

FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR BRADLEY HAYS

Dear PSC Community,

Each fall term, a sense of return imbues the campus; a return of campus life, a return to the rhythms of the academic year, a return to studies and academic experiences, and a return to the friends and colleagues we have not recently seen. This year, the return is so much more striking and profound. We are back in the classroom together, the campus is vibrant again, and there is a sense of enthusiasm and excitement to experience Union in its fullness. Personally, I have taken great pleasure in seeing so many of you again in person whether that be in class, during office hours, at events, or just walking around on campus.

While the campus is slowly returning to normal, there have been some changes in the department. As was previously announced, David Siegel left the department for a tenure-track position at St. Joseph's College (in Brooklyn). We will certainly miss Prof. Siegel but, fortunately, his departure enabled the department to retain Prof. Ahmed for this academic year. Prof. Dallas will be away from the department this year on a fellowship with the Council on Foreign Relations. To close the gap in our comparative politics offerings, Prof. Ahmed will be offering two new courses: *African Liberation Politics* (Winter '22) and *Exiles* (Spring'22). These are unlikely to be offered again soon, so, if you are interested, please consider enrolling in one or both of these courses.

I'll also note that it will be an interesting and exciting year for the department. In mid-October, the department conducted its decennial external review. This is an important moment for the department to reflect upon its commitments, pedagogy, resources, structures, and much more. The department is confident that it will emerge

Requirements for Graduating with Honors in Political Science

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

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

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

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

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

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

out of this process even stronger. And, there is exciting news among the faculty. Prof. Oxley's co-authored article in the *American Political Science Review* (which is arguably the flagship publication of the discipline), entitled "This One's for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls' Political Ambition and Interest," has received significant media attention, including on one of my favorite podcasts *The Takeaway*. Prof. Seri recently received an American Political Science Association Summer Centennial Center Research Grant in support of her current research project on memorializing human rights abuses in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, which will support her travel and field research in those three countries.

Finally, I wanted to bring to your attention that the Term in Washington DC will now be offered in the spring term of 2022. This move was necessary due to safety concerns related to COVID-19.

Best of luck with the rest of the fall term and I'll see you around campus!

PROFESSOR SOUND OFF

THE BIG LIE

By Professor Clifford W. Brown Jr.

The Big Lie is indeed a big lie, yet two thirds of Republicans say they buy it as do a reasonable number of independents. According to Joseph Goebbels's view on propaganda, if you tell a big enough lie and repeat it long enough, the people will believe it.

Who really won? Biden.

Trump and his buddies filed 60 court challenges to the result (many were heard by Trump-appointed judges). They lost 59 -- the win was on a technicality that was irrelevant to the result. If there had been decisive fraud, why couldn't anyone find any evidence of it?

Trump's charges of fraud frequently applied to minority precincts, but Biden didn't improve Clinton's numbers appreciably in those areas -- his biggest improvements over Clinton came in predominately white suburbs.

If Democrats found a successful way to steal votes, why did they reduce their own margin in the House?

With respect to the lie that Dominion voting machines were programmed to flip Trump votes to Biden: Dominion machines, after people vote ATM style, print out a paper copy of how they voted -- for the voter to inspect before handing it in to an election official. These records were kept. If the machines were programmed to steal, why did millions of Trump voters, already suspicious of "election-steal," not notice that their ballot copy said they had voted for Biden?

Case-by-case in the decisive close states:

In Georgia, despite Trump's direct efforts to coerce the Trump-supporting Republican Secretary of State to "find" 11,780 votes, the Secretary honorably refused because he knew that the votes Trump asked him to find weren't there.

In Michigan, a Republican-dominated State Senate election investigating committee concluded that Biden carried Michigan.

In Pennsylvania, the Trump challenge asked the courts to toss out over a million otherwise valid absentee ballots because, due to COVID-19, voters were permitted to send them in later than the original deadline. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court permitted the delay and the United States Supreme Court upheld it.

In Wisconsin, Trump asked for a recount in the two largest Democratic counties; it was done, and Biden's margin actually went up a hair.

Arizona was the big event.

The Republican Senate authorized a recount of Maricopa County which took five months to The Republican Senate authorized a recount of Maricopa County which took five months to conduct. All manner of alleged conspiracies were investigated, including the famous bamboo ballots that were actually bamboozle. After all the fuss (*and* after a Justice Department warning, *and* emerging legal trouble for prominent Trump election fraud liars), the Ninjas doing the recount found that Biden actually carried the county by a tad more than the original result.

The purpose of all this effort is not to reverse the election.

Trump knows that is not going to happen. The purpose is to reinforce a very useful false narrative and myth. What does continually promoting this falsehood on a sustained basis do for Trump and many other Republican liars?

- It energizes Trump supporters, sows outrage, and can be used to justify violence.
- It justifies the attack on the Capitol -- or provides a mitigating excuse for the attackers.
- It adds to larger narratives about evil elites, the deep state, and fake-news media.
- It keeps Trump in the news and gives him the opportunity to maintain (or regain) the strategic initiative.
- It contributes to Trump's re-nomination messaging.
- It is one mighty fund-raising asset; it puts hundreds of millions into Trump's 2024 campaign and millions into his own pockets.
- It helps to de-legitimize Biden and reduce his political power.
- It provides an explanation for why Trump lost the election and, thereby, un-tarnishes his image as a winner.
- It enables Trump tactically to play the victim.
- It diverts attention from Trump's post-election failures and treacherous actions.
- It provides an excuse for Republican legislatures to impede minority voters in name of election "integrity."

- It provides an excuse for Republican legislatures to give themselves the power to overturn future unwelcome presidential election results in their state and impose partisan vote counters.
- In a marvelous example of projection, it justifies Trump's stealing of the 2024 election; it is just tit-for-tat.

For the above reasons, the Big Lie is enormously helpful to Trump and enormously harmful for Democrats. Yet, the latter have not been pro-active in creating and publicizing an effective counter-message. The Arizona recount and its outcome was an extraordinary opportunity to make a big national media buy and ridicule the entire myth. Well done, it would have been a productive investment. But being Democrats, they never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT
Enrolling in PSC 277**

If you are interested in PSC277, Capital Region Political Internships, please **email Prof. Oxley at oxley@union.edu**. *And please do so soon!* Enrollment in the course requires that you first have an internship secured. Prof. Oxley can help you with that.

**PSC Major Foreign Experience
Requirement**

All PSC majors graduating in 2023, 2024, or 2025, 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.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO
SPEND THE SPRING 22 TERM
IN WASHINGTON, DC?**

If you are interested in spending the Spring 22 Term in Washington, DC please attend an informational meeting on **Tuesday, November 2nd from 5-6PM** in Lippman 014 to learn more about this great opportunity!
We look forward to seeing you there!

WINTER POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

Introductory

- PSC 111: Intro to American Politics
(B. Hays) MWF 8:00-9:05AM
PSC 112: Intro to Global Politics
(S. Ahmed) MW 3:05-4:45PM
PSC 113: Intro to Political Theory
(G. Seri) MWF 9:15-10:20AM

Political Theory

- PSC 434: Feminist Film
(L. Marso) Th 1:55-4:40PM

Comparative Politics

- PSC 215R: African Liberation Politics
(S. Ahmed) MWF 10:30-11:35PM

International Politics

- PSC 350: Theories of International Politics
(C. Brown) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
PSC 354: Human Rights and Immigration
(C. Cidam) MW 7:00-8:45PM

US Politics

- PSC 269R: Media and Politics
(Z. Oxley) TTh 10:55-12:40PM
PSC 286: The Modern Presidency
(C. Brown) TTh 7:00-8:45PM
PSC 369 Seminar: U.S. Politics
(B. Hays) TTh 9:00AM-10:45AM

Internships

- PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
(Z. Oxley) F 3-4PM

Methods

- PSC 220: Social Data Analysis
(S. Wiest) MWF 9:15AM-10:20AM

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR WINTER TERM

PSC 215R: African Liberation Politics

In this course, we will read a variety of remarkable texts written by African revolutionary thinkers whose works are extremely influential in terms of not only African studies but also politics of liberation and the idea of liberty as such. We will read works by Franz Fanon, Steve Biko, Walter Rodney, and Kwame Nkrumah among others, to learn about forms of political practice and thought that are centered around liberation. In addition to studying multiple works by African thinkers and on African liberation movements, the course aims to familiarize students with some key concepts in liberation politics such as “total liberation” per Fanon, “Black consciousness” per Biko, colonial “underdevelopment” per Rodney, and “Consciencism” per Nkrumah. Because of the vastness of African liberation politics, the course includes a relatively large number of required readings.

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 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.

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 350: Theories of International Politics

In-depth investigation and evaluation of the major perspectives on world politics. Mainstream theories will be compared and contrasted to critical/alternative paradigms. Special attention is given to modes of theory evaluation.

PSC 354: Human Rights and Immigration

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 369: Seminar: US Politics

This seminar will interrogate the development of American constitutional authority, law, institutions, and practices until World War II. The class will explore the way the US Constitution was designed, the way it was interpreted, and the way interpretive authority was contested. It will seek to understand the tension between the Constitution as an empowering force and a limiting rule. The class will survey the changes to constitutional values (and their understanding) over time, the forces that

brought these changes, and how these changes, in turn, have affected institutions and practices. The focus of this class will be constitutionalism in the political, economic, and social environment in which development occurs.

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.

REMEMBER!

The political science website has lots of useful information for majors and prospective majors
<https://www.union.edu/academic/majors-minors/political>

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 a 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.