

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Spring 2016

Dear Students,

I'm happy to be able to get again in touch with you through this Government Department Newsletter for the Spring of 2016. These continue to be exciting times for all of us who are interested in politics. On one hand, the domestic political situation has become even more interesting than in the Fall of 2015 as the two main parties began to have their primary elections and caucuses. In the Republican party the rise of a political outsider like Donald Trump combined with the support granted by the anti-Trump forces to a marginal candidate like Ted Cruz, the permanence in the race of a lower-ranking candidate like John Kasich, and the collapse of "establishment" candidates like Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio has led to internal disarray. In the Democratic Party, the unexpectedly strong challenge posed by an outsider like Bernie Sanders to Hillary Clinton has resulted in a more exciting race. Both developments provide multiple opportunities for political analysis and discussion that we'll be able to make good use of in our classes and events. At the international level, multiple developments, such as the confrontation with ISIS and the Taliban in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, the spread of terrorism in Europe, the multilateral attempts to solve the Syrian crisis, the international flow of refugees, the nuclear negotiations with Iran, the continuous Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other developments around the world continue to challenge the capacity of the U.S. and other state and non-state actors to promote global peace and security while encouraging democratic stability and economic development. In this complicated context, we hope that political science studies will offer us the opportunity to understand what is happening in the world and to debate what policy approaches could provide better solution to these problems.

As you can see in the following pages, the Department of Government, through its students and faculty has been very much involved in addressing many of these issues through the organization and sponsoring of presentations and debates, participation of students and faculty in conferences, offering of courses on related topics, creation of volunteer action committees, and participation in different non governmental organization devoted to important political and humanitarian causes. In the coming months, as is partly reflected in this newsletter, the Departments intends to sponsor a number of lectures and presentations by guest scholars on political topics, to organize meetings with student-faculty participation to discuss current issues of interest and inform about departmental activities, while continuing to support student initiatives and participation in campus and off-campus activities, here and abroad.

On behalf of the Department, I'm also glad to announce that we have decided to change our name from Department of Government to **Department of Political Science**. We believe that the new name reflects better the nature of the courses we offer and the research in which we are engaged. Government studies tend to be focused on state-related issues while political science includes the study of state-related issues but covers a broader range of political issues such as political behavior, political theory, social movements, transnational and international relations and organizations and others on which our teaching and research activities are currently focused. The Political Science title will become effective in the Fall of 2016 when it will replace Government in Skidmore's catalogue, schedules, offices, etc. The students graduating in May this year who are majoring or minoring in the Department will still receive their degrees in Government.

I regret to inform that Prof. James Sieja, who joined us in the Fall, has accepted a permanent position in another institution and will leave us during the Summer. We wish James the best of luck and expect him to keep in touch with us in the future. In the meantime, the Department has begun a national search to find Prof. Sieja's replacement. As soon as this process is completed, we'll communicate to you the name and a brief resume of the successful candidate so you will know those courses whose instructor appears as "to be announced."

Finally, I would like to thank Barbara McDonough, Maddy Morency and the Government Department assistants for their efforts in making it possible for the Department to work so efficiently and to produce this newsletter. To all the newsletter collaborators that contributed their time and energy to produce it, many thanks on my part and from the rest of the Department.

Cordially,

Aldo Vaca

Professor and Chair, Government Department

FACULTY NEWS

Rick Landry '16

Professor Biberman-Ocakli is busy working on multiple exciting projects, including several with Skidmore students. She recently co-authored an article with Fahran Zahid of the National Police Academy in Islamabad, Pakistan, entitled "Why Terrorists Target Children: Outbidding, Desperation, and Extremism in the Peshawar and Beslan School Massacres," to be published in *Terrorism and Political Violence*. She also co-authored "The Problem with Proxies: Ideology is No Substitute for Operational Control" with Government major Orr Genish ('17). Recently, Professor Biberman-Ocakli became a Nonresident Fellow at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center in Washington, DC. Last fall she presented research at the Annual Conference on South Asia, where Government major Rachel Castellano ('16) presented a paper they co-authored together. Professor Biberman-Ocakli is currently the advisor to *Skidmore News* and encourages government students to contribute to the newspaper.

In January **Professor Graney** led a trip to Antwerp, Belgium with a group of Skidmore's Model EU students. (Read more about that in Alexis Cantor's article.) She recently traveled to Carlisle, PA to review the political science department at Dickinson College, and was intrigued by the similarities and differences of the departments. Professor Graney is excited to be teaching a new class next semester titled "Race, State and Power," which will analyze race and state structures both historically and in the modern world. She is both honored and nervous for commencement, where she will be giving the faculty address.

Last fall **Professor Mann** co-authored and published a paper examining whether online tools can increase voter participation. Perhaps surprisingly, he found that allowing voters to do things online did not increase participation. Recently he returned to Washington DC to present his research to the Analyst Institute and a conference at American University. His new research analyzes the effectiveness of English versus bilingual communication when seeking to mobilize Latino citizens to vote. In April, Professor Mann will present two papers at the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, where Government major Elena Veatch ('16) will simultaneously be presenting her thesis research on the presidential nomination process. Reflecting on his impressions of Skidmore so far, Professor Mann is thrilled to be back in a liberal arts college environment where students are so engaged and excited about learning. He happily explains that there are now more students visiting his office hours during an average week at Skidmore than he saw over the course of the entire semester at his previous school.

Professor Ocakli is on sabbatical, currently finishing up five articles. He traveled to Ankara, Turkey to examine the

growing factionalization within Islamist movements in the region. He also just finished up a paper with former Government student Matt Scotch on how ISIS (in Iraq and Syria) and MEND (in Nigeria) use oil resources to fund their insurgencies.

Professor Seyb traveled to Boston University over spring break to conduct research in the David Halberstam Papers.

In January **Professor Sieja** traveled to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston. While President Obama's "short list" for his Supreme Court nomination pick – that is, the list of the handful of possible candidates he is considering – is all over the news, Professor Sieja spent his time researching the short lists from previous lower court nominations. While he is excited about his new tenure-track faculty position at St. Lawrence University, he is saddened to be leaving Skidmore College after this semester.

Professor Flagg Taylor is looking forward to his return to Prague to continue his discussions and interviews with dissidents, specifically those who were involved in the underground church. In honor of the 75th Anniversary of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Professor Taylor was asked by a journal to contribute to a symposium about the novel. Additionally, he will be attending a New England Political Science Association meeting in April to present a paper.

Professor Natalie Taylor participated on a panel discussion about "American Political Thought as a sub-discipline" at the University of Houston. There, she gave a talk titled "The New Science of Politics and the Art of Politics," she made the case for the importance of studying literature for those who hope to understand the American polity. During spring break Professor Taylor delivered a lecture at Lee University in Tennessee titled "The Sisterhood is Powerful, But is it Global?: Feminism at Home and Abroad."

This semester, **Professor Turner** has been enjoying teaching the interdisciplinary *Perspectives on Inequality*, along with Professors Delton, Brueggemann and Solomon. Over spring break, Professor Turner traveled to Vietnam and Thailand to review a potential new study abroad program for Skidmore's Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges.

Professor Vacs traveled to Latin America over winter break for a trip that was equally fun and productive. He interviewed people throughout Brazil regarding the recent economic and political crisis, examining how they have been effected and how they feel about the government and its alleged corruption. He also traveled to Argentina for research and was also able to spend some time visiting friends and family in Mendoza where he is from. Professor Vacs is currently writing a paper discussing Argentina's recent shift from the populist left to the center, questioning if Argentina is moving back to a more neoliberal economic system.

THE PALAMOUNTAIN CHAIR CHANGES HANDS

Elena Veatch '16



A rotation of the Joseph C. Palamountain Jr. Chair in Government is about to ensue. As one of seventeen endowed chairs at Skidmore, the Palamountain Chair grants its holder within the department funding to pursue research and bring unique voices to campus.

For the past five years, the Palamountain Chair fund has allowed Ron Seyb to dig into the Walter Lippmann Papers at Yale, the William J. Clinton Papers at the Clinton Presidential Center, the Lester Markel Papers at the New York Public Library, and the David Halberstam Papers at Boston University. Seyb is grateful to have benefitted from the generosity of the fund, as the archival research he has been able to pursue has led to numerous published articles, with an additional few under review. He added: "This work has advanced my thinking about the development of the media in the United States and, in particular, the tension between the profes-

sional norm of objectivity and journalists' desire to give Americans the kind of interpretative reporting they need to navigate a world in which, as Lippmann noted in *Public Opinion*, much of importance happens 'out of reach, out of sight, [and] out of mind.'"

Kate Graney has been selected to serve as the next Palamountain Chair. In light of this honor, she plans to brush up on her Russian at Middlebury College's "Russian Boot Camp" in the summer of 2017. She then hopes to travel back to Kazan, Russia to conduct research on religious pluralism. Graney is additionally ecstatic to visit the European Parliament's newly established House of European History in Brussels, and to embark upon some SIT and CIEE faculty travel seminars. These exciting travels, will, of course, only ensue *after* Graney delivers what we all know will be a phenomenal commencement address in May for the Class of 2016!



Faculty Question: What are 3-5 websites you read for political news (whether that be local, national or international news) that you would recommend to government students seeking to expand their news sources?



QUARTZ



DAWN

The Atlantic



The New York Times
TheUpshot



—The—
Cook
POLITICAL
REPORT

THE CARAVAN
A journal of politics & culture
www.caravanmagazine.in



Jadaliyya جدلية

The Daily Star
JOURNALISM WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR



Religion & Politics
Fit For Polite Company

truthdig
drilling beneath the headlines



FACULTY PHOTOS



Prof Vacs standing against the back-ground of the beach in Bay of the Turtles in the island of Fernando de Noronha (Brazil)



Prof Vacs (and his wife, Trudi) in front of the old penitentiary for political prisoners in the island of Fernando de Noronha (Brazil)

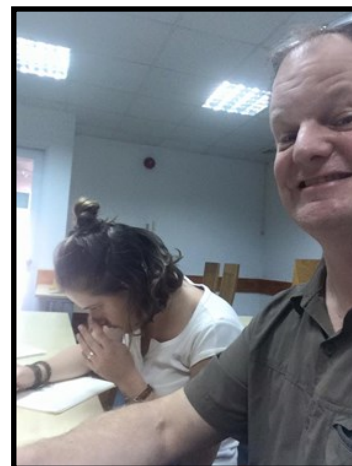


Prof. Vacs getting ready to engage in snorkeling in the coral reef of Picaozinho in Joao Pessoa (Brazil)



Professor Bob Turner in Vietnam in March 2016
also pictured is Megan Schachter '17.

Read Megan's study abroad article on page 14



Professor Biberman-Ocakli with leading Pakistan and India army expert, Stephen Cohen, at the South Asia conference in October



Professor Mann baked a King Cake to celebrate Mardi Gras on February 5th

THEIR HANDS SAY IT ALL



Photo Credit: Maddy Morency '16

Thank you to all of our student contributors!

Addison Bennett, Cara Cancelmo, Alexis Cantor, Rachel Castellano, Will Clark, Jesse Evensky, Izzy Fischer, Sydney France, Katie Hamilton, Will Hird, Rick Landry, Jeremy Lockett, Matt Marani, Emma Marshall, Maddy Morency, Gabriella Perez, Paulina Phelps, Dylan Quinn, James Rider, Brian Elie Saleeby, Megan Schachter, Jack Schreuer, Rebecca Stern, Jason Sutherland, Charles Tetelman, and Elena Veatch

FROM “GO” TO “PL”: WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Elena Veatch '16

The Government Department that we so revere will soon be no more—in that it will henceforth be known as the Political Science Department, once the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning officially approves the proposal.

Over the years, whispers through the halls of Ladd have sought answers to a question that has kept many students up at night: “*Why Government?*” The department’s original name hails from its founder, Henry C. Galant, who sought to emulate his Harvard alma mater in creating a Department of Government at Skidmore. However, just as 2016 has ushered in unexpected developments in the presidential nomination process (who would have thought Martin O’Malley would drop out?), so too has it brought about (slightly more predictable) changes in our department.



In highlighting the reasons behind the name change, Bob Turner explained, “Government does not really describe what many of our classes are. The name suggests an antiquated vision of the discipline.” With professors and students among our ranks exploring topics from campaigns to immigration policy to ethnic violence to the psychology of politics in any given semester, it grew increasingly apparent that “Government” did not fully capture the range of perspectives offered by the major.



Although the department faculty briefly discussed the prospect of a “Politics” department, they were nearly unanimous in viewing “Political Science” as the option for change. As Turner pointed out, most of our faculty members have degrees in Political Science, and while there is no true consensus in the discipline’s branding among colleges and universities, this term for our area of study is most common. Consequently, it may be easier for graduates of the department to navigate the job market and seek higher degrees in Political Science. Upon hearing the news, Emily Mangan ‘16 exclaimed, “Finally, potential employers will understand what it is that I study!”

Few tangible changes will accompany the transition to Political Science, outside of the new “PL” course listings to come on the Master Schedule and the inevitable name change of the critically acclaimed “Skidmore Government Department” Facebook page. As Ron Seyb pointed out, “internally, the name change won’t make much of a difference. Changes will lie in external perceptions.” Incoming students will not face new quantitative requirements for the major, as many have wondered—though if you ask Bob Turner how long this will be the case, his response may or may not be overshadowed by the amount of winking and yearning that will accompany it.

New Government Department Courses offered Fall 2016!

GO 239: Middle Eastern Politics ~ Feryaz Ocakli, GO 251A: Race, State and Power in Comparative Politics ~ Kate Graney,
GO 251C: Demagogues, Demons and Democracy ~ Ron Seyb, GO 251C: Campaigns and Elections ~ Chris Mann,
GO 351B: African-American Political Thought ~ Flagg Taylor, GO 367: Election Research ~ Chris Mann

see pages 24-25 to read topics descriptions!

Student Faculty Connections: Independent Studies

Jack Rosen '16

I am currently enrolled in GO 371: Independent Study with Professor Mann. I have found the opportunity to work with him has certainly been great; together we are developing a reform proposal that is aimed at encouraging New York State to employ SUNY students as poll workers in exchange for academic credit. We believe, based on the results of past studies, that employing students as an auxiliary poll worker force would improve the speed and accuracy of counting votes, as well as clear a serious potential hurdle (i.e. : the older nature of our current poll worker pool) to rolling out high-tech voting machines in the future.

The independent study process is one that, as the name so obviously suggests, requires me to do most of the leg work on my own. Though Professor Mann and I meet on a weekly basis, most of the time I am given a general direction in which to take the proposal, and the rest is up to me. While I do find this process challenging, I look forward to that rewarding feeling I will get when I see the first op-ed calling for this proposal published. I would like to thank Professor Mann for encouraging me to pursue this reform proposal, and the Government Department for allowing it to move forward.

Gage Willand '16

I have been conducting research with Prof. Yelena Biberman-Ocakli on terrorists and the lifecycle factors that lead them to engage in terrorism. I am currently reading autobiographies of terrorists of diverse backgrounds -- including a German Neo-Nazi, a Quebecois Separatist, and one of the leaders of Irgun. The goal of this research is to determine what types of experiences these terrorists cite as their inspirations or otherwise frequently mention, especially during their formative years, and to see if there is any overlap across the different cases.

My preliminary research has shown that the terrorists do have much in common in regards to their development. All of the terrorists I've researched so far have grown up in conditions where they regularly faced some sort of institutional, societal, or cultural hardship or discrimination. Then, in their early adult years (18-20 years old), they had an inciting experience, such as imprisonment or moving to a conflict zone. This experience led them to take extreme actions to change their conditions.

Guidelines for Gaining Faculty Approval to Enroll in GO 371: Independent Study

The Government Department allows students who meet certain criteria to present an independent study proposal to a faculty member. An independent study usually consists of a course of intensive reading on a topic that is not addressed by one of the department's established course offerings.

An independent study is not an "entitlement" or a "right." A faculty member might decide not to grant a student's request for an independent study for a variety of reasons, including (but not limited to) an independent study proposal that addresses a topic outside of the faculty member's sphere of competence, a series of other commitments that preclude the faculty member from taking on additional teaching responsibilities in a given semester, or a faculty member's concern that the student may be unable to complete the proposed course of study successfully.

A faculty member will not consider an independent study proposal unless the student has met all three of the following criteria:

- 1) The student has completed at least one course with the faculty member*
- 2) The student's topic is one that is not addressed by any of the department's course offerings*

3) The student presents to the faculty member some time during the semester prior to the one in which the student hopes to enroll in the independent study a brief description (two or three paragraphs) of the proposed independent study. This description should include a discussion of both the content and the goals of the independent study. The student also will be responsible for working with the faculty member to compile a list of appropriate readings for the independent study.

GOVERNMENT MAJORS SHARE BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR SENIOR THESES PROJECTS

The Shift in Time: Marriage Equality through the Lens of Historical Institutionalism

Addison Bennett '16

Gay and lesbian couples have been petitioning courts for the right to marry since at least the early 1970s. Relying on constitutional principles including privacy, equal protection, and due process, these couples found, until quite recently, that courts were highly unresponsive to their compelling claims. In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v Hodges, granting total victory for marriage equality nationwide, but this success is recent and represents a break from established norms and precedent from only a few years before. The legal arguments remained relatively static, but the Court's willingness to hear them evolved significantly. Through the lens of historical institutionalism, which analyzes temporal factors contributing to institutional change, the history and apparently sudden success of the marriage equality movement is analyzed.

An Unforgivable "Mistake": The 1994 Crime Bill and the Racist American State

Cara Cancelmo '16

My thesis is an examination of the political and social discourse surrounding the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. At the time of its passing this "tough on crime" legislation was considered a huge bipartisan success - but it has, in more recent years, come under fire for having dramatically increased the nation's prison population as well as for contributing to racial disparities in incarceration rates. The dominant narrative of the political establishment is that these racial disparities were simply unintended consequences of a good faith effort to control a rising crime problem in the 1990s. My paper aims to address the racially coded flaws in the established narrative -- I use Critical Race Theory to provide a new narrative that will address the culpability of the political actors involved in crafting the legislation in perpetuating the racist status quo.

Why Do Elections Turn Violent? An Analysis of Political Violence in Bangladesh

Rachel Castellano '16

It is often assumed that elections facilitate communication between the government and the governed by giving a voice to the public. Thus, a democratic society is expected to be a non-violent and orderly one. Elections are the mechanism by which a democratic society remains dynamic and effective. Why then, do some democratic elections instigate violence? My paper posits that electoral violence in Bangladesh is related to two structural factors -- both political bipolarity and weak and politicized institutions. I use data collected by scholars at Yale in the National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy dataset to analyze elections in Bangladesh which resulted in civilian deaths. Then, using qualitative analysis, I identify variables and mechanisms that contribute to the presence of violence.

Friend or Foe: Examining the Geopolitical Impact of China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Will Clark '16

My project examines the development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a Beijing-led multilateral development bank, and its impact on the region and the globe. My research explores whether the AIIB will complement or challenge existing MDBs, with a particular focus on how the AIIB will influence institutions led by the United States.

Immigration, Education, and the Goal of Integration in France

Sydney France '16

In 2015, France became the target of two separate terrorist attacks. Beyond proclaiming "Je suis Charlie" and changing facebook profile pictures to be tinted with the French flag, the French began to question the origins of terrorism and, more broadly, the place of immigrants in French society. Blame for the so-called "failure of immigrant integration" fell, in part, on schools. Education in France is meant to teach Republican values, creating unity and peace. This paper will examine the history of public education in France to illustrate how different schools can be either effective or ineffective tools in immigrant integration. Further analysis demonstrates that today's government controlled curriculum and dress code in public schools alienates immigrants from French culture. Furthermore, this study shows that education systems will serve as a tool of integration only so long as the society also provides opportunities for social mobility and demonstrates a willingness to receive new immigrants. Therefore, education reform can only play a limited role in facilitating integration.

GOVERNMENT MAJORS SHARE BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR SENIOR THESES PROJECTS

A Possible Progressive or Libertarian Moment Among Young Voters

Rick Landry '16

I am looking into the possible resurgences of libertarian or progressive ideas from US senators and presidential candidates, and examining their connection to young voters. Has there been a clear increase in the use of progressive or libertarian rhetoric in recent Senate elections? Why are progressive senators like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, and libertarian politicians like Ron and Rand Paul, especially popular among the millennial generation? Is this popularity due to the media sources that millennials use?

Devolution of authority: China and U.S. military

Emma Marshall '16

As a senior in the Government department, I am writing a comparative historical analysis on the development of China and U.S. militaries, and their employment (or unemployment) of regional militia forces. The thesis' puzzle focuses on a unique paradox between China and the U.S.; the former is centralized politically and decentralized militarily, whereas the later is decentralized politically and highly centralized militarily. In short, why does China continue to use militia forces, while the U.S. does not?

An Evaluation of Political Opposition in Belarus

Charles Tetelman '16

Since 1999, Alexander Lukashenk has been illegitimately acting as President of Belarus. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Belarusian opposition groups appeared. However, none of these groups have seen much success in establishing a true democratic system. This thesis focuses on the many groups since 1987 in Belarus with a special focus on the 2010 election where multiple candidates (representing different political groups) were arrested. The research includes poems of prisoners, interviews with candidates, and first hand accounts of the political system in Belarus.

A Systematic Explanation of Modern Presidential Nominations

Elena Veatch '16

In weighing factors to explain the triumphs of candidates in the presidential nomination process, the bulk of analyses tend to focus on the idiosyncratic outcomes of specific primary years. But do larger political dynamics preempt indicators of electoral viability, making it possible to more systematically assess the seemingly volatile circumstances that shape nomination victories? This research employs a longitudinal approach to illuminate trends in presidential nomination contests from 1980 through 2012, evaluating the status of the presidential in-party at the time of candidate field formation as a means of determining: 1) Which political circumstances impel certain candidate types to seek the nomination, and 2) Which candidate type is likeliest to prevail in the nomination process in the larger political context in which they operate?

Attention Junior Government Majors!

Are you eligible to and interested in writing a senior honors thesis?

If so, read our guidelines and timeline for this yearlong process on the web at

<http://www.skidmore.edu/government/senior-thesis.php>

PI SIGMA ALPHA KEYNOTE SPEECH

Thank you for asking me to give this talk. It is an honor and a wonderful opportunity for me to share my passion for political science, and especially for international politics. In this speech, I will offer three thoughts about the value of political science based on my experience.

I remember signing up for my first undergraduate courses at Wellesley College. As soon as I signed up, I felt sick – I had just enrolled in a course that had the scariest title I could imagine: “Arguing in Public Places.” As a non-native speaker of English and dreadfully shy, speaking in public was my greatest fear. Why did I do this to myself? – I asked. Had I not taken this course, I would certainly not be up here today. And this is actually not because the course was amazing. It is because I had done something that has served me well since then. I stepped out of my comfort zone. Way, way out of my comfort zone.

I love studying politics because it creates countless opportunities to make yourself productively uncomfortable. To challenge yourself, your opinions and even fundamental beliefs. It has taken me to fascinating places.

Why do things that scare you or make you uncomfortable? I have found that it is the best way to learn about the world and about yourself, what you are actually capable of. Raising a hand in class and making a potentially provocative but thoughtful comment, or, for some, even just raising a hand in a given class, can be monumental. You may, one day, find yourself doing that very thing for a living. And loving it.

I will now turn to my second point about why I love studying and teaching international politics. With international politics, nothing is foreign. Nothing is too far, or too close. No one is too insignificant or too important.

How else could I have become obsessed with studying Pakistan? It began with me pursuing a political science question: Why do states with strong militaries use nonstate actors to fight wars? And Pakistan seemed like it would be a great case for me to explore this question. It has a very powerful army. In fact, it's a running joke in the field that most states have an army, but the Pakistani Army has a state. At the time, it was making the headlines for doing something very interesting – sponsoring militants. Why would this powerful army rely on proxies? I took an intensive Urdu language course, traveled to the country to interview military and political officials, and am now writing a book on the topic.

Of course, once I delved deeper, I realized that Pakistan was far from exceptional in its strategy vis-à-vis armed nonstate groups – that is, using them in war-fighting. Countries all over the world – from Mozambique to Russia to India to the United States engage in this shady business. We know very little about it. And this is not surprising. It is certainly not something states advertise. For one thing, it is illegal under international and most national laws to blur the line between civilians and combatants. From reading the headlines, you would think that Pakistan is somehow unique in using militias. My research shows that it is not, for better or worse.

The third reason why I think political science is worthwhile is that it is an opportunity to step outside of yourself (your own identity, biases, and assumptions) and ask big, timeless, and timely questions:

Why is democracy facing new challenges around the world? How do we make countries more democratic? Should we even try? What is democracy?

Why, in 2016, are millions of people suffering from malnutrition, easily preventable and curable diseases, lack of access to water, and other poverty-related problems? How do countries develop? Does development require a more or less equal or unequal distribution of resources? Is development a privilege or a human right?

I conclude with one final observation. I was born in a country that no longer exists. While I was growing up there, everyone around me was afraid to talk about one particular topic. They were afraid because, if they said the wrong thing, their neighbor or co-worker – or even family member – might tell on them. And the last thing you wanted was to be interrogated by the KGB. This topic was politics. Candidly discussing politics was out of the question in my household, my neighborhood, my school. I am standing here before you, Government majors, as a political scientist. And, it so happens, it's political science that equips us so well to truly understand and to appreciate this freedom.

Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocackli



Congratulations to our members of the Tau Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society

Class of 2016 Addison Bennett, Emily Benoff, Michael Bruschi, Cara Cancelmo, Rachel Castellano, Will Clark, Marc-Eric Ernestus, Sydney France, Corinna Goodman, Alec Grossman, Will Hird, Hulwa Khaleel, Zachary Lachman, Richard Landry, Emily Mangan,

Emma Marshall, Daniel Meyers, Madison Morency, James Rider, Jonathan Rosen, Noah Tananbaum, Elena Veatch

Class of 2017 Matthew Bristol, David Immerman, Luca Mobilia, Megan Schachter, Rachel Talanian, Joshua Wagner

PI SIGMA ALPHA



Photo Credit: Rebecca Stern '16



Student Employment Opportunity in the Government Department for 2016 - 2017

Are you interested in designing posters for upcoming events and lectures in the Government Department?
Do you want to take photos at Government events, design and layout spring and fall newsletters and update graphics?

If you are interested contact Barbara McDonough (bmcdonou@skidmore.edu) or Maddy Morency (mmorency@skidmore.edu).

Proficiency in graphic design a must – GO major or minor preferred.

Undergraduate Conference on the American Polity Sponsored by The Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization

Skidmore College will host the **Undergraduate Conference on the American Polity on April 1-2, 2016**. The conference is made possible by Professor Robert Paquette and the Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization. The conference is modeled in part on a professional/academic conference where students will have the opportunity to present their work to professors and some of their peers. There will also be a keynote address Friday evening and a common set of readings for a group discussion on Saturday evening.

Event Schedule

Friday, April 1

8:00pm : **Professor Diana Schaub**, Loyola University (see bio below)

“Learning to Love Lincoln: Frederick Douglass’s Journey from Grievance to Gratitude”*

Davis Auditorium, Palamountain Hall, Skidmore College

*Students should come to the conference having read two documents.

Frederick Douglass’s Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, originally delivered on April 14, 1876. This speech can be found here:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/oration-in-memory-of-abraham-lincoln/>

In addition, read chapter 17, “The Last Flogging,” from Douglass’s autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*

Saturday, April 2

8:30: coffee, continental breakfast, Payne Room, Tang Teaching Museum

9:00-10:30

Panel #1, Payne Room, Tang Teaching Museum

Emily Mangan, Skidmore College, “Tocqueville on the Democratic Intellect”

Matthew Bristol, Skidmore College, “Retreat with Honor: LBJ’s Decision not to Run in 1968”

Drew Hoffmaster, Texas Tech University, “Donald Trump’s Party: An Analysis of the Trump Candidacy”

11:00-12:30

Panel #2, Payne Room, Tang Teaching Museum

Owen Smitherman, Princeton University, “Leadership, Slavery and the Civil War”

Michael Adamo, Hamilton College, “Anti-Capitalism and Paternalism in Pro-Slavery Thought”

Tim Rice, College of the Holy Cross, “Refreshing the Founding: Mercy Otis Warren and a New Approach to Early American History”

12:30-2:00: Lunch at Skidmore’s Dining Hall

2:00-3:30

Panel #3, Payne Room, Tang Teaching Museum

Jack Schreuer, Skidmore College, “Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian Constitutionalism”

Savannah Barksdale, Texas Tech University, “Comparing the United States and Texas Constitutions”

Dimitri Halikias, Yale University, “The Democratic Thought of the Anti-Federalists”

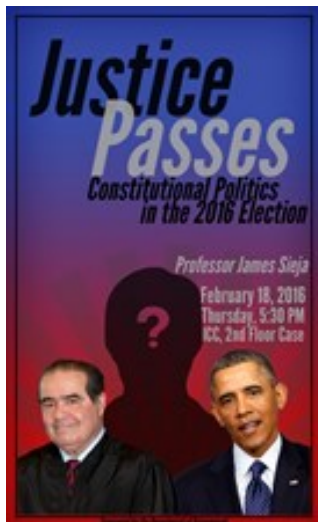
Julie Nelson, Baylor University, “A Foundational Consideration: Why Religion Should be Treated as Special”

Speaker bio:

Diana Schaub is a professor of political science at Loyola University Maryland and a member of the Hoover Institution’s Jill and Boyd Smith Task Force on the Virtues of a Free Society. In 2001, she was the recipient of the Richard M. Weaver Prize for Scholarly Letters. From 2004 to 2009 she was a member of the President’s Council on Bioethics. She is the author of *Erotic Liberalism: Women and Revolution in Montesquieu’s Persian Letters* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), along with a number of book chapters and articles in the fields of political philosophy and American political thought. She is also a co-editor (with Amy and Leon Kass) of *What So Proudly We Hail: The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song* (ISI, 2011). She is a contributing editor for *The New Atlantis* and Ms. Schaub’s work has also appeared in *National Affairs*, *The New Criterion*, *The Public Interest*, *The American Enterprise*, the *Claremont Review of Books*, *Commentary*, *First Things*, *The American Interest*, and *City Journal*.

CONSTITUTIONAL POLITICS MAKES FOR A ROUSING DISCUSSION

Matt Marani '16



Justice Antonin Scalia's passing on February 13, 2016, left the Supreme Court without one of its most conservative voices. An intellectual innovator of the "original public meaning" interpretation of the Constitution, Scalia and his career provide an insight into the legal and ideological battles of the last quarter century in American jurisprudence. While Scalia was undoubtedly a well-known justice, only history can determine his judicial legacy and impact on American law.

Five days after Scalia's death, Professor James Sieja led a lecture and discussion on the impact of the vacancy and consequent politics of nominating a new Supreme Court justice during a presidential election cycle. I was truly impressed by both the turn out – it was "standing room only" at the Inter-cultural Center – and the diversity of students and faculty attending from multiple departments. Due to the lecture's popular relevance, *Justice Passes* attracted members of the Saratoga community as well. Professor Sieja began the lecture by providing the background on Antonin Scalia "the person," a Depression baby who ascended to the High Bench while helping to raise nine children. In terms of Scalia's death interfering with ongoing Supreme Court decisions and the institution's daily functioning, Professor Sieja noted that the only decisions that will be affected are those containing a 5-4 split where Scalia would have been in the majority. The Supreme Court can accept new cases to hear, because acceptance requires the assent of only four justices.

Regarding the replacement of Justice Scalia, Professor Sieja provided two procedures. First, President Obama could have made a recess appointment (the deadline passed at noon on February 22). Second, Obama could nominate a judge who has already been unanimously confirmed for a lower court.

Although the Republican Party has received criticism for suggesting radical obstruction of any potential nominee, Professor Sieja reminded lecture group that this political act is not without precedent. In fact, nominees in the last year of a president's term during divided government historically have a 29 percent success rate. Also, in 2006 then-Senator Barack Obama supported a Democratic-led filibuster to stop Samuel Alito from being confirmed to the Supreme Court. Concluding his lecture, Professor Sieja noted the advanced age of other Supreme Court justices, such as Ruth Bader Ginsberg, increased the likelihood of nomination battles occurring in the near future.



The Q & A following the lecture was both lively and informative. The most interesting question concerned Barack Obama's eligibility for a Supreme Court nomination as a sitting president. Although the student asking the question had done so speculatively, Professor Sieja informed the audience that there is no bar in the Constitution against members of the executive branch simultaneously holding positions in the judicial branch. This means that, constitutionally-speaking, President Obama could have appointed himself to replace Scalia during the recess. Professor Sieja recalled that Chief Justice John Marshall was Secretary of State John Marshall, at the same time, for several weeks in 1801.



In conclusion, *Justice Passes* was an informative and well-structured lecture. Not only did Professor Sieja provide an in-depth analysis of the nomination of process for Supreme Court Justices, but also the how the partisan nature of contemporary politics effects the judicial branch. The audience itself was both engaged, and educated on the historical precedents of judicial nominations. I believe it is safe to say that every attendee left the lecture with a greater understanding of Justice Scalia and the complexities of the Supreme Court.

STUDENT NEWS

Hello from Vietnam!

Megan Schachter '17



I'm spending the semester participating in SIT's Culture, Social Change, and Development program with 15 other American students from universities around the country. As part of SIT's "Experiential Learning" model, we are based in the economically-thriving Ho Chi Minh City, but spend over half our time traveling to other parts of the country. We go as far south as the Mekong Delta and as far north as Sapa. Additionally, the last four weeks of the program are spent conducting our independent study projects (ISPs) in any part of the country.

I am currently enrolled in four classes: Economic Reform and Development, Introduction to Vietnamese, Research Methods and Ethics, and Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Change. We've received amazing lectures from academics from top Vietnamese Universities as well as professionals in the field. One of the best aspects of the program is how we apply everything we learn in class to the experiences we have outside of the classroom.

It is a particularly fascinating time to study in Vietnam. It is a strongly communist country with a rapidly developing economy. Its relationship with the U.S. has revolutionized in the last twenty years. There is a strong divide between the mindsets of younger and older generations. Furthermore, a new governmental regime was recently elected that many believe will take Vietnam in an entirely different direction. These fascinating aspects of Vietnamese life have given us an amazing starting point to choose our ISP topics.

I decided to focus my research on Vietnamese Women's Access to Legal Assistance, particularly in cases of domestic abuse. Women in Vietnam, like all over the world, are still not granted equal rights to men. Additionally, Vietnamese government and society places a higher priority on keeping families together than on the safety and well-being of women. These facts combined with a lack of access to education and resources prevents the majority of women from coming forward to seek help. The few who do face public shaming and a loss of economic security for them and their children. I am looking forward to spending more time studying this critical gap in justice. During this time, I will be working with the Center for Women and Development in conjunction with other not-for-profit organizations, women's shelters, and law firms to obtain a stronger understanding of the existing barriers against women's rights. During this time, I will live in an apartment with SIT friends in Hanoi, the country's capital.

While taking classes in Ho Chi Minh City, I have lived with a host family, two sisters who are 22 and 26 and share an apartment in Saigon to attend school and work. This is consistent with the major urban migration in Vietnam as younger people have trouble finding work everywhere but in the large cities. Their parents come to visit from time to time, though I have greatly enjoyed living and forging a stronger bond with people my age. We have had our share of cultural misunderstandings, though each has resulted in some laughs, greater knowledge, and a stronger bond. One night, I volunteered to make dinner and decided to show them Mexican food. I didn't consider two key facts: (1) Vietnamese people are not accustomed to cheese and (2) tortillas simply don't exist here. In short, dinner was a mess and my host sister's boyfriend promptly said my food "makes him miss Phở." The dinner gave us a funny experience to talk about and made us more comfortable joking together.

That said, I have not had an easy experience here. Vietnamese culture is quite different than American culture. Some striking differences include an average daily temperature of 95 degrees, communist propaganda posters everywhere, and a fear of death each time I cross the street and endure Vietnamese traffic. In fact, the first time I tried, I stood petrified for ten minutes before someone took my hand and walked me across. Beyond that, I have had to accept some simple facts: I am outside of my comfort zone a fair amount of the time, I must be willing to go with the flow, and I spend entire days without hearing any word that I understand.

I have had an incredible experience so far and learned that there is value in pushing my own boundaries. I have been very fortunate to have this opportunity and I am looking forward to the adventures to come!



STUDENT NEWS

The Skidmore Consensus: Political Climate during the Primary Elections

Jack Schreuer '17

This election cycle is absurd. I don't mean this in the diluted colloquial sense but actually nonsensical. If just last year you had read an article that placed a reality TV mogul as the clear Republican front runner and Hilary in a competitive primary with a socialist, the only logical response would be to throw it into the pile with *Candide* and go back to talking about Biden. At the very least this election hasn't been boring, from Sanders' impassioned rhetoric to Trump's outlandish antics.

Trump seems more an entertainer than a politician, deflecting policy questions to instead make jokes at the expense of his rivals or diverting attention entirely with increasing inflammatory expressions of bigotry. Bernie Sanders has inspired the youth vote, with unprecedented turnout at rallies, and challenged the established electoral strategies raising huge sums from purely small donations. Considering these factors one would expect it to be a particularly engaging election with Skidmore's campus a buzz with debate. Unfortunately that's not the case. Sure Trump's latest antics, whether profane or hilarious, are a common topic of conversation. But overall, substantive debate on campus has dried up, being replaced by bemused apathy, as if the winner of this quadrennial reality show wouldn't hold the free world in his or her hands. I think the current situation provides insight into the structural factors that underlie Skidmore's political discourse.

There exists a Skidmore Consensus that pervades most aspects of campus life. This liberal consensus on social issues and the resulting deeply established social norms suppress conflicting opinions on these matters. When someone points out this consensus on social issues it tends to be a critique of Skidmore's political correctness. But I'll defend it. I'm proud to attend a college that condemns bigotry and at least attempts to conceptualize all people as equally human. This consensus by no means proves we have reached our goal of an egalitarian campus society; systematic and subconscious discrimination is still pervasive, as it is throughout America. Our campus societal structure needs vast reform to deal with these problems but we should do what we can and try to ensure that no member of the Skidmore community is demeaned or dehumanized.

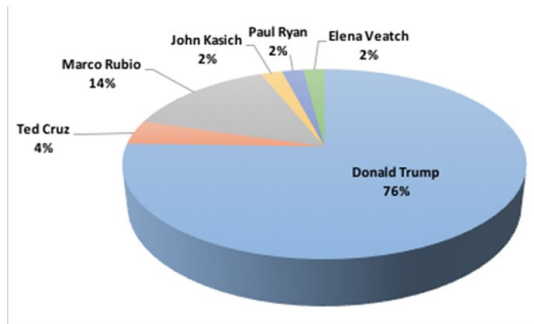
All that being said the lack of political discourse on campus signals a problem. I believe this arises from the lack of breadth in the conversation. The Skidmore consensus is on both opinion and topic; the campus political dialogue focuses around social justice, not economics or foreign policy. The consensus on social issues and the consequent social norms seep into these other aspects of the political discourse. A culture has developed where opinions outside the Skidmore orthodoxy have become taboo. This stifles debate because those who share these opinions may feel judged for their views, leading to political discussions limited to various levels of agreement. It is important for Skidmore to reconsider its consensus, not give up the fight for a more equalitarian school but be aware of how social norms can spread restricting debate in other areas and hurting our intellectual development.

Many conceptualize this consensus as only suppressing conservatives' voices but that's an oversimplification. The perceived unanimity of ideology curbs the expression of all dissenting theories. Not only is this not a discourse between left and right but there is also no debate on the true meaning of progressiveness. Without contemplative discussion these progressive values are not truly our own but mere manufactured platitudes. It's also worth pondering, where is the radical left? One is hard pressed to find even the slightest mention of the proletariat outside of Marxist circles or in an inter-ideological discourse. This issue of a levathan like consensus reaching past the bounds of social issues should be lamented by liberals as well as conservatives as it censors all ideological outside of the socially sanctioned paradigm. The accepted ideology must face critiques from both left and right if Skidmore is to provide us with the intellectual development we to prepare us from the post-grad world, a world which clearly lacks consensus.

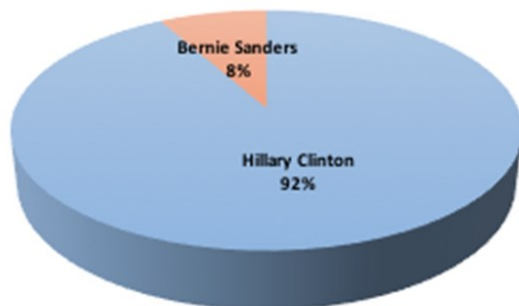
Schreuer continued on page 16

STUDENT POLLS BY RICK LANDRY '16

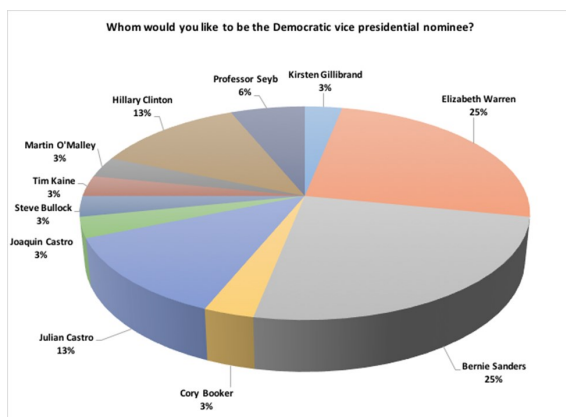
Whom do you think will be the Republican presidential nominee?



Whom do you think will be the Democratic presidential nominee?



Whom would you like to be the Democratic vice presidential nominee?

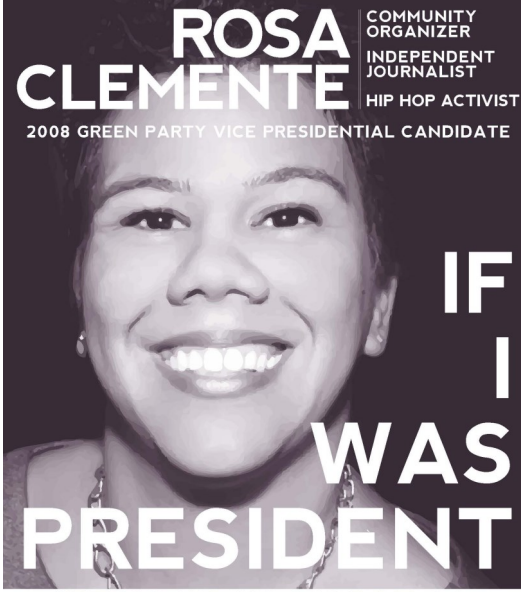


The Skidmore Consensus

Schreuer continued from page 15

Our country is at a crossroads, a moment that will define the identity of our nation. We are fortunate to live at a time when our voices and ideas could shape the America's future. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we intellectually engage with our world and each other. We can learn by discussing from those who disagree with us, even if the intent is not to convert, we benefit from gaining insight into their views. Now is the time for a debate on campus, not about the equality of humanity because hopefully our social norms have cleared that up, but about the social responsibility we have to one another. Should our government seek to interfere less or become more involved in an attempt to promote to the public good? Should America's role in the international community be a global police force or should we be more isolationist? It doesn't matter if convince others of our position; what really matters is that we have the debate.

ROSA CLEMENTE
 COMMUNITY ORGANIZER
 INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST
 HIP HOP ACTIVIST
 2008 GREEN PARTY VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE



IF I WAS PRESIDENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30
GANNETT AUDITORIUM
6:30PM

Intergroup Relations (IGR) + the SO219 Race & Power Class
 Office of the VP for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity,
 Speakers Bureau, Gender Studies Department, RAICES, Environmental
 Studies Department, Sociology Department, American Studies Department,
 Government Department, Democracy Matters

SCUSA 67: Confronting Inequality: Wealth, Rights, and Power

Rachel Castellano '16



My experience at West Point last fall was unlike anything I could have imagined. The four days at the conference was full of intense debate, compassionate understanding, and eye-opening realizations. It was one of the first times I found myself surrounded by students with whom I had almost identical interests. Regardless of our differences in opinion, I found that to be inspiring and motivating.

I was seated on the United States roundtable. Our task was to discuss the concept of “separate and unequal” – a look into the inequalities that divide groups of people in the United States. After working together to discuss solutions, we were asked to write a paper and then present it to the rest of

the conference in the form of a skit. In the end, we discussed everything from campaign finance reform to critical race theory.

The most interesting part of the conference was the dialogue between civilian students from other schools and military cadets at West Point. Before this experience, I had never so much as approached the civil-military divide that exists in our country. I realized I had many false and preconceived notions about those that risk their lives to fight for this country. Surprisingly, we had many of the same views on the most current issues. Not only was I able to learn from the discussions on inequality, I also learned a great deal about life at West Point. The attendees of the SCUSA conference stayed in rooms with cadets. The female cadets living in my room openly shared their opinion on the War on Terror, women in combat positions, and the anticipated struggles of having a family and a military career.

The SCUSA conference will rank highly on the list of my most memorable college experiences. Therefore, I am extremely appreciative of the Government Department and Skidmore College for making this opportunity possible.

Maddy Morency '16



When I was first invited to the Student Conference on US Affairs at West Point Military Academy, I felt like I would be getting a peek behind the curtain. Going into it, I only knew that the theme of the conference was ‘Confronting Inequality’ and that Madeleine Albright was the Keynote Speaker. I was assigned to the round table called *Europe: Common Defense, Disjointed Security, Exploring European Threat, Defense Policy, and Capacity Inequalities* and was tasked with creating a US policy recommendation for future relations regarding EU and NATO.

Being at West Point paradoxically felt more like a traditional college experience than what I am used to in a liberal arts environment at Skidmore. The conference came

right before the rival Army versus Navy football game, a game that West Point has lost for the last 13 (now 14) years. Despite this seemingly uneven matchup, the cadets at West Point showed immense support and school pride for the upcoming game.

The biggest difference I encountered was the strict and regimented lifestyle. When I asked one of the cadets what his least favorite rule is at West Point, he explained that if he wanted to walk from his room to the bathroom, he had to either dress up in complete uniform, or dress down and get into a bathrobe. As punishment for not following the rules, such as going to the bathroom in inappropriate dress, being out after curfew, or coming to class late, cadets receive “hours” where they have to dress up in full uniform and walk up and down the main courtyard holding a very large rifle for a prescribed amount of time. A “century man” is someone who has accrued at least 100 hours throughout his or her time at West Point. During the conference, the only rule that I had difficulty with was not being able to walk from one building to another without a cadet escort based on my civilian status. All of the cadets on my panel were second-years (also known as cows) and



Morency SCUSA 67, continued on page 20

STUDENT NEWS collected by Will Hird '16

Alexis Cantor '18 I am a research assistant for Professor Minita Sanghvi in the Management & Business Department. We are currently co-authoring an article about the role of appearance in political marketing, specifically when it comes to female candidates of intersectional identity. Additionally, I attended Eurosime 2016 in Antwerp, Belgium in January along with six other members of Model European Union. Stay tuned for information about our upcoming trips to Brockport and the Netherlands.

Will Clark '16 is completing his senior thesis for the government department. His project examines the development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a Beijing-led multilateral development bank, and its impact on the region and the globe. In addition to the political economy of Asia, Will is interested in the healthcare industry. He hopes to work in a healthcare consulting role upon graduation in May.

Jesse Evensky '16 I have been working hard in my last semester here at Skidmore! I'm so grateful to Skidmore College and the Government Department in general for opening my eyes in so many different ways. I am currently on track to graduate in May and have found a job in the field of accessibility. This will take me back home to Syracuse, NY and so I just hope my parents are ready to have a third roommate for a while!

Izzy Fischer '18 This summer I will be working in Chicago, IL at West Monroe Partners. I will be shadowing their General Counsel working on negotiation, contracts and learning about Corporate Law. This semester I am doing an Internship for credit in Saratoga Springs at Bergmann Zwerdling Direct which is a Political Consulting Firm that produces Direct Mail all of the states.

Katie Hamilton '17 I have been studying in Paris for the past academic year taking Government classes at French universities such as La Sorbonne and l'Institut Catholique de Paris. I am currently searching for summer internships in NYC after a very successful internship with the Clinton Foundation during the summer of 2015.

William Hird '16 Trying to make the most out of my last semester at Skidmore! I am currently on the job hunt for this summer and the following year - looking to pursue both policy work and electronic music production if possible. Had an amazing time studying abroad last spring in Cape Town and trying to not be too stressed about the future!

Jeremy Lockett '16 I'm currently very interested in working for a child advocacy agency once I graduate Skidmore College. Specifically I would like to work with children that have in and out of foster care. From my own experience in the child protective services, I have learned that these children are resilient, and can lead hopeful lives, once given the support.

Matt Marani '16 After graduating from Skidmore College in May, I will be continuing my studies at the University of Edinburgh for a MSc in architectural preservation. I am still working on plans for the summer, but hopefully it will include interning at a preservation organization or a body involved with urban planning. Over spring break I will be visiting Budapest and Vienna where I hope to visit sights related to courses I have taken with the Government Department.

Gabriella Perez '17 After an exciting fall semester as an intern and co-President of Democracy Matters, I headed to Madrid as part of the Skidmore in Spain program. Here, I am taking a course on the politics of the European Union at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, in addition to a class on the politics of Spain at the program center. I recently began an internship as a research assistant to Professor Josep Lobera who teaches "Is Spain Different?" at the program center. My responsibilities include translating articles and analyzing the ways in social movements has translated into political decisions and change.

Paulina Phelps '16 I knew I wanted to have an experience in my last semester of college that incorporated the greater community of Saratoga and the Northeast Region. My interest in journalism and

STUDENT NEWS

storytelling led me to pursue an internship in which I could tell the stories of individuals and how processes in their community affect them. For this reason, I applied and was given an internship at WAMC radio, which is the Northeast NPR affiliate. WAMC coverage spans over seven Northeastern States, with a headquarters run out of Albany, NY.

During my internship, which began at the beginning of this semester, I have worked three days a week with reporter Lucas Willard, the Southern Adirondack Bureau Chief at WAMC. Surprisingly, Willard has an office tucked away in Skidmore's Palamontain building. He mentors me in how to write the forty second voicings that you hear on NPR affiliates, which summarize the key points of a story, and often include "sound" from an interview or an event. Willard is not shy about letting me get out in the field. So far, I have worked on stories about the smoking ban at Saratoga Housing Authority and about Saratoga Shelter's program Code Blue which aims to keep homeless inside during freezing temperatures. Another rewarding, but difficult, part of my internship has been learning the audio editing program "Adobe Audition." Willard is a pro at using this program and has helped me immensely with becoming comfortable with the sometimes foreign concepts.

So far, I feel extremely fulfilled by this internship. Willard gives me constant feedback on journalism skills I hope to develop including writing, editing, and interviewing. Some of my fondest moments have been driving back with Willard from an interview, say at SPAC or at the Hyde Collection in Ballston Spa, reflecting on the experience and discussing the always changing field of journalism.

James Rider '16 I am currently busy organizing for Democracy Matters and freaking out about plans for post-grad along with almost every other senior. For the summer, I will be leading hiking and rafting trips in Washington State with Overland, a summer trip company that leads biking tours, hiking excursions, and service trips across the country and around the globe. After that, I will (hopefully) be teaching English in Spain for a year to hone my Spanish skills before pursuing a career in immigration policy. See you guys in the real world.

Brian Elie Saleeby '17 As I am currently studying abroad in Geneva, Switzerland, my independent study project will explore the possible regionalization of the Ghanaian energy sector (generation and distribution), with the Swiss system acting as a comparative guide where possible. I am also interested in the socio-economic effects of trade liberalization on West African countries, a topic I hope to explore throughout my senior year when I get back.

Jason Sutherland '18 This semester I will be traveling to Toronto with Model UN for a 4 day conference. I'm on EBoard for the club which is looking forward to a fun trip after all the prep we have done! Besides that I am focusing more on fulfilling my major requirements and trying to spend some more time around the department.

Charles Tetelman '16 Last summer, I worked with a non-profit organization called Ultimate Peace based in Israel. The program takes place in a politically charged region, but political discussion and solution finding is deliberately avoided. The focus of the UP program is on providing a positive, educational, multicultural experience that is healthy, enriching, inspiring, and fun for youth through the sport of Ultimate frisbee. For about a month, I coached Ultimate to children (ages 9-15) from Israel (Arab and Jewish youth) and the West Bank. Learn more at ultimatepeace.org!

Elena Veatch '16 I am currently writing my senior thesis on the all too relevant presidential primaries, looking at the partisan circumstances that have granted some candidate types an advantage over others in certain years, in the hopes of making sense of 2016. In April, I will be taking a break from stress-binge-watching Chopped to present my findings at the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago. This semester, I am also interning in Albany at the Rockefeller Institute, serving as the politics editor for the Skidmore News, and wondering if I will ever find a job.

MODEL UN GOES TO TORONTO

Jason Sutherland '18



This past February, Skidmore's very own Model UN club traveled to Toronto to participate in the annual North American Model UN conference hosted by the University of Toronto. Among the roles taken on by Skidmore's delegation were General Victor Lundula of the Congo, the Representative of Hezbollah to Iran, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, and the British seat on the UN Security Council. Delegates were charged with the task of finding diplomatic solutions to long-standing political problems and modern crises, such as the tenuous relationship between Israel and Iran and the Greek financial crisis.

Creative thought was put to practice over the course of three days. In an effort to make the world a better place (with results pending), Skidmore's students sought out alliances, traded blows, and followed whatever

means they thought necessary to achieve their assigned goals. With about 500 other students participating there were some hard fought battles. In the "stuxnet" crisis simulation, the Israeli Deputy Minister (Byron Poplawski) saw himself ousted from his position after staging a coup gone wrong, later to emerge as powerbroker for the Iranians. Meanwhile, the secret Ad-Hoc Committee (Ray Gnesin) reenacted the Korean War from the perspective of both factions, ultimately creating a new world order. Honorable mentions for best delegate were won by Themba Shongwe and Jason Sutherland.

This fall, Model UN is looking forward to hosting its 4th annual Professor's Dinner as well as traveling to another conference. The club will be meeting every Tuesday for the rest of the semester at 6pm in Ladd 107. Each week's meeting consists of a roundtable discussion about a current international issue. We also host the occasional jeopardy competition – which gets about as competitive as any conference we go to. There are always snacks and we are always looking for new students to stop by and share their thoughts – and join us in our travels!



Morency SCUSA '67, continued from page 17



as graduation quickly approaches, I can't help but compare my uncertain future with the West Point cadets who make such a large commitment at such a young age. The cadets that I spoke with had many different reasons for coming to West Point. Some came because of familial legacy; others valued the free education. I also heard about cadets that went rogue. West Point cadets are able to get a \$30,000 loan during their second year, and apparently a cadet a few years ago took his loan and moved to Mexico with his girlfriend. Other cadets have left West Point to work for private military contractors. The point is, and it seems almost too obvious to say, but I was struck by the amount of diversity I found at West Point. Of course I didn't expect everyone to be single-minded war mongers or brainwashed in some way, but I was definitely surprised by how normal and relatable many of them were. In short, learning about and from the cadets was an incredibly rewarding and eye-opening experience that I will not soon forget.

Votes Not Dollars: Skidmore's Chapter of Democracy Matters

James Rider '16

This election year is on mark to break records in candidate spending. With the election a little less than nine months away, the top six candidates have raised over \$217 million for their campaigns. To put that number in perspective, that amount is high enough to pay for the Skidmore tuition of more than 4,000 students in any given year—and that's not even counting the PAC money. So far, an additional \$187 million has been raised by Super PACs and "outside" organizations to spend on behalf of presidential candidates (OpenSecrets.org). Without a doubt, no matter who is elected, his/her priorities and policy choices will be ill-proportionally influenced by the people and groups that gave them the most money.

But a group of Skidmore students is working to change this, and make our elected officials more accountable to the wider public. Skidmore's chapter of a national organization called Democracy Matters hopes to change how politicians get elected in the United State's by advocating for campaign finance reform and public financing of campaigns.

This year, the club has been working hard to raise awareness about the negative effects of money in politics through media campaigns, speaking events, movie screenings, and increasing attendance at regular club meetings. However, awareness is only one important step in creating policy change. The next step is taking action. Democracy Matters is also working to mobilize students to advocate for their interests through organizing voter registration drives, petition writing, and lobbying.

The big event that the group is planning for this semester is to send students to Democracy Awakening, a 3-day long protest and lobbying event in Washington, DC on April 16-18. Over one hundred campaign finance reform groups and thousands of people will be attending the event with one goal in mind: truly free and fair elections (see: <http://democracyawakening.org/> for more details). We encourage anyone interested in attending (students, faculty, the wider public) to email jrider@skidmore.edu. Alternatively, you are always welcome at one of our regular meetings every Tuesday at 7pm in Ladd 307.



Agora is an online and print magazine for Skidmore students, which publishes opinion articles and other student writing. Unlike other publications, it does not have a hierarchical structure. The editorial staff acts as curators rather than gatekeepers, accepting all students' work. Its aim is to act as a forum for the expression and distribution of student ideas, with the hope of stimulating intellectual discourse on campus. All submissions are welcome and will be published. They should be sent to agoramagazineskid@gmail.com. The print version of Agora is a free magazine published on a monthly or bimonthly basis, and is distributed throughout campus. Agora can also be accessed online at <http://agoramagazine.club/>. For more information, feel free to contact jschreue@skidmore.edu.

THE FRANKLIN FORUM AND GREAT BOOKS

Dylan Quinn '18



If you want to tackle great books in the company of friends, then the Franklin Forum is the place for you. The Franklin Forum, a student-led reading club founded in 2012, aims to have engaging discussions revolving around topics such as technology, friendship, virtue, politics, and religion. Ranging from *Moby Dick* to Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, the Forum explores texts from a range of disciplines within the humanities. Meeting every Sunday at 4:00 pm, the Franklin Forum provides students and faculty the opportunity to discuss and reflect on seminal literary works that are often not offered within the classroom. Faculty members from various departments are invited as "guest professors" to participate discussion with student members.

Just this past semester, the Forum tackled two major autobiographical texts: *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Through Franklin's autobiography, students examined the fascinating life of one of America's Founding Fathers. While *My Bondage and My Freedom* told an extraordinary story of perseverance and bravery, in which Douglass overcame unimaginable odds to become a leading figure in the abolition movement of the mid-19th century.

Through each of these great works, students and faculty alike were exposed to new ideas and perspectives provided by two extraordinary Americans.

This semester the Forum is exploring foundational texts from progressivism and conservatism of the early 20th century in the hopes of expanding our understanding of American political thought and its roots. So come join us in the Honors Forum Lounge on Sundays to expand your mind and have your voice heard! Feel free to contact either Dylan Quinn (dquinn@skidmore.edu) or Beckett Rueda (brueda@skidmore.edu) to become involved with the Forum.

Skidmore Women in Business

Emma Marshall '16



Founded in Fall of 2013, Skidmore Women in Business (WIB) strives to engage dynamic women across all disciplines to engage in leadership in the classroom, the workplace, and the world. In all that it does, Skidmore WIB's actions stem from four pillars which are core to its mission: Leadership, Connection, Professionalism, and Philanthropy. Through bi-weekly meetings that cover a range of topics, WIB has become one the most active and highly attended clubs on campus with over 40 loyal members.

Through events including the WIB Talks speakers' series, social media campaigns, and high-impact fundraisers, WIB has engaged and brought together the Skidmore and Saratoga Springs community. In 2015, Skidmore Women in Business was named Skidmore College's Club of the Year in recognition of its profound effect on the culture of the campus and the community.

Since its founding, WIB has facilitated the travel of over 60 Skidmore students to 8 Women in Business conferences at Harvard University, Harvard Business School, and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. On April 16th, 2016, Skidmore Women in Business will host a conference titled, **"Creative Thought Leads: Liberal Arts and Business smarts."** This conference aims to connect the college's current student population with dynamic thought leaders and top c-suite executives. The all-day event will consist of a series of panels, speakers and networking events.

If you are interested in joining WIB, please reach out to both Cen Liang (cliang@skidmore.edu) and Savannah Lansing (slansing@skidmore.edu), the current Co-Presidents of Skidmore WIB.

ANTWERP IN JANUARY WITH EUROSIM 2016

Alexis Cantor '18



This past January, the Model European Union Club (MEU) attended EuroSim 2016 in Antwerp, Belgium. Seven students traveled to Europe for the conference, including me, Megan Schachter, Dorothy Parsons, Kali Villarosa, Harrison Hale, Kris Vahle, and Shuchismita Hassan – as well as our advisor, Professor Graney. Each conference is developed around an issue or policy and this year's was immigration and asylum policy, which was quite topical. It was an excellent learning experience and it provided us with the unique ability to learn about European Union law and politics

among other American and European students who study these topics. All the student participants are extremely knowledgeable and provide for constant peer-to-peer learning. For example, the 27-year-old to my left was a practicing lawyer in Mexico and came to Germany to earn a Master's degree in European law.

Each student chooses an alter ego to represent at the conference. I chose the Prime Minister of Spain, Mariano Rajoy. I sat on the European Council, which comprises the heads of government of all 28 member states. The council has no formal legislative power and asserts influence by setting priorities and guiding the European Commission and the European Parliament in drafting policy. However, the fact that the European Council cannot pass anything without unanimity made this challenging. I obtained a realistic understanding of the inefficiencies and difficulties of government as we only passed extremely vague and inconsequential proposals, largely due to a minority of outlying members of the council, namely the Prime Ministers of Greece and Slovakia. My experience on the council was quite different from my experience on the European Parliament in 2015, when the conference was held at Skidmore. As a Member of the European Parliament, I focused on drafting policies. More importantly, the Parliament only needed a majority to pass legislation, meaning that we were much more efficient than Council this year.

We were fortunate to have had ample time to explore Antwerp, a city known for its Diamond District, art museums, and waffles (a personal highlight). As we flew through Amsterdam, we had a day at the end of our trip to explore the city before going home. We visited the Anne Frank House, the Rijksmuseum, and the Van Gogh Museum.

I have had a terrific experience in my two years in MEU. It has given me terrific opportunities, immense knowledge of the EU, and an ability to practice my debate skills. I highly recommend joining us on our next trips to SUNY Brockport in 2017 and Maastricht University in the Netherlands in 2018 if you are at all interested in international relations, European Union law, or Dutch cheese.



FALL 2016 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

GO 251A: Race, State and Nation in Comparative Perspective

Kate Graney

Description: Does the founding and maintenance of a stable political community, a nation-state, by a discrete group of people (the in-group, “we”), always also necessitate the presence or creation of an opposing group (the out-group, “them”), a group that may be targeted for political, social or economic exclusion, or even for extermination, in order that the nation-state forming “in-group” might prosper? When nation-states are founded on ideologies and structures of racial or ethnic oppression, are those ideologies and structures always the same, regardless of time or geographic location? Or must each situation of structural national racism be understood to be unique? What does the comparative study of race, state and power in different contexts (Colonial regimes in Africa; States that engaged in genocide or mass killing—Ottoman Turkey, the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Cambodia, Serbia; and states whose modern existence has been in large part predicated on the systematic oppression of a significant racial minority—the United States, South Africa and Brazil) tell us about this abhorrent and disappointing aspect of human behavior, and how we might mitigate it?

GO 251C: Campaigns and Elections

Chris Mann

Description: This course provides an overview of campaigns and elections in the United States for political science majors and non-majors with an interest in understanding elections, campaigns, and voting. We will cover the institutions governing voting, political communication, public opinion, political participation, and political behavior. The primary course objective is an in-depth understanding of when, where, why, and how candidates, media, and voters shape strategies and outcomes. *Pre-reqs: GO101 or permission of instructor*

GO 251C: Demagogues, Demons, and Democracy: The Origins of America’s Venomous Politics

Ron Seyb

Description: “American politics has often been an arena for angry minds.” While the American historian Richard Hofstadter made this statement in the midst of Barry Goldwater’s unconventional presidential campaign in 1964—a campaign that Hofstadter thought had unleashed the “heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy” that characterized the “paranoid style” in American political life—many contemporary commentators have suggested that the anger of many current voters, candidates, and officeholders has curdled our political discourse and poisoned our political institutions.

List of Recommended Courses for Government/Political Science Students

Anthropology

AN 351: Urban Anthropology

American Studies

AM 103: Introduction to American Studies

AM 250: Regional Culture

AM 260A: Civil Rights in 20th Century United States

AM 260C: The African-American Experience, 1860s-1980s

AM 260J: Diversity in the United States

AM 360: American Cultural Periods

Economics

EC 103: Introduction to Macroeconomics

EC 235: Macroeconomic Theory

EC 283: Economics of Health and Healthcare

EC 286: Economics of Development

EC 319: Economics of Income Distribution and Poverty

EC 334: International Political Economy

EC 344: Public Finance

EC 361: Behavioral/Experimental Economics

Education

ED 324: Education Policy, Politics, and Law in the U.S.

English

EN 228: Prose Boot Camp

EN 280: Introduction to Nonfiction Writing

EN 280: Introduction to Political Writing

Environmental Studies

ES 224: Political Ecology

ES 221: Sustainable Development

ES 252: Political Ecology

ES 352: The Politics of Food

ES 352: Environ and Development in the Middle East

ES 352: U.S. Public Lands & Oceans

ES 352C: Global Environmental Governance

TOPICS DESCRIPTIONS

This course will trace the roots of American political invective by examining the historical, institutional, and cultural influences on America's peculiar brand of emotionally labile politics. It will, in particular, ask whether anger or "passion" is always harmful to democracy? Does, in short, America need to tolerate the presence of demagogues such as William Jennings Bryan, Huey Long, Joe McCarthy, Ross Perot, and Donald Trump who trifle with the public's emotions in order to create space for the "righteous anger" of those seeking healthy political change?

GO 351B: African-American Political Thought

Flagg Taylor

Description: W.E.B. DuBois described his people as "gifted with second sight in this American world...an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings." In this course we will examine the writings of those African-Americans who have reflected most profoundly on the American regime and their place in it, from the time of the nation's founding to the present. Prerequisite: GO 102. Recommended preparation: GO 236 and/or permission of the instructor.

GO 367: Election Research

Chris Mann

Description: Recent and ongoing controversies have demonstrated that the conduct of elections can have profound effects on election outcomes. Yet the conduct of elections remains one of the most neglected areas of political science research. This course aims to fill that gap by developing and conducting a research project on the quality of polling places in the Capitol Region. Polling places are the foundation of the electoral process in New York, and their quality can effect turnout, confidence in the voting process, confidence in government, and more. This civic engagement/research in the community course will begin by reading existing research on conducting elections in order develop a research design. Students will collect information about polling places on Election Day, then write up their findings in the last part of the semester. **Prerequisites:** GO101 and at least one 200 or 300 level course in GO; or permission of the instructor.

GH 322: The History and Political Thought of the American Revolution

Natalie Taylor and Tillman Nechtman

The creation of a new nation: 1763-1789. This course will give special attention to the political ideas which gave direction to the American Revolution and the Constitution. Note(s): Courses at the 300 level are open to sophomores only with permission of instructor.

List of Recommended Courses for Government/Political Science Students

History

HI 223: U.S. Foreign Policy, 1790 to the Present
 HI 229: War and Peace in 20th Century Latin America
 HI 151C: Islamic History before 1800
 HI 251D: Women, Gender, & Sexuality in the Middle East
 HI 265: Class in the United States, 1776 to the Present
 HI 320: The Rise of American Democracy
 HI 327: The Progressive Era
 HI 328 - Depression and War
 HI 329 - U.S. Since 1945

International Affairs

IA 101: Introduction to International Affairs
 IA 251A: Cyberwar: States, Industry, Hackers and Global Security

Philosophy

PH 101: Introduction to Philosophy
 PH 304: Social-Political Philosophy

Research Methods

SO 226: Statistics for the Social Sciences
 SO 227: Social Research Methods
 EC 237: Statistical Methods
 EC 361: Behavioral/Experimental Economics
 ID 210: Introduction to GIS
 ID 351C: Spatial Analysis and Modeling
 MS 104: Introduction to Statistics

Sociology and Social Work

SO 213: Crime and Victimization
 SO 251: China in Transition
 SO 251: Sociology of Immigrant Adaptation
 SO 251: Social Issues in Black America
 SO 322: Political Sociology
 SO 328: Social Movements and Collective Action
 SW 338: Social Policy and Social Justice

Fall 2016: What Counts for What?

| AMERICAN POLITICS | POLITICAL THEORY | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | COMPARATIVE POLITICS |
|--|---|--|--|
| GO 251C: Demagogues, Demons and Democracy (RS) | GO204: Classical Political Thought (NT) | GO 309: Latin America and the United States (AV) | GO 227: From Genghis Khan to Gorbachev (KG) |
| GO251C: Campaigns and Elections (CM) | GO 351B: African-American Political Thought (FT) | GO 346: Politics of Modern Warfare (YBO) | GO 239: Middle Eastern Politics (FO) |
| GO252: The Psychology of Politics (RS) | GH 322: The History and Political Thought of the American Revolution (NT and T. Nechtman) | | GO 251A: Race, State and Power in Comparative Perspective (KG) |
| GO 311: Constitutional Law (TBA) | | | |
| GO 315: Immigration Politics and Policy (BT) | | | |
| GO 334: The United States Presidency (RS) | | | |
| GO367: Election Research (CM) | | | |

GOVERNMENT COURSES: FALL 2016

GO 101-001: Introduction to American Government

Robert Turner M W F 12:20—1:15 PM

GO 101-002: Introduction to American Government

Unit Coordinator M W F 11:15—12:20 PM

GO 101-003: Introduction to American Government

Unit Coordinator M W F 1:25—2:20 PM

GO 102-001: Introduction to Political Philosophy

Flagg Taylor T TH 9:40—11:00 AM

GO 103-001: Intro to Comparative and International Politics

Feryaz Ocakli M W F 9:05—10:00 AM

GO 103-002: Intro to Comparative and International Politics

Yelena Biberman- Ocakli M W F 10:10—11:05 AM

GO 204-001: Classical Political Thought

Natalie Taylor M W 2:30—3:50 PM

GO 227-001: Power and Politics in Russian History

Kate Graney T TH 11:10—12:30 PM

GO 239-001: Middle Eastern Politics

Feryaz Ocakli M W F 10:10—11:05 AM

GO 251A-001: Race, State, Power

Kate Graney T TH 8:10—9:30 AM

GO 251C-001: Demagogues and Democracy

Ron Seyb M W F 11:15—12:10 PM

GO 251C-002: Campaigns and Elections.

Chris Mann T TH 2:10—3:30 PM

GO 252-001: The Psychology of Politics

Ron Seyb M W F 12:20—1:15 PM

GO 309-001: Latin America and U.S.

Aldo Vacs T TH 12:40—2:00 PM

GO 311-001: Constitutional Law

Unit Coordinator W F 8:40—10:00 AM

GO 315-001: Immigration Politics

Bob Turner M W 4:00—5:20 PM

GO 334-001: The U.S. Presidency

Ron Seyb M W F 1:25—2:20 PM

GO 346-001: Politics of Modern Warfare

Yelena Biberman-Ocakli M W 2:30—3:50pm

GO 351B-001: African American Political Thought

Flagg Taylor T TH 2:10—3:30 PM

GO 367-001: Election Research

Chris Mann T TH 3:40—5:00 PM

GH 322R-001: History and Political Thought of American Rev

 Natalie Taylor W F 12:20—1:40 PM
Tillman Nechtman