

# POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



## SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Dear Political Science Majors and Minors,

Welcome back! I hope that you had a fun spring break and are well rested for the last half of the semester. We have a lot to look forward to and it will go quickly!

Before heading into spring break we inducted several new members into Pi Sigma Alpha, the national honor society for students of politics. Students who are eligible for Pi Sigma Alpha have taken at least six political science courses and have earned a 3.5 GPA in the major, as well as a 3.25 GPA overall. We were happy to recognize their achievements and delighted to meet the friends and family who helped us to celebrate. Lucy Scribner was among the guests and was kind enough to pose with the students for the photograph that Barbara was able to snap. That picture and others are inside.

The Pi Sigma Alpha induction was the first of several events that honor academic excellence. In April we will congratulate those students who have completed and defended their honors theses. We have an impressive range of topics. The descriptions are listed inside. As Academic Festival draws closer, consider attending the sessions where this research may be presented. In the meantime ask these students about their work. The recipients of our departmental prizes (which have not yet been announced) will be honored at Honors Convocation on May 2.

As many of you already know, we will be losing wonderful colleagues at the end of the semester. Professors Katie Zuber, Mara Suttman-Lea and Megan Turnbull were hired to temporarily replace Professors Beau Breslin, Ron Seyb, and Yelena Biberman-Ocakli respectively. All three of these colleagues received amazing job offers that could not be turned down. Professor Zuber is the Assistant Director of Policy and Research and the Executive Director for the Center of Law and Policy Solutions at the Rockefeller Institute of Government. Professor Turnbull has accepted a tenure-track job at the University of Georgia and Professor Suttman-Lea has taken a tenure-track job at Connecticut College. We are excited for what the future holds for them. They have contributed to the intellectual and social climate of our department and will be missed by the students and the faculty. Stay tuned for an opportunity to celebrate with them and to wish them well in their new jobs!

In the fall we will welcome back Professor Biberman-Ocakli and Professor Vacs. We will also welcome three new colleagues to replace Professors Breslin, Seyb, and (Flagg) Taylor. Professor Breslin and Taylor will enjoy a sabbatical next year while Professor Seyb continues as the Associate Dean.

In the meantime, there is a lot going on as you will see from the following pages. I would like to extend my gratitude to Barbara McDonough who is constantly on the look-out for newsletter material and who works with the many students to write and publish it. This spring we have a new feature in the newsletter: a crossword puzzle! Give it a try and find out if you know the faculty as well as Biba Contin, who wrote the puzzle. Thank you to all the students who have contributed – it is another terrific newsletter!

Sincerely,

Professor Natalie Taylor  
Chair, Department of Political Science

# FACULTY NEWS

Collected by Alexis Cantor '18

**Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocakli** is continuing her sabbatical work. She recently served as a delegate at the Raisina Dialogue – India's flagship multilateral conference on geopolitics and international economics. Among the participants were India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and former prime minister of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai. Professor Biberman had a chance to chat over lunch with former CIA director and commander of the NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan David Petraeus about his highly influential counterinsurgency field manual, which she assigns in her *States, Rebels, and Warlords* course. Professor Biberman is continuing her research on militias and biological warfare, and is receiving outstanding research assistance from Jan Janiszewski '20. An article she co-authored with one of her students, Trevor Cloen '18, entitled "Terrorist Prison Breaks," was recently published in *Perspectives on Terrorism*. Professor Biberman received a Jacob Perlow grant to support the visit of Dr. Jael Silliman from Kolkata, India, to Skidmore College in November for a lecture entitled "Recalling Jewish Calcutta." Professor Biberman also continues to serve as a Nonresident Fellow at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center in Washington, D.C.



**Professor Feryaz Ocakli** is basking in the glow of his recently received tenure. He is developing new research projects on institution-building in the Middle East, the impact of colonial institutions on post-colonial development, and genocide denial at the societal level. He recently published an article on state-business relations in Turkey. The article focuses on how Erdogan's Justice and Development Party reshaped the construction and hydroelectricity sectors in Turkey by massively increasing state involvement in the former, and through momentous privatizations in the latter. The article tackles the thorny issue of neoliberal economic policy making by states that have no intention of leaving resource allocation to market mechanisms.

**Professor Flagg Taylor** is the editor of a book called *The Long Night of the Watchman, Essays by Vaclav Benda, 1977-1989*, just published in January. In February



in Washington D.C. there was a book launch event sponsored by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, and Florida International University. On March 6, author and blogger Rod Dreher interviewed Professor Taylor about Benda and the book on his blog at The American Conservative. Next year he will be a visiting research scholar in the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University.



**Professor Mann** was busy through the fall and winter. In the fall, he taught a new "Introduction to Political Science Research" course (PL202) designed to help majors read, use, and eventually conduct their own research. He has been working with five students (Alexis Cantor '18, Izzy Fischer '18, Emil Gilkes '18, Janine Kritschgau '18, and Chloe Singer '18)

on separate research projects that each will present at the 2018 Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago. Each of these original research projects has roots in one of Professor Mann's classes, especially Experiments in Political Science (PL302). In his own research, Professor Mann and his co-authors have an article coming out about the value of students doing hands on research about elections. The article reports the positive experiences (and learning!) of students in his Election Research course (PL335) in fall 2016. This class is being offered again next fall. Professor Mann has other papers under review at academic journals, plus cool new projects like an experiment on using text messages to increase voter turnout in a 2017 election. Professor Mann has also been busy in the last few weeks trying to figure out what to say as the Commencement Faculty Speaker selected by the Class of 2018.



**Professor Ron Seyb** offers this update: "I continue to make mistakes in my position that are not lethal to the institution only because I work with such hyper-competent and preternaturally tolerant people. I write the occasional book review and give a cursory read to journal manuscripts, but most of my time is devoted to exporting disappointment and importing resentment (which is not nearly as lucrative as importing potato chips and exporting diapers)."



**Professor Natalie Taylor** is spending a few days of the spring break at a conference on American exceptionalism. Is America still exceptional? Was it ever exceptional? She is also working on a few essays: "Susan B. Anthony: the Prophetic Eye Discerns the Woman Politician." It will appear in a volume of essays entitled, *The Renewal of American Statesmanship*. "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Social Contract Tradition", which will appear in *The Making of the Wollstonecraftian Mind*.

**Professor Kate Graney** was lucky enough to travel to the Free University of Brussels in January 2018 with the Skidmore Model EU club, for the 26th annual EUROSIM simulation. While there, she also conducted some research for an article on the new "House of European History" museum in Brussels, and visited a lot of wonderful museums. She is also thinking about attending a Russian-language refresher camp at Middlebury College this summer, in preparation for a possible research trip to Russia next year. Also, a potential travel course to Russia — stay tuned!

This spring, **Professor Suttman-Lea** is juggling a number of research endeavors. She is finalizing the survey for her study on the preferences and attitudes of poll workers in the United States, and beginning a related project that looks at the methodological challenges of surveying this population. She's also preparing a paper that looks at the effects of expansive voting reforms on legal challenges by political parties and campaign organizations to electoral processes and outcomes in the United States. Outside of her research and teaching, Professor Suttman-Lea is getting ready to transition to a tenure track position at Connecticut College for the fall of 2018 and



training for her 7<sup>th</sup> marathon at the end of May. She will miss everyone at Skidmore, but promises to visit often!



**Professor Megan Turnbull** has been moving forward with her book manuscript, *State Responses to Armed Groups: Democratization and State-Building in Africa*. The project examines the effects of electoral competition on the consolidation of state authority. Recent literature on state-building in democracies has argued that elections generate strong incentives for politicians to form alliances with armed groups who can deliver victories via violence and intimidation. In the process, state power is weakened as its monopoly on violence is undermined. This perspective, however, cannot account for the wide variation in relations between governments and armed groups. The book asks: what explains government responses to armed groups? Under what conditions do elected officials collaborate with, tolerate, or repress these actors? Drawing on evidence from Nigeria, she argues that elected officials' behavior vis-à-vis armed actors is driven by their need to win elections. Two factors aid incumbents in determining which strategy is most likely to help them achieve this goal: popular support for the armed group and the competitiveness of elections. Lindsay Walsh, a student at Skidmore, has been an



incredible research assistant, gathering further evidence from Kenya to put the Nigerian case in comparative perspective. Professor Turnbull has also been revising an article-length manuscript of the book project, which has been invited to resubmit with the journal *International Security*. One of the questions which emerges from the book project is what determines the behavior of armed groups towards state actors. To answer this question, Professor Turnbull is drafting a paper to present at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago this April. Other projects she is working on include the impact of vigilantism on political participation and patterns of electoral violence in transitional African democracies.

**Professor Katie Zuber** recently accepted a position as the Assistant Director for Policy and Research at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, which is a public policy think tank located in Albany, New York. As part of this job, she is working on several projects related to the opioid epidemic including an in-depth study of Sullivan, County New York. Although one purpose of the study is to better understand how opioids impact rural communities, it is also a study about government. How do different levels of government work together to address the epidemic? Are the policy solutions



really addressing needs on the ground? How are governmental agencies and departments working or not working together in response? In essence, the project looks at how government works by examining its response to a public health crisis. For Professor Zuber, the research is exciting not only for the subject matter, but because she grew up in neighboring Orange County.

Thus she is able to witness firsthand how abstract laws and policies impact real people, living in real communities. In addition to the Sullivan project, she's overseeing a new student internship at the Rockefeller Institute, which seeks to give students a firm grounding in the use of data and research in the policy-making process. This semester, she and the interns are working on a project to better understand the implementation of drug treatment courts in New York's Third Judicial District. Although she is sad to depart from the political science department, she is delighted to be able to continue working with students in her new position.

**Professor Bob Turner** has spent the last two years chairing the Saratoga Springs Charter Review Commission. After the absentee ballots were counted, his campaign lost by 10 votes, the closest margin in city history. The campaign is currently seeking a recount in the courts. After finding very little academic research on the subject, he plans on writing about the politics of charter reform.



## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT AND ALUMNI CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS EDITION OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER:

Zachary Altman '19, Connor Batsimm '18, Will Berg '18, Emma Bernstein '19, Isabelle Bertolozzi '18, Eli Bliss '20, Matt Bristol '17, Alexis Cantor '18, Effrosyni Chantzi '17, Biba Contin '19, Olivia Cox '18, Izzy Fischer '18, Max Fleishman '19, Jack Galardi '18, Kira Geary '18, Orr Genish '17, Nosheen Hotaki '18, Jane Huber '19, Henry Jaffe '18, Janine Kritschgau '18, Erin Mah '19, Hannah Miller '18, Landon Miller '20, Luca Mobilia '17, Dylan Quinn '18, Minja Ranisavljevic '19, Ricky Rios '18, Ben Rudman '18, Jared Schwartz '20, Megan Schachter '17, Chloe Singer '18, Jason Sutherland '18, Wyeth Taylor '19, Rachael Thomeer '18

# NOT-SO-SMART PHONES: NEWS AND INFORMATION LOSS IN THE MOBILE ERA



**Monday, April 16 at 6pm ~Emerson Auditorium**

Assistant Professor **Kathleen Searles** (Ph.D., Washington State University, 2011), holds a joint appointment in the Manship School of Mass Communication and the Department of Political Science at Louisiana State University. Her interests include news media, campaign advertising, and political psychology. Specifically, her research examines the ways in which choice conditions media effects, with a particular focus on the content of partisan news, and the influence of campaign ads on political behavior. In the latter vein she has recently received several grants to support her research using eye-tracking technology, part of a broader agenda which influenced the advertising landscape of the 2016 presidential election. Her work has appeared in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *The Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Political Communication*, *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, *American Political Research*, and *Political Psychology*. She is currently working on a book manuscript which investigates the effects of mobile devices on information processing. She also serves on the editorial board for *womenalsoknowstuff.com*, a site designed to amplify the voice of women political scientists in public discourse and decrease the gender imbalance in media representation of experts.

Sponsored by Skidmore Speakers Bureau, Skidmore College Republicans, Skidmore Democrats and the Political Science Department

## PROFESSOR FLAGG TAYLOR IN WASHINGTON D.C.



On February 13<sup>th</sup> Flagg Taylor led a discussion in Washington D.C. on his newly published book  
*The Long Night of the Watchman: Essays by Vaclav Benda, 1977-1989*

Photos posted on Twitter by Sarka Vamberova @SVamberova, Cultural attaché at the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Washington, DC

# POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT TRIVIA

CREATED BY BIBA CONTIN '19

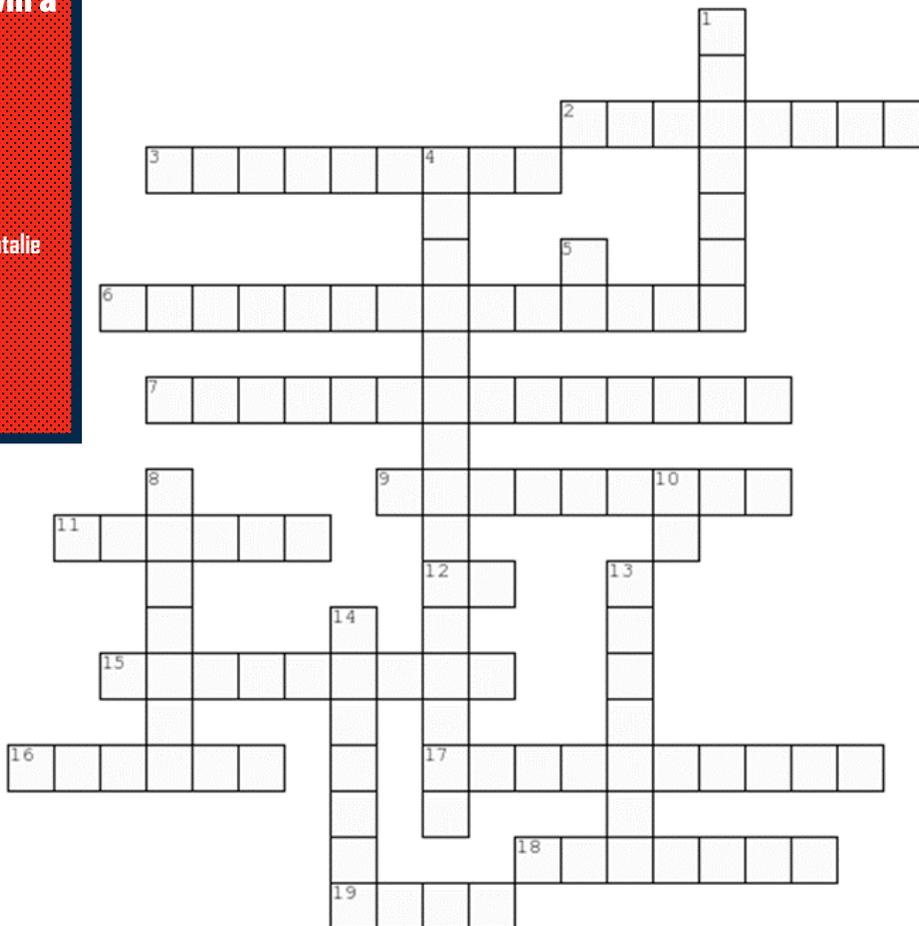
**Be one of the first three students to complete this crossword to win a prize!**

(turn in to Professor Natalie Taylor or Barbara)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Political Science Crossword

Complete the crossword below



Created with [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) [Crossword Puzzle Generator](#)

**Across**

- 2. Professors Mann, Suttman-Lea and Zuber's Area of focus within Political Science
- 3. Location of School Attended by Professors Turner and Graney
- 6. Popular Class Taught by Professor Ockakli
- 7. Female Philosopher Professor Taylor Wrote a Book on
- 9. Overlap between Professor Mann's and Professor Suttman-Lea's focus in American Politics
- 11. Country Where Aldo Vacs got his PHD
- 12. Professor Natalie Taylor is head of this department (acronym)
- 15. Professor Biberman's Area of Focus
- 16. Country of focus for Professor Graney's studies
- 17. Name of Department before 2017
- 18. Aldo Vacs' First Language
- 19. Where Professor Seyb got his PHD

**Down**

- 1. School Where Taylor's got their PHD
- 4. Town that Bob Turner is highly engaged in
- 5. Bob Turner is the head of this department (acronym)
- 8. Professors Teaching Political Philosophy (sing)
- 10. Professor Graney is the head of this department (acronym)
- 13. Professor Turnbull's Country of Focus
- 14. Professor Seyb is the Dean of \_\_\_\_\_ at Skidmore

# A Film of Shakespearean Proportions: Kara-Murza's "Nemtsov"

JARED SCHWARTZ '20



I had never heard of Boris Nemtsov before I attended a screening of *Nemtsov*, a film directed by Russian dissident Vladimir Kara-Murza, last Wed. Jan. 31. The movie tells a story of Shakespearean proportions — a nonfiction tragedy chronicling the rise and fall of one of Russia's most powerful liberal leaders. Russia's rise from the ashes of Communism and fall into the clutches of authoritarianism is mirrored by Nemtsov's ascendancy and descent within Russia's government. The movie portrays Nemtsov as a figure of unparalleled integrity, illuminated by the highest aspirations of mankind, caught between his ideals and the reality of modern Russia.

Nemtsov follows this great Russian leader from his political birth in the Soviet province of Gorky to the height of his career in the Kremlin, and back down to a grassroots protester. In 1986, Nemtsov, then a young and brilliant radio-physicist, began leading protests against the Soviet government's plans to install an experimental nuclear reactor in Gorky. His intellect and charm distinguished Nemtsov within Russia's burgeoning liberal movement, and he won a seat in the Supreme Soviet during the first free elections. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin named Nemtsov as the new governor of Nizhny Novgorod — the Russian oblast formerly known as Gorky — at the age of 32.

The movie conveys the extent to which Nemtsov transformed Nizhny Novgorod through archival footage, anecdotes, and testimonials, all blended together into the image of good, liberal government. Nemtsov reformed Nizhny Novgorod's economy; liberalizing the industries to promote private ownership and business growth. He pumped public money into extensive infrastructure projects, and created the oblast's own provisional currency. He won reelection in 1995 in a landslide; and in 1997, he was appointed first deputy prime minister of Russia. Kara-Murza bolsters Nemtsov's reputation using compelling testimonials from former Russian leaders, activists, and witnesses.

Eventually Nemtsov's own integrity proves to be his downfall. Nemtsov portrays an incorruptible administrator in the highest levels of government, besieged by the oligarchs at every turn. Despite being named Yeltsin's successor to the Presidency, Nemtsov resigns his position in government following the collapse of the Russian economy. He is slandered in the presses, still primarily owned by his monopolistic opponents, and cast down from his exalted position. The movie artfully turns on a dime, remaking Nemtsov into a tragic revolutionary. Marza utilizes photographs taken inside legislative chambers with Nemtsov, and footage of him on the street to vividly display downfall and fierce resistance.

The next sixteen years of Nemtsov's life are dedicated to opposing the Putin regime's increasing authoritarianism. Again and again he is elected to various positions in the Russian government, and perpetually cast back down. Eventually Nemtsov is effectively barred from holding public office, and turns his reform efforts to the streets, leading mass protests and strikes. He is arrested continuously -- beaten, sentenced, cast out -- but never broken. Kara-Murza's *Nemtsov* becomes a metaphor for the liberal movement in Russia, portraying Boris Nemtsov as a tireless crusader for liberalism. By casting him as the vanguard of Russian resistance, the film gives us a glimpse into the Russian opposition. From its height in the late 1990s to its oppression under the boot of authoritarianism, the Russian liberal movement has never been broken.

The movie is a paradoxically hopeful tragedy, a glimpse into a people's hopes that were so close to being realized, a dream deferred but not forgotten. Perhaps this is why there is no mention of Nemtsov's 2015 assassination in front of the Kremlin. Boris Nemtsov may be gone, but what he lived for is not.

# LOOKING TO RUSSIA'S FUTURE

JASON SUTHERLAND '18

In February, the Periclean Honors Forum hosted a two-day event on the future of Russia. The event featured prominent Russian democracy activist Vladimir Kara-Murza, Vice Chairman of Open Russia, and Jonathan Brent, Executive Director of The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City. Mr. Kara-Murza screened his film *Nemstov* during the first night. The following evening featured a conversation between Mr. Kara-Murza and Mr. Brent on the prospects of democratic revolution in Putin's Russia. Professor Kate Graney moderated the discussion.

Mr. Kara-Murza has a long history with the Russian opposition. His most recent documentary, *Nemstov*, is a portrait of Boris Nemstov, the high profile democratic opposition leader, former deputy prime minister, and friend of Mr. Kara-Murza. Mr. Nemstov was assassinated near the Kremlin in 2015 in a hit likely ordered by the Putin government. Since Nemstov's death, Mr. Kara-Murza has been an organizer for free and fair elections in Russia. He was also involved in the passing of the 2012 U.S. Magnitsky Act. Mr. Brent rose to prominence as a Soviet scholar in the 1990's with his *Annals of Communism Series*. He conducted intense research in the Former Soviet Union's archives during their open period after the FSU's collapse. As a publisher at Yale Press, he oversaw the publishing of about thirty books documenting many of the hidden crimes of the Soviet Union. He has authored several books including *Stalin's Last Crime: The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors*.

The conversation between Mr. Kara-Murza and Mr. Brent began with comments by Mr. Brent regarding the relationship between Russian and American citizens. He commented that many Russians feel as if Americans generally look down on Russia as a backwards and insignificant place. This attitude has carried over from the perceived poor treatment of the new Russian state by the U.S. after the fall of the U.S.S.R. The Putin regime intentionally fuels this perception through propaganda in order to prop up the United States as the enemy of the Russian people.

Vladimir Putin took over the Russian presidency during one of the most unstable periods in Russian history. Mr. Kara-Murza commented that at this moment, when the Russian economy was in a devastating freefall, Russian citizens were willing to accept security over freedom. Today's presidential elections are fraudulent. During the first four years of his presidency, Putin shutdown much of the country's pluralistic media and began to rig elections in the State Duma. Many prominent opponents of Putin's consolidation of power have found themselves either imprisoned or threatened into silence.

Putin enjoys incredibly high approval ratings within his country (often more than 80%). This is used as an indicator by Western commentators to say there is no end to Putin's authoritarianism in sight. Mr. Kara-Murza disagrees with this outlook on Russia's future. He stated that these ratings are reported uncritically by these commentators, as it is clear that they are falsified by the Putin government. False reports such as these are part of the vast propaganda machine that props up the government.



Mr. Kara-Murza believes that democracy will come sooner to Russia than the world thinks. Last year saw anti-corruption protests in Moscow that drew tens of thousands of people. The average age of these protestors was from 16 to 25 years old. According to Mr. Kara-Murza, the younger generation is largely immunized to Putin's propaganda. Young people are actively seeking out new sources of information and letting their frustration with an irresponsible government be known. Like the Maidan movement in Ukraine, protests in Russia are a call for the government to treat Russians like citizens, not "cattle."

What does the future of Russia hold? There is no clear answer. But there is a clear sense that things will not remain the same forever. The increased frequency of protests indicates that there may be a storm brewing. For two decades, Putin has ruled the country with an iron fist. If citizens' demands for a more legitimate democracy are not met, the Putin regime may find that intimidation is not enough to keep people quiet. Mr. Kara-Murza put it best when he said that "There is no such thing as a good czar." Russians may teach the world this lesson yet. A number of Skidmore students and professors were treated to dinner with our guests after the discussion. President Glotzbach joined as the conversation carried on into the night. What this author was struck by most was the humor of our guests. Even Mr. Kara-Murza, despite the hard nature of his work, was cracking jokes and laughing. It goes to show that even when things are not right in the world, the human spirit prevails. Everyone went home that night believing in a brighter future.

*Photo credits to Erik Jenks*



# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: 101

Eli Bliss '20

On Friday Nov. 17, students and faculty from the Political Science Department travelled to SUNY Adirondacks for a night of discussion on global citizenship. "Global Citizenship 101," organized by the World Awareness Children's Museum in collaboration with Professor Kate Graney from the Political Science Department, gave high school students a taste for college discussions through two panel presentations and small group discussions.

Skidmore professors made up the first panel to establish some foundational knowledge of world affairs with the students. Professor Feryaz Ocakli opened the discussion by addressing common misperceptions surrounding the Middle East — his area of expertise. Professor Megan Turnbull followed up by asking for common stereotypes surrounding African politics, the topic of her research. Students were surprised to find growing economies, urban metropolises, and modern technology in several of the continent's countries. Finally, Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocakli used her expertise of South Asia to challenge students to embrace diverse viewpoints when considering other countries. Students were slow to acknowledge India as the world's largest democracy measured by population, or even the presence of democracy in the region itself. Following these brief presentations, students were eager to ask questions about the role of Islam in the Middle East and American politics, and in what ways America can help in international development.

The second panel was made up of world travelers to share personal experiences and advice for travelling abroad. A global brand marketer, a real estate agent with family in Europe and Egypt, and a young columnist from *The Chronicle* comprised this three-person panel. The panel discussed the process of translation as more than simply language, but cultural interpretations as well, which dramatically impact abroad experiences. The panel suggested students think in global terms but act locally.

Following the panel discussions, high school students, ranging from sophomores to seniors, were split into small groups for discussions. The discussions were led by Skidmore students Jillian Seigel '18, Nosheen Hotaki '18, Jane Moretta-Miller '18, Eli Bliss '20, Jinan Al-Busaidi '20, Aniba Rahman '20, and Hunter McWilliams '20. Students were once again challenged to confront their biases and preconceptions to consider a global citizen world view. Relations such as music, film, food, and literature could

be seen as cultural bridges — tools to appreciating diversity. Students were guided in understanding and appreciating their role as Americans in a global context to interrogate the information they come across, and to see the world from differing point of views.

*This article previously appeared in the Skidmore News.*



# THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL UN CONFERENCE

CONNOR BATSIMM'18

This February, Skidmore's Model United Nations club sent thirteen delegates to the North American Model United Nations Conference (NAMUN) at the University of Toronto. The group included both upperclassmen with extensive model UN experience, and first-timers, equal parts excited and terrified at the prospect of their first conference. For this year's conference, NAMUN featured a variety of committees, from General Assemblies focused on topics including decolonization and humanitarian aid, to integrated crisis committees covering the Colombian conflict and the Malayan emergency, to specialized agencies like the International Court of Justice.

My committee, a symposium of Colombia's myriad leftist guerilla groups, including the FARC and the ELN, spent the weekend attempting to secure both ideological and military control over Colombia, while attempting to transition the nation into a communist state. To achieve these ends, we had to pass both committee-wide public directives and strategize as a unified collective, while also working covertly to build private alliances and sabotage our enemies. These behind the scenes operations involved secretly negotiating with members of the drug cartel committee, kidnapping wealthy hacienda owners and holding them for ransom, and hiring spies to privately investigate members of our own committee.

In other committee rooms, members of Skidmore's delegation worked towards repairing post World War II Japan, staged revolutions against the Malayan government, and strove to condemn Croatia for human rights abuses committed in the Serbian conflict. Admittedly, many of these committees covered extreme, heightened scenarios that none of us will likely encounter during our own post-graduation work; in fact, while some members of our club major in political science, others primarily study another subject (I myself am an English major) and will probably end up in a field that bears no resemblance to the floor of the United Nations or the war-torn countryside of Colombia. Yet the negotiations, nonstop public speaking, collaborative writing, and networking that take place at NAMUN offer students a chance to practice skills which can apply to any area of study.



As a comparatively small delegation, hailing from a tiny liberal arts college, Skidmore's model UN approaches conferences with something of an underdog status. Many of the delegates we met throughout the weekend attend massive universities and take classes specifically designed to prepare



them for conferences, in which they spend entire semesters studying resolutions and drafting practice position papers. Often, these delegates receive formal grades based on their successes or failures at conferences, and as a result, they approach their committees ruthlessly, determined to make a lasting impression and more than willing to double-cross anyone who stands in their way.

But while other schools bring extreme competitiveness, Skidmore's delegation delivers resourcefulness and genuine passion. Most of our delegates teach themselves the skills they need to succeed at conference, and every year throughout my time in Model UN, I have been consistently impressed by the resourcefulness and scrappiness of our club's members. And despite our small size and relative lack of formality, the hard work our delegates put in always pays off. This year, our delegation took home two awards – former club president Jason Sutherland earned an Outstanding Delegate award, and I received a book award for my pre-conference position paper. But more importantly, the thirteen of us came together and shared an exhausting, yet indescribably rewarding four days of diplomacy and community.

# PI SIGMA ALPHA



Founded in 1920, Pi Sigma Alpha receives into membership students in political science and related disciplines who have outstanding records of scholarship, high academic integrity, and academic distinction. Last year ten members of the class of 2018 were abroad when they accepted membership; with their return this year's ceremony was extra special. Next spring we will formally induct four Pi Sigma Alpha members of the class of 2019 who are currently studying abroad.

**Class of 2018** Jackson Benarroch, William Berg, Isabelle Bertolozzi, Alexis Cantor, Olivia Cox, Isabelle Fischer, James Galardi, Kira Geary, Emil Ghitman Gilkes, Hannah Hoey, Nosheen Hotaki, Janine Kritschgau, Michael Lanin, Reed Logan, Jane Moretta-Miller, Anne Pfeifenberger, Chloe Singer, Rachael Thomeer, Rachel Turk, Kristopher Vahle, Kali Villarosa, Emily Walter, Nicole Werner, Hannah Zinker **Class of 2019** Elizabeth Bushey, Barbara Contin, Hannah Fishman, Erin Mah, Pearse Martin, Rachel McPherson, Sarina Musallam **Class of 2020** Maya Bornstein, Clare McInerney

**Members of Tau Gamma chapter previously inducted** Edson Acosta, Trevor Cloen, Henry Jaffe, Dylan Quinn, Jason Sutherland



# STUDENT NEWS

Collected by Erin Mah '19 and Izzy Fischer '18

**Zachary Altman '19** I was recently accepted to participate in the Grand Strategy Program at the Hertog Foundation this summer at the recommendation of Professor Flagg Taylor. At the Hertog Foundation, I'll be studying with some of the eminent practitioners and scholars of U.S. foreign policy. In short, I am extremely grateful to Professor Taylor for his counsel and guidance.

**Emma Bernstein '19** I'm back at Skidmore this semester after studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina in the Fall. I was in Buenos Aires to study the history of human rights in Latin America and while I miss BA, I'm currently enjoying my semester, especially my Political Islam class with Feryaz Ocakli. This summer I plan to work in New York City and am waiting to hear back from internships.

**Alexis Cantor '18** Aside from being the only senior political science major in PL 102, this semester I am working for the department, presenting at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago and deflecting questions from my relatives about my post-grad plans.

**Olivia Cox '18** This semester I am working on my senior thesis for Political Science and senior cello recital for Music. Upon graduation I will be returning to Schenectady Inner City Ministry to serve as the assistant director of the Free Summer Meals Program. In the fall I will be attending Albany Law School where I intend to concentrate in International Law. It is going to be a busy, but fun, next few months for me!

**Izzy Fischer '18** I am currently finishing up my thesis and getting ready to present my findings at the Midwest Political Science conference in Chicago this April. After that's done, I will be gearing up to move to Boston, Massachusetts post-grad. In Boston, I will be doing data analytics on the Asset Management Audit Analyst team at Fidelity Investments!

**Max Fleischman '19** This semester I am studying at American University through the Washington Semester program. The program is great and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in getting involved in national politics. While in DC I'm interning for the Inter Faith Conference of Metropolitan Washington as a communications/program support intern. Additionally, I'm writing a research paper on the effects of marijuana legalization laws on communities of color. I hope this semester is going well for everyone in the poli sci department, and I can't wait to be back at Skidmore next semester!

**Jack Galardi '18** As I wrap up my last semester of college, I can confidently say that I am happy I got my education here at Skidmore. It's been great getting to learn and grow in such a comfortable, progressive environment. While I am not yet sure of my post graduate plans, I am confident that I will be able to take the skills and knowledge I have acquired at Skidmore and apply them in whatever I do. Also, one of my sisters is having twins in a week or two so that's pretty cool.

**Nosheen Hotaki '18** I was re-elected as the politics editor at Skidmore News and have been working with reporters to increase both the quality and quantity of our articles. I have also been working on my senior thesis which is about non-state legal practices in Afghanistan. Lastly, I attended the Harvard Women in Business Conference on Feb. 24, which was an incredible experience. I got to meet the President and CEO of Nasdaq and attend several panels about consulting norms and women leaders in turn around crises.

**Jane Huber '19** I have joined the club ski team and am enjoying being back on campus after a semester abroad. I was offered a summer position at Success Academy Charter Schools and will be receiving an official offer of a summer Internship from The Fresh Air Fund soon. That one is not official, but it was unofficially offered to me. Just waiting on technicalities. So that is exciting as both organizations are great options and do great work for New York City kids and my goal this summer is to give back to the city that raised me.

**Henry Jaffe '18** I have been working on getting through my Skidmore bucket list before graduating. As of this year, I have gone to Chowderfest (and learned what chowder is), taken a class with Ron Seyb, attended a Beatlemore concert, and gone to Compton's at 3 am. Less exciting to everyone but myself, I am still doing SGA like it's my job and interning in the Saratoga Springs office of Risk and Safety. I am currently looking for work in public administration...please help.

**Erin Mah '19** Following my summer 2017 internship in the chambers of Judge Helene White, who sits on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, I made my way across the Atlantic to study at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. At Trinity I gained some valuable insights on the state of the European Union, political violence around the world, and the interworking of the Irish political system. Listening to professors and classmates who were born and raised abroad made me realize just how much I still have to learn.

# STUDENT NEWS

Collected by Erin Mah '19 and Izzy Fischer '18

**Hannah Miller '18** I'm currently writing a thesis on the effects of standardized testing on elementary school children's wellbeing. My research focuses on accounts from school teachers and nurses in the New York area. Upon collecting and analyzing data, I hope to use my findings to evoke policy reform with respect to state testing standards in the New York area.

**Landon Miller '20** This past January, I was able to embark on a trip I've dreamed of for years. I travelled to Healy, Alaska, where I spent four days dog sledding along the Shushana River and Stampede Trail, eventually visiting Bus 142 from "Into the Wild". It was the coldest and most incredible experience of my life.

**Dylan Quinn '18** This semester I am splitting my time writing my thesis - concerning episodes of American populism during the twentieth century in relation to Trump and Sanders - and working as a Policy Fellow for Gareth Rhodes's campaign for Congress (NY-19). As for post-grad plans, I will be the Project Coordinator at the law firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP, where I will be working as a mergers and acquisitions (M & A) paralegal and managing projects with their business development and senior management teams.

**Minja Ranisavljevic '19** Last semester I studied abroad in Indonesia and had the chance to intern at *Metro TV*, a television news network (located in West Jakarta) that broadcasts domestic and international news 24 hours a day. Among its broadcasting repertoire, *Metro TV* produces two programs in English: *Indonesia Now* and *World News*. *Metro TV's* mission statement is to "stimulate and promote the nation's and country's advancement towards a democratic atmosphere, in order to excel in global competition, with high appreciation of moral and ethic." While interning at *Metro TV*, I worked for the English-speaking program *Indonesia Now*. *Indonesia Now* is aired on Sunday morning. It lasts around 30 minutes and it encompasses three categories: business, travel, and entertainment. With an exception for technical questions, there is a "help yourself" policy. The main objective is to complete the scripts before the taping of the program. This internship helped me experience a fast-paced job and molded me into a proactive intern that can think and react quickly. My primary duty was to scout events for the upcoming week and write a synopsis. I was prepared for various tasks: learning about the system software, translating an interview, and following reporters to an event. Interning for a non-stop television network was a bit hectic, but a lot of fun!

**Jason Sutherland '18** I am trying my best to enjoy my last semester at Skidmore. It is bittersweet. While it is sad to be on my way out, there is much promise for the future. As always, things are great here at the department. Professor Taylor's dystopia class has been great so far. And Professor Seyb has been kind enough

to put up with my jokes. When I come back for a reunion I will still be bragging that we are the best major on campus.

**Wyeth Taylor '19** This past fall I had an amazing experience studying abroad in Galway, Ireland, where I had the opportunity to take classes on a wide variety of topics, including European Politics and the conflict with Northern Ireland. I am very happy to be back on campus and really enjoying all of my classes. This semester I am also interning for Katie Wilson, who is running for the 21st Congressional District seat here in NY.

**Rachael Thomeer '18** This semester I am working on my thesis, planning Fun Day & Senior Week, and trying to enjoy every second of my last semester at Skidmore! I am writing my thesis on the 2017 Saratoga Springs Charter Referendum. For my thesis I did archival research (I got to go into the vault at City Hall!) and conducted interviews to put together an account of charter change in the city over the last 100+ years. The historical analysis sets the stage for the analysis of the 2017 change campaign that was voted down by 10 votes. I will be using exit poll data from 2017 to assess demographic trends, voter preferences, and campaign/message efficacy. Ultimately, I will attempt to answer the question of what makes charter change succeed or fail. I'm very excited to be going to the MPSA conference in Chicago in April to do a poster presentation on this subject! I know types of local government is a topic that everyone finds enthralling, so after graduation I hope to turn my thesis into a big blockbuster movie or maybe a Broadway musical (just kidding). My actual post-graduation plans are to work on a midterm campaign this summer and fall and then apply to grad schools for next fall. Since this is my last student newsletter contribution I want to thank the department for four wonderful years!

**Marcus Tweedy '19** I just returned from my fall semester studying abroad with IES Amsterdam! Not only did I travel quite a bit, I got to attend volunteer events with non-profits like Amnesty International and Free Press Unlimited, and take local university classes on such topics as migration policy, global development aid, the non-profit industry, and the relationship between policy-making and science. Now that I'm back, I'm shifting my focus closer to home, as I'm taking The Psychology of Politics and Intro to Political Philosophy, while also trying to figure out how best to spend my upcoming summer and senior year at Skidmore.

**Nicole Werner '18** This semester I am taking Professor Mann's Politics and News Media class as well as Immigration Politics and Policy with Professor Turner. I am also taking Reading *The Wire* with professor Nathan in the American Studies department. Next year I will be attending the University of Pennsylvania's Masters of Social Work Program.

# BRIDGING THE GAP

## AT THE STUDENT CONFERENCE ON U.S. AFFAIRS

JASON SUTHERLAND '18

Last November, I traveled to West Point to participate in the U.S. Military Academy's annual Student Conference on U.S. Affairs (SCUSA). The expressed goal of this conference is to bridge the gap between civilian students and cadets while developing an understanding of what challenges face the United States today. This year's conference took a largely international focus, with topics discussed including global markets, migration and refugee displacement, and U.S. relations with Russia.

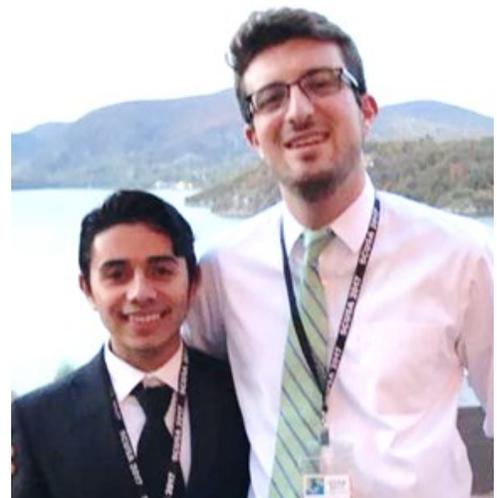
Fellow PL major Ricky Rios and I were not sure what to expect when we arrived at West Point. But we knew we were in for quite the experience. Visiting students were assigned to sleep in the barracks with cadets. The rigor of life in the barracks was quite a change from Skidmore's dorms and on-campus apartments. West Point cadets abide by a strict curfew, room inspections, and must be awake, in uniform and formation, before the sun rises every day. For someone used to waking up 15 minutes before class, this truly felt like another universe.

I was assigned to a committee of visiting students and cadets that focused on the future of NATO and U.S. alliances. We spent our first three days in deep debate over the purpose of NATO in the twenty-first century. Does the alliance fairly distribute the burdens of mutual defense among member states? Is the purpose of NATO simply to protect Europe from threats along its eastern borders? Or should the organization recommit to the democratic values stated in its charter by taking on a humanitarian focus? Our policy proposal addressed all of these questions and more as we designed a strategy to keep NATO relevant in a rapidly changing world order. Our group also met the most recent U.S. ambassador to NATO. He was even impressed by our policies; we couldn't have asked for a better seal of approval.



SCUSA is the only time of year that students from other colleges and universities are able to come and (almost) live the cadet experience. I think any person who has been to the conference would say that the cadets are incredible. Every student I met was an upstanding individual, filled with optimism and a drive to make the world a better place. After spending so much time engaged in discussion over policy and personal experience with the people that will someday be the bearers of American foreign policy, I felt far more optimistic about our country's future.

Suffice to say, SCUSA was an incredible experience, and I am so lucky to have been chosen to participate. It might seem like Skidmore students and military cadets come from different worlds. But the truth is we have far more in common than we think. When people of different backgrounds and perspectives work together towards a common goal, the experience (and the results) are inspiring. Whoever the department chooses next for this conference will be very lucky.



# EUROSIM 2018

## PROFESSOR KATE GRANEY



From January 4-8, 2018 eight Skidmore students from Skidmore's Model European Union club travelled along with club faculty advisor Kate Graney to the 26th annual EUROSIM simulation conference, held at the Free University of Brussels, in Brussels, Belgium.

Skidmore has been a participant in EUROSIM since the first simulation was held back in 1992. Indeed, retired Professor of Government Roy Ginsberg was one of the founders of the simulation, which now draws participants from around twenty US and European based schools (including Colgate, Hamilton, SUNY Brockport, St. John Fisher, Canisius, Widener University, Saarland University, the University of Maastricht, Antwerp University, Helmut Schmidt University in Hamburg). Skidmore hosted EUROSIM in March 2015, when close to 200 students stayed on campus for 3 wonderful days.

That Skidmore's participation in EUROSIM is facilitated through a wholly student-run, SGA-chartered club makes it unique. Most of the other universities send delegations who have trained for the simulation as part of an academic course of study, and they are evaluated on their participation for course credit. Skidmore's representatives prepare on their own, make their own travel arrangements, and operate with minimal faculty oversight. "The other delegations are always impressed by the professionalism of the Skidmore delegation, even more so when they find out that the students themselves are responsible for all the arrangements and preparation for the conference," says faculty advisor and Professor of Political Science, Kate Graney. During the three day conference, students are in meetings all day, and take on the role of a government member from a European Union member state, a member of the European Parliament, or a "special" role, such as a journalist. Over the three days, the students work together to try to pass a piece of legislation, mimicking as closely as possible the real EU process. Each year there is a different theme. This year's theme was very topical—the students were charged with trying to develop an EU-wide Entry/Exit

system for the regulation of "third-country nationals" (migrants).

There is also a social component to the conference. Students ate all meals together, and enjoyed a day trip to Bruges, Belgium. Several academic programs and departments helped to fund Skidmore delegation's trip to Brussels this year, including Management and Business, Gender Studies, and Political Science. Each participant was also responsible for bearing some of their own expenses. This year's delegation included the following students, playing the following roles during the three day simulation:

- Kali Villarosa, 2018, Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior Herbert Kickl
- Mariam Vahradyan, 2018, Austrian Head of Delegation Sebastian Kurz
- Chloe Pinkney, 2018, Member of the European Conservative and Reform Party from Denmark, Anders Vistisen
- Claudia Malpeli, 2019, Member of the European People's Party from Estonia, Tunne Kelam
- Jada James, 2018, Member of the European People's Party from Slovakia, Josef Nagy
- Alyssa Morales, 2018, Member of the Socialists and Democrats Party from Malta, Miriam Dalle
- Sophia Fox, 2020, Member of the Green Party from the Netherlands, Judith Sargentini
- Clara Thompson, 2020, Member of the European People's Party from Croatia, Dubravka Suica



# THE POLITICS OF THE FORGOTTEN AND THE AGGRIEVED: REMAKING THE WORLD ORDER?

RICKY RIOS '18

Last fall I had the privilege of attending the Student Conference for United States Affairs (SCUSA) along with my peer, Jason Sutherland. This conference took place at the United States Military Academy at West Point (USMA). Understanding the international crises regarding displacement and genocide, the organizers of the conference decided that the theme would be “The Politics of the Forgotten and the Aggrieved.” Student delegates from over 120 different colleges and cadets from the academy were divided up into 15 different roundtable topics. These roundtables ranged from NATO and Climate Change, to more broad topics referring to the issues of large regions such as Latin America or the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA). Over the course of 4 days, participants had the opportunity to learn and engage with West Point customs, spend an incredible amount of time deliberating their respective topics, and network with other students and experts interested in politics.

When I first learned about SCUSA, I was immediately captivated by the theme for 2017 which was “Politics of the Forgotten and Aggrieved. Was it referring to those who have been forcibly silent by government officials and other politically, economically or socially powerful people, or was it referring to the silence exhibited amongst the international community at large who was guilty of overlooking atrocities and not doing enough to provide solutions when those most vulnerable were being persecuted? Working with refugees in Thailand during the spring of 2017, and then again during the summer of that same year, I quickly linked the overarching theme to the experiences of migrants and refugees. More specifically, I thought of the Rohingya in Myanmar, displaced persons in Syria, and Latin American immigrants. People within these groups are often forced to immigrate due to financial hardships, political persecution, and ethnic and racial tension, among other reasons. The difficulty of their trials is exacerbated when these people are also not being treated fairly while applying for refugee resettlement, asylum, or documented immigration. Just compare the average “wait time” for visas for people looking to relocate to the United States. You will come across statistics that indicate that there is a substantial difference between visa approvals depending on the applicants’ country of origin. That is why I decided to join the roundtable topic, “Displacement: Migrants and Refugees.”

Every aspect of SCUSA had a purpose, a meaning, and a collective goal to be attained. The roundtables were no different. Over the span of four days I deliberated with students on the country’s current stance and system of immigration that resulted in the

creation of a short memo proposing possible reforms. We discussed the inefficiencies of the bureaucracy—highlighting that the institutions in place practically beg for the backlogs that currently exist, amongst other shortcomings. By the end of the conference, we had bonded over a very divisive topic, emphasizing that regardless of where we stood on the political spectrum, we could all agree that immigration reform was very relevant and pertinent to the current political climate. On the final day, we presented our strategy to our colleagues and administrators of the conference, and we were proud of the work that we had done. In addition to the academic portion of the conference, I had a lot of fun learning and experiencing the daily routine of cadets at the military academy.



Unlike Skidmore, USMA has very stringent policies on how cadets are to conduct themselves daily. As a military institution, this is not surprising, but that does not make the life of a cadet any less commendable. We were awakened at 0600 every day (some cadets have to be up earlier) and were escorted to breakfast. We would break off into our roundtables, followed by lunch, another roundtable session and then either a networking opportunity or a plenary session. Our schedule was very structured, but many of the cadets noted that it resembled what they went through every day. Our recreational activities consisted of a tour of the campus, a gun show, and a visit to USMA’s local bar. Despite all of this, my favorite “past-time” while at SCUSA was having deep and long conversations with my hosts at night. One is studying sociology, the other mechanical engineering. We spoke about the conference, about their lives, and most importantly about our differences. That was the most enriching part of SCUSA’s whole experience: being able to come from completely different places (physically and ideologically) and finding the beauty in what would otherwise divide us.

My experience at SCUSA granted me the opportunity to interact with individuals who, like me, are interested in leaving a positive impact on this earth. Some of my professional goals consist of pursuing higher education in, and advocating for, immigrant rights. SCUSA reminded me that politics, and more generally helping people, is what I am most passionate about. The conference only affirmed that I am capable of effectively advocating for what I believe in. I have the utmost respect for the cadets at USMA—as their diligence, tenacity, intelligence, and compassion are not only visible in the work that they do, but also how they interact with others. I am grateful that I was chosen to attend this event, and I hope the Skidmore Political Science Department continues the tradition of sending students to this conference for many years to come!

# ALUMNI UPDATES

COLLECTED BY RACHEL THOMEER '18

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Orr Genish '17



I am currently a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. For at least the next year, I am stationed in Pensacola, Florida for Undergraduate Combat Systems Training. Since graduating Skidmore, I've gone through a number of different training programs and schools: Air Force Officer Training School (OTS), Initial Flight Training (IFT) and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape school (SERE). Upon completion of Flight School, which is the program I am enrolled in at the moment, I will be assigned to a specific aircraft. The possibilities range from F-15Es, to B-52 Bombers, to AC-130 Special Operations gunships. Depending on the assignment, I will be stationed at an Air Force base either in the continental U.S. or abroad. Being an officer in the Air Force is an honor, and has thus far been a pleasure and an incredible challenge. Participating in an organization that many of my Skidmore Political Science professors lecture and write about is a unique, and an intellectually interesting experience.

## STROOCK & STROOCK & LAVAN

Luca Mobilia '17



Since November of 2017, I've been working as an entry level paralegal at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, a law firm in New York City's Financial District, in Stroock's estates and trusts department. My main duties involving performing general clerical work

and assisting attorneys with filing various motions in court. As a former political science major, I found that it was an intriguing time to enter not just the legal field, but an area of law directly related to money management. It was interesting to observe how the changes in the tax code brought about by the recent tax reform legislation directly affect the advice the attorneys give to clients. It serves as a reminder that what we study isn't just words in a newspaper, talking

points on a cable show, or fodder for tweets, but rather has real world implications on people's lives and livelihood.

## ORGANIC FARMING

Matt Bristol '17

I have just finished working a season on a small organic farm with Skidmore alumni Charlotte Ross and Jonathan Janeway and can't stop talking about it. In light of our heinous politics, I'm running away to Norway to do some more farming this spring and summer, after which my plan is to go to graduate school to study food access and mental health under the glorious banner of Human Geography (sorry, Polisci). If that doesn't pan out, well, I know how to farm now.



## GOVERNOR CUOMO'S OFFICE

Megan Schachter '17

After graduating in May, I began working as a Special Assistant for the Office of Governor Cuomo, based out of NYC. My coworkers and I are responsible for the Governor's briefing materials, compiling information to prepare the Governor for his daily schedule. We determine what information is necessary to include before either coordinating its retrieval or creating it ourselves. The job is a combination of chaotic, stressful, exhilarating, and rewarding; sometimes all at once. Nothing could replace hanging out on the 3rd floor of Ladd, but I've certainly found another group of policy nerds to debate.



## COMPASS NEWS

Effrosyni Chantzi, '17:

I am currently interning at a London based start-up called *Compass News* as a marketing assistant. It is a small team of enthusiastic LSE graduates and current students who are trying to battle two great challenges that journalism currently faces.

The first one is the plague of Fake News; misinformation is frequently seen as a re-occurring phenomenon harming the transparency and credibility of information providers leaving the public prey to demagogical aspiration or simply driving them towards political apathy. The second problem with news today is the echo chamber fostered by social media. Most people now get their news from Facebook, Twitter etc. which are designed to maximize positive engagement. To put it simple social media show users stuff they are more likely to "like." The result: you will only have your own opinions reflected back at you, also known as filter bubble effect. Our *Compass news* application (which can be found and downloaded here <https://compassnews.co.uk/sign-up?code=sxzPf>) was created in response to these two problems. To tackle them we have created called *Compass News* and acts as Spotify for news. Our mission is to

create a daily news agenda with a carefully curated selection of articles from the worlds most trusted publishers (to name a few The New York Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Der Spiegel, The Economist, Politico Europe, The Atlantic). We also attempt to break this delusive echo chamber through a "Perspectives" feature, which gives *Compass News* app users a selection of articles demonstrating a range of different opinions on the same topic. However, what also differentiates our application is that we have managed to address the question of accessibility by making our product free to use. This allows our users, especially young people, to engage with a whole range of publications free from financial considerations.

year in different planes learning the trade. Skidmore's Political Science Department had a large part in preparing me to be successful in this career, as it requires you to be a creative and critical thinker with whatever you are presented. After my training is complete, I will be assigned a plane, anything from an F-15E, B-52 bomber, to an AC-130 Special Operations gunship, and be sent anywhere around the world. I can honestly say that, without Skidmore, I wouldn't have been prepared for the challenges that I have faced so far, and am incredibly grateful for the professors in the Political Science Department for their mentorship and friendship.

# SENIOR THESES 2018

*Political Science majors completing PL 375 share brief descriptions of their research*

## **Will Berg '18**

**Thesis Title:** Repressing Repressive Forces: Marcusean Subversion of Free Speech on College Campuses Today

**Description:** In my thesis, I address Herbert Marcuse, a political philosopher who helped inspire and drive the 1960s New Left movement. Further, I try to connect some of his writings to the current free speech climate on college campuses. Marcuse's radical understanding of American society combines neo-Marxist advocacy for socialism with a unique blend of Freudian psychology that would allow man to increase his consciousness, and subsequently reject all components of the present society. Because oppression in the modern liberal order is rampant, it can only be liberated with actions and thoughts that operate completely outside the status quo. Marcuse suggests so-called free speech is yet another weaponized tool by society's dominant forces, and that it must be subverted toward his notion of liberating tolerance. This liberating tolerance, according to Marcuse, demands repression of some speech.

## **Izzi Bertolozzi '18**

**Thesis Title:** Addressing Non-Compliance with Title IX in College and University Athletic Departments

**Description:** Subsequent to the implementation of Title IX (the amendment banning sex discrimination), the Department of Health, Education and Welfare developed a test of compliance with Title IX for athletic departments. The regulations posited three possible means by which schools could pass the compliance test, and as such it is commonly referred to as the "three-prong test." My thesis uses publicly available data to analyze the cornerstone of the three-prong test—"substantial proportionality." I used the data from 153 NCAA Division I and Division III institutions. It builds on other studies which suggest that the three-prong test is actually a failure. In addition, in light of the lack of compliance, my thesis addresses what changes could be put into place in order to rectify the long standing and widespread trend of non-compliance with Title IX in college and university athletic departments.

## **Olivia Cox '18**

**Thesis Title:** Why do they feed us cardboard? School Food Policies in the U. S. and Europe  
A historical comparative case study of the School Food Policies in the US and Europe. This thesis will compare the historical background, legislation, and implementation of school

food policies in the US and Europe, focusing especially on New York State and France. Based on this analysis the paper will offer a reason as to why American school food programs pale in comparison to their European counterparts.

## **Izzy Fischer '18**

**Thesis Title:** Who Cares About Your Error Bar? A Survey Experiment on Visualizing Uncertainty in Politics

**Description:** How can scholars convey uncertainty about empirical data? The general public frequently misinterprets data in journal articles, presentations, and the mass media, and especially struggles with uncertainty about estimated quantities. I conduct an experiment to determine what approaches to data visualization are most effective in communicating both point estimates and uncertainty of political poll data to the general public. My treatments test multiple formats: simple text, basic error bars, hypothetical outcome plots, and advanced error bars.

## **Kira Geary '18**

**Thesis Title:** Explaining Variations in Responses to Gender-Based Violence by International Organizations

**Description:** My thesis seeks to examine why particular types of gender-based violence receive more attention by international organizations than others. I will be comparing two types of gender-based violence; "honor killings" and "female genital mutilation". I will be using case studies that look at four states experiencing "honor killings" within their borders; Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine. I intend to be able to draw a conclusion about why international organizations choose to respond to "honor killings" in the way that they do. I will then compare this to the way in which international organizations have responded to "female genital mutilation." Does the likelihood that an international organization will intervene in issues of gender-based violence differ by the political characteristics of that issue? I argue that the way in the "honor killing" has been defined and constructed is distinct from other forms of gender-based violence, and this has had a significant impact on international organizations' incentives to take any kind of action.

## **Nosheen Hotaki '18**

**Thesis working title:** Non-State Legal Practices in Afghanistan

**Description:** The concept of rule of law is often underlined by state-building experts for it is deemed a vital part of a functioning democracy. Afghanistan, considered by most a failed state, is not only struggling with upholding the rule of law, but also centralizing and legitimizing its official legal systems. Foreign nations have come to the country's aid to construct a Constitution and build a legal system, yet the majority of disputes are handled by non-state legal systems.

While there is extensive literature in this field, most discuss whether the non-state legal systems should be incorporated in with the state legal systems or left as it is to preserve the hybridity. These studies either expressly or implicitly reinforce stereotypes about Afghanistan: that there are vast, irreconcilable differences between various ethnic groups in the country. Pashtuns specifically are a target of this stereo

type as they are labelled a violent, barbaric group that refuses any form of governance. This study will look at whether and, if so, how the non-state legal bodies of various ethnic groups differ in their practices.

**Janine Kritschgau '18**

**Thesis Title:** Assessing Economic Diversification Policies in Resource Rich Sub-Saharan States.

**Description:** I am investigating the effectiveness of policy aimed at attracting foreign direct investment as a means for encouraging non-oil growth by examining the Nigerian economic experience. These finds are applied to Angola, another oil exporting state struggling to diversify.

**Ben Rudman '18**

**Thesis Title:** The Turk's Other: An Experimental Investigation into Turkey's Prejudice Towards Kurds

**Description:** My thesis investigates whether the use of affirmation theory can decrease prejudice among the Kurdish population, as well as Syrian immigrants, by Turks within Turkey. Previous research has been done as to why such prejudices exist; however, no experiment has yet to be conducted attempting to decrease said prejudice.

**Chloe Singer '18**

**Title:** Who Runs, Who Communicates, and Who Listens?: An Experiment in Effective Communication

**Description:** I conducted a survey experiment embedded in the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study measuring the effectiveness of the same message across sources, using a peer-to-peer message, a political advertisement, and a political reporter as the possible sources. My results report the effect

## SENIOR THESES 2018

*Political Science majors completing PL 375 share brief descriptions of their research*

of the source on respondents' perceptions of candidates' likeability, ethics, and openness. I then examine how the effectiveness changed in relation to the gender of the source and the gender of the candidate described in the vignette.

**Rachael Thomeer '18**

**Thesis Title:** The Politics of City Charter Reform: Explaining Voter Behavior in the 2017 Saratoga Springs Charter Referendum

**Description:** Saratoga Springs is a unique city for a number of reasons one of which being its government. It is one of two cities in New York with a commission form of government. The city has had this form of government since it was incorporated in 1915, though there have been many attempts to change it over the years. The most recent change campaign was in 2017 and, while the book is not yet closed on this campaign, it appears to have lost by ten votes. Using 512 exit polls from Election Day, I examine the impact of partisanship, ideology, voter preference, demographics, and campaigns to explain individual voter choice.

# PL 365: POWER AND CAPITAL

PROFESSOR FERYAZ OCAKLI

**FALL 2018** This class examines the interconnections between the state, class, and the economy in capitalist societies. It focuses primarily on critical approaches to political economy and state theory. Students will discuss both theoretical and empirical studies in comparative politics and historical sociology.

Pre-requisite: One of the following PL 103, SO-101, IA-101, EC-103, or EC-104

## FALL 2018 — WHAT COUNTS FOR WHAT?

AMERICAN POLITICS	POLITICAL THEORY	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	COMPARATIVE POLITICS
PL 222: State and Local Politics (Bob Turner)	PL 204: Classical Political Thought	PL 226: States, Rebels and Warlords (Yelena Biberman-Ocakli)	PL 209: The Latin American Puzzle (Aldo Vacs)
PL 224: Campaigns and Elections (Chris Mann)	PL-HI 322R: History and Political Thought of the American Revolution (Natalie Taylor)	PL 228: U.S. Foreign Policy (Aldo Vacs)	PL 227: Genghis Khan to Gorbachev: Power and Politics in Russian History (Kate Graney)
PL 311: Constitutional Law		PL 366: Understanding Globalization (Aldo Vacs)	PL 239: Middle Eastern Politics (Feryaz Ocakli)
PL 334: The United States Presidency			PL 365: Power and Capital
PL 335: Elections Research			

## FALL 2018 — POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSE OFFERINGS

PL-101 001	Intro to American Politics	Bob Turner	M W F	10:10 – 11:05 AM
PL-101 002	Intro to American Politics	Bob Turner	M W F	12:20 - 1:15 PM
PL-101 003	Intro to American Politics	To be announced	T R	8:10 - 9:30 AM
PL-101 004	Intro to American Politics	To be announced	T R	12:40 – 2:00 PM
PL-102 001	Intro Political Philosophy	To be announced	T R	2:10 – 3:30 PM
PL-103 001	Intro to Comparative and International Politics	Kate Graney	T R	9:40 – 11:00 AM
PL-103 002	Intro to Comparative and International Politics	Yelena Biberman-O	T R	11:10 -12:30 PM
PL-202	Intro to Political Research	Chris Mann	M W F	11:15 – 12:10 PM
PL-204	Classical Political Thought	To be announced	T R	9:40 – 11:00 AM
PL-209	The Latin American Puzzle	Aldo Vacs	M W F	11:15 - 12:10 PM
PL-222	State and Local Government	Bob Turner	M W	4:00 – 5:20 PM
PL-224	Campaigns and Elections	Chris Mann	M W F	9:05 – 10:00 AM
PL-226	States, Rebels & Warlords	Yelena Biberman-O	T R	2:10 – 3:30 PM
PL-227	Power and Pol in Russian History	Kate Graney	T R	12:40 – 2:00 PM
PL-228	U.S. Foreign Policy	Aldo Vacs	W F	8:40 – 10:00 AM
PL-239	Middle Eastern Politics	Feryaz Ocakli	M W F	12:20 – 1:15 PM
PL-311	Constitutional Law	To be announced	T R	11:10 – 12:30 PM
PL-334	U. S. Presidency	To be announced	T R	3:40 – 5:00 PM
PL-335	Election Research	Chris Mann	M W	2:30 – 3:50 PM
PL-365	Power and Capital	Feryaz Ocakli	M W	2:30 – 3:50 PM
PL-366	Understanding Globalization	Aldo Vacs	M W F	1:25 – 2:20 PM