

6-2016

Political Science Department Newsletter, v11n1, June 2016

University of Northern Iowa. Department of Political Science.

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Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa. Department of Political Science., "Political Science Department Newsletter, v11n1, June 2016" (2016). *Political Science Newsletter*. 5.

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POLITICAL SCIENCE

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11 | ISSUE 1 | JUNE 2016

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Here at the Department of Political Science, faculty are constantly striving to make a difference. We want to make a difference in the lives of our students (and their families). We hope to make a difference with our engagement and research. We strive to make a difference in the lives of our colleagues and the university community. And, we endeavor to make a difference in the lives of citizens at the local, state, regional, national and international levels.

In this edition of our annual newsletter, we illustrate just a few of the myriad of activities of our students, alumni and faculty as we seek to fulfill our mission of making a difference. If you are receiving this newsletter, know that you have made a difference in our lives. We hope that you, as students, alumni and supporters, will continue to engage with members of the Department of Political Science in the coming year.

Connect with us as we work to expand our social media outreach. Be sure to keep up with our latest events, announcements and networking opportunities on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. You can "like" us on Facebook at Department of Political Science, University of Northern Iowa; "follow" us on Twitter @unipolisci; and "connect" with us on LinkedIn through UNI Political Science Majors & Alums.



FACULTY UPDATES



JILL WITTROCK

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

My first year at UNI has been devoted to learning the expectations and responsibilities of the assistant director role at CSBR as well as acclimating to being a new faculty member after several years outside of academia. In my capacity as assistant director, I was lead author of the "Public Perceptions of Water Quality: A Statewide Survey" report and was also a co-presenter for three presentations and one keynote address related to the report. The timing of the presentations coincided with Gov. Branstad's effort to use revenue from the one-cent sales tax to fund water quality projects in the state,

thus the report and presentations received statewide media coverage in March and early April. I co-authored one program evaluation and three additional reports, two of which were related to the strategic review of the UNI's Teacher Education Program. I also oversaw the hiring, training and supervision of 20+ student employees who visited more than 1,700 retail locations across Iowa collecting information on tobacco availability and advertisements. The retail outlet is the latest arena in the battle against nicotine usage for public health departments in the U.S. since tobacco companies advertise heavily inside the stores, and especially around the checkout counters.

In terms of research, I have several papers at various stages of development that fall under the broad category of survey methodology. Most of these papers focus on how the choices made during the research design and early data collection phase impact data quality and under which situations we should be concerned about our ability to draw valid conclusions from the data. In the last year, I also had an article published at the Journal of International Migration and Integration with colleagues from the University of Michigan and Qatar University.

Teaching for the first time in nearly a decade has been, not surprisingly, the most challenging (but also rewarding!) part of my job to date. I taught Comparative Politics and thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the students in the department. Highlights from the class include debating whether ISIS should be considered an emerging state based on the group's recent activities in Syria, creating lobbying plans for various interest groups in the European Union and constructing a new constitution for Tunisia.



RAMONA MCNEAL

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

It has been a very busy year for research and scholarship. I had four co-authored book chapters, one co-authored encyclopedia entry and one co-authored journal article published on topics ranging from variation in state-level cyberbullying policies to public opinion on government wiretapping powers. In addition, I have two co-authored book chapters and one co-authored journal article forthcoming. The first book chapter, "U.S. Public Support for Climate Change Initiatives: Setting Stricter Carbon Dioxide Emission Limits on Power Plant," concerns public opinion of President Obama's efforts

to address greenhouse effects while the second book chapter, "Smart Phones and Their Increased Importance in the U.S. Election," looks at how presidential campaign strategies are changing as a result of advances in

telecommunication technology. In early June, I have a co-authored article, "Consulting Online Healthcare Information: E-caregivers as Knowledgeable Decision Makers," coming out on the importance of the Internet in helping family members make critical healthcare decisions for loved ones in the *International Journal of Computers in Clinical Practice*. Over the summer, I will be undertaking additional research projects on the impact of social media on the 2016 presidential election and Medicaid long-term care.

In addition to these research projects, I have continued my joint study on court reentry programs with Susan Kunkle from the Sociology Department at Kent State University. On May 2013, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio implemented a reentry court program in the Akron division of the court. It was developed with the goal of helping federal offenders successfully reenter the community after serving their time. While it is hoped that it will reduce recidivism among federal offenders, there is little known about the success rates among reentry court programs. Kunkle and I have been helping to assess the effectiveness of this particular reentry program. We look forward to being able to present our final assessment within the next year.



JAYME NEIMAN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

It was another fantastic year for me as part of the UNI political science department. Last summer I was able to get three articles published. One, on value language usage and political partisanship is spinning off into several related projects that I am looking forward to working on this summer. I also presented a new paper at the Southern Political Science Association meeting in Puerto Rico. The paper, exploring the link between language structure and policy, was very well received and I hope to get it published this summer. On teaching, I spent the year experimenting with hybrid online/classroom classes. Students largely seemed to enjoy this structure

and I was honored to be nominated for the Above and Beyond Award for teaching. I look forward to continuing to improve on this model. One example of how I plan to do this is through service-learning projects integrated into my classes. I am excited to see how they turn out!



SCOTT PETERS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Over the past several years I have enhanced my teaching by incorporating elements of inquiry-based learning and flipped classroom approaches. In inquiry-based learning, students are presented with a series of problems that they must solve. The teacher's role is not to tell the students the answers, but to set up the problems to solve and guide students as they search for answers. In "flipped" classrooms, information is shared via readings or videos outside of class and class becomes a time to practice and apply that information. These two approaches combined in my Analyzing Politics course this semester, which I was able to teach in our CAT Classroom, a technol-

ogy-enabled room that facilitates group work and student interaction. Students worked on group projects, coming up with an interesting question and designing research that would be capable of answering it. They then pitched their research designs as if they were competing for grant funding from a nonprofit. This fall I'm looking to hone this approach to the course; long-term, I hope to bring it into more of my other courses as well. I am also conducting research on the effectiveness of these teaching techniques which I hope to publish in the next couple of years. My book, *Regulating Judicial Elections*, is under contract at Routledge. The manuscript is due in February 2017, and if all goes according to plan, it will be published next spring or summer. The book provides the first full

accounting of the efficacy and consequences of state efforts to protect judicial independence in judicial elections. I find that while a few regulations within state codes of judicial conduct achieve their desired goals, they also lead to higher levels of interest group involvement in campaigns and higher levels of incumbent success. I've been working on this for a long time and I'm eager to see it to completion.



BRIAN WARBY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

We often work on projects that only come to fruition after several years of work. This year I had a few of those projects that finally bore fruit. First and foremost, my book, *Politics, Poverty and Microfinance: How Governments Get in the Way of Helping the Poor*, was published through Lexington. This is a project that I've been working on for several years and to which I dedicated most of last summer. I am very happy to have it in print. It is such a relief to have that project tied off.

Secondly, as a graduate student I co-authored a book chapter with some fellow grad students. The chapter was finally published this year as "Trade Networks and Conflict Processes in the Israeli Conflict System." The chapter is part of an edited volume published by Routledge called "The Israeli Conflict System: Analytic Approaches." This is another project that took a long time to bear fruit and I'm very happy to see it published.

I am also honored to have received the Vajpeyi fellowship award for research I worked on last year. The research led to a conference paper that I co-authored with a UNI student and which we presented at the Midwest Political Science Association's annual conference. The research studies the long-term societal level effects of a new type of poverty alleviation program the Brazilian government implemented beginning in the late 90s. I've resumed work on the project after a hiatus while finishing my book. I hope that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge that informs policy makers concerned with global poverty alleviation.

Finally, last summer I also proposed a study abroad course. By the time this is in print I will have taken a group of students to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for 18 days. The study abroad is a capstone class, so as part of the Liberal Arts Core it draws students from across the university. The title of the course is Globalization, Cultural Pluralism and International Security. As one of the 10 largest economies in the world, a significant regional military power, a leader among developing countries, host to the largest piece of rainforest in the world and much more, Brazil is a terrific place to study these topics. We saw preparations for the Olympics in August and watched the unfolding of the Brazilian President's impeachment – which many in Brazil have begun to call a coup.



JUSTIN HOLMES
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

This year I published a book chapter, "The E-Government Surveillance in the United States: Public Opinion on Government Wiretapping Powers," with colleague Ramona McNeal and Mary Schmeida of Kent State University. In the lead up to the Iowa Caucuses, I was kept busy with many interviews to local, national and international outlets about how the process works and what to expect from the results. In April, I moderated a debate between Democratic congressional candidates in the First District of Iowa. I'm looking forward to teaching the Campaigns & Elections class in the fall during what promises to be an exciting election season.



CHRIS LARIMER

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Students in my Iowa Politics class this spring had an interesting and engaging trip to the capitol in Des Moines, meeting with several state legislators as well as the governor and lieutenant governor. Juniors and seniors in the senior seminar in public administration class conducted field research for their final projects. The students collected survey data from registered voters in the state to test hypotheses about preferred leadership styles and preferences for presidential candidates. My research remains focused on Iowa politics, collecting data on Iowa governors, voter behavior and

reactions to various public policies. My book on *Gubernatorial Stability in Iowa: A Stranglehold on Power* was published by Palgrave Press.



WELCOME TO EVAN RENFRO

The Department of Political Science is pleased to welcome Evan Renfro as a new assistant professor. Professor Renfro is no stranger to the department as he has served the last two years as a visiting assistant professor. He has hit the ground running, attending the Southern Political Science Association's annual meeting in Puerto Rico and also representing the Department of Political Science in the Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance between U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha and universities throughout the country. His current research analyzes the importance of personality and perception in strategic foreign policy making and examines

the leadership regimes of Russia, North Korea and China. In the past year, Professor Renfro taught courses on the Middle East, international relations, terrorism and insurgency and U.S. foreign policy.



Stephen and Linda Segebarth, along with professor Dhirendra Vajpeyi, listen as Brian Warby explains his research.

PROFESSOR WARBY AWARDED VAJPEYI FELLOWSHIP

Brian Warby, assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, was awarded the Vajpeyi Political Science Fellowship for 2015-16. The fellowship honors Professor Emeritus Dhirendra Vajpeyi and is awarded annually to a faculty member who engages students in their research. Professor Warby and UNI student John Hickl collaborated on a paper, "Long-Term Societal Impacts of Conditional Cash Transfers: Bolsa Familia a Decade In." They presented their research at the Midwest Political Science Association's annual meeting in Chicago in April 2015.



STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FORGED

On March 3, 2016, Professor Even Renfro and Aaron Ridgely, political science and criminology major, attended the Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance Conference and Workshop jointly hosted by University of Nebraska Omaha and U.S. Strategic Command. The conference and workshop consisted of distinguished military personnel and political scientists engaging in a collective effort to cultivate new ideas and perspectives in deterring threats the U.S. and our allies may face today and in the future. Says Aaron about the experience, "Since a large amount of my studies have focused primarily on international relations and international security, the opportunity to participate in such an invaluable event not only broadened my perspectives but also allowed me to put theory into some sort of practice. All in all, my decision to pursue a degree in the field of political science at UNI may be one of the best academic decisions I've made thus far." The Department of Political Science is now a member of the USSTRATCOM Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance and will be participating in future collaborations and workshops that will give our students important experience in the area of national security.



IOWA POLITICS STUDENTS VISIT STATE CAPITOL

Students from Professor Chris Larimer's Iowa Politics class visited the state capitol in Des Moines during the spring semester while the General Assembly was in session. Students were able to meet with Rep. Bob Kressig (pictured to the left) as well as Rep. Walt Rogers, Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds.



Donna Hoffman, department head, Department of Political Science; Sen. Joni Ernst; and provost Jim Wohlpart at Elect Her! event.

ELECT HER – PANTHER WOMEN WIN!

For the second year in a row, Elect Her – Panther Women Win! was held on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. Elect Her is an outreach effort of the American Association of University Women and Running Start. The program seeks to give students training and tools to consider running for positions in student government. Approximately 30 UNI students participated in a day filled with activities. U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst gave the keynote address and Iowa State Representatives Timi Brown-Powers and Abby Finkenauer also spoke to students about the importance of women holding elective office. The AAUW facilitator for the event was political and advocacy consultant Chonya Johnson, who also happens to be an alumna of the UNI Department of Political Science! NISG President Katie Evans (an alumna of last year's event) also helped lead a session. Rachel Gregory and Kerri Robinson (MPP alumni) helped organize the event with assistance from Professor Allison Martens. The program was sponsored by the Department of Political Science, AAUW-Cedar Falls and NISG's Diversity Matters Fund.



Emily Cox, Megan Gillins, Sarah Rudy, Autumn Reeder, Tizrah Roussell and chapter adviser Chris Larimer.

PI SIGMA ALPHA

Five students from the Department of Political Science were inducted into the Alpha Delta Chi chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha in the Great Reading Room in Seerley Hall. Pi Sigma Alpha is the national political science honor society whose purpose is to further interest and scholarship in political science. Professor Chris Larimer serves as the faculty advisor for the UNI chapter. Congratulations to the new inductees!



FAREWELL TO PROF. MARTENS

Allison Martens is leaving the Department of Political Science after coming to UNI in August 2012 from the University of Louisville. At UNI, Allison has taught courses in American politics and women in politics. One of her recent publications won the Lineberry Award for best article in *Social Science Quarterly*. During her time in the department, she maintained our web page and social media platforms and contributed in myriad other ways. The department is sad to see Allison go, but wishes her well as she embarks on the next stage of her career. Allison would like to thank the faculty, staff and students here at UNI for making this a terrific four years, and promises she will be #PurpleForLife.



NISG President Katie Evans and Hansen Breitling, NISG director of diversity & student life, help organize voters at the Mock Caucus.

MOCK CAUCUS!

In the run up to the Iowa precinct caucuses, the Department of Political Science and the Northern Iowa Student Government put on a "Mock Caucus." On a cold January evening, approximately 150 UNI students gathered to hear political science faculty explain how both the Republican and Democratic parties in the state conduct their precinct caucuses. After explanations, actual mock caucuses were held, and students participated in both parties' process. For the first time in the last several election cycles, the caucuses took place during the spring semester. Many students would go on to take advantage of this fact and participate in either the Democratic or Republican precinct caucuses that took place on Feb. 1 in what was a very exciting start to the nomination season for 2016.



Students gather into candidate preference groups.



Paul Andersen, Alyssa Kudron, Elizabeth Lynch and Jordan Rockwell get ready to march into the McLeod Center for the spring 2016 graduation ceremony

CONGRATULATIONS 2015-16 GRADUATES!

BA, POLITICAL SCIENCE

Travis Conder	Kellie Petersen
Kathryn Evans	Autumn Reeder
Zachary Garrigus	Jordan Rockwell
Breanna Johnson	Rogan Roosa
Elizabeth Lynch	Tirzah Roussell
Alexander Mackay	Jedediah Stegman
Emily McMickle	Drake Swanson
Christopher Orr	

BA, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Paul Andersen	Michael Minnier
Emily Chiochon	Isaac Pezley
Lakita Clark	Barry Schintler
Brent Dunlay	Mitchell Sinnwell
Alyssa Kudron	Tyler Stanley
Elizabeth Lynch	Evan Stoakes

BA, POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Megan Kennedy	Emilio Sanchez
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Professor Donna Hoffman presents awards to Autumn Reeder Domesy, winner of the Purple and Old Gold Award, political science; Parker Bennett, winner of the Glasener Political Science and Vajpeyi scholarships, as well as the Servant Leader Award; Gabriella Ruggiero, winner of the Women in Politics scholarship and Sue Follon Scholarship for Women in Leadership

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Paul Andersen, Lux Service Award

Autumn Reeder Domesy, Purple and Old Gold, political science

Gabriella Ruggiero, Women in Politics Scholarship, Sue Follon Scholarship for Women in Leadership,

Sarah Hofmeyer, Women in Politics Scholarship

Parker Bennett, Glasener Political Science Scholarship, Vajpeyi Scholarship, Servant Leader Award

Alisha Thompson, Dennis Jensen Scholarship

Ashley Madsen, Charles Ray and Ada May Hoxie Scholarship

Tyler Shuck, Black Hawk County Bar Association Pre-law Scholarship

2016 GRADUATE

PAUL ANDERSEN

I chose the public administration major because it provided me with an opportunity to take courses in business, political science and geographic information systems. This combination of courses fit my desired career path and allowed me to learn a broad spectrum of skills. It also focused on organizational leadership and management, which I utilized throughout my undergraduate career. I aspire to lead in every aspect of my life, so this major fit me well. I also knew that I had aspirations of attending law school and that this major would provide me with the undergraduate education in logical reasoning and writing.

My time in the public administration major was significant because it allowed me the opportunity to interact with faculty who have spent countless hours working and doing research in their fields. This experience helped me better understand the concepts in the classroom but also provided

me a network for potential careers. This faculty network within the public administration major opened up the door to an internship on the United States Senate Judiciary Committee. This internship provided me with a foundation of experience for my future aspirations as a lawyer and allowed me the opportunity to connect with prosecutors and lawyers working in the United States Senate.

After graduation I will be working on Sigma Phi Epsilon's Fraternity Headquarters staff where I will be serving as a regional director. In this role, I will oversee and foster executive team development with SigEp chapters at 25 universities in the United States. After a year in this position, I will be attending the University of Iowa to pursue my Juris Doctor. I intend to focus mainly on criminal law, with the ultimate goal of becoming a prosecutor for the Department of Justice. Ultimately, I hope to serve as a federal district court judge.

RECENT ALUMNI PROFILE

JEREMY EVERETT

I chose to study political science at UNI because I have had always wanted to have a greater understanding of our complex system. More importantly, I wanted to hone my skills and gain more knowledge regarding public policy and how government can serve people through legislation and community development. I graduated with a B.A. in political science in 2015.

After learning about and participating in our lovely democratic process, I was in danger of becoming a cynic. I was let down and disheartened, but I didn't want to think that way anymore. I decided to continue my work with refugees through the refugee-led nonprofit organization EMBARC (Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center) as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. I mostly work with refugee youth from Burma on workforce development and college access. My degree gave me the necessary understanding and connections to assist in passing legislation to fund a first-in-the-nation program designed for refugees to serve their communities.

Now that I have a greater understanding of how to use politics to create change, I am returning to UNI to pursue my master's in social work to assist the refugee and immigrant communities with obtaining the skills and knowledge to live healthy, productive and happy lives.

Jokes can be made about liberal arts majors, but I think many people fail to realize the potential of this type of education. Politics isn't just about electing people. It's about understanding how change is made through public policy and the value of civic engagement. UNI's political science department introduced me to concepts and strategies I used every day while working alongside the refugee community and often the instructors made sure to emphasize how to utilize our knowledge and skills in a practical, real-world way. Political science degrees are about creating sustainable change through civic engagement and an in-depth understanding of abstract concepts like "freedom," "justice" and "power" (which was a class I took at UNI!).

MARK LAWRENCE SCHRAD, PH.D., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.

In the summer of 1996, Russia was about to hold its first free presidential elections in its thousand-year history, and as a UNI student studying at Moscow State University, I had a front row seat--literally! On our first day of classes, Moscow State students were given tickets to meet the presidential candidates, beginning that evening with Mikhail Gorbachev. Revered in the U.S., in Russia he was blamed for destroying Soviet greatness, and ultimately got less than 1% of the vote. Still--it was a three-hour town hall meeting totally unlike anything I'd seen in America: raucous, raw and unscripted. When it was done, I elbowed my way to the front of the crowd, which is how--on my second day in Russia--I met the man who peacefully ended the Cold War. My ticket autographed by Mikhail Gorbachev is one of my most prized possessions. And people wonder why I'm interested in Russian politics!

The next afternoon, while wandering through Moscow, I stumbled upon an ultra-nationalist political rally and came face-to-face with Vladimir Zhirinovsky--the saber-rattling presidential candidate who vowed if he won, he'd reconquer lost Russian lands: not just the former USSR, but Alaska too! And that wasn't the worst of it: that night was another "meet the candidate" forum with Yeltsin's primary rival, Gennady Zyuganov. Summoning my courage, I asked a question about the status of free education if he won. I vividly remember his sarcastic reply of "Students. Oh you poor, poor students," as he began his lengthy tirade.

As I slowly sank back in my seat, I thought: "Three days out of Cedar Falls, and I'm already getting yelled at by the head of the Russian Communist Party!"

These events and others during my time at UNI stoked a passion for studying the world of Russian and European politics. In 1998, I graduated summa cum laude with four overlapping majors: political science, Russian language, European studies and Russian/East European studies. With my UNI diploma in hand, I went on to Georgetown University and earned an

M.A. in Russian/East European Studies and then a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison--where I unexpectedly discovered that I enjoyed teaching, which solidified my choice for academia over a state department career.

After three years teaching at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign during the global economic crisis, I finally landed my dream job at Villanova University outside of Philadelphia, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in comparative politics, international relations, international law, and Russian and East European politics.

Recently, I published my second book with Oxford University Press, *Vodka Politics: Alcohol, Autocracy, and the Secret History of the Russian State*. In seeking to uncover the deep political reasons for Russians' famed addiction to alcohol, I examine 500 years of Russian history through the bottom of the bottle--from Ivan the Terrible to Vladimir Putin. The book has been met with substantial commercial success. It is currently being translated into Russian, Polish and Lithuanian and has been the basis for commentaries and excerpts in *The New York Times*, *Politico*, *The New Yorker*, *Salon* and elsewhere, and has been hailed as a top nonfiction title by *Marginal Revolution* and *The New Yorker*. Even this ambitious project has humble roots at UNI: in 1997 I secured a \$200 CSBS Undergraduate Research Grant--spent mostly on gas to Champaign, Illinois, where I spent a few days photocopying UIUC's library holdings on alcohol politics in the Soviet Union and slept the nights in the back of my run down 1982 Pontiac.

Looking back, it is just another reminder that, while the path to an academic career in Russian politics has at times been arduous, it has ultimately been worth it, and would not have been possible without the education and opportunities UNI afforded.

The Department of Political Science at the University of Northern Iowa offers degrees in political science, public administration and political communication. We are one of the few undergraduate institutions in the country to offer majors in public administration and political communication. We feature student-focused education with small class sizes, research opportunities and internships. Our distinguished teacher-scholars turn excellence in research into excellence in the classroom. Visit us at: uni.edu/polisci or on the Cedar Falls campus in Sabin Hall.



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