

News and Views from the Political Science Department

Winter 2017

FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR MICHELE ANGRIST

Dear PSC Students,

Greetings and Happy New Year!

It is hard to believe that we are midway through the winter term already, but so time flies on the trimester system.

We bring you this newsletter to keep you informed as to departmental requirements, deadlines, and, perhaps most importantly in the short term, our course offerings for the upcoming Spring 2017 trimester.

I want to put in a “plug” for the Political Science department’s website, which you can find at <https://muse.union.edu/politicalscience>. We have been working to upgrade the content on the website for some time now, and it contains a good deal of useful information. Ever wonder what subfield a course falls under? Check out the “Courses and Programs” tab to find out. Confused about major requirements? Curious about the requirements to graduate with honors? Unclear about what Pi Sigma Alpha is? Check out the “FAQ” tab, which is designed specifically with student-related concerns in mind. Do your parents ask you what you can do with a PSC major? Check out the “Beyond Union: Jobs and Internships” tab for useful information as well as snapshots of alums who have gone on to work in a wide variety of professional fields.

Advising season is upon us. I encourage you to review our website. It will provide you with answers to many questions that you may have. Armed with answers to the basics, you can then use your time with your academic adviser to have deeper conversations about your interests and aspirations, and how to connect those to your Spring 2017 course work.

ATTENTION JUNIOR PSC MAJORS

There will be a meeting on Friday, February 24, at common lunch, in Lippman 016, regarding the senior thesis. Professor Angrist will explain the requirements of the thesis and the process by which you will be matched with an advisor. In addition, several current seniors will be in attendance to share their projects with you to give you a sense of the range of types of theses that are possible. Pizza and cookies will be served. Mark your calendars and spread the word!

Senior Thesis Submission Information

Seniors: If you are working on a Fall-Winter thesis, your finished work is due on the last day of classes, **Friday March 10**, 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, including if you hope to be a candidate for departmental honors. If you are on track for honors, you will be contacted in the spring and given thesis-related instructions at that time. 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 PS office. The college administration requires that we collect these evaluations. There will be some yummy treats in the office that day to celebrate your achievements!

PROFESSORS SOUND OFF

History Repeats Itself: First Time as Tragedy, Second Time as Trumpian Farce (Borrowed and amended from Marx, *The 18th Brumaire*)

By Professor Tom Lobe

I love my job. As a professor, I'm privileged to get to teach and conduct research, to read and write, on most any subject that interests me. As a Political Scientist, since my undergraduate days, I've been fascinated by and appreciated the importance of politics and how international political debates influence our lives.

Perhaps I first got my political feet wet as a college student, learning about war and peace, organizing around the US in Vietnam, and through graduate school, studying the United Nations and the importance of international cooperation and the various efforts toward peace and conciliation. My first professional ambition was to work at the UN, intervening in international crises, or assisting in humanitarian emergencies. But, like a slow boil, my own tragic family history as a Jewish-American, son of German-Jewish immigrants escaping from the Holocaust, percolated up into my intellectual and political universe. I read everything I could about the Holocaust, until friends accused me of increasingly morbid thoughts. But that focused and provoked my interest in human rights. This was the 1970's, and the campaign for universal human rights, and against those governments that infringed on its own citizens' human rights (think Iran, Chile, Soviet Union, Philippines, Guatemala and so many others), and that led to campaigns against torture, disappearances, and state terror.

And from there, and without much of a reach, I gained an interest in refugees. My parents were refugees; the upshot of the Vietnam War were millions of refugees; Central Americans fleeing civil war and death squads were refugees; and more recently, millions of innocents from all over the Middle East are refugees. Interviewing refugees and those UN and NGO workers that

ATTENTION SENIORS

Requirements for Graduating with Honors in Political Science

--GPA of 3.50 or better in PSC, and 3.3 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****

The Union Banner

The Banner is Union College's student Political Newsletter. Every other week The Banner publishes five articles to be printed and dispersed throughout campus as well as published online (at www.muse.union.edu/banner). The articles are contributed by students, providing a platform to express opinions regarding political theories, current events, and issues.

Email articles to unionbanner@union.edu to contribute.

attempt to give comfort to Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis, and so many others, is fulfilling but heart-rending. I spent time in Lebanon talking to Syrians living by the side of the road, with no

shelter, in the driving rain, facing persecution and all kinds of abuse. In Turkey and Jordan and Pakistan and Iran, refugees have found temporary refuge without it being home... and so many of them, countless... lost generations of entire countries. And what was especially sad, despairing, is that most were stuck. Borders were closing in Europe, and now, all over the world. I just spent a week in Athens, Greece, attending a seminar on refugees, talking with experts and refugees, those that have lived under ISIS control, or Assad control, or psychiatrists working with refugee children that experienced severe trauma, but different than PTSD, the trauma keeps coming, the abuse, and murders, and lack of any normality, never ends. And now, thousands are stuck in Greece, homeless, without decent shelter, education, jobs – just boredom and depression – can't go home, can't find another country to resettle into, and are despised in the only country they are in, Greece. The seminar was intellectually wonderful, but was not an uplifting week. And I also became increasingly aware that these millions of refugees, with millions more likely in the near future (global warming, more and more war, hunger), challenge the very nature of the global order, that state sovereignty and international cooperation is under attack, and the future looks very grim indeed. And at that very moment, as I gain this thought, Trump arrives.

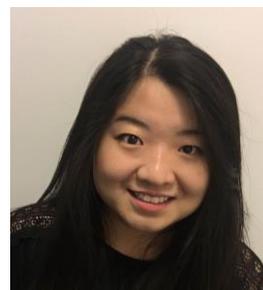
Most of the time during these last 50 years of teaching and learning, my life has been challenging and thrilling. But today I feel devastated, as all the issues I have cared so much for are under attack by Trump and his scary closest buddies. Trampling on human rights, the needs of refugees, and international agreements and cooperation, without a thought toward basic decency, empathy or universality, is despairing. Closing our borders to innocents while categorizing whole peoples on the basis of their religion or ethnicity or gender, and thus, discriminating against them, is exactly what I thought our country would never do again, and that generally we had at least in principle, stood for those better principles and values. No longer.

How do we teach and read in this new age? How do we research and write relevantly when our democratic and human values are being undermined?

Trump and “our” government are the face of nationalist narcissism and selfishness. We once were a kind of model (for opportunity, prosperity, but for many, including my parents, also human rights and a sense of individual liberty and basic democratic protections). We are again a model, but this time around, for all that I detest. We are repeating the tragedies of history, and we should know better. If this is a farce of the sort that Marx predicted, it is one that will certainly have tragic consequences for too many, and maybe for all of us.

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

Christine Liang



What is your current professional title?

I am a Special Assistant at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the United States Department of State.

What does your work involve?

My work involves coordinating all of the activities for the office, which includes scheduling meetings, coordinating between our office and others, and serving as the assistant for the office of Western Hemispheric Affairs. Working in the Department of State headquarters in downtown Washington, DC allows me not only to work on the issues specific to the office, but also to be involved more largely in the flurry of activity at the State Department.

How did your time at Union prepare you for this position?

When I was at Union, I did not appreciate how much the writing skills I was developing would

help me out in the work world. My job demands that I analyze issues and provide concise written briefs – without all the writing and research the professors at Union taught me to perform I would not be able to succeed in this position. Most importantly, though, Union taught me how to learn and be passionate about the issues which I am studying. Prior to starting in this position, I was an intern for the Turkish affairs office in the State Department, and I had to learn quickly about issues pertinent to Turkey. In my current position I have had to absorb information about Cuba, Mexico and other areas in the Western Hemisphere. My time at Union was crucial to learning how to absorb information quickly and become passionate about those issues.

What is your fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science?

I have so many wonderful memories of majoring in “Poli Sci.” Whether it was establishing my four-year plan with Professor Angrist, spending hours on end chatting with Professor Cidam or listening to Professor Dallas weave together politics and economics, I miss interacting with and learning from all of the wonderful Political Science professors. If I had to pinpoint one specific aspect of Political Science at Union, though, I would have to choose the term in Washington, DC. Aside from all of the amazing adventures we went on with Professor Lobe, this term really helped me put my interest in Political Science in a career perspective. Working on the Hill and talking to people in DC allowed me to cement my interest in foreign affairs and begin to see how my studies fit into the larger fabric of Washington.

What advice do you have for current Political Science majors for life after Union?

Take advantage of all of what professors have to offer! Make sure you talk to them, get to know them, and get their advice. They will be able to point you in the direction of great opportunities which will enrich your Union

experience. Talking with professors helped me to discover the Washington, D.C. term and the West Point conference. Both of these opportunities allowed me to hone my communications skills and be more comfortable in my current position. Don’t take your time at Union for granted, it will fly by!



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/UnionCPolitical Science](https://www.facebook.com/UnionCPoliticalScience)

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, 222 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.

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING TERM 2017

PSC 239: American Political Thought to WWI
Political thought in America from the colonial period until World War I with an emphasis on evolving political, social, cultural, and intellectual perspectives on enlightenment values, nationalism, slavery, the rise of the industrial economy, the political machine, and America's changing role in the world.

PSC 247: Human Insecurity

With a focus on "the daily lives of ordinary people", the recent tradition of Human Security redefines safety as "freedom from fear and freedom from want." At the interface of security, development, and Human Rights grounding democratization, Human Security adopts the perspective of the common citizen, calling for collaboration between states and international and grassroots organizations to prevent and eliminate obstacles undermining people's autonomy, rights, and development. This course aims, first, to provide students with a solid conceptual and applied knowledge of Human Security. Second, by learning

Spring 2017 POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

Introductory

- PSC 111: Introduction to American Politics
(Weiner) MWF 9:15-10:20AM
- PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics
(Hislope) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM
- PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory
(Seri) MWF 8:00-9:05AM

Political Theory

- PSC 239: American Political Thought
(Brown) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
- PSC 434: Feminist Film
(Marso) W 1:50-4:40PM

Comparative Politics

- PSC 247: Human Insecurity
(Seri) MWF 11:45-12:50PM
- PSC 248R: Politics of the New Europe
(Hislope) MW 3:05-4:45PM
- PSC 349: Comparative Politics Seminar:
Technologies—Power, Politics and Society
Across Industrial Revolutions
(Dallas) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM

International Politics

- PSC 251: American Foreign Policy
(Brown) TTh 7:00-8:45PM
- PSC 253: International Relations of East Asia
(Dallas) TTh 9:00-10:45AM

U.S. Politics

- PSC 281: Issues in American Education
(Weiner) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
- PSC 361R: Political Psychology
(Oxley) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
- PSC 365: Law, Society and the Wire
(Hays) TTh 9:00-10:45AM

Internships

- PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
(Brown)

about the deep-seated conditions that hinder people's safety from fear and from want, students will gain a thicker perspective on the structural challenges for peace and democracy around the world through the eyes of the people on the ground.

PSC 248R: Politics of the New Europe

A survey of contemporary European politics including topics such as the emerging European Union, the rise of right-wing movements, growing regional and sectional conflict, patterns of immigration, and debate about the very meaning of "Europe."

PSC 251: American Foreign Policy

This course will provide an overview of the history of US Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the post-Cold War era. The course focuses on major policy options, issues in the Middle East, reset to Asia, and the choices between multilateralism and hegemonic dominance. The course emphasizes policy-making, especially the role of the President and Executive, in struggles with Congress, and the role of various NGO's, think tanks, and other lobbyists in the formation of foreign policy outcomes.

PSC 253: International Relations of East Asia

This course surveys the main currents of international politics in East Asia since World War Two, with an emphasis on events since the end of the cold war. It considers the sequential rise of the economies of Japan, the four East Asian tigers, and finally Southeast Asia and China, and how regional integration across East Asian countries differs from other regions in the world. Furthermore, it examines the foreign policies of the main players in this area, including the important role of the United States, and it explores the evolution of international institutions and norms pertinent to East Asia.

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 281: Issues in American Education

The analysis of current conflicts over education policy at all levels of government including the funding of education, increased testing for accountability, the impact of charter schools and choice, bilingual education, religion and prayer, tenure laws and the role of teacher unions. Most of the focus will be on K-12 education but we will also address higher education and the recent concerns about tuition costs, financial aid, and the mission of colleges and universities.

PSC 349: Seminar in Comparative Politics: Power, Politics, and Society Across Industrial Revolutions

With the advent of artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics and the internet, we are already well into a Third Industrial Revolution. If history is any guide, this industrial revolution is transforming society, politics and culture in ways both overt and subtle. Further, as it diffuses, it will not be replicated identically across time and space. This course compares the first, second and third industrial revolutions – selectively focusing on the advent of machines, mass production and information technologies, respectively. For each revolution, the course asks three questions: 1) how value is created, 2) who controls and benefits from the new modes of production and consumption, and 3) how it transforms and is transformed by its social and political contexts. Second, it explores variation across different national political economies, most prominently in the advanced countries of England, the US, Europe and Japan, with

selective comparisons to China, Brazil and India.

PSC 361R: Political Psychology

The application of psychological theories to understanding 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.

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 systems 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.