

FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR BRADLEY HAYS

Winter at Union feels like a time when we put our heads down and get to work. For most seniors, it is their second term of the thesis, many of our juniors are taking research and methods courses, sophomores are taking more challenging upper-division courses, and first-year students are working hard to find their approach to and the rhythm of classes and the academic year. But, as we enter 2020, the year of what is perhaps the most consequential election in recent memory, I encourage each of you to reflect on where we are as a political community and how your educational experience engages with this moment. Cynicism is not welcome in this space but critical reflection is. What have you learned that helps you understand this moment? What do these insights mean to you, to your values, and to your aspirations for our collective political future? And, given what you've learned, what are you going to do about it at this moment and moving forward?

These questions invite a turn to greater civic engagement and I want to bring to your attention a number of opportunities in the department and on campus. The College recently began its Civic Engagement Initiative that is tasked with developing, planning, and organizing civic engagement opportunities at Union, including increasing student voter participation in the 2020 elections. In partnering with the Initiative, the political science department and its faculty will be involved in programming like the recent event on impeachment (with Prof. Oxley and me) and a Pizza and Politics event on February 13th (with Profs. Brown and Oxley) breaking down the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary. There will be many more opportunities, too, so please be on the lookout for future announcements on ways to engage.

In the spring term, two classes will be offered for

ATTENTION JUNIOR PSC MAJORS

There will be a **must-attend meeting on Thursday, February 27, at common lunch, in Lippman 017, regarding the senior thesis.** Professor Oxley 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 near the end of the term, on Thursday March 12, in the Political Science office (Lippman 117) by 12:00 pm noon. 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 ask 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 PSC office. The college administration requires that we collect these evaluations. **Have a workable printing plan (taking into account that many, many seniors will be submitting that week) and do not be late**: if your thesis comes in after 12:00 pm, the time will be noted and communicated to your adviser. More details regarding thesis submission can be found on the PSC department website's FAQ section.

the first time by Profs. Ahmed and Wiest. Prof. Ahmed will offer PSC 331: Public Sphere and Democracy, a political theory class, and Prof. Wiest will offer PSC 291, Urban Politics and Policies, a US politics class. Please see the course descriptions at the end of the newsletter for more information.

Finally, I want to note a few accomplishments. Jane Wiesenbergh, a senior with a political science-sociology double major, will present her research at the upcoming Pi Sigma Alpha undergraduate conference in Washington DC. The department is very excited for Jane and hopes that more students follow her lead and pursue this opportunity next year. (Funding to support such opportunities is available.) Prof. Siegel had an article entitled "Privatization without Capitalism: The Social Relations of Property in Post-Communist Transition" accepted at *Polity*, one of the more well known and respected journals in the discipline. Please congratulate Prof. Siegel when you see him. And, as the inaugural Stillman Prize for Faculty Excellence in Research Award recipient, Prof. Marso delivered Union's faculty colloquium on February 5th.

In this exciting, busy, and eventful year, I hope you join us to reflect and engage. By doing so, we can move beyond the work at hand and dedicate our efforts to engage with our collective political future.

PROFESSOR SOUND OFF

Can you convince someone who refuses to listen?

By Professor Hislope

This question comes from Polemarchus, a figure in Plato's *Republic* who challenges Socrates and physically threatens him if he attempts to return home from his attendance at the Bendidean festival. Socrates pleads that perhaps he could provide a convincing argument for Polemarchus to release him. "But can you persuade us, if we refuse to listen to you?" was Polemarchus' macho rebut.

Two thousand some years later, this question has returned in the form of a global radical right

INTERESTED IN AN INTERNSHIP?

The political science department will offer PSC 277, *The Capital Region Political Internship*, again in the spring term. If you are interested in gaining internship experience and/or engaging with political life outside of campus, please see Prof. Oxley during her office hours (M 10-12, Th 2-3) or by appointment.

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

movement that has made a refusal to listen a key part of its political repertoire.

Who is the radical right, you might ask. Well, this is an international movement that promotes the group rights of state-dominant peoples who wish to continue that dominance. In the Netherlands, it is represented by Geert Wilders, who is anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim, and employs a hate-filled rhetoric against such groups. In Germany, it is the Alternative, now the 3rd largest party in the country and the 2nd largest in the east.

In Hungary, it is Victor Orban who holds a death grip on the political system and has perfected “salami tactics” where democracy is undermined from within, one slice at a time. In Brazil, it’s Jair Bolsonaro, who proudly boasts he would kill his own son if he were gay. And in the USA, it is of course represented by Donald Trump, the reality-TV showman, the master news cycle manipulator, the slippery teflon-don who escapes one self-created crisis and scandal after another.

This movement is dangerous not only because of its obvious and gleeful racist rhetoric directed at minorities and immigrants, not only because of its unhinged chauvinism against women (the demographics of the radical right are overwhelming male), not only because of its compulsory heteronormativity and therefore complete negation of LGBTQ communities, and not only because of its rejection of the traditional bipartisan norms and practices that have functioned to maintain western postwar democracies, but also because of its attack on the epistemological foundations that undergird our entire social order. Collectivities of people need shared norms and understandings; without them one can expect neither rational behavior nor social peace. By undermining our shared points of reference regarding fact-claims and empirical knowledge about the world, the radical right is paving the way for a new hegemony, which is to say it is busy creating new values, new assumptions, and a new common sense that cancels just about every single liberal-democratic achievement the West has built since the end of World War II.

We see these maneuvers in the work of the Austrian identitarian Martin Sellner, who declares his movement’s mission to be the creation of nothing less than a new normal. In his words, “our job as the avant-garde from the right is to show the people that the normality of tomorrow doesn’t have to be what is considered normal today. Political normality is something very volatile, dynamic, and relative.”

Donald Trump is a master narrator in the weaving of this new normal and is consistently underestimated by those who oppose him. Armed with the latest means of mass communication (i.e., twitter), his branding skills are unparalleled in modern politics – his ability to convey an invidious essentialism about an opponent (“crooked Hillary,” “lyin’ Ted,” “little Marco”) via repetition and simplicity is diabolically ingenious. He has transformed advertising puffery into an entire epistemology of alternative facts, conspiracy theories, and fake news that now defines our post-truth era. By dismantling peoples’ everyday empiricism – “Don’t believe what you’re reading or seeing. Just stick with us.” -- Trump nourishes a collective dependency on the leader. As Hannah Arendt perceptibly noted about totalitarian and dictatorial rule, “if everybody always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer. ... And a people that no longer can believe anything cannot make up its mind. It is deprived not only of its capacity to act but also of its capacity to think and to judge. And with such a people you can then do what you please.” Or, as Voltaire noticed in his own time, “those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”

How do the forces of democracy counter this movement? Are traditional modes and rules of democratic contestation – public debate, universal suffrage, check-and-balance institutions, a free press questioning power, the prohibition of foreign influence in domestic elections – losing legitimacy? In practical terms, can an oversized personality like Trump even be debated? What happens to a democracy when we can no longer talk to one another because we literally inhabit different mental worlds? Can you convince people who refuse to listen? Polemarchus so long ago expresses the unique challenge of our age.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW

Kelly Krause

What is your current professional title?

U.S. Press Officer at the Center for Reproductive Rights



What does the work involve?

The Center for Reproductive Rights is a non-profit that protects and advances the reproductive autonomy of women through impact litigation. For example, when Georgia and Mississippi passed abortion bans last year, we took them to court and successfully blocked those bans from taking effect. We currently have 30 cases across the country, spanning 17 states. One of those cases has made its way up to the Supreme Court and will be heard on March 4. It will be the first abortion case heard by Justices Kavanaugh and Gorsuch. The decision could have major implications for the future of abortion access in the U.S.

My role is to make sure the public knows about these critical cases and the ways in which their lives could be impacted. I work with reporters on a daily basis to ensure these issues are being covered by the media.

How did your time at Union prepare you for your current position and/or, more broadly, your career?

When I started at Union, I was dead set on a career working on the Hill in Washington, D.C. My sophomore year, I spent a term in D.C. with Professor Lobe and interned for Senator Charles Schumer. The pace at which legislation moved (or didn't move more accurately) was incredibly disheartening, and I knew it would be an unsatisfying career for me. That was such a

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 (mini-terms do not qualify).

Please plan carefully to fulfill this requirement: for many languages, the introductory course is only offered in the Fall Term, so you cannot necessarily begin your language study any time in the year. 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.

pivotal realization. Like most students, I didn't graduate knowing what career path I would take, but knowing what you *don't* want to do is just as important.

What is your fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science?

Like many PSC majors, my favorite class was Electoral Politics. As part of the class, we held a mock presidential election with all the bells and whistles of a real election: campaign staff, debates, political ads and speeches. At the end, the student body actually voted. Each candidate had to personify a real-life politician. I was the campaign manager for the Independent candidate, who personified Michael Bloomberg funnily enough. I wrote his speeches and helped prep him for the debates. We ended up winning, and it was such an adrenaline rush. Similarly today, my favorite part of my current job is writing speeches for press conferences and prepping our attorneys for media interviews.

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

You *can* make a good living working at a non-profit or in civil service. Don't rule it out. The reality is that working 40+ hours every week of your life gets old fast if you're not doing something you care about.

REMEMBER!

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

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

SPRING 2020 POLITICAL SCIENCES COURSES

Introductory

- PSC 111: Introduction to United States Politics
(T. Weiner) MWF 9:15-10:20AM
PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics
(R. Hislope) MWF 8:00-9:05AM
PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory
(C. Cidam) MWF 11:45AM-12:50PM

Political Theory

- PSC 331: Public Sphere and Democracy
(S. Ahmed) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
PSC 334R: Contemporary Continental Theory
(C. Cidam) MW 3:05-4:45PM

Comparative Politics

- PSC 243: Latin American Politics
(G. Seri) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
PSC 246: Asian Development
(M. Dallas) TTh 9:00-10:45AM

International Politics

- PSC 258: Strategies of WWII
(C. Brown) TTh 7:00PM-8:45PM
PSC 356R: International Law
(D. Siegel) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM

U. S. Politics

- PSC 261: Public Opinion
(Z. Oxley) MWF 10:30-11:35AM
PSC 282: Health Politics and Policy
(T. Weiner) TTh 9:00-10:45AM
PSC 284: Political Sociology
(D. Hill-Butler) MW 3:05-4:45PM
PSC 291: Urban Politics and Policies
(S. Wiest) MWF 1:50-2:55PM
PSC 369: U. S. Seminar
(C. Brown) TTh 1:55-3:40PM

Internships

- PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
(Z. Oxley)

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING 2020 TERM

PSC 243: Latin American Politics

This course offers a working knowledge of Latin America's current politics, trends, and challenges. Years after democratization, regular elections are in place, and support for democracy in the region seems widespread. Still, as local traditions infuse the principles of liberal democracy, politics in Latin America reveal unique traits. Exploring the political as an interpretive endeavor, the course's readings, assignments, and class discussions will help to identify key political institutions, traditions, and cleavages, as well as forms of agency and leadership, both in specific countries and at the regional level.

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 pre-modern 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 Two 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 258: Strategies of WWII

This course will examine the interplay between

military and political strategies that shaped the course of World War II, with special attention to the European Theater. It is designed to illustrate the nature of strategic thinking, its relationship to tactical thinking, and its real-world constraints. Special attention will be given to the British decision to continue fighting after the French surrender, the Battle of Britain, Hitler's decision to invade Russia, the allied decision to invade North Africa, and the planning for Normandy.

PSC 261: Public Opinion

An overview of public opinion in the United States. Topics include the content of citizens' opinions toward a wide range of political topics, the sources of people's opinions, and an evaluation of whether the opinions of the public matter (for policy, for governance, and for democracy). The course material is structured around important normative questions, such as: What is the role of citizens in a democratic society? Are citizens pliable? Do citizens organize their political thinking? Do citizens demonstrate and endorse democratic basics?

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 282: Health Politics and Policy

This course will examine the subject of health care policy in the American political system. Students will learn about the roles and functions

principles as part of a broad overview of American health politics. From this foundation, we will develop a theoretical and practical framework to ground our analysis of current health policy issues and debates. Topics will include finance, insurance, Medicare/Medicaid, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka "Obamacare"), prescription drug regulation, private markets, the public interest, ethics, and the role of government.

PSC 284: Political Sociology

Explores Issues of political power, domination, and legitimacy from a sociological perspective. Topics include the creation and maintenance of political power, the role of legitimacy and the impact of political socialization.

PSC 291: Urban Politics and Policies

This course is designed to survey the politics of America's central cities. The actors in this story include machine bosses, reformers, immigrants, bureaucrats, politicians, average citizens, the rich, and the poor. Particular attention will be given to the forms of local government, governing strategies of mayors, populations, types of communities, urban institutions, and policy challenges. The first part of the course will examine various forms of city government, the emergence of urban America, and the rise of political machines. The second part of the course will study the effects of progressive reforms, the reorganization of city politics and the emergence of race and ethnicity in the post-war city. The third part of the course will examine policy challenges such as poverty, crime, education, and economic development in the contemporary city. We will conclude with a consideration of national urban policy and different ways average citizens can make a difference.

PSC 331: Public Sphere and Democracy

This course stems from the need for learning about the history and theory of the public sphere as a crucial step towards deepening our grasp of democracy both as a doctrine and as practice. Following the Habermasian approach, problematizing the links between language-discourse, theory-practice, rationality-

understanding, communication-the public and, above all, the public sphere-democracy will frame the conceptual investigations of the course.

Against the backdrop of mounting threats to (and struggles for) democratic progress around the world, this course will offer a space for democratic citizens to enhance their conceptual analysis of and critical participation in the public sphere. While the main focus will be Jurgen Habermas's influential book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, we will also read works by prominent thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, John Dewey, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, and Charles Tylor, as well as some more contemporary discussions of Habermas.

PSC 334R: Contemporary Continental Theory

In the latter half of the twentieth century, theorists working in the continental tradition have developed new approaches to modern political concerns about the power of the state, the possibility of democracy, the importance of language, media and rhetoric, and the connections between knowledge, ethics, religion and politics. Students in this course will grapple with some of the most important figures and theories at the leading edge of this tradition. While this course presumes no background in continental theory, students must be prepared to wrestle with difficult texts, ideas and thinkers. Authors may include: Agamben, Badiou, Butler, Cavarero, Cavell, Deleuze, Derrida, Fanon, Foucault, Ranciere, Zizek.

PSC 356: International Law

International law is the body of rules that are designed to regulate and govern the behavior of states. Although the "law of nations" has existed for centuries, most international law has been created during the past 70 years. Indeed, since the end of World War II, the breadth and depth of international law has expanded rapidly, extending into nearly every issue area of international politics. The mere existence of international law, however, does not imply or

arena remains fundamentally different from national politics in that there is no world government to make or enforce rules. As a result, power and politics remain central. While many argue that the development of international law has shaped world politics, few would suggest that it has transformed it completely. The governance of states, for all of its development, remains partial and incomplete. In this course we focus on the role of power and politics in international law, the basic mechanics of how international law is made and enforced, and, finally, the rules of international law in specific issue areas, including the laws governing the use of force, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, international environmental law, and human rights law.

PSC 369: U. S. Seminar

This seminar will focus on the Trump campaign and presidency -- economic successes, foreign policy failures, messaging and base cultivation, organizational chaos, authoritarian or dictatorial behavior, corruption, criminal behavior, betrayal of America to foreign interests, and relations with the press, the bureaucracy, Congress (impeachment, etc.), and the polarized elites.