

## FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR ZOE OXLEY

To Political Science Majors and Students,

I always look forward to spring term, and not only because it signals the end of the long winter. It is also the time of year when we celebrate many important accomplishments. We profile one in this newsletter: selection into Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honor society. And, on May 10, many of our seniors will be presenting results from their senior thesis research at the Steinmetz Symposium. I hope you will be able to attend some sessions to support these students and learn about their research.

As always, this newsletter contains important details about next term's courses. There is a profile of Professor Saladdin Ahmed, who will be joining us next year. We will also have a second new political science faculty member arriving in the fall. I will share news about that person once our search is finalized.

This is the last of my newsletter chair's messages, as my (brief) term as interim department chair is ending. Professor Brad Hays will step into this role in September.

Best wishes to our graduating seniors and we look forward to welcoming the rest of you back to campus in September.

## PROFESSOR SOUND OFF

### The Politics of Millennials and Generation Z

By Professor Zoe Oxley

Generational differences abound in our society, in musical tastes, use of technology, clothing preferences, and communication patterns, to name a few. Do age cohorts differ also in terms

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<https://www.facebook.com/Union/PoliticalScience>

### STEINMETZ SYMPOSIUM

The Steinmetz Symposium is Friday, May 10th. 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.

of politics? Put another way, do political generations exist such that those from the same generation have politically distinctive outlooks that distinguish them from other generations? Scholars of political socialization have long assumed so, arguing that because a generation of people – such as the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) or Generation Xers (1965–1980) – pass through their impressionable years of late adolescence and early adulthood around the same time, they are exposed to the same political and social context during this crucial time in their lives. Such exposure can result in a set of characteristic political views for the generation that then persist throughout adulthood.

Lately, I have been pondering the topic of political generations as I revise my textbook on American public opinion. In particular, I have been exploring public opinion data to assess whether those born between 1981 and 1996 (Millennials) differ politically from earlier generations. They do. Millennials are much

more likely to consider themselves independent of partisanship than are members of previous generations (44% versus 39% for Generation X and 32% for Baby Boomers). Ideologically, they are more liberal. Compared to older cohorts, Millennials are more supportive of LGBTQ rights, racial and gender equality, a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, government involvement to address societal ills and protect the environment, legalizing recreational marijuana, and pursuing diplomacy rather than military might to ensure peace among nations. On the other hand, in terms of trust in government as well as the issues of abortion and gun control, Millennials' attitudes are little different than those of older generations.

What about members of Generation Z, those born after 1996? That is, what about your generation? Because the oldest members of Generation Z have just turned 22 and rigorous survey research is conducted only on Americans who are at least 18 years old, our knowledge of the political views of this generation is developing. Having said that, a few patterns have started to emerge. Above all, Generation Zers closely resemble Millennials in many of their political outlooks, such as their ideological liberalism, preference for government to solve societal problems, and support for racial, gender, and LGBTQ equality. However, compared to Millennials, Generation Zers hold more favorable views regarding the use of gender-neutral pronouns and are more accepting of those who identify as neither a woman nor a man. Cataloging differences among generations is relatively straightforward, although explaining why such differences exist is tricky. For one, at a given point in time, generations differ by when they went through their impressionable years as well as their current age. Therefore, today's Millennials' attitudes might differ from Baby Boomers' simply because they are younger rather than because they were socialized in a different historical setting. Furthermore, generations differ in a myriad of politically relevant ways, making it challenging to sort out which factors might contribute to generational

distinctiveness. Bearing this complexity in mind, a few possible explanations for the Millennial generation's distinctiveness have been proposed. Some of these explanations might also apply to Generation Zers. Coming of political age during a time of political polarization and government stalemate has likely contributed to weaker ties to the political party system, whereas coming of age during the 2008 economic recession probably has shaped Millennials' views toward government regulation of the economy. White Millennials' more liberal racial attitudes have been attributed to one key political event that happened as some were entering adulthood: the election of Barack Obama as president. The fact that the Millennial and Generation Z generations are more racially and ethnically diverse than older groups likely contributes to their political liberalism. Other societal factors are probably relevant as well, such as the greater presence of women in the workforce, the increase in nontraditional families, and the heightened visibility of gays and lesbians in popular culture.

That is what I have learned so far regarding the political views of the two youngest generations. Am I on the right track? Do the generational differences I summarized seem correct to you? Have I overlooked anything? I welcome your thoughts and comments. My revised textbook chapters are not due until this summer, so there is still time for me to make changes to my analysis and conclusions.

## ALUMNI INTERVIEW

### Christina Tremante '02

*What is your current professional title?*

Chief Homicide Prosecutor  
Schenectady County District  
Attorney's Office

*What does the work involve?*



Handling the prosecution of homicide and other felony cases from start to finish. This means handling the case from the arraignment through the grand jury process, motion practice and the ultimate resolution by either a plea or trial. In some cases, particularly homicide cases, I get involved during the early stages of the investigation with the police department in an assisting role.

*How did your time at Union prepare you for your current position?*

In my time at Union, particularly as a Political Science major, I was involved in classes that involved speaking to different groups of people. This, along with the opportunity to field questions in those situations, prepared me not only to speak publicly but also think on my feet, which is something that I do regularly in my current position.

*What is your fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science?*

My fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science at Union is the Electoral Politics class that I took during my junior year. This was a course that centered around a mock presidential election where we assumed the roles of candidates, staff and members of the press. Of all of the great courses that the political science department had to offer when I was at Union this stands out the most (and not just because I won the close election that we ultimately had). I couldn't think of a better way to teach the students of this course about electoral politics more so than actually having them assume these roles. It was not only a valuable learning experience but a memorable one.

*What advice would you have for current majors for life after Union?*

In your time at Union take classes that challenge you and encourage critical thinking. Develop a love for learning that you take with you as you move on to your next endeavor.

## PI SIGMA ALPHA MEMBERS

*Congratulations to the Members of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society.*

### **Union Students Inducted in Spring 2018:**

Alastair Allen  
Emily Bobruff  
Victoria Carter  
Kevin Fitzpatrick  
Justin Lange  
Drew Lenz  
Nathan Levi  
Maria Lovetere  
Margaret McCormick  
Nicholas Meixsell  
Sapan Shah  
Alexander Tellides

### **Union Students Inducted in Spring 2019:**

Daniele Durkin  
Alexandra Baldwin  
Mikaela Buryj  
Matthew Carrigan  
Katie Casado  
Christina Craig  
Hannah Ellen  
Owen Farley  
Connor Finn  
Madeleine Hamparian  
Sofia Lopez  
William McCann  
Jared Milazzo  
Alexa Morin  
Caroline Ristaino  
Michael Secchiaroli  
Katee Sosa  
Nicole Sturno  
Bridgit Sullivan

### **Washington, D.C. Informational Meeting**

*Wednesday, May 15, 2019*

*Lippman 014, 5:00 PM*

For any questions or more information,  
contact Professor Lobe: lobet@union.edu

## Fall 2019 POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

### Introductory

- PSC 111: Introduction to United States Politics  
(Staff) MWF 9:15-10:20AM
- PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics  
(Siegel) MWF 8:00-9:05AM
- PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory  
(Ahmed) MWF 11:45-12:50PM

### Research Methods

- PSC 223: Critical Comparisons  
(Hislope) TTh 1:55-3:40PM

### Political Thought

- PSC 231: Theories of Peace and War  
(Seri) MWF 10:30-11:35AM
- PSC 333: 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Political Thought  
(Marso) TTh 1:55-3:40PM

### Comparative Politics

- PSC 248R: Politics of New Europe  
(Hislope) TTh 9:00-10:45AM
- PSC 341: Genocide  
(Lobe) TTh 7:00-8:45PM

### International Politics

- PSC 250: Politics of Resistance  
(Ahmed) MW 3:05-4:45PM
- PSC 358: Wealth and Power  
(Dallas) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
- PSC 359: Seminar: Refugees  
(Lobe) 9:00-10:45AM

### U.S. Politics

- PSC 273R: Supreme Court  
(Hays) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
- PSC 286: Modern Presidency  
(Brown) MW 7-8:45PM AND  
M 8:45-11:00PM

**PSC 2xx: Upper-level US politics course to be determined**

**(Staff) MWF 1:50-2:55PM**

### **New Political Science Faculty Member: Professor Saladdin Ahmed**

Professor Saladdin Ahmed will be joining the Political Science department for the 2019-20 academic year. Professor Ahmed earned his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Ottawa and has teaching and research expertise in political philosophy as well as international relations. He has written on varied topics such as totalitarianism, political space, Foucault, and the Kurdish Liberation Movement. His book, *Totalitarian Space and the Destruction of Aura*, was recently published by SUNY Press. While at Union next year, Professor Ahmed will teach political theory courses (such as Introduction to Political Thought, Fascism and Neo-Fascism, and Enlightenment). In the fall, he will also teach an international relations course, Politics of Resistance. A description for this course is at the end of this newsletter.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR FALL 2019 TERM

### **PSC 223: Critical Comparisons in Politics**

What does a convincing explanation in political science look like? This course will focus on how to make good comparative explanations in political science. We will explore how to do this by studying and applying key concepts, such as culture, social movements, elites, institutions, hegemony, and the state. This course will help prepare students for writing the senior thesis.

### **PSC 231: Theories of Peace and War**

Do aggression and violence arise from individuals or groups, from nations, global forces, or from entire civilizations? Is warfare an eliminable pathology or just part of the human condition? Any answer to these questions ultimately involves ontological claims on how things are, key in shaping the ways in which we imagine and inhabit our world. This course revisits arguments on peace, war, and violence central in the tradition of Western political thought. By exploring works of classical, modern, and contemporary political thinkers, contextualized in reference to key cases, we will identify and critically assess contentious explanations and philosophical justifications.

### **PSC 248R: Politics of 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 250: Politics of Resistance**

Nation-state systems often create in groups and outgroups along other power relations of class, race, and gender. As a result, movements of resistance emerge. These movements may be legal or illegal, pacifist or armed, popular or isolated, but in all cases, they point to consistent contradictions within the system of nation-states. In this course, we will explore various ongoing resistance movements from different political and geographic contexts. Our case studies will include Maoist, anarchist, feminist, and indigenous movements

## 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, Thursday June 6th, in the Political Science office (Lippman 117) by 12:00 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.

from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Through our discussions of these movements, we will analyze and compare their philosophies, politics, and strategies. In most cases, the states these movements oppose have either banned them or sought to squash them through force. Because of this, there are few balanced sources about these movements, and we will thus also explore how power and knowledge production are used to sideline opposition forces.

### **PSC 273R: Supreme Court**

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 286: Modern Presidency**

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

**PSC 333: 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Political Thought**

An exploration of the development of political thinking in the United States in the 20th century of 20th-century. Potential topics include the nature of democracy in the United States, individualism, pluralism, diversity, freedom, social responsibility, protest, social ethics, justice, and how Americans perceive their role in the world.

**PSC 341: Genocide**

Genocide is humanity's greatest and most enduring scourge. After the horrific Holocaust, the world's leaders cried out, "Never Again." Sadly, genocide has occurred, again and again, wherein mass murders, ethnic cleansing, mass rape and pillaging, has taken place in countless places and times since World War II. This course examines examples, causes and motives, position of the perpetrators, victims and bystanders. We shall also look at proposals for avoiding or preventing genocide, perhaps through some form of international humanitarian intervention, or "responsibility to protect."

**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.

**PSC 359: Seminar Refugees**

Currently around 65 million people across the globe are displaced by war, violence and environmental destruction. This worldwide refugee crisis of forced migration is the largest displacement of people since World War II. Seventy years ago various humanitarian institutions and legal conventions were first set up to deal with the refugee crisis. Moreover, many NGO's across border originated in order to help rescue and resettle refugees. Today that global regime is breaking apart as many nation-states are closing their borders to more refugees, and the opportunities for those fleeing war and persecution, including internally displaced persons, has constricted dramatically, leaving refugees in increasing unsafe and desperate circumstances.

**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.