

FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR MICHELE ANGRIST

To PSC majors, minors, and all students in PSC classes this fall,

I hope that everyone is off to a positive start with fall trimester coursework. As usual, the term is moving quickly, and, somehow, it is already time to start thinking about winter term course selection!

This fall the department welcomes a new Visiting Assistant Professor, Dr. David Siegel. Professor Siegel did his graduate work at the Graduate Center, CUNY. He is a specialist on post-Soviet Central Asia and will be teaching courses this year in Russian Politics and International Law, along with Introduction to Global Politics. Professor Siegel comes to us with significant teaching experience; we are very fortunate to have him here. I encourage you to consider his courses this year and beyond — you won't be disappointed!

I also need to announce a coming change in PSC staffing. I will be taking a leave from the department beginning January 1, 2019, to serve the college as Dean of Studies. Professor Oxley will be serving as Chair of the department for the remainder of this academic year. It has been my great privilege to be a member of this department for the past 18 years, and to be chair for the past 5. I want to thank my faculty colleagues for being the wonderful collection of scholars, teachers, and human beings that they are. I also want to thank Carol Fortsch for the hard work, dedication, and care that she brings every day to her role as Administrative Assistant to the department. My appreciation also goes to the work-study students who keep the office operating smoothly (including by producing this newsletter!).

Finally, for those of you who are new(er) to the college and/or to the department, I wanted to draw your attention to the departmental website, which

you can find at <https://muse.union.edu/politicalscience>. Here you

Remember!

The political science website has lots of useful information for majors and prospective majors

<http://muse.union.edu/politicalscience/>

Requirements for Graduating with Honors in Political Science

--GPA of 3.50 or better in PSC, as well as 3.30 cumulatively

--Completion of a PSC seminar with an A- or better [if you do not attain an A- in the seminar, you may still be eligible for honors if your PSC GPA is 3.70 or higher.] Either way, you must complete a seminar.

--At least three PSC course grades of A- or better [not including thesis courses].

--A grade of A- or higher on the senior project.

--Delivery of an oral (not poster) presentation on your senior project at the Steinmetz symposium.

****ID majors must meet the requirements for honors in both departments****

can learn more about our faculty members, the courses we offer, and special curricular opportunities such as the Term in Washington DC, Model United Nations, and the Capital Region Political Internships course. Note the FAQ page, too, which contains the answers to common student queries.

Professor Sounds Off: China's 'Muslim Problem' in Xinjiang Province – The New Face of Mass Surveillance and Detention

Prof. Mark P. Dallas

There are increasingly disturbing reports coming out of Xinjiang Province in China's northwest concerning the mass detention and cultural destruction of Muslim citizens, with a particular focus on the Uyghur population (pronounced "We-gurs"), a Turkic ethnic group.¹ According to various pieces of evidence,² including satellite photographs, interviews, government policy documents and government procurement contracts, there is growing evidence that hundreds of thousands of Muslims³ have been detained and placed in 're-education' camps where they are forced to undergo 'de-radicalization,' which generally involves renouncing Islam and/or pledging allegiance to the Communist Party. In many cities with large Muslim populations, innumerable checkpoints and fortified police stations have been set up every few hundred yards. Furthermore, the Chinese police in Xinjiang are testing out China's most cutting-edge surveillance technologies, including facial recognition cameras that can identify faces as far away as nine miles and the building of biometric databases. There is concern that these new modes of police surveillance and information augur a new era of enhanced police power in China, which are being exported to other authoritarian countries.

The Chinese state justifies its policies towards the Uyghurs for two reasons. First, there have been several riots in Xinjiang starting in 2009 which pitted Muslim against Han Chinese citizens, and which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people. In other attacks (in Beijing and Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province in China's southwest), some Uyghurs, armed with machetes and knives, terrorized Chinese in train stations and other public places. Second, and related to these attacks, there is an active separatist movement supported by some Uyghurs living in China and abroad, which holds the fanciful goal of separating Xinjiang from mainland China to create a new, East Turkestan.

PSC Major Foreign Experience Requirement

All PSC majors, including ID-PSC majors, need to fulfill the 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. Complete a full-length term abroad (miniterms 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. In addition, there is now a third, student-proposed option for fulfilling this requirement. See PSC website for details.

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 or 223)

[Note: Normally, students must have a GPA of at least 3.0 to gain entrance into a seminar.]

PSC Interdepartmental (ID) majors must take one R course to fulfill the research requirement. Students are strongly recommended to complete this requirement before the end of their junior year, as preparation for their senior thesis.

While the group is active, no one knows how much popular support there is for the separatists among the general Uyghur population in China.

Nevertheless, the Chinese government at the highest levels takes the threat very seriously. In 2016, they transferred the Party Secretary of Tibet at the time, Chen Quanguo, to become the Party Secretary of Xinjiang as well as to hold one of the seats in the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party – the second highest political organ in China. Chen had gathered years of experience in Tibet, controlling and at times suppressing similar ethnic tensions among Tibetans, including through drastic expansion of police presence and surveillance, such as placing over 100,000 cadres in Tibetan villages and hiring four times more new police. But, his actions in Xinjiang go much further as his goal has shifted to a more aggressive suppression and transformation of Islamic practices and beliefs. For instance, hundreds of thousands of Muslims have been sent to detention centers for possessing religious books, visiting relatives abroad or wearing certain clothing. Men under 60 must shave their beards and female clothing is regulated. In practices reminiscent of Maoist China, loyal citizens or cadres are also assigned to monitor and report on ten families.

While the Chinese government has denied many of the reports and no one has gained access to the detention centers and very few Muslims are willing to speak to independent journalists for fear of reprisals, there is substantial evidence of these practices (see Footnote 2). Most importantly, some researchers collected government documents online which explicitly outline government practices and goals. This includes the actual government procurement bids made public for construction companies to bid on and build the detention centers. Other researchers have documented the dramatic growth of these detention centers since 2017 using satellite imagery. Of course, given the prison security of these detention centers, no journalists or independent agencies can verify what happens inside their walls apart from interviewing citizens who have been released, of which some have

spoken privately in interviews, some of which can be viewed online.

Of course, one of the pillar functions of any state is to ensure the security of its population, and this is how the Chinese government justifies its policies. Few would deny that the Chinese government's actions would be reasonable if they were narrowly targeted towards terrorists or secessionists. It is the broad-brush tactics affecting nearly all Muslims in Xinjiang which are problematic. Given existing ethnic tensions and occasional violence between the (vast) majority Han Chinese population and some of the larger ethnic minorities in China, as well as the government's tight control over the media, the government is able to control the national narrative and gain generalized support for its policies, or at least what is known of them. However, the grave risk that the government takes is that their actions against the vast majority of ordinary, non-terrorist and non-secessionists Muslims will deepen ethnic divisions and stoke the very terrorism and secessionism which they seek to suppress. If this leads to some Muslims lashing out in sudden bursts of disorganized violence or creating more connections with foreign secessionists, then the government's narrative of the need for 're-education' will be more firmly confirmed which may lead them to the wrong conclusion that even more surveillance, more police and more suppression are required to 'solve the Muslim problem.' The cycle of violence may very well worsen.

¹ There are approximately 10-15 million Uyghurs in China, most living in Xinjiang Province. Another 1-2 million Uyghurs live abroad, largely in Central Asia.

² For a good compilation of news, research and other reports, see https://supchina.com/2018/08/22/xinjiang-explainer-chinas-reeducation-camps-for-a-million-muslims/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioschina&stream=top-stories

³ One UN agency estimates the total could be one million Muslims.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW



Emily Myers

Recent Career Path:

I'm currently a Research Associate for the Reagan-Fascell Fellowship Program at the National Endowment for Democracy.

What does the work involve, and how did your time at Union prepare you for it?

The core of my job is to support the Reagan-Fascell Fellows—international scholars, journalists, and civil society practitioners completing five-month residencies at the National Endowment for Democracy—as they work on projects that will aid in the promotion of human rights and democracy in their home countries and regions. In this capacity, I provide input on the shape and development of Fellows' projects, offer editorial research assistance, and facilitate outreach to relevant professionals in DC. Because Fellows come to democracy work from different countries, disciplines, and perspectives, I have to learn regional contexts and technical subject matter quickly and assess how I can be most helpful to each Fellow's work.

My experience at Union, especially my Political Science classes, has been critical in this regard. My classes at Union taught me how to research efficiently and articulate that research clearly and concisely. My job is often to wade through large bodies of resources to extract the most important information for my Fellows in a way that will help

them build their projects. I draw on my experience writing term papers for my Political Science classes at Union, where I learned to distinguish between what is relevant and what is peripheral and bring together pieces of evidence to form a cohesive and compelling argument.

What is your fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science at Union?

My fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science at Union was the process of writing my senior thesis, "War and Women Wielding Power". It was an incredibly rewarding experience to pursue a political science puzzle I was deeply curious about. Drawing conclusions from the data and case studies I had developed, I felt that I had learned to think like a political scientist and contributed something novel to scholarship on civil war and women. Furthermore, I deepened my professional and personal relationship with my thesis advisor, Professor Angrist. I learned a great deal from her guidance while writing my thesis and she has remained a mentor of mine since my graduation. Lastly, writing a senior thesis cemented my resolve to eventually earn a PhD in Political Science and become a professor. So, in short, it was a formative experience!

What advice would you have for current Political Science majors as they think about life after Union?

Take advantage of the opportunities Union offers, especially study abroad, Model UN, and the term in Washington D.C. Build relationships with professors and seek their advice on the classes you should take based on your interests or career aspirations. Perhaps most importantly, take a wide array of classes and spend time reflecting on what you are most interested in. Concrete skills and experiences, connections and strong recommenders, and seriousness of purpose will all serve you well in your professional career post-Union.

Winter 2019 POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

Introductory

- PSC 111: Introduction to American Politics
(Hays) MWF 8:00-9:05AM
- PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics
(Siegel) MWF 10:30-11:35AM
- PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory
(Seri) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

Political Theory

- PSC 232: Violence and Politics
(Cidam) MW 3:05-4:45PM
- PSC 434: Feminist Film
(Marso) Th Lab 1:55-4:45PM

Comparative Politics

- PSC 241: Russian Politics
(Siegel) MWF 1:50-2:55PM
- PSC 246: Asian Development
(Dallas) TTh 9:00-10:45AM
- PSC 349: The Rise and Fall of the Left
(Hislope) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM

International Politics

- PSC 252R: Global Value Chains
(Dallas) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
- PSC 256: Model United Nations
(Seri) Th Lab 1:55-4:45PM

U.S. Politics

- PSC 363R: American Political Development
(Plencner) MW 3:05-4:45PM
- PSC 365: Law, Society and the Wire
(Hays) TTh 9:00-10:45AM

Research Methods

- PSC 220: Social Data Analysis
(Oxley) MWF 9:15-10:20AM

Internships

- PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
(Oxley)

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR WINTER TERM

PSC 220: Social Data Analysis

Introduction to the research process in political science with an emphasis on the analysis of social science data. Focus on the utility of quantitative data and statistical techniques to answer research questions about the political world. Prerequisite(s): Any introductory social science course; a background in math is not necessary. CC: QMR

PSC 232: Violence and Politics

What is the relationship between violence and politics? Is politics a continuation of violent struggle through other means? Or is there a fundamental difference between the two? What is the relationship between legal order and violence? What is the role of violence in resisting different forms oppression? Can the use of violence ever be morally justifiable? If so, when and why? This political theory course aims to inquire into these challenging questions by studying the theoretical debates on the relationship between violence and politics with a special emphasis on questions related to the relationship between legal order, constitution of the state, and the use of violence both in support of, and in opposition to, the existing order. During the course of the term, we will focus on debates surrounding different forms of violence in embedded in our legal systems, look at examples of resistance movements, assess different arguments made in defense of nonviolent and violent methods of resistance, analyze different conceptions of civil disobedience, and grapple with the question of how representations of violence affect our judgments about its legitimacy and/or justification.

PSC 241: Russian Politics

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia underwent a series of transitions

that are almost without precedent in modern history in terms of their scope, scale, and suddenness. This included the development of new state institutions, the accommodation of multiple and overlapping ethnic and national identities within new international borders, the transition from state socialism to market capitalism, and the struggle to develop democratic institutions, which subsequently faltered under a rising tide of authoritarianism. In the context of these transformations, Russian society has witnessed continual civil strife in the northern Caucasus, severe economic crisis followed by the entrenchment of a powerful oligarchy, and the rise of organized crime and rampant corruption at all levels of government. In exploring these transitional challenges and their outcomes, we will develop a deeper conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing Russian politics today. What are the main processes associated with post-Soviet political and economic transitions in Russia? To what extent, if any, are some of these dynamics shaped by the legacies of the Soviet Union itself? Conversely, which aspects of Russian politics today represent a significant break with the Soviet past? Why are informal institutions so central to Russian politics; what are these informal institutions and how do they work? To what extent has a changing international environment shaped Russian behavior at home and abroad? These are the main questions that will organize our inquiry. While we may not arrive at definitive answers, the process of exploration will expand and deepen our understanding of how Russian politics works, and also contribute to our thinking about comparative politics more generally.

PSC 246: Asian Development

How did some Asian countries become the first non-Western countries to achieve high-income status, near elimination of poverty, a highly educated and healthy population, leading edge technology and in some cases robust democracies and even admirably equal distributions of wealth. And how did they come to compete with the West, often on terms set by Western

countries, despite the West's much earlier industrialization, and the vast geographic and cultural distances? Are answers to be found in politics and institutions? Culture? Resources and demography? Historical effects of imperialism? Regionalism? After a brief comparison of premodern China and Europe, the course focuses on the 'miracle' of Japanese industrialization from the late 19th to early 20th century, as well as Japan's combination of industrialization and militarization on the road to World War Two. This is followed by post-World War 2 Japan and the four Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore), before focusing on the return of China since the 1980s, and Southeast Asia within the Asian region. This is a reading intensive course, though no background in Asia, political science or economics is required.

PSC 252R: Global Value Chains

This course examines the intertwining of power, politics and markets that undergird the production and consumption of everyday consumer goods, from coffee to cars to iPhones. It examines the primary countries where these goods are produced, their differing labor regimes, the international agreements regulating them, the transnational corporations which coordinate the chain of production and consumption, how goods are globally traded and the relative winners and losers these linkages create, usually between developing and developed countries. Each product also corresponds with an underlying theoretical topic, such as natural resources and the global commons or heavy industrialization and industrial policy. The course will introduce some basic conceptual building blocks which will help us organize the extraordinary variety of places, production processes, policies and populations engaged in global value chains. But, we will spend most of the course examining one commodity or product at a time, using what we learn along the way to build an increasingly sophisticated understanding of global production and exchange. Finally, for a final project, students will conduct research on their own

product of choice and explore a theoretically important concept associated with it.

PSC 256: Model United Nations

This course prepares students to participate in the National Model United Nations (NMUN), the largest UN simulation in the world. The NMUN program provides students a better understanding of the inner working of the United Nations. Course goals are to develop research, writing, public speaking, and diplomatic skills amongst students as they confront at myriad of global public policy challenges. At the simulation, students and faculty from five continents work to propose resolutions addressing regional conflicts, peacekeeping, human rights, women and children, economic and social development, and the environment. Students are permitted to take PSC 256 multiple times for credit, but this course can only count once toward a PSC major, ID major or minor. Note: PSC 256 cannot be taken pass / fail.

PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships

This class enables students to become politically active and/or gain political experience by working for elected officials, government agencies, election campaigns, interest groups, nonprofit organizations, lobby firms, etc. 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. Students are permitted to enroll in this course twice, although the course will count toward the Political Science major only once. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing and permission of the instructor. Note: This course does not count towards the PSC portion of an ID major.

PSC 349: The Rise and Fall of the Left

This seminar is organized around the theme of the historical trajectory of Left-wing ideas and politics. The current global era is marked by the growing popularity and success of radical right parties and the corresponding decline of left-wing parties virtually everywhere. Why is this so? Does the Left face permanent political defeat, or are there opportunities for renewal and

resurgence in the current political landscape? This class seeks to answers these questions by critically examining the philosophical, historical, and comparative politics of Marxism and associated Left-wing ideas, movements, and practices.

PSC 363R: American Political Development

This course is designed as an advanced study of American national political institutions by way of introduction to the disciplinary subfield of American Political Development (APD). Over the last thirty years, as but one expression of "the historical turn" in the social sciences and humanities, APD has carved a distinctive voice within academic Political Science, blending elements of political history, theory, multi-level political analysis, cultural studies, and an array of diverse methodologies in order to better understand how political institutions change over time--or remain durable in the face of significant challenges and pressures. We will begin the term by considering foundational concepts for APD--including specific understandings of the state, institutions, ideology, order, critical junctures, change, and the role of time in politics. Then, we'll explore these concepts in depth with focused attention on questions regarding the emergence of the state in American history; the crafting of state power by national political institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts; and how, where, and when otherwise durable institutions are subject to forces of change.

PSC 365: Law, Society and the Wire

HBO's *The Wire* is often hailed as one of the greatest television series. During its run, critics compared it to a novel or epic poem. Along with its gritty portrayal of inner city decay and the lives lived in this environment, the crime drama convincingly portrays communities and their institutions. *The Wire's* depiction of law is among its most nuanced and provocative features. The show easily slips among the black letter law, the law on the street, and informal law-like system that exist among communities that do not fully subscribe to the norms of the state. This

course will use the portrayal of law in *The Wire* to address some of the following questions: What is law? Is law only the domain of the state? What is the relationship between law and power? Is violence inherent in law? Is law inherently oppressive? If so, how do we reconcile oppression with democratic practice and human rights?

PSC 434: Feminist Film

Using 10 films as our “texts” we will examine the role of women in society, the diversity of women’s lives, the impact of gender roles in various cultural contexts, the possibility of alternative sexualities and ways of living, and whether we can say what constitutes a “feminist film.” The course is focused on discussion of, and writing about, the films but includes analysis of feminist political theory and feminist film theory to provide tools for better interpretation.