleled opportunity to enhance one's college education.

Prioritizing Global Social Concerns

JULIA BIENSTOCK '09

The day after Barack Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States of America I arrived at West Point to attend the Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA). As I was escorted to the barracks where I would be spending the next three nights, Russian Communist music was coming from several windows in the surrounding barracks. The West Point student I was staying with later explained that the majority of West Point students were very upset about Obama's victory, equating his principles and values with socialism and communist Russia.

It was against this background that I proceeded to a conference room on the top floor of a newly renovated brick library, which overlooked the West Point campus, nestled between rolling hills and the Hudson River. While back at Skidmore, my classmates were discussing and debating the election of President Obama in their classes, sitting around a table with a handful of students from West Point as well as students from other colleges and universities around the country, our sole focus was on "global social concerns." You would have never known that one of the most historic American moments had occurred less than 24 hours before. Everyone was committed to tackling the task at hand: to come up with a policy recommendation for the U.S. government on "global social concerns."

With my government thesis on my mind, I cannot help but to compare this experience to the legislative process that House and Senate Committees pursue on almost a daily basis. Here we were 12 students, and 3 "experts" charged with the challenge of formulating a policy recommendation on an expansive topic. The first question we all asked the "experts" was which "global social concern" should we address, considering that we could come up with many, including public health, education, sanitation, global warming, etc. But just as congressional committee jurisdictions are expansive, and often legislators must prioritize among pressing issues what must be addressed immediately and what can wait, we, too, had to make that decision. We had to decide which global social concern was "most important," and if we could not do that, could we possibly tackle, in a meaningful way, all global social concerns.

We had two 6-hour sessions to complete this task; we spent the first 6 hours debating whether health care was more important than education, or if migration was of the utmost

importance to address, or if a country does not address the environment whether degradation would undermine all other aspects of life. Partisan alliances often times undermine consensus in congressional committees; for us, it was our various educational backgrounds and personal ideologies that made this process so difficult. But in the end we came to an agreement: enhancing public health must be a global social concern top priority.

Congressional committees would have learned a lot about an efficient and effective policymaking process had they been in attendance at our second session where we formulated a policy proposal for addressing public health in Afghanistan and around the world. We first decided the format for the policy paper. We wanted to convey the severity of the problem, and then identify key assumptions. Some of our assumptions included stability in the region where we intended to implement public health programs and the availability of resources to implement the program. We then proposed that Afghanistan and other areas in the Middle East were in the most need of public health programs, particularly because they are on the brink of instability and war. We described three essential steps that must be taken to establish a successful, sustainable and self-sufficient healthcare system. First, there must be cooperation and collaboration among all actors. Second, a basic health services package must be created. Third, resilient communities must be created through open and inclusive dialogue at the community level aimed at empowerment of the local populous to take health matters into their own hands. While the process felt like it took forever, and the debate often was heated with agreement and compromise seeming impossible, by the end of the 6-hour session, we were able to produce a comprehensive policy proposal.

My time at West Point was interesting, exciting and edifying. Beyond being exposed to a military perspective, which is absent in my Skidmore education and experiences, I was delighted to have the opportunity

to work with students of very different experiences and backgrounds. The process for creating the policy proposal was by far the most enlightening, as the efficacy of debate and conversation became clear.

I believe that students should have more opportunities such as the SCUSA Conference to engage in dynamic debate on today's most pressing current event issues.



Academic Conference Offers Memorable Opportunity

LAURIE GRAHAM '09

It's that time of year again, just as the weather finally begins to break and new buds at last begin to appear in gardens across town—it's the time of year when our own Skidmore campus, along with the campuses of thousands of other colleges and universities across the country, is flooded with flocks of would-be freshmen, all eagerly surveying their surroundings as they assess the prospects of a possible fall arrival. And while crowded tours often overwhelm the walkways, it is easy enough for any Skidmore student to articulate just what it is with which that we hope to lure so many new and often widely courted recruits: an abundance of competitive academics from which to choose, coupled with a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Indeed, our appeal finds its basis in the sort of allurements boasted of by many similarly sized and situated liberal arts colleges, the sort of things we might be tempted to think would be found attractive by all of those who are young and college-bound.

If ever there was such a thing as the much-lamented Skidmore "bubble," then it seems to me that it must be in this that it exists: the assumption that all that is alluring about any individual college setting can be characterized as a collection of those qualities that correspond to that ideal collegial image which is aspired to by our own school and which so many of us find so attractive in our own cases. With this in mind, then, you can begin to imagine the very real sense of other-worldliness that came over me this past fall as I, along with three other of my Skidmore peers, approached the formidable stone gates that barricade the entrance to the United States Military Academy at West Point, preparing to become members of its student body, if only for a few days time.

All being government majors, we were brought to West Point for the sake of participating in the 60th annual Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA). One of the largest events of its kind, SCUSA brings together hundreds of students from colleges and universities across the country as well as many students from location around the world, for the sake of deliberating on a wide-range of foreign policy issues and challenges that currently confront the United States on the international stage. Upon arrival, delegates are divided into sixteen groups, each of which will meet for the next two days in roundtable discussions in order to address a particular area



or region of the world that is an important aspect of U.S. interests abroad.

The topic of roundtable to which I was assigned was sub-Saharan Africa, and so, as one can well imagine, one of the most significant challenges even from the very outset was to be able to frame the grave difficulties faced by the continent in terms that reflected a compelling national security interest for the United States. While there is much good work taking place in sub-Saharan Africa on the part of non-state actors in the name of humanitarianism, justifying the intervention of the U.S. or any other foreign state for that matter proves to be more difficult, especially in the aftermath of the international involvement in Somalia. Much of the discussion was spent, then, bringing out the compelling state interests to be found in such action as securing access to relatively untapped oil sources and establishing security in areas that border important maritime points of access to the Middle East. Of interest, too, was the apparent lack of communication on the ground between the various parties already involved on the

ground in Africa—a difficulty that was made only all too clear by the drastically different understandings of both the challenges and the potential solutions facing the continent articulated by those participating in the conference who worked as government officials stationed in Africa.

Perhaps, though, what was most memorable about the trip was the opportunity to live amongst the cadets at West Point, witnessing a college experience that is altogether different than anyone one could expect to find in a settling like Skidmore. With the morning bugle sounding before many Skidmore students would even manage to find their way to sleep and mandatory uniform announcements accompanying such early morning wakeup calls, the transition seems at first to be almost an impossible one to make. As only a little time passes, however, it is possible to observe something very impressive and admirable in the manner in which the cadets are expected to act. To be certain the rules by which they must abide are very strict and the expectations very high, but one still cannot but get the sense that those who attend West Point derive no small satisfaction from the knowledge that they are and will be serving, perhaps only for few years or perhaps for an entire lifetime, a cause that is not only great but also noble, making all of the sacrifices it demands at once seem worthwhile.

The First Domino Falls...

LAURA SWARTZ '10

“Power corrupts. Absolute power is kind of neat.” - John Lehman



Being a Government major has significantly improved my ability to secretly take over power on the Wombat Ultimate Frisbee team here at Skidmore, my first stepping stone to total world domination. Oligarchies have never been my strong suit; total consolidation of power has. Just call me the Puppet-master, hiding in plain sight on the team as a co-captain for the

last year and a half. I recently installed first-year and rookie Max Drascher in power to depose the only other Government-major co-captain, one Stephen Giacolone. This power-play effectively secures my iron grip on the team. Max, as a first-year, has no idea what to do or how to run a team, allowing me to step in and “guide” his actions from behind the scenes, molding him and his decisions to my every whim. He will be my figurehead for my rule, simply acting as a public face and motivational speaker, using such powerful phrases as “Catch’et!” I don’t want the title; I want the power. I am Dick Cheney to Max’s George W. Bush, but without the creepy smile or distaste for basic constitutional rights (these things I leave to Steve). Max also lacks the southern accent or monkey-like expression, at least most of the time.

While I hold Steve in the utmost respect, replacing him was a necessary part of my takeover. He posed a serious threat to my plan for a Platonic “benevolent monarchy”, ruled by none other than yours truly. Steve has truly been a boon to this team, and his organizational skills are not to be questioned, but his unfortunate overextension of himself has provided the perfect opportunity to take over. As for the



other two co-captains, I expect to buy their loyalty in exchange for promising they won’t be next.

My secret, bloodless, but nonetheless effective, coup d’etat has been greatly influenced by classes taken as a Government major. Professor Hoffmann’s class “Military and Political Lessons from World War II” has given me a military leader’s insight into fighting battles for control, including the covert ones. My “U.S. Presidency” class, taught by Professor Seyb, was a crash course in leadership, including a wonderful case study on Eisenhower, the king of running things from behind the scenes. Being a peer mentor for Professor Seyb’s first-year seminar also taught me how to deal with a large group of screaming children or apathetic college students (no offense, guys). Professor Flagg Taylor’s “Dissident Political Thought” is giving me a heads-up to the whining and intellectual sniveling I may expect as some begin to chafe under my reign. Professor Ginsberg’s “Principles of International Politics” and my current “Politics of Congress” class with Professor Seyb are also contributing to my philosophy that personal power instead of cooperation and compromise is definitely the way to go. My takeover has also been significantly influenced by some of my own outside readings, most notably Machiavelli’s “The Prince” and my own little red book, “How to Rule the World: A Handbook for the Aspiring Dictator” by André de Guillaume.

As you read this, Steve, my secret police are coming for you, because I cannot risk you beginning an underground movement to regain control. I expect great writings from you from your prison cell, à la Solzhenitsyn or Milosz – you always did remind me of Delta. I’ll even censor you so that everyone will be dying to read your work. Don’t feel bad about your fall from power; you’re just the first domino.

One Balloon at a Time

BEN VAIL '10

What exactly does SGA do? This question, often times worded less politely, is something that many Skidmore students ask on a daily basis. At the start of this year, I really didn't know what SGA did either, but as a government major and a student who wanted to become more involved I decided to find out. In the Fall of '08, I ran for two student government positions: Secretary of 2011 and Senator-at-Large. I collected the necessary signatures (about a 100 or so for each position), put up some goofy posters, and gave a speech at Election Night (to less than fifty people), and was elected to both positions.

As Secretary of my class, I, along with all of the other class officers, am part of a group called Inter-Class Council (ICC). ICC is primarily responsible for programming class events, including Skidmore's four major weekends: Oktoberfest, Junior Ring, Winter Carnival, and Spring Fling. We plan dances, study breaks, events on the green, and even give out sweatshirts, scarves, and hats to help unify our respective classes. While getting a free scarf in March might not excite the average Skidmore student, ICC is definitely making an effort to just do fun things for the Skidmore community. And the fact that only twenty or so people are putting on big events like dances for the entire school, I'd say that's pretty impressive.

As a Senator-at-Large, I've realized that Senate does a lot too. All senators sit on about two committees and these committees have a significant role. Both the Budget and Finance Committee and the Clubs and Organizations Affairs Committee are responsible for chartering clubs

and allocating their budgets. The Willingness-to-Serve Committee is responsible for interviewing students for college committees, including Integrity Board, Speakers Bureau, and any vacant SGA positions. Academic Council is made up of Senators and representatives from each academic department or program and works on projects such as the Out of Classroom Discussion Fund and the annual Academic Fair. Senate may not get a lot of attention and many of its actions go unnoticed, but these are all projects that have a huge impact on student life at Skidmore.

So back to my first question: What does SGA do? The answer is quite a lot. From programming events to approving clubs, SGA plays a big role in student life on campus. While at times it can be frustrating or boring, I've had a great experience so far. I encourage anyone who might have any inkling of running for an SGA position to do so. You'll see what its like to work with different people with different (overly enthusiastic) opinions and how much time and effort goes into creating policy or planning an event.

This semester, I sit on Academic Council, which is chaired by the VP for Academic Affairs Claire Solomon. When members of Academic Council have a birthday, Claire buys them a balloon. This may seem like a small gesture, but according to Claire it "boosts morale" and I'd have to agree with her. The actions of SGA may not always seem earth shattering, but its elected officials are always looking to boost student morale, one balloon at a time.

Making Connections In and Out of the Classroom

SARAH SAVISKAS '09

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a college student is experiencing the intersection of what I learn in class with my every day life. As an International Affairs major concentrating in Government, I am passionate about what I study, so it is exciting when I can apply my newfound knowledge outside of the classroom. I am in Bob Turner's Immigration Politics and Policy class, and on numerous occasions this semester, I have continued debating a hot immigration topic with my housemates, who in turn bring to the table knowledge from their respective majors. Skidmore encourages making connections between the Government department, other disciplines, and student life, and I have experienced how valuable and satisfying it is to do so.

I am involved in several activities on campus, but my participation in the International Affairs Club is most relevant to my studies within the Government department. I have been involved in the club throughout my four years at Skidmore, and the club has been a means of exploring my academic interests from a different angle than I am exposed to in class. Weekly presentations are a main feature of the club, and members present on their experiences abroad, current events they are passionate about, and issues they think are important for other Skidmore students to know about. I gave a presentation about my experience abroad in Uganda and how my perception of "African development" has since evolved, and other topics have ranged from lessons learned on a birth right trip to human rights issues in Tibet. We also periodically screen documentaries to increase awareness both within the club and on the campus at large.

Saviskas- continued on page 11

All We Need Is Number Four

JACKIE SHYDLOWSKI '09

My grandpa once told me that Skidmore has given me the tools to rule the world. While I don't see world domination in my near future, I do recognize how Skidmore, specifically the Government Department, has inspired me to think about efficiency in ways I never could have imagined.

Before November if someone were to ask me what was needed in order to efficiently run the Student Government Association (SGA), I would have said: 1. An organized constitution, 2. An accessible historical record, and most importantly, 3. Able and willing bodies. I spent my first few months in office determined to meet the initial two. Fifty resolutions later, I'm proud to say, pending the student body's approval, the SGA Constitution is thirteen pages shorter and grammatically correct! As for an accessible historical record, the SGA historical documents are well on their way

to being alphabetically and chronologically catalogued and available for your reading pleasure conveniently located in the newly organized SGA Office/Case Info Desk.

After November if someone were to ask me, again, what was needed in order to efficiently run the SGA, I would have added: 4. An Administration that collaboratively supports SGA's endeavors and doesn't try to demolish its policies and funding, and 5., To require what it wants to produce. For diplomacy's sake I won't disclose my rationale for the former, but the latter I'll recount.

While taking American Indian Politics and Policy, in order to better understand the unique government-to-government relationship between the federal government

Shydowski—continued on page 13

Invisible Architecture: The Seeds of Future Political Thought

JASON TAKAHASHI '09

At some point in my college career I began to cultivate a love of wisdom. In Greek this is known as *philosophy*, but what I was looking for was much different than coming into the classroom every weekday and listening to the history and ideas of Plato or Buddha, Kierkegaard or Marx. The conundrums of the world that I perceived - from environmental devastation to the prospect of government-led false flag operations to the incredible and seemingly deliberate over-saturation of distracting consumerist media - required a voice or an experience that reached further back into the human story than what these philosophies could afford me.

A piece of the puzzle came into view when I enrolled in *American Indian Politics and Policy* with Dr. Patricia Ferraioli in the fall semester of my junior year. What I learned in that class was that a people, who in fact lived and grew on the very land we stand on today, felt that all was part of one living sphere and that nature exemplified the complexity and virtue that can exist in this world. These people possessed a constitution that united six nations (*The Great Law of Peace*), practiced unparalleled "sustainability", and shared their knowledge of democracy with newcomers such as American Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin. These people were known as the Haudenosaunee, residents and caretakers of the precolonial, northeastern North America.

Studying the Haudenosaunee (better known today

as the Iroquois Indians), created an entirely new space for both my political and spiritual self to explore. My intuition that indigenous peoples of the world were going to be a vital key to any worthwhile 21st century political philosophy seemed to be solidified by their successful implementation of practices that we are still struggling with today, i.e. maintaining a constitution, implementing sustainability, and civilly sharing knowledge of democracy. What I was not sure of, however, was exactly how deep these connections I was making would go.

Outside the walls of Skidmore, I try and walk the path of a native North American samurai. During the spring and summer, I attend as many concerts and music festivals as possible to dance for days upon end in the sun and under the stars with what I call my "peace sword": a large red, black and white hula hoop. During the fall and winter, I buckle down and scour the wilderness known as the Internet and try to synthesize as much data as I can to best understand our current adversary: ourselves.

It is no longer an issue confined to fringe and indigenous populations that the Earth has fallen ill. A Pentagon report issued in October 2003 titled, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security*, hypothesizes that the imminent collapse of our biosphere may occur as climates radically destabilize due to pollution and global warming. Approaching such an event from a political perspective, I began to feel, requires superior caution because in this case - and perhaps this case alone - citizens who wish to enlist in the fight to defend the planet are in many ways simultaneously forced to stand in opposition the current processes

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The Utility of our Education

SKYLER PARKHURST '09

Throughout my undergraduate career at Skidmore I have had a number of unique opportunities to pursue my own interests through student clubs, organizations, and government. As I near graduation, I look back on these past four years—all of which have been spent under the assumption that I would be a Government major—and I see how varied my interests have been outside of the department.

The vast majority of Government classes I have taken have been in the concentration of political philosophy, yet I have been involved in a number of far more “practical” activities at Skidmore. My freshman year I joined SYRA, became Vice President the following year, and continued for the past two years as Co-President. My studies and SYRA have intersected on a few occasions. Most notably, Dr. Harvey Mansfield’s visit to our campus that I helped to arrange, and the last debate held between SYRA and the Skidmore Democrats required use of my studies to engage in a useful dialogue. Without my education I fear that I would lack a proper understanding of what was being discussed. Collegiate debate should not resemble poor cable news punditry, and I succeeded at avoiding this horrific fate.

In addition to my work with SYRA, I have had the unique opportunity to write a column for Skidmore News on topics of my own choosing over the last year. My work in the government department, and more generally the books I read, has been of great assistance in writing my columns. I can’t imagine writing about multiculturalism without having studied it.

For the last three years I have also served in SGA leadership roles. My three years on the Honor Code Commission, two as Commissioner, have been directly influenced by my study of ancient political philosophy, and a few contemporary thinkers I became aware of during my education. To some degree this was also the case when I served on the Integrity Board, but it is most evident in the SGA Student Senate where I have been known to recite Tocqueville from memory, and where I often make arguments originating from my studies to explain to students what they had missed about a particular issue. This can be detrimental to my “social standing” in the Senate body, but self-sufficiency was always more appealing!

My education has taught me one thing that is particularly note worthy at

this time: the “utility” of one’s education is not the primary end, nor should it be. Although I have been involved in a number of activities at Skidmore, my greatest pleasure has been developing a true longing for education. The greatest reward truly has been my newfound pleasure in reading. My classes have acted as starting points for my own study, and I would assert that the utility of our education should not be of the greatest concern for students choosing an academic discipline. No, education seems to be an end in and of itself.

All prospective students should ask themselves what they really want their education to be about. There is great temptation in choosing a discipline with serious practical and professional training because we know that we will be afforded the comfort of a well-paying job upon graduation, but then there is the path without a concern on our comfort. True education requires that we be willing to sacrifice everything—even our creature comforts—to make the journey. One will have far greater satisfaction pursuing their education for its own sake than with an eye always fixed on a cubical. This has been my greatest lesson and use of my studies.

Making Connections, Sarah Saviskas

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This semester, we screened “Forced to Flee,” a documentary on refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Philippines, and “Invisible Children,” a documentary about the child soldiers of northern Uganda.

The club not only enables me to learn about pertinent issues from my peers, but it also provides an outlet for action. This February we held a dinner/art auction/music fundraiser whose proceeds went to help Skidmore alum, Joseph Kaifala '08, build a school in Sierra Leone. Last semester, we raised money for an orphanage in Uganda to which I am personally affiliated, and we went to a Darfur rally in New York City my sophomore

year. It is one thing to learn about what is happening around the world in class, but being able to act on that knowledge makes the issues so much more real.

Skidmore has taught me that no field, be it Government or Sociology or English, stands alone; everything in life is interrelated, and one can only fully understand a particular field by making connections between other fields. As I make the big transition into the real world in May, I aspire to continue establishing these links that my liberal arts education has so strongly emphasized, for it is in making connections across various fields and applying new knowledge to everyday life that we become more interesting, informed individuals.

Model European Union: The Intersection of Academics and Student Engagement

RITIKA SINGH '11

The government department at Skidmore College is unique in that it offers students numerous opportunities for intellectual endeavor as well as prospects for student engagement. As a sophomore, my experiences with the academic and co-curricular opportunities offered by the department have been both intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding. I have always sustained a 'lively interest' in the economic disparities that exist between countries in our world, contemporary political issues, and foreign governments. My government classes at Skidmore allowed me to delve into these topics of interest and to hone the critical thinking and public speaking skills I hoped to use to participate thoughtfully in public discourse. This led me to realize that I would benefit both academically and personally from involvement in some of Skidmore's academic clubs and organizations – the Model European Union club (MEU), in particular, sparked my interest.

I joined MEU as a freshman at Skidmore. I walked in knowing nothing at all about the EU. We were headed to an international conference at the European Academy Otzenhausen in Germany, co-hosted by the Universities of Trier and Saarland. The topic that year was so broad it was intimidating: EU defense policy and EU foreign policy. Preparation for the conference was challenging, and as a first-timer, I had no idea what to expect. Simulating the EU at an American college was unique enough in the first place – Skidmore's EU club is one of only a handful in the States – and traveling to Germany to discuss these issues with both graduate and undergraduate students

from all over America and Europe was nerve-racking to say the least.

My first conference was nothing short of challenging. I was taught to look beyond the black and white of the easy answer, and to analyze and question narratives that are often embedded in history, politics, and tradition. I learned to tie the micro of our actions to the macro of a global, social, and political economy where even small choices have far flung consequences. The conference exposed me to internationally recognized experts who discussed a plethora of current issues and political trends, allowing me to knowledgeably and thoughtfully critique the world we live in.

The experiences I've had with Model European Union, both as a member and a leader, feed off of the government classes I take at Skidmore. My classes reinforce concepts I've come across during simulations and information I've acquired from research. Attending the conferences has broadened and deepened my understanding of the problems associated with European integration and the difficulties of diplomatic negotiation. There is something powerful about reading about how the European Commission works and then experiencing the reality of it. MEU has made me more certain that this is what fascinates me and this is what I want to be doing in life. It cemented my interest in certain areas of government and tweaked my curiosity about others. I can safely say that it is this very "intersection", this connection between my academic environment and my engagement in a club, is one of the most rewarding things I have experienced.

Setting High Expectations

RAINA BRETAN '11

My long relationship with the Student Government Association (SGA) is no doubt rooted in my experience with the government department. In fact, I "blame" my start with SGA on the guiding hands of Beau Breslin, who literally welcomed me "home" to the government department as both the chair of the department and as my advisor. I was a naïve freshman in his Scribner Seminar "The Killing State." A characteristically confident person, his class shook my self-assurance when I received my first grade, a "D," on a paper I was expecting an A

on, no less. I realized his expectations for me, and in turn, my expectations for myself, had to be far higher if I were to make it as a government major. Perhaps as a way to compensate for my projected poor grades, I did what any over-ambitious girl would do; I did more.

Looking forward to (what I thought might be) a long road of poor grades and an endless future of embarrassment, I turned to something else I *thought* I could be good at, student government. When I joined, I was mid-way through my first semester of freshmen

year; I had left one family, and clearly was desperate to find another. The combination of wanting to compensate for my failures in the government department and hoping to find an extended family at college, gave me the impetus to give student government a whirl. I had found my niche, my new family, and suddenly my life-altering "D," was a distant memory rather than a constant embarrassment.

After I let go of my "D," and began to feel confident that I could suc-

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Setting High Expectations, Raina Bretan

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ceed in something at Skidmore, I realized the reasons behind my success in SGA would become the reasons behind my success in the government department. I was outspoken, diligent and willing to sacrifice (senates can last up to four hours and I often receive up to 300 pages of reading per class). As soon as I realized my two biggest commitments, SGA and my major, were looking for the same thing to garner success, my life at Skidmore became far easier. No longer a naïve freshman, I felt at home as both the government department and SGA metaphorically deemed me a new member of their family.

What I learned is that both my adopted families advocate for similar values. For example, the government depart-

ment and SGA, like my real mother, sets high expectations, won't settle for less and demands a huge amount from me. Further, they like my friends are not afraid to embarrass me. Lastly, as true in all my relationships, SGA and my major are founded on discussion, argument and, then, understanding. Those committed to either SGA or the government major, therefore, must be hard working, willing to laugh at themselves and eager to explore foreign ideas outside their comfort levels. In this sense, I have been fortunate to work with the most responsible, active and engaged students at Skidmore. As a rising senior, now, I look back on my "D," or my incentive for action, and can appreciate Beau's pushing me to meet higher expectations.

All We Need is Number Four, Jackie Shydrowski

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and Indian nations, some members of my class and I attended the fifth annual Haudenosaunee Conference at Syracuse University's Center for Indigenous Law, Governance, and Citizenship with Professor Ferraioli. The conference, "Moving Beyond ID Card Indians: The Search for Native Citizenry," consisted of a series of lectures and conversations ranging from the role of identity to its inequalities, focusing on the Haudenosaunee of upstate New York and the Six Nations of Canada. The most interesting part of the conference to me was a lecture entitled, "Require What You Want to Produce: Indigenous Citizenship Criteria" by Scott Richard Lyons, a Leech Lake Ojibwe from Minnesota and professor at Syracuse University. Professor Lyons' lecture confronted the term "tribal membership," and the problems associated with its use. Specifically he said, "Nations do not have members, clubs have members. Nations have citizens." This simple change in vocabulary was the root of the problem to Professor Lyons. He insisted that once Indian Nations began to use the term "citizen" rather than "member," they would be more highly regarded. He also encouraged Nations to "require what they wanted to produce." For example, he argued that if a tribe's language was dying, then speaking the language fluently should be a prerequisite for citizenship.

According to the SGA Constitution, "Senate shall implement programs and policies to establish and maintain the conditions of community life conducive to good scholarship, benevolent service, intelligent citizenship and individual growth." In addition, the SGA Constitution also defines Senate's responsibilities, one of which is to "discuss and legislate upon matters concerning student life." In my opinion, the legislation process is not just about casting a vote, it requires more. The process of crafting and passing resolutions is one of the first steps of bringing initiatives to fruition. Unfortunately, SGA Senators have a long history of voting on but not writing legislation. I took Professor Lyons' argument to heart and in the spirit of making this change a reality, required each Senator to introduce legislation to the Senate floor by the last session of the semester. Despite initial hesitation, the majority of Senators have actually started to think creatively about their responsibility to the Skidmore community.

One of the things I love most about our department is the fact it has instilled in me the ability to think about efficiency and ask important questions both in my capacity as SGA President and as a student of government. It is now March and if someone were to ask me, once more, what was needed in order to efficiently run the SGA, I would smile and add: 6. A Government Major!

Invisible Architecture, Jason Takahashi

Continued from page 10

of industrial civilization, the cornerstone of our current way of life.

Such a scenario, I believe, can at a very fundamental level instigate immense confusion in the collective psyche of society, opening the doors for global governing bodies to mandate unethical political initiatives such as extensive carbon taxes or increases in surveillance. Furthermore, talking monkeys are particularly clever when it comes to designing such inventions as the “speed-bump” or the “band-aid”, but such resolutions no longer appear capable of absolving the fact that our situation is global and extreme. If we are to protect citizens' rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness not only for the remainder of this century but for future generations, larger efforts must be considered of which the roots run deeper than just what consensual reality supposes.

My thesis, *Invisible Architecture*, is an attempt to illustrate the profoundly symbiotic landscape we are in perpetual communication with that has not yet been truly recognized or understood by mainstream science, religion, or politics. Such an understanding, can hopefully provide a firm, fertile ground for humanity to begin to better comprehend its place in ecological governance and its duty to protect the biosphere. This landscape begins with the fungi kingdom, moves into the domain of the computer Internet and electronic communications, and finishes in the visionary landscapes provided by naturally occurring hallucinogenic compounds.

Fungi are the caretakers of this planet and have been for over one billion years. The *mycelial* network - fungi's ultimate contribution - is the Earth's natural Internet; an intelligent information network running throughout all of Earth's soil. Mycelium travels throughout the soil, recycling waste, connecting different biological organisms and sprouting over 2 million different species of mushrooms as fruitbodies. It then monitors and systematically responds to any changes in the environment by transferring and allocating resources, sometimes across thousands of acres of land. Mycelium also serves as Earth's safety net, providing the infrastructure to recultivate life in the event of a catastrophe and at this moment, mycologists feel they are only beginning to scratch the surface of the potential for fungi to aid in the perpetual fight against disease and pests.

The Internet is a mycelial-like, ever-evolving network engineered to hold together and aerate the fertile soil that is human-generated, multi-medial information. I look at the Internet from the perspective of it being an organi-

cally grown technology that possesses a specific ecological purpose not unlike the mycelial network itself. Internet technology finds itself on an exponential wave of growth, and many of these developments have shattered the costs of production as defined by the industrial models of the 20th century, thus creating a business and economic landscape that is no longer focused on efficiency or productivity, but in fact creativity. Similarly, enterprises such as open-source software, the “blogosphere”, and Wikipedia automatically deconstruct traditional hierarchical modes of production by virtue of their design, illuminating the tremendous potential of self-organizing organizations. This deconstruction, if viable, offers many keen insights on how future systems of business, economics, and governance may be designed in order to best suit the needs of the digitally sophisticated and organically situated human being.

Lastly, many of our leaps in understanding regarding mycology, biology and computer science have been the result of mindful adventures into realms presented by the world hallucinogenic compounds which occur naturally all throughout our environment and within ourselves. I began to wonder if such molecules offer high-speed communication with the mind behind nature, and if so, what is their current position in the eyes of our laws and culture? From mycologist and 2009 Skidmore science lecturer Paul Stamets' assertion that mycelium is the neurological framework of the Gaian mind, to Nobel Prize Winner Francis Crick's discovery of the foundations of life (DNA), to the fleets of Silicon Valley engineers' engineering of the personal computing revolution, these molecules found in myriad of life have offered supplemental material to most sophisticated of human minds throughout history and certainly before.

Until now, our evolutionary path has generally been constructed via the forces of nature. This path, I feel, is akin to the feeling one gets during a walk in the woods. Today we ride on the freeway in smoking machines, listening to corporate radio pundits, while burning the dug-up remains of dead dinosaurs. I believe that if we reconnect with the forces of nature; that if presidents once again become venerable chiefs and clan mothers; that if technology is once again understood as magical rather than profitable; and that if all life is once more regarded as sacred and not dispensable, we stand to become the full-on hyper-intelligent “alien” race that some of our most gifted imaginations fantasize about in science fiction and film daily.

But becoming the “alien” poses two major shifts in thinking. First, we run the risk of losing the idea of the nation as we know it. Imaginary lines backed by combustible ideologies fraught with an insatiable greed for resources and wealth will dissolve like egos into the wondrous nature of the whole. And second, in becoming the “alien” and dissolving the nation, I believe we will witness the change we can really all believe in: the end of alienation.

An American in Athens

SAM GLICKSTEIN '10

Politics is not the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Greece. You think of Athens and the Acropolis, of Sparta and the movie, *300*. Studying in Athens for a semester and taking courses in Greek politics and international relations has helped me identify similarities as well as differences between the United States and Greek government. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the Greek government over their handling of recent security problems and immigration issues.

In my Society and Politics in Contemporary Greece course I have come to understand Greece's unique history among European countries. Because Orthodox Greeks lived under the Ottoman Empire for almost four centuries, there is still lingering tension between Greece and Turkey. My class' discussion with Greece's Deputy Foreign Minister, Miltiades Varvitsiotis, demonstrates Greece's complex relationship with Turkey. Varvitsiotis noted that Greece and Turkey are partners and that Greece is pushing for Turkey to be granted European Union membership. But even Varvitsiotis, a high-ranking member of the Greek government, continues to call Istanbul by its Greek name, Constantinople, instead of the Turkish name the city has had for more than a hundred years. President Barack Obama's decision to visit Turkey, while skipping Greece also disappointed Greek politicians and the mass media. They fear that the U.S. no longer values Turkey and Greece as equal allies because of Turkey's great influence on the Middle East.

Both the United States and Greece have problems with terrorism. While the American government is fighting Osama bin Laden and violent Muslim extremists in Afghanistan, the Greece government is combating domestic terrorists who pose under monikers such as "Revolutionary Sect" and "Revolutionary Struggle". Unlike Al-Qaeda, which tries to kill as many people as possible, Greek terrorist organizations try to avoid unnecessary loss of life. Instead they focus on damaging property and issuing proclamations, regularly published in newspapers, in which they attempt to justify their actions. In response to such recent terrorist attacks as a failed car bombing of a Citibank office in northern Athens, Greek authorities have brought in Scotland Yard officers to help them catch terrorists before they can strike again.



On March 13, 2009 a band of hooded anarchists smashed stores and automobiles in the middle of Athens' upscale Kolonaki neighborhood. There has been a growing breakdown in public order since December 2008 when Greece erupted in riots after a policeman shot a 15-year-old boy. Peaceful demonstrations turned into violent rampages and more than a billion dollars in property were destroyed. Anarchists encouraged the violence and threw pipe bombs and rocks at policemen. Some people might find it shocking that these anarchists have not been arrested. But the situation in Greece is complicated. After the police violently suppressed a student rebellion against the military junta at Athens Polytechnic University in 1973, the Greek government enacted an asylum law that banned policemen from college campuses unless administrators invited them. This law has led to anarchists not only storing weapons and supplies on college campuses, but living there as well.

Like the United States, Greece is faced with the challenges of not only combating illegal immigration but also assimilating those who have already settled in the country. After receiving hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Greece is now facing a new wave of illegal immigration from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The Greek government is unwilling to grant political asylum to these newcomers. Many of the immigrants who arrived in the 1990s have successfully adjusted to life in Greece. But walking through the streets around Monastiraki and Omonia Square, one can see that many immigrants are unemployed and have been marginalized. Drug use and poverty are spreading. Immigrants can only succeed in Greece if they can get jobs and become legal residents. The Greek government has promised more long-term-residence permits. But there are many barriers to residency status including a nine hundred euro application fee and a Greek-language proficiency requirement.

Greece is a spectacular country, but one that faces many challenges in the years ahead. These challenges will be met because the Greek public will demand change. Despite their differences, Greece and Turkey have a better relationship than ever and cooperate on key issues. Greece is a safe country even if there are some security problems. I have not witnessed any riots or terrorist attacks after living in Greece for more than two months. The weekend visitor should not face any danger. Although Greece desperately needs immigration reform, the majority of Greek and European citizens living in Greece are living safe and healthy lives. I am very fortunate to be studying in the birthplace of democracy and I highly recommend the experience.

Absolutely Everything

LINCOLN BRODY '07

It's not uncommon for me, suddenly seized by a slight sense of the ridiculous, to remind myself "so *this* is my life." I might be walking to work on a calm, balmy January morning, soldiering up the daunting slope into the cliff-dwelling Old Town, where I am faced with a river of pasty-faced tourists flowing against me like a strong river current gushing between the narrow banks. I feel myself fade into the background on their hand-held camcorders, taken for granted as a momentary and arbitrary mark on the scenery, along with that unremarkable working class bar on the corner, or the unacceptably recent New Town constructions.

I live in Arcos de la Frontera, a spectacular, whitewashed hilltop village in the south of Spain that predates the Romans, but which owes much of its current labyrinthine layout to the Muslim conquerors that reached the village within days of their 711 Iberian invasion. Due to its dramatic perch overlooking two 300-foot cliff sheer faces on either side of the Old Town, as well as year-round gorgeous weather, Arcos is now subject to the invasion far more fearsome than the Moors: The socks-and-sandals Brits. While mostly ignored by the locals, the English (and German, and Dutch, and American for that matter) tourists can be a healthy reminder of the true value of integration; speaking no Spanish, staying for just one afternoon, and never interacting with a single local gets you very little. I, on the other hand, am now in my second year as an elementary school English teacher, with a grant from the Andalusian regional government, and I am proud to say that I am the next best thing to a local. I may be a *guiiri*, an often depreciative Spanish word for foreigners, but people who know me tell me that I might as well be a Spaniard at this point. So *this* is my life.

As a Spanish major, I amassed volumes of knowledge about the literature and cultures associated with this language. I learned the histories, the biographies, and the tragedies, but my understanding was self-contained. Even when I spent my whole junior year in Madrid, I felt that my place in their society was at times superficial, fleeting. Af-

ter graduating, I walked a 500 mile pilgrimage route across the entire north of Spain, and I knew that it was the beginning of not just an extended sojourn, but of a true love affair with this country. People used to ask me a couple years ago "so what, you're going to be a Spanish teacher then, right?" I may not directly apply my knowledge of Golden Age literature or contemporary Spanish poetry towards my livelihood, but absolutely everything I have ever learned in a Spanish classroom has come back to me in some unexpected way, shape or form during my quotidian life in Spain. My students, for example, are not the best Spanish speakers for being Spanish (Andalusians speak an extremely colloquial dialect of Castillian Spanish), and I find myself correcting their own native subjunctives and conjugations almost as much as their English errors. Maybe I'll answer a TV game show question about a novelist correctly, even before the contestant. Maybe I'll notice something peculiar in the street and say "oh my god, *that's* what I read about!"

It is not my academic formation itself, but rather what this knowledge illuminates and enriches that has brought me to where I am now. I am profoundly integrated into my little slice of Spain, Arcos de la Frontera. It may well be that next year this will not be home any longer, but I know that I am always welcome, and that odds are I'll be living nearby. This is my "real world." I may not make a lot of money (I may not have a "real job"), but I live in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, and I hold access to the vast intricacies of this culture at the tip of my tongue. While many seniors have their sights set on New York, D.C., or Boston, I would urge as many as I can to consider taking a scenic detour. When they say that graduating college means venturing out into the real world, let's not forget that this really means "world," lest you not always be a tourist in life, with folded map, phrasebook and flip-flops.



Lincoln Brody '07 a former research assistant to Professor Aldo Vacas invites you to follow his life in Spain via his blog *La Vida Andaluza*, www.lincolnbrody.wordpress.com.

Alumni Updates

Brian Harrison '04 recently completed a fellowship with Citizens Schools in Boston where he instructed 8th graders in a sports education program and coordinated a citywide program with the Boston Public Library (Homework Assistance Program) for 125 high school students to provide free homework assistance. During this time, Brian completed his Masters in Education from Lesley University. He now works as a Trainer for Global Kids (www.globalkids.org) where he conducts workshops related to global issues, such as human rights, and leadership development at two city schools. He refers to this work as both challenging and rewarding.

Since his graduation in 2001, **Zach Pusch** served with the Peace Corps in Nepal and has worked on the staff of Senator Robert Byrd. He is planning to enter graduate school in international affairs this Fall.

Dan Walfield, '07 has been admitted into the Asian Studies M.A. Program at The George Washington University's Elliot School of International Affairs.

Christopher McGrath, '99 has been admitted into the doctoral program in Political Science at The George Washington University.

Lt. Col. Robert Resnick, '88, reports that The Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Department of Defense appointed him Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Rucker, Alabama, effective summer 2008. Rob, who is secretary of the Skidmore Class of 1988, has been appointed to another term on the Alumni Board, chairing the awards program.

Laura Renz '06 was awarded the distinguished Bryce Harlow Foundation Scholarship to pursue a Masters of Public Policy at George Mason University. The scholarship is awarded to students recognized as high academic achievers and leaders committed to integrity in professional advocacy. Laura is currently a legislative assistant for the Federal Government Relations Section at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, a law firm in DC.

Rebecca Horton '08 is currently studying at the UN Mandated University for Peace in El Rodeo, Costa Rica, working towards a masters in international peace studies. She reports that it has been an amazing experience both in and outside the classroom. There are only 150 students in the entire university, with students from countries all over the world including Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Italy, Darfur, Somalia,

Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mongolia, Croatia, and India, to name a few. The student body greatly influences the class discussions and forces students to think in a much more global perspective.

Geannan Camponeschi '07 was hired as a Research Associate at a small economic and business cycle research firm in Manhattan. She writes "It has been incredibly interesting that I was hired at a forecasting firm in such tumultuous economic times. I have learned a great deal about business cycle indicators and forecasting growth and inflation cycles, all of which are getting a great deal of attention given the weakness of the economy."

Kevin Callahan '92 (Phi Beta Kappa), received his Ph.D. in modern European history at Indiana University (2001). He has since been teaching at Saint Joseph College where is now Associate Professor. His new and most topical book was just released: *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France* (University of Nebraska Press).

Julianna Koch '06 is working on a PhD in government at Cornell University. She is studying American politics and policy.

Eric M. Kider '88, a Government and Economics major, is assistant to the Chairman of Dun and Bradstreet Corporation headquartered in Short Hills, New Jersey.

After working for about two years as the Assistant Director of Scheduling for Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, **Petria Fleming '06** is now working towards her Ph.D. in American politics and political philosophy at Claremont Graduate University in California.

Lincoln Brody '07 www.lincolnbrody.wordpress.com

After spending a year teaching English in China, **Shubha Gokhale '07** (Government and Asian Studies) is enrolled at the Benjamin N. Cardozo law school. Shubha has received a Howard M. Squadron Fellowship in Law, Media, and Society that will bring her to Mumbai this summer where she will have an internship in media and communications law. Her fellowship covers all transport and living expenses.

Fall 2009 Government Department Courses

GO-101 001 Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Pat Ferraioli
M/W/F 10:10AM – 11:05AM Ladd 307

GO-101 002 Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Ronald Seyb
M/W/F 11:15AM – 12:10PM Ladd 307

GO-101 003 Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Natalie Taylor
M/W 2:30PM – 3:50PM Ladd 307

GO-102 Introduction to Political Philosophy

Instructor: Timothy Burns
M/W/F 9:05AM – 10:00AM Ladd 307

GO-103 001 Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Instructor: Sumita Pahwa
M/W/F 9:05AM – 10:00AM Bolton 280

GO-103 002 Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Instructor: Aldo Vacs
TU/TH 2:10PM – 3:30PM Ladd 307

GO-224 American Indian Politics and Policy

Instructor: Pat Ferraioli
M/W/F 1:25PM – 2:20PM Ladd 206

GO-225 Military and Political Lessons from WW2

Instructor: Steve Hoffmann
TU/TH 3:40PM – 5:00 PM Ladd 206

GO-229 International Law

Instructor: Roy Ginsberg
TU/TH 9:40AM – 11:00AM Ladd 307

GO-239 Nationalism and Politics in the Middle East

Instructor: Steve Hoffmann
TU/TH 9:40AM – 11:00AM Tisch 302

GO-252 Psychology of Politics

Instructor: Ron Seyb
M/W/F 12:20PM – 1:15PM Ladd 206

GO-303 Classical Political Thought

Instructor: Timothy Burns
M/W 2:30PM – 4:20PM Ladd 207

GO-309 Latin America and the United States

Instructor: Aldo Vacs
TU/TH 3:40PM – 5:00 PM Ladd 207

GO-319 What the US Does Wrong

Instructor: Steve Hoffmann
TU/TH 12:40PM – 2:00PM Ladd 207

GO-334 United States Presidency

Instructor: Ron Seyb
M/W/F 10:10AM – 11:05AM Ladd 207
TH 5:00PM – 6:00PM Ladd 307

GO-339 International Political Economy and Environment

Instructor: Roy Ginsberg
TU/TH 11:10AM – 12:30PM Ladd 207

GO-351A Lincoln as Statesman

Instructor: Flagg Taylor
TU/TH 2:10PM – 3:30PM Ladd 207

GO-352 Women and Law

Instructor: Pat Ferraioli
M/W 4:00PM – 5:20PM Ladd 307

GO-365 Religion and Secularism in Contemporary Politics

Instructor: Sumita Pahwa
M/W 4:00PM – 5:20PM Tisch 307

Fall 2009 Topics Course Descriptions

GO 351A: Lincoln as Statesman

Professor Flagg Taylor, TU/TH 2:10 – 3:30PM

This course will explore Lincoln's confrontation with the problem of slavery and the American regime. It will consist primarily of a close analysis of Lincoln's speeches and writings. Lincoln's speeches and deeds have been said by some scholars to constitute a completion of the American founding or a second American revolution. We will explore the origins and nature of Lincoln's impact, trying to understand Lincoln's project from the perspective of Lincoln himself. Lincoln reflected deeply on America's founding ideals as expressed in its public documents, as well as particular historical realities confronting the nation in the 1800s. Our course of study will therefore attempt to mimic these reflections. Recommended preparation GO102 and/or GO236.

GO 365: Religion and Secularism in Contemporary Politics

Sumita Pahwa, M/W 4:00 – 5:20PM

Religion was supposed to fade away from contemporary politics and society as we became more modern, but it has thrived and even taken on new political forms. How did this happen, and what does this mean for secularism, democracy and the modern nation-state? How are fundamentalist movements changing the West and countries in the Middle East and the third world? This course addresses these and other questions with a survey of major theories from sociology and political science about why, when and how religion becomes politically relevant. We will examine case studies of religion in nationalism, social movements and electoral politics, and then consider the role of religion and religious extremism in political conflict and violence. Prerequisite: GO103 or permission of the instructor.