

Professors Sound Off

Do you believe that the health reform passed by Congress will help or hurt the American people? Why or why not?

I believe health care reform will help the American people, particularly those who have difficulty acquiring affordable insurance, those denied for pre-existing conditions, and young adults who can remain on their parents coverage for longer periods of time. What still needs to be addressed is the labor shortage some areas of our country face and many regions will have in the coming years. We will not have enough nurses or primary care physicians to treat an aging baby boom generation, and thus the federal government (and states) must create greater incentives to encourage our youth to enter the healthcare profession. This can take place through subsidizing the cost of education in the medical fields.

-Prof. Nicholas

While Obama's bill is a major compromise with the powerful pharmaceutical industry in America, it will still provide benefits for the American people, especially the 47 million who are uninsured. Comparative statistics with Europe suggest, moreover, that all of society will benefit. European national health care systems generally produce healthier people (including mental health) who live longer than Americans. In fact, when you look at the raw deal that American workers get as opposed to their European counterparts, the question above appears without merit and could only be raised in a political system in which mass perspectives are profoundly shaped by the interests of the powerful and the privileged who, in turn, directly benefit from the perpetuation of popular ignorance about real social choices. To cite just one example of

how this ignorance gets perpetuated -- while plenty of pundits, news anchors, talking heads, etc. worry about the "high" costs of taking care of sick people, when and where have these same people raised alarms about a military defense budget that surpasses all the world's military budgets combined? Where is the national debate and attention on this issue? Why do we wring our hands about the "helping" or "hurting" of HEALTH CARE while total silence confronts the constant amassing of the instruments of DEATH? As a people and a civilization, how could we have our priorities so messed up?

-Prof. Hislope

The new health care reform legislation will clearly help some people: those who could not get insurance coverage before because of pre-existing health conditions and those up to age 26 who can now stay on their parents' insurance policy, for example. These are two groups who will more easily be able to get health insurance coverage now. What is presently very unclear is whether the cost of this insurance will be affordable for them, or for others. When the public option was stripped from the legislation, a mechanism for introducing competition into the health insurance market was eliminated. Without such competition, it seems likely that health insurance costs will not decrease and will, perhaps, continue to spiral upward.

-Prof. Oxley

What do you believe will be the largest diplomatic hurdle for the Obama Administration in the months to come? Why?

I expect that the largest diplomatic hurdle facing the Obama Administration will involve Iran and its nuclear program. President Obama has endorsed a diplomatic approach, but this may become more

problematic as Ahmadinejad persists in being an uncooperative interlocutor. Ahmadinejad is Iran's global face, but I maintain that it's not entirely clear how much he speaks for influential internal decision makers such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Ayatollah Khomeini.

-Prof. Xydias

Student Accomplishments

Congratulations to the New Members of Pi Sigma Alpha 2009-10:

Seniors

Rebecca Bardach
Timothy Cook
Benjamin Cote
Sarah Doucett
Jennifer Lichtman
Gregory Mitchell
Katherine Rodman
Max Shapiro
Jeffery Temple

Juniors

Alexander Brockwehl
Maeghan Buckley
Andrew Churchill
Andrew Davis
Olen Henderson
Kathryn Leary
Nicholas Poli
Jennifer Ramirez
Matthew Rogers
Georgia Swan-Ambrose
Caroline Tulp
Stephanie Vacchio

Guest Speaker

Personal insights on 5 Presidents aboard Air Force One: Master Chief Sergeant Howie Franklin, United States Air Force (Retired)
May 26th, 2010
7:00 pm
Nott Memorial

Letter from the Department Chair

Deep into spring term, as we are, probably has many of you thinking about what summer will bring. For me, it will involve a trip to my home state of Maine, spending time with my son, and making some progress on a couple research projects. With your thoughts about summer, please do not overlook many events coming up this spring, such as guest speaker Howie Franklin (who will discuss his experiences on Air Force One). Other events are listed in this newsletter, as are important details about Fall Term courses. We also include a list of students who are new members of Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honor society. If you see any of them around campus, please pass on your congratulations for this significant academic achievement!

- Prof. Zoe Oxley(oxleyz@union.edu)

PSC Major Foreign Experience Requirement

All PSC majors, including ID-PSC majors, need to fulfill a foreign experience requirement. There are two ways to fulfill this requirement:

1. Complete a three course language sequence (only two courses are required if the sequence is begun beyond the first introductory course in the language)
2. Participate on a full-length term abroad (mini terms do not qualify)

Please plan carefully to fulfill this requirement.

For many languages, the introductory course is only offered in the Fall Term, so you cannot necessarily begin your language study any time in the year.

Faculty Updates

Prof. Lori Marso

In the fall term, I will be teaching a political theory seminar on political judgments in exemplary and historic trials. My interest in this topic stems from my current book project comparing the political theories of Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir on conditions enabling judgment, the role of intellectuals in political life, and the centrality of freedom, action, and embodiment in politics. The seminar will examine the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Walter Benjamin, and focus on famous post-WW II trials such as those of Brasillach, Eichmann, and Klaus Barbie, and the more contemporary trials of OJ Simpson and the Central Park Jogger. I also had two articles published in March 2010, one in Perspectives in Politics titled "Feminism's Quest for Common Desires," and one in Politics and Gender titled "Marriage and Bourgeois Respectability."
(marsol@union.edu)

Prof. Michele Angrist

I have just finished putting the final touches on a new textbook on Middle East Politics, to be published by Lynne Rienner Publishers this August for Fall 2010 classes nationwide. The book features chapters written by some eighteen plus highly regarded professors around the country, each writing on his/her specialty. The book will be used in upper level undergraduate courses and beginning level graduate courses on Middle East Politics. It begins with thematic chapters that talk generally about what is going on the region with respect to politics, economics, international affairs, civil society, religion, identity, and gender. It then contains case studies on eleven key countries in the region. I look forward to assigning it to Union students when I return from the sabbatical I am taking next year!
(angristm@union.edu)

Prof. Zoe Oxley

I recently presented a paper titled "Newspaper Coverage of State Executive Office Candidates: Belief Stereotypes and Novelty" at the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago. At that conference, I was also filmed as part of a video project for an introductory US politics textbook. Each chapter in that text profiles a piece of political science research, including an article that I co-authored (on news media framing effects). For the video, I answered questions about the research process as well as about our findings and their implications for politics. When complete, the video will be available for professors who assign this introductory text to show to their students. Who knows, I might become famous among undergraduates across the nation!
(oxleyz@union.edu)

Prof. Phil Nicholas

I was pleased to be reappointed for the 2010-2011 academic year, and I will be teaching Congressional Politics and Intro to US Politics in the Fall. In December I performed archival research at National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. (nicholap@union.edu)

Prof. Christina Xydias

I am happy to share several updates. First, I completed the requirements for my PhD in March 2010, and I will officially receive my degree from The Ohio State University in June. Second, I attended two research conferences in the month of April: the Midwest Political Science Association and the Council on European Studies. At these conferences I presented work related to my dissertation as well as a new project that I am co-authoring with a doctoral student at Notre Dame, Shannon Drysdale Walsh.
(xydiasc@union.edu).

Pizza & Politics

Thursday, May 13th

12:55 PM-1:45PM, SSCI 104

Student- Faculty Panel

“How the World Perceives the United States and President Obama: Freedom or Imperialist?”

Wednesday, May 19th

12:50PM-1:45PM, SSCI 016

Allen Wells, Jr. Professor of History at
Bowdoin College

“Cuba’s National Pastimes: Baseball and Politics”

Important Announcement

The Washington, DC organizational meeting will be on May 13th, at 5:00 PM, in Social Science 017. This is for the Spring 2011 DC term. At the meeting we will discuss what the program consists of, and application forms will be distributed.

Student Accomplishment

Frederick Franke '10 received a ***Watson Fellowship***. Franke (Rahde to his friends), an interdepartmental history and political science major, will research the intimate connection between food and culture in “Out of the Kitchen and Into the Fire: Exploring the World’s Open-fire Cooking Methods.”

PSC Major Research Requirement

All PSC majors are required to take two research-focused courses:

- An R course (the R indicates that the course is research-intensive)
- Either a 2nd R course, a seminar or a research methods course (PSC 220, 222 or 223)

PSC Interdepartmental (ID) majors must take one R course to fulfill the research requirement.

Finally, students are strongly recommended to complete this requirement before the end of the junior year, as preparation for the senior thesis.

Fall 2010 Offerings:

PSC 361R - Political Psychology
PSC 339 - Political Theory Seminar
(Judgments in Dark Times; Prof. Marso)

Winter 2011 Offerings:

PSC 220 Social Data Analysis
PSC 240R Comparative Ethnic and Racial Politics
PSC 254R Arab-Israel Conflict
PSC 359 IR Seminar (Terrorism and Torture; Prof. Angrist)

Spring 2011 Offerings:

PSC 251R American Foreign Policy
PSC 369 US Politics Seminar (Topic TBD; Prof. Brown)

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING TERM

243: Latin American Politics-Seri

Latin America's political dynamics, with special reference to Latin America's position in world affairs, economic and cultural patterns within the region, and U.S. influence.

246: Contentious Politics-Xydias

From the American and French revolutions to peasant riots in contemporary China, ordinary people all over the world have challenged the power of political and economic elites. This course explores why people who are usually submissive to authority sometimes rebel, why some social movements spread but not others, and what impact contentious politics has on ordinary politics. It introduces basic concepts of contentious politics and applies these concepts to the study of historical and contemporary patterns of social protest around the world.

248: The Politics of the New Europe-Hislope

A survey of contemporary European politics including topics such as the emergence, dynamics, and problems of the European Union, types of European social democracy, patterns of institutional governance (parliamentary government and proportional representation), trends in immigration, the rise of right-wing movements, and debate about the very meaning of "Europe."

255: International Security-Watson

Much of our understanding of international relations has focused on the perceived and real threats to international security. Over time these threats have included nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons designed to kill millions of people in a single attack. More recently concerns have focused on those who would use these weapons as

much as the weapons themselves, making rogue states and terrorist groups in particular the most recognized threats to international security. Now add to this the increasing concerns over cyber terrorism and environmental causes of conflict and the world seems beset by dangers. This course seeks to critically examine those dangers and the policies developed to deal with them. Core issues to be examined will be sources of and responses to state insecurity, WMDs, multilateral conflict resolution, and the ramifications of US hegemony for international security.

264: Congressional Politics-Nicholas

The course begins with a discussion of the formal powers of Congress and its historical development. We will explore how people become members of Congress and ways legislators represent their constituents. Other learning objectives include the influence of party organization and leadership in the House and Senate; ways members of Congress specialize in particular policy areas through serving on committees; and the relationship Congress has with the executive branch; the federal courts; and interest groups.

273: Supreme Court & Judicial Politics-Hays

An investigation of the judicial branch of government in the U.S. that focuses on the role of judges, the functioning of courts, and leading contemporary controversies in the judicial system. Among the primary concerns of this course are: the structure of the American Judiciary, judicial selection processes, how cases originate and move through the judicial system, how judges think about and reach decisions in the cases, and the role law plays in society. In exploring these topics many actual Supreme Court cases are dissected, focusing on such issues as: gay rights, pornography, rights of disabled citizens, the rights of those accused of crimes, and free speech over the Internet, to name only a few areas.

277: Local Political Internships-Hislope

Students find internships in local political organizations and in offices in local and state government. Students draw on their internship experience and related academic work to reach a better understanding of the complexities and dynamics of politics at the state or local level. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing and permission of the instructor.

336: Prudence-Seri

If the political involves making decisions that define the fate of entire communities, where and how can we learn to judge and decide wisely? In his Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle defines phronesis, commonly translated as practical wisdom or prudence as the eminently political virtue of producing “right judgments about what is to be done” in concrete circumstances. While a concern with prudence informed the Ancient and Medieval education of statesmen and princes, in this seminar we will revisit and assess the possibilities of the tradition of prudential governance-in both its classical and postmodern versions-to inform contemporary political puzzles as well as the epistemological bases for an interpretive political science.

339: Seminar: Judgments in Dark Times: Historic Trials, Justice, and Democracy-Marso

This course will focus on how political judgments, mostly enacted in historic or exemplary trials, become a significant factor in fostering or undermining democratic legitimacy. We will study post-World War II trials of war criminals, trials of collaborators in France, as well as trials in the U.S. that illuminate race, gender, and class dilemmas. The theoretical focus will be on discovering which kinds of questions/issues factor into making political judgments and how intellectuals and theorists talk about these judgments after the fact, especially when they consider their effects on democratic politics and institutions. Theorists will include Hannah

Arendt, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Walter Benjamin, and Shoshona Felman.

361R: Political Psychology-Oxley

[Same as PSY 336] Do the personalities of political leaders impact the decisions that they make? How is information from the political environment (campaign advertisements, news media stories, etc.) processed by individuals? How do stereotypes and emotions influence individuals’ attitudes? When and why do groups make poor decisions? We will answer these and many other questions in this course. More specifically, we will apply psychological theories to understand the political attitudes and behavior of individuals (citizens, political leaders) as well as small groups (juries, presidential advisors). Specific topics include stereotypes, personality, social cognition, attitude formation, altruism, emotion, psychoanalysis, groupthink and elite decision-making.

362: CIA and the Art of Intelligence-Lobe

Provides an historical background to intelligence and espionage, and offers perspectives on present day secret intelligence operations of world powers in support of their national security objectives. Discussions on intelligence analysis, evaluation, human and technical intelligence, cryptography, counter-intelligence, moles, various kinds of overt operations, US foreign policy issues and goals.

POLITICAL SCIENCE
COURSES: Fall 2010

PSC 111- 01-Introduction to US Politics
(Hays) MWF 10:30AM-11:35AM

PSC 111- 02-Introduction to US Politics
(Nicholas) MWF 08:00AM-09:05AM
PSC 112 – Introduction Global Politics
(Lobe) MWF 01:50PM-02:55PM

PSC 113 – Introduction to Political Thought
(Scherer) TTH 09:00AM-10:45AM

International Relations

PSC 255-International Security
(Watson) MWF 09:15AM-10:20AM

Comparative

PSC 243- Latin American Politics-
(Seri) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

PSC 246-Contentious Politics
(Xydias) TTH 01:55PM-
03:40PM

PSC 248-The Politics of the New
Europe (Hislope) MW
03:05PM-04:45PM

US Politics

PSC 264- Congressional Politics
(Nicholas) MWF 01:50PM-
02:55PM

PSC 273- Supreme Court & Judicial
Politics (Hays) MW
03:05PM-04:45PM

PSC 277- Local Political Internships
(Hislope) TBA

PSC 361R- Political Psychology
(Oxley) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

PSC 362- CIA and the Art of
Intelligence (Lobe) TTH 10:55AM-
12:40PM and
T 06:30PM-08:30PM

Theory

PSC 336-Prudence (Seri) TTH
10:55AM-12:40PM

PSC 339- Seminar: Judgments in
Dark Times: Historic Trials, Justice,
and Democracy (Marso) TTH
01:55PM-03:40PM