

FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR MICHELE ANGRIST

Happy Spring!

There are a few pieces of staffing news that we wish to share with you. This term the Department of Political Science is happy to welcome back Professor Mark Dallas, who spent the fall and winter trimesters on sabbatical leave based at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He has been missed!

We also thank Professor Terry Weiner for stepping in this year to fill some crucial gaps in our curriculum in U.S. Politics.

And, we are thrilled to introduce a new colleague who will arrive in the department next fall: Professor Joshua Plencner. Professor Plencner currently teaches at Drexel University in Philadelphia. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon and will be teaching courses in U.S. Politics for us for the next several years. Read on for an introductory message from him to PSC majors.

I also wanted to congratulate this year's Model United Nations team for a job extremely well done over spring break, when members traveled to New York City for a week to represent the Kingdom of Bahrain in eight separate simulated United Nations Committees. The team won many honors for its performance, including six position paper awards, one best delegate award, and an honorable mention delegation award. Professor Seri will be taking over the course next year, when Union plans to represent a country from Latin America.



As is our common practice, this spring newsletter provides you not only with information

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!



To keep up to date on all events, talks, requirements, deadlines, etc., please “like” our new Facebook Page, which you can find at

<https://www.facebook.com/UnionCPoliticalScience>

STEINMETZ SYMPOSIUM

The Steinmetz Symposium is Friday, May 12th. Many, many Political Science majors are presenting that day. Juniors especially: **attend a panel or two.** Support your peers and get a stronger sense of what you can achieve with your Senior Thesis or Senior Project next year.

about our fall course offerings, but also about planned offerings for winter and spring 2018. We do this in order to enable and encourage you to do some long-term planning.

Enjoy the term. We wish the very best to our graduating seniors. And we will look forward to welcoming everyone else back to campus in September.

War Games in North Korea

by Professor Dallas

We are in treacherous waters these days over North Korea. Most public analyses believe that North Korea may have a deliverable nuclear weapon by the end of the Trump administration's first term. If so, then they would become a nuclear power with the ability to strike Tokyo, Seoul (and Beijing...more later), at least. They have tested middle-range missile delivery many times – mostly successfully. They have started to test submarine launches and have tested first-stage intercontinental capabilities for striking a

US city, but they are farther from this achievement.

It is unclear how much confidence one should have towards this assessment, but it is a basic starting point for most of the discussions today. If this is good information, then action is paramount. The question is ‘what’ action. If it is false information, but we believe they are squarely on the road to nuclear capability, then there is more concern about starting a conventional war while pushing harder on the North Koreans. If it is false and the North’s nuclear capabilities are a hoax (more bravado than reality), then we are needlessly playing war games. On this point, we can only hope that our intelligence community has some degree of certainty and will communicate this (truthfully) to the President.

But, let’s assume it is true. First, South Korea and Japan are unlikely to make any moves without full consultation (and likely agreement) with the US, and vice versa. This is because we are bound to each other through security alliances, and also because the US ensures their security with tens of thousands of military personnel permanently stationed in each country (and additional air power stationed in Guam and Pacific fleet aircraft carriers). So, unless Trump engages in highly risky or thoughtless actions, Japan, South Korea and the US should be on the same page. China and the US allies have a common interest: they neither want regime collapse, nor do they want North Korea to acquire nuclear capabilities. China also would not want a nuclear armed neighbor for many reasons: China’s relationship with Kim is not very friendly, lukewarm friends can become enemies, and a nuclear North Korea will generate momentum for Japan and South Korea to ‘go nuclear’ too, or introduce weaponry from the US. Many people believe that Japan is as prepared as it can be to go nuclear, but without the ability to test or construct weapons (given Article 9 of their Constitution). Regime collapse through the elimination of Kim could lead to social breakdown, a refugee crisis in China and South Korea and possibly a civil war between contending North Korean generals. In addition, China and US-allied forces would be tempted to send troops into the North to secure the territory,

perhaps under the guise of humanitarian assistance and establishing ‘temporary’ security (though history tells us that ‘temporary’ can easily turn into permanent). This means that unfriendly militaries may try to occupy Korean territory.

So, can China and US allies cooperate to engineer the destruction or undermining of the North’s nuclear capabilities without triggering regime collapse? This is the fine line that needs to be walked. It would be very hard to negotiate an Iran-style agreement because North Korea is not as dependent on global finance and exports as Iran – a major oil exporter that relies on international banking. North Korea has organized its country around the principal of “self-reliance” (juche) since the Korean War (1950-1953) and so they are highly autarkic – if not always in practice, at least in rhetoric, meaning that bowing to foreign powers and allowing foreign inspections of nuclear facilities would severely undermine the credibility of Kim and the government. Perhaps their tools of propaganda are so strong that they could shield this from their people, but there is evidence that enough cell phones have infiltrated the country from China and enough people can tap into cell towers along the Chinese and South Korean borders that this may not be feasible anymore.

If so, this leaves only two means: carrots and sticks. The problem with carrots is how to verify that the North Koreans have shut down their operations? And how would each country react if another country were able to detect on-going activities? This is where intelligence is so important, and the sharing of information between China, US, Japan and South Korea. However, sticks are also problematic. One common hope is that North Korea is more dependent on China than we think for critical raw materials and for selling coal for much needed foreign cash. But Kim knows that it is a game of chicken: China risks social dislocation and even possibly regime collapse if North Korea is that dependent on China. I am also doubtful that the North is that dependent on China anyways, so “starving” them (literally and metaphorically) may not be feasible. The last, and riskiest, possibility is a preemptive

strike. There are so many variables and risks here, it is hard to fathom. This would have to be agreed upon between China and the US, with agreements on how the militaries would each operate and a whole slew of contingency plans. Unfortunately, our militaries have very little communication, no coordination and no joint exercises, so we would be “testing” out our cooperation while also engaging in highly sensitive and fast-paced operations. Seoul would almost certainly be attacked through conventional missile attacks and possibly long-range cannons since it is close to the border, and could sustain serious damage. It is not a pretty scenario and would likely lead to regime collapse and foreign occupation. How quickly this happens would determine how much damage would be sustained by Chinese and South Korean cities.

The above discussion also assumes China perceives North Korea as a comparable threat as US allies. It is unclear to what extent North Korean weapons and possibly future nuclear weapons would be aimed at China. From China’s perspective, an ICBM capable of reaching the US is not very concerning. And from China’s perspective, why antagonize Kim if missiles and weaponry remain aimed at South Korea, Japan and the US? Why provoke him into directing his military capabilities towards China? This is why China soft-peddles with North Korea. On the other hand, China does not want South Korea to install US anti-missile defense systems, so they do have tough decisions to make too. Somewhat paradoxically, it is in our interest to increase the costs on China as a way to better align their interests with ours. So, increase our aggressive posture on the Korean peninsula in order to force China’s hand to be more cooperative with us – cooperation through aggression.

There are no ‘good’ choices in this crisis and arguably, the range of viable options is narrower than with other countries. Indeed, these are treacherous waters.

PSC Major Foreign Experience Requirement

All PSC majors, including ID-PSC majors, need to fulfill the foreign experience requirement. There are two primary 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 the 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.

FROM PROFESSOR PLENCNER

My name is Joshua Plencner, and I'm thrilled to join the faculty at Union College this Fall. Professor Angrist asked me to share a little about myself to help you get a better sense of who I am, what I bring to Union, and what students can expect in my classes.

So here's how it is: I was born and raised in Fargo, North Dakota (of all places), and after finishing my undergraduate degree at the University of North Dakota, I moved to the Pacific Northwest for graduate school—a place that, in my young mind's eye at least, everything was green and the radical counterculture still danced in the streets. It turns out I was only half right, though about exactly which I'll leave it up to you to decide. I completed my PhD in the Department of Political Science at the University of Oregon in December 2014, specializing in American Politics, Public Policy, and Political Theory, with a strong emphasis in Racial Politics, Political Culture, and American Political Development. From there, in September 2015 I traded coasts to join the Department of Politics at Drexel University in Philadelphia, where I'm currently a Visiting Assistant Professor teaching my last term of courses this Spring.

Maybe one of the best ways to learn about how I think is through my research agenda, which explores the role of visual culture in American political life. In particular, I'm interested in the relationship between popular visual culture and political identity formation. For example, in my current book project I look to superhero comic books and the widely recognizable phenomenon of origin stories—a form of recurrent storytelling familiar to political founders of all kinds—arguing that such origins are instances of what social theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant call “racial projects.” I argue that superhero origin stories help “make” race in America by shaping popular ideas about power and racial meaning. I show how these ideas about race interact with their respective historical contexts, and map the way origin stories develop over time as they respond to, and help construct, the common sense political

Senior Thesis Submission Information

Seniors: If you are working on a Winter-Spring thesis, your finished work is due on the last day of classes, Friday June 2nd, in the Political Science office (Lippman 117) by 4:00 pm. Do not submit your thesis directly to your advisor – it must be submitted to the departmental office. You need to submit one hard copy, and it must be bound in some *secure* way (any type of binding is fine other than a staple or paper clip). If you are working on an ID thesis and have two advisors, you should submit one copy to each department. No special cover page is necessary. When you turn in your thesis, Ms. Fortsch will require you to fill out an evaluation of the senior thesis experience as a condition of your submission, so be sure to allow 10-15 minutes to complete this in the Political Science office. The college administration requires that we collect these evaluations.

discourse of race in America over the long 20th Century. In other projects, I also write on Black political thought, social movements, feminist cultural studies, affect theory, and art and cultural policy, among others.

As a professor, I do everything I can to bring this critical, interdisciplinary approach into my classes. Using a variety of perspectives, my students will learn how to break down those things that appear familiar at first, and, through hard work and sharp analysis, re-make them as new, strange, vital, and exciting again. That skill is at the core of doing politics. And while all of my classes offer their own versions of this approach, I promise you don't want to miss my “Comics, Culture, & Politics” class next Fall. We'll survey a variety of styles and genres—history, journalism, memoir, and even a few super-types—as we connect comics to classic questions of power and justice. I look forward to meeting you then!

Pi Sigma Alpha's Annual Essay Contest
Open to All Students

- 1st Place: \$100
2nd Place: \$75
3rd Place: \$50

Address one of the following topics in 750 words or less:

1. The U.S. Presidential Election. Analyze the results of this year's U.S. presidential election. In the aftermath of Trump's election, and in the first weeks of his presidency, the United States has become rather polarized. A recent report from the PEW Research Center shows that an increasing number of Americans have moved further away from the centrist mentality and now strictly identify with one party or the other. What have been the major contributing factors to this change in political climate regarding the major split between political party identification?

2. The Yemeni Conflict. The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien, has identified the crisis in Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia as "the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II." Looking toward the future, how can this issue be addressed? What actors—domestic, international, non-governmental, if any—should intervene, and to what capacity?

3. Media and Democracy. In the current age of exponentially accelerating technological growth, media has become an important aspect of governmental relations and democracy. Discuss the relationship between media and democracy in the United in its current state and compare this relationship to one in another country.

Contest Details:

-This essay contest is open to all Union College Students.

-The essays are due in the Political Science Department (Lippman Hall, Room 117), by 12pm on Wednesday, May 3rd.

-Essays will be graded by a panel of students and faculty on originality, clarity, creativity, and precision.

-The winners will be honored at the annual Pi Sigma Alpha award dinner, Wednesday, May 10th, 6:30-9:30pm.

-Each winner will be asked to provide a short description of his or her essay at the dinner.

-The essay contest is sponsored by Zeta Upsilon, Union College's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha.

Fall 2017 POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

Introductory

PSC 111: Introduction to American Politics
(Plencner) MWF 9:15-10:20AM

PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics
(Hislope) MWF 8:00-9:05 AM

PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory
(Brown) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

Political Theory

PSC 229: Comics, Culture & Politics
(Plencner) MWF 1:50-2:55PM

PSC 237: Music & Politics
(Hislope) MWF 10:30-11:45AM

Comparative Politics

PSC 213: Contemporary China
(Dallas) TTH 1:55-3:40PM

PSC 245: Populisms in Latin America & Beyond
(Seri) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

PSC 349: Seminar in Comparative Politics
(Angrist) TTH 9:00-10:45AM

International Politics

PSC 354R: Immigration and Human Rights
(Cidam) TTH 1:55-3:40PM

PSC 358: Wealth and Power Among Nations
(Dallas) 10:55AM-12:40PM

U.S. Politics

PSC 269R: Media and Politics
(Oxley) TTH 10:55AM-12:40PM

PSC 273: Supreme Court & Judicial Politics
(Hays) TTH 9:00-10:45AM

PSC 286: Modern Presidency
(Brown) MW 3:05-4:45PM
PLUS M 7:00-9:30PM

Internships

PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
(Oxley)

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR FALL TERM

PSC 213: Contemporary China

A survey course on the politics of the People's Republic of China, with an emphasis on state-society relations. After briefly introducing the Republican and state socialist eras, the heart of the course provides a historical and topical overview of the contemporary political and economic reforms in China. It explores topics in Chinese domestic politics, such as policy-making, center-local relations, inequality, rural transformation, industrialization, village elections, the rule of law and contentious politics, in addition to China's relationship with the outside world, including its integration into the international economy, the environment, energy and foreign policy.

PSC 229: Comics, Culture & Politics

This course will challenge students to carefully consider and substantively analyze comics--from early single panel cartoons to mass culture comic books, alternative commix, and long-form graphic novels--as sites of critical political discourse. In other words, students will engage with and ultimately participate in developing the political theory of comics--a promisingly vibrant if still nascent field. We will have two focal points guiding our study: understanding the historical relationship between context and material production of comics art, and interpreting the ongoing salience of comics as cultural artifacts that shape how we conceive classic political questions of law, power, and justice. A primary goal of the course is to situate comics, as well as our interpretations of their politics, within a broader narrative of political culture--mostly in the United States, but with short excursions abroad as

well. Because of this, this course will utilize comics as evidence of political argument and theorization, or as primary documents from which we can develop critical understandings of politics and change through time.

PSC 237: Music and Politics

This class explores the multiple relationships between music and politics with a specific focus on the following dimensions: (1) the use of music as a lens to perceive the world, to frame injustices, to inform political discourse, to raise consciousness, and to mobilize public opinion; (2) the political context in which critically significant music is produced; (3) biographical details of artists that bring understanding to the art they produce; (4) the impact of class, race, ethnicity, and gender on music; (5) the interpretation of political messages found in music; and (6) the intentional and unintentional political consequences of popular music.

PSC 245: Populisms in Latin America & Beyond

Leadership and politics in Latin America are often characterized as populist, but there is widespread disagreement as to what populism is. Claimed by no one, most of the time populism is blamed, disapprovingly, upon leaders and movements connoting demagoguery, manipulative appeals to people's emotions and disregard for formal institutions and rules. Interestingly, a similar characterization of populism has recently entered politics in countries such as France or the U.S.

With a main focus on Latin America, extending the discussion outside the region, this course scrutinizes three different "populist moments," from the first half of the 20th century to the present. Major figures such as Peron or Vargas; neoliberal reformers from the 1990s, from Fujimori to Menem, and recent Latin American leaders, from Chávez, to Fernandez de Kirchner, plus a few salient cases from outside the region (e.g. Trump, Le Pen) will be examined in the class.

PSC 269R: Media and Politics

Major trends in U.S. media, politics, and political communication. The focus is on media treatment

of politics as well as effects of media on the public, across various types of media sources. These will include the traditional news media, partisan media sources, entertainment shows that address politics, and social media. The larger context is the role of media in a democratic society.

PSC 273: Supreme Court & Judicial Politics

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.

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, non-profit 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 286: The Modern Presidency

Case studies in Presidential leadership and administrative styles, including those of FDR, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Reagan, Clinton, Obama, and Trump.

PSC 349: Seminar in Comparative Politics: *The State of the State in Africa*

Sub-Saharan Africa is the focus of considerable international scrutiny and concern. From lagging economic growth across much of the continent, to famine in Somalia, to civil wars in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Boko Haram's terror attacks in Nigeria, to the suspected use by the al-Qaeda affiliate AQIM of Sahara desert territory as a staging ground – instability and a sense of threat tend to crowd the headlines. This course takes you deep beyond the headlines as it poses the following questions: What is the “state of the state” in Sub-Saharan Africa? How well have state institutions provided order, security, good governance, economic prosperity, and social services to citizens? Why have some states done (much) better than others in this regard? How have colonial legacies, climate, poverty, ethnic and religious divides, oil and mineral wealth, and other factors impacted the quality of state institutions and the provision of good governance? How do the policies of key external actors – primarily the U.S. and China – shape state institutions? What are the consequences of (varying) state quality for regular people? Can states be strengthened? Should they be?

PSC 354R: Immigration and Human Rights

With the recent rise of the far-right movements in Europe and President's Trump inauguration in the United States, the question of the scope, content, and limits of the rights of immigrants has gained a new urgency. In France, during her much debated presidential campaign, the leader of the National Front Marie Le Pen galvanized her supporters by calling for the deportation of all second generation immigrants who had any problem with the law at any point in their lives. In the Netherlands, the far-right leader Geer Wilders not only called Moroccan immigrants “scum” but also promised to shutter mosques and ban Koran in case of an election victory. Here at home, President Trump started his tenure, among others, with a so-called “Muslim ban” and a sharp increase in the number of deportations and detentions of undocumented immigrants. In the face of these developments,

this course explores the tense relation between immigration, nation-states, and human rights. What are the rights of documented/undocumented immigrants? What kind of human rights abuses are these people subjected to? What renders non-citizens so vulnerable to various forms of violence, discrimination, and mistreatment? To what extent can these problems be addressed and remedied by appeals to human rights? In what ways does the contemporary condition of non-citizens reveal the limits, paradoxes, and promises of human rights? In this upper level political science course, we will address these challenging, intriguing, and somewhat disconcerting questions through an interdisciplinary inquiry.

PSC 358: Wealth and Power Among Nations

An examination of the tensions between developed and developing countries in the global political economy. First, the course traces the genealogy of thinkers on the issues of development, such as Smith, Marx, Keynes, modernization theory and development economics, as a way to understand the enduring debates within the field. Second, it examines historical transformations in the international economy, such as in trade, global finance and economic crises, in order to understand how the structures and opportunities for developing countries have transformed over time. Finally, although there is no focus on any single region of the world, the course touches upon the oil boom in the Middle East in the 1970s, the debt crises in Latin America and Africa in the 1980s, the rise of Japan and the East Asia tigers, the Fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries in the 1990s, the new giants of China and India, new forms of post-Fordist production, and the relationship between production and identity.

***Tentative* Plan for WINTER and SPRING 2018**

Winter 2018
PSC 111 Intro to American Politics (Plencner)
PSC 112 Intro to Global Politics (Lobe)
PSC 113 Intro to Political Theory (Marso)
PSC 277 Capital Region Political Internships (Oxley)
PSC 232 Violence and Politics (Cidam)
PSC 330R Enlightenment and Its Discontents (Brown)
PSC 256 Model United Nations (Seri)
PSC 258 Strategies of World War II (Brown)
PSC 371 Civil Rights & Civil Liberties (Hays)
Race & US Politics (Plencner)
Technologies: Power, Politics and Society (Dallas)
PSC 249 Middle East Politics (Angrist)
PSC 369 Seminar in US Politics: Partisanship (Oxley)
PSC 223 Critical Comparisons in Politics (Hislope)

Spring 2018
PSC 111 Intro to American Politics (Hays)
PSC 112 Intro to Global Politics (Dallas)
PSC 113 Intro to Political Theory (Cidam)
PSC 277 Capital Region Political Internships (Oxley)
PSC 235R African American Political Thought (Marso)
PSC 334 Democracy in a Globalizing World (Cidam)
PSC 350 Theories of International Politics (Brown)
PSC 353 Terrorism and Torture (Angrist)
PSC 364 Law and Film (Hays)
PSC 260 Policymaking and American Society (Plencner)
PSC 266 Women and Politics (Oxley)
PSC 240R Comparative Ethnic & Racial Politics (Hislope)
Citizenship (Dallas)
PSC 339 Seminar in Political Theory (Marso)
PSC 280T Internship in Washington DC (Lobe)
PSC 251T American Foreign Policy (in DC) (Lobe)