

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Fall 2015

Dear Students,

It is for me a great pleasure to be able to communicate again with you through this introductory note to the Government Department Newsletter. As you probably know, I'm the chair of the Department. Thus, if you need to discuss anything related to your major or minor in Government, obtain authorization for courses to be taken abroad, or any other requirement please contact me. My office is located in Ladd 319 (X5249) and my e-mail address is avacs@skidmore.edu. Thank you.

These are exciting times for students of domestic and international politics and I hope that, as in the past, the department will be able to organize a number of events to keep us informed about these developments and their potential repercussions on our lives. On one hand, the domestic political situation has become more interesting as the two main parties move toward their primary elections. The rise of Donald Trump and other political outsiders in the Republican party and the competition between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in the Democratic party create multiple opportunities for political analysis and discussion that I hope we'll be able to consider in our classes and events. At the same time, domestic issues on which we focus on our classes such as economic policies, role of the state, health care, religion-state relations, voter participation and identification, reproductive rights, gun control, and welfare policies are only some of the topics that have generated and will continue to generate in the next year intense political confrontation, often with important constitutional implications. At the international level, multiple developments, such as the confrontation with ISIS and the Taliban in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, the Russian role in the Syrian crisis, the migration of refugees to Europe, the political economic problems with China, the slow pace of the global economic recovery and other issues around the world continue to challenge the capacity of the U.S. and other state and non-state actors to find effective solutions. In this complicated context, political science studies provide the opportunity to understand what is happening in the world in which we live and to consider what policy approach could provide a better solution to these problems, while making a well-thought commitment to engage in activities aimed to solve them.

As you can see in the following pages, the Department of Government, through its students and faculty has been very much involved in addressing many of these issues through the organization and sponsoring of presentations and debates, participation of students and faculty in conferences, offering of courses on related topics, creation of volunteer action committees, and participation in different non governmental organization devoted to important political and humanitarian causes. In the coming months, as is partly reflected in this newsletter, the Departments intends to sponsor a number of lectures and presentations by guest scholars on political topics, to organize meetings with student-faculty participation to discuss current issues of interest and inform about departmental activities, while continuing to support student initiatives and participation in campus and off-campus activities, here and abroad.

The Department is happy to welcome this Fall Professors Chris Mann and James Sieja as our newest and outstanding faculty members. Prof. Mann is an expert in American Politics, particularly focusing on voter behavior, elections and political parties. Prof Sieja also specializes in American Politics and his focus is on judicial behavior. Both of them are currently teaching in the Department and I hope most of you will have the opportunity in the next terms to take their classes and get to know them. In the meantime, this newsletter offers you information about them, their interests, travels and activities. The rest of the Faculty, as you can see in the following pages, has been involved in numerous activities, both academic and extra-academic, in the U.S. and abroad.

Finally, I would like to thank Barbara McDonough and the Government Department assistants for their efforts in making it possible for the Department to work so efficiently and to produce this newsletter. To all the newsletter collaborators that contributed their time and energy to produce it, many thanks on my part and the rest of the Department.

Cordially,

Aldo Vacs, Professor and Chair

FACULTY NEWS

Jack Schreuer '17

Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocakli conducted fieldwork in India and Bangladesh. She interviewed former rebels, army officers, journalists, and politicians for her book on state outsourcing of violence. She also presented her research at the Observer Research Foundation, a leading think tank in Asia, and at the Center for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in New Delhi. In addition to her travels, Professor Biberman-Ocakli collaborated with Rachel Castellano (Government major, '16) on a scholarly article entitled "Wartime Nation-Building and the Logic of Genocidal Violence in Civil War," which Rachel will be presenting at the Annual Conference on South Asia in Madison, WI, in October 2015. Professor Biberman-Ocakli also collaborated with Orr Genish (Government major, '17) on an article about US use of rebel proxies against ISIS. The article was recently published in the *Small Wars Journal*. Trevor Cloen (Government major, '18) has assisted Professor Biberman-Ocakli with her research on cross-border violence in Kashmir. Professor Biberman-Ocakli is also excited to work again with Mende Yangden ('16), who is assisting her with research on several projects. Professor Biberman-Ocakli's summer experience also includes sharing her research with the local community at the Newcomb Foreign Affairs Roundtable in Newcomb, NY. She completed and submitted four articles. Among them is a piece entitled "Militia Welfare: Resource Endowment and Public Goods Provision by Armed Nonstate Groups in Pakistan and Nigeria," co-authored with Megan Turnbull, who visited Skidmore and gave a talk on Boko Haram in April. Professor Biberman-Ocakli also completed and submitted to a highly reputable academic journal an article entitled "Why Terrorists Target Children: Outbidding, Desperation, and Extremism in the Peshawar and Beslan School Massacres," co-authored with Farhan Zahid, Superintendent of Police in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Professor Kate Graney is finishing up the conclusion and final edits to her very own *Moby Dick*, a 600+ page manuscript tentatively entitled *Re-Orienting Europe: Europeanization in Russia and the Former Soviet Union*. She happily accepts all burnt offerings, prayers and petitions on her behalf, that this thing may finally be done. She is also busy helping the Gender Studies program search for its first full-time faculty member and will be attending the National Women's Studies Association conference in Milwaukee in November to interview candidates. She is also lucky enough to accompany the Model EU club to the EUROSIM 2016 meeting in Antwerp, Belgium in January.

Professor Chris Mann's research is focused around voter mobilization. He has worked with multiple state governments

to analyze the effect of election administration's official communication on voter turnout. Professor Mann is also performing research with past students on a wide range of topics. These include gender's effect on the credibility of scientific research and the transmission of political information through physical social networks, such as the workplace. In his research, Professor Mann works to determine how effective communication can increase engagement in the political process.

Professor Feryaz Ocakli is on sabbatical this year. Since last year's installment of this column, three of his articles have been published in political science journals. He has finished and submitted two more single authored works, and one article co-authored with Matthew Scotch'14. Professor Ocakli worked with Ovgu Bozgeyik'16 and Oyku Bozgeyik'16 this past summer on a new research project that investigates who runs for congressional office in Turkey. He has presented his research on political economy of development at a workshop held at Koc University in Istanbul in July. Professor Ocakli conducted archival research in the Ottoman State Archives in Istanbul in August, as well as elite-level interviews with current and former politicians, civil society leaders, and think tank experts in Ankara in September. He also attended the Network Mapping and Structural Journalism Hackathon held by Graphcommons in Istanbul in September, and is integrating network analysis into his current research. Professor Ocakli has recently published an article entitled "Why is Turkey Attacking the Kurdish Militants Instead of ISIS?" in the *Small Wars Journal*. He is happy to be back in Saratoga Springs for several months to work on multiple new articles which build on his summer research.

Professor Flagg Taylor: I am currently finishing editing a book of essays by the Czech dissident Vaclav Benda, most of which will be appearing in English for the first time. On October 1st and 2nd I gave two lectures: one at Texas Lutheran University and one at Baylor University. The lecture was called *Czech Dissent and the Nature of Liberty*—the first was more historical and the second more theoretical. I argue that the Czech dissidents, in the course of the late 1970s and 1980s, articulated through their writings and activities an understanding of human freedom that remains instructive today.

Aldo Vacs research is focused on the coming election in Argentina, the current political crisis in Brazil, the process of regional integration in Latin America and its impact on the relations with the U.S., the political role of women in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay), and a comparative analysis of the political lives and activities of Hillary Clinton and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. In 2015, he traveled to Brazil where he participated in a conference in Sao Paulo and gathered materials to complete his research.

FACULTY NEWS

INTRODUCING PROFESSOR JAMES SIEJA



Professor James Sieja shares "I come to Skidmore from Madison, Wisconsin, where I completed my Ph.D. in political science at the University of Wisconsin. That means there are now three Badgers in the Government Department: Professor Graney, Professor Turner, and me. If Ladd Hall starts shaking on Saturdays, don't worry. It just means that it's the end of the third quarter and we're "jumping around." My research focus is on judicial behavior. My first project explored the role of the American Bar Association in rating federal judicial nominees. And, my next project looks at who was considered, but not nominated, for judicial positions. Both projects take me to archives, particularly presidential libraries. In my opinion, archival research is about the greatest thing ever (and I'm not just saying that because my wife is an archivist). I spent this summer driving around the Midwest and South visiting presidential libraries for a month, staying in state parks along the way rather than stuffy hotels. (There should be a few pictures elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter.) I will be visiting the JFK library in Boston over winter break.

In the spring, I will teach "So You Want To Be a Judge?," along with Civil Liberties and Intro to American Government. So You Want To Be a Judge will examine the judicial life cycle: who goes to law school, who gets picked to be a clerk, what clerks do, running in state judicial elections, the federal nomination process, the day-to-day life of a judge, handling the workload, getting along with judicial colleagues, moving up in the judicial hierarchy, retirement, and death. I hope that many of you will take my other classes on judicial process and constitutional law as well.

About the only downside to living in Saratoga Springs is that it takes me away from my wife, who lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska. But, it does mean that I get to spend the summer in Alaska. If you're going to spend a season in the 49th state, summer is the best one. We plan on hiking. Lots of hiking."

Behind the Ph.D. with Professor Chris Mann

Will Hird '16

I recently chatted with Government Professor Christopher Mann about his history and life within the realm of political science. Born in Chicago, he grew up in a politically and civically active family and community. With both parents working in various campaigns and organizations, Mann spent more of his early childhood canvassing than most kids. He even has a picture of himself at three on the back of a bike ridden by Chicago Senator Charles Persey (note: he did not show me this picture). His interest in political thought and civic duty were evident from an early age. In first grade Chris and some friends ultimately decided that Thomas Jefferson was an underappreciated figure in American history and proceeded to take April 13th off from school - Jefferson's birthday. As Chicago continued through its seasonal cycles of sports and politics, Mann's own interest and experience in politics increased. He studied American Political Thought at Pomona College as an undergraduate, and wrote his thesis on Thomas Jefferson. Through both his undergraduate and graduate studies he worked for various political campaigns, notably the campaigns of Bobby Rush and Dawn Netsch in Illinois and Loretta Sanchez in California, figures he noted were particularly inspirational. He talked to me about how his passion for politics and justice have been driven by a "sense of a better way of doing things" and participation in "fights worth having". While campaigns are obviously about winning, the ultimate goal is to facilitate long-term change within the policy debate around certain issues. Dawn Netsch once said, concerning her campaigns defeat, "There are no regrets for telling the truth".

Questions and ideas raised during his campaign experience continue to motivate Mann's current work, which generally falls under our nomination and electoral process, how public opinion is shaped and formed, political communication, how campaigns work and function, or the general "rules of the game". He explained to me that some of his core goals as a teacher are to further the appreciation of important questions and facilitate the process of knowledge building. Less about the recital of facts and figures, Mann's classes explore and investigate the boundaries of what we don't know - "answers are boring," he told me. Before Skidmore, Mann taught at the University of Miami and Louisiana State University. What he appreciated about the University of Miami as opposed to LSU, and would later draw him to Skidmore, was the difference in levels of engagement with students. He has felt the difference again since coming to Skidmore College, particularly noting his student's frequent usage of his office hours. Through teaching and interaction with students, his own thinking undergoes what he described as "a constant evolution of perspective" and even during our talk, which took place towards the end of the day, his energy and intellectual curiosity were both very apparent. Skidmore College and the government department are extremely lucky to have Professor Mann.

Read about Professor Mann's talk on page 7

FACULTY TRAVELS

MY SUMMER TRAVELS BEGAN IN ALASKA

Prof James Sieja



This is Alaska's Exit Glacier. My wife, who lives in Anchorage, Alaska, went down on a day trip to Seward and we hiked to the glacier on our way back. President Obama visited the glacier later in the summer on his trip to Alaska.



The odometer reading on my rental car at the end of the trip. Nearly 5,000 miles in a month! I spent only two nights of that month in a hotel; the rest was spent camping in state parks.



Interior of Truman Library



H.W. Bush Library



Exterior LBJ library



Interior LBJ

FACULTY TRAVELS

Hamilton: An American Musical

Prof Natalie Taylor



Several years ago Lin-Manuel Miranda, the composer and the lead in the musical, picked up Ron Chernow's *Alexander Hamilton* for beach reading. He soon recognized that the first two chapters of the biography could be heard on "anyone's hip hop album." Hamilton shared the same narrative of as many hip hop artists who experienced heartbreaking home lives and were involved in morally questionable trade in order to get out of their desperate circumstances. The force of Hamilton's intellect and writings led to his success during the American Revolution, the ratification of the Constitution, and the early republic. Miranda thought Hamilton's story was the natural subject for hip hop. The music conveys the urgency of the Founders' ambitions and the nobility of their aspirations. In the



musical the Founding Fathers are all portrayed by men of color. Miranda, who is Latino, recalled in a recent interview visiting two Santas during the holidays, a white Santa Claus and a Dominican Santa. "They were *both* Santa to me...when a character is mythic, I think, we have license to believe in it, no matter what it looks like." Daveed Diggs, the African-American rapper, plays both the Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson, but his long curls evoke the image Frederick Douglass. Leslie Odom, Jr., who plays Aaron Burr, told NPR that "this is our story too." Following the performance I pushed my way through the crowd at the Richard Rogers Theater in midtown New York. I came face to face with Lin-Manuel Miranda. More smitten than professorial, I gushed, "Hamilton is my favorite founder!" "Mine too!" Miranda replied in a delighted, surprised pitch-- as if he couldn't believe the coincidence. It's not for nothing that the man has a collection of Tony Awards.



PROFESSOR BIBERMAN-OCAKLI TRAVELS TO SOUTH ASIA



Prof. Biberman-Ocakli gave a talk at the Center for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India. The photo (with the Center's director Dr. Swaran Singh) was taken outside the university building where she presented.



Prof. Biberman-Ocakli interviewing a former rebel of the Bangladesh War of 1971.



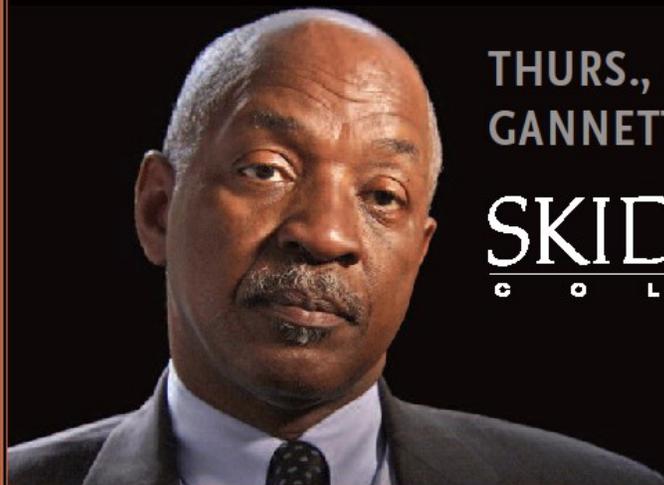
Prof. Biberman-Ocakli interviewing a former rebel commander and Election Commissioner of Bangladesh.

COMING THIS WEEK!

THE RONALD J. FISCUS LECTURE IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

DO BLACK LIVES MATTER? RACE AND JUSTICE IN AMERICA NOW CHARLES OGLETREE

JESSE CLIMENKO PROFESSOR OF LAW AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL AND THE DIRECTOR OF HARVARD'S CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON INSTITUTE FOR RACE AND JUSTICE



THURS., OCT. 29, 8 P.M.
GANNETT AUDITORIUM

SKIDMORE
C O L L E G E

CAMPUS EVENTS

Professor Mann talks Primaries and Caucuses

Will Hird '16

I recently attended Mann's lecture "*When? How? Why? Explaining the Presidential Nomination Process.*" He took us through a brief history of our primary systems and how we ended up with our current system of primaries and caucuses. Both the Republican and Democratic nomination processes were looked at and the differences in allocation of delegates. Mann talked about the role of the super-delegates and PLEOS, or Pledged Party Leaders and Elected Officials, and their role within the nomination process. After running through the basics of our system, he discussed several proposed reforms, but explained the institutional barriers that are unlikely to allow such change. Mann also talked about the financing of campaigns and the important distinction between Super PAC money and "hard money".

With the national election approaching in little over a year, all of this information was extremely helpful and relevant to the students and faculty in attendance. A question and answer followed the lecture that addressed some of the issues in the current campaign of presidential candidates. Donald Trump's ability to win the nomination, Scott Walker's departure from the race, and Bernie Sander's campaign finances were all discussed with students.

WHEN? HOW? WHY?
explaining the
**PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION
 PROCESS**

PROFESSOR CHRIS MANN
 DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT



TUESDAY 5:30 PM
10/6/15
 INTERCULTURAL CENTER
 SECOND FLOOR CASE

SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

If you are interested in spending a semester abroad or are already planning to be abroad in the spring you should check out the Study Abroad Photo Journals bulletin board to read about the amazing experiences that the following students have shared!

**Marc-Eric Ernestus, Corinna Goodman, Will Hird, Rick Landry,
 Matt Marani, Maddy Morency, Elena Veatch**

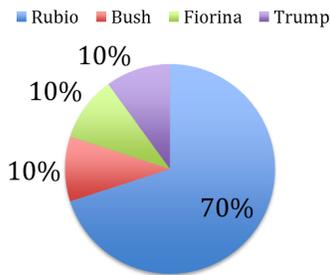
CAMPAIGN POLL PIE CHARTS

Rick Landry '16

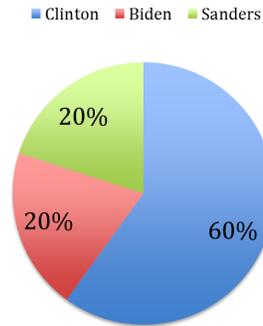
Government department faculty members were polled with the following question:

Who do you believe **will** be the Republican and Democratic nominees for president in 2016? *Note: This has nothing to do with your personal preferences.*

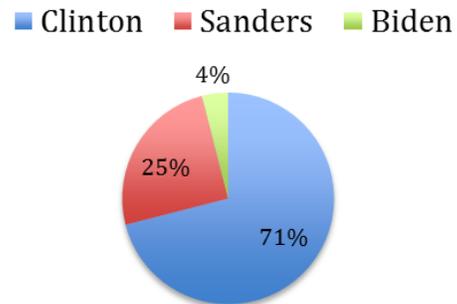
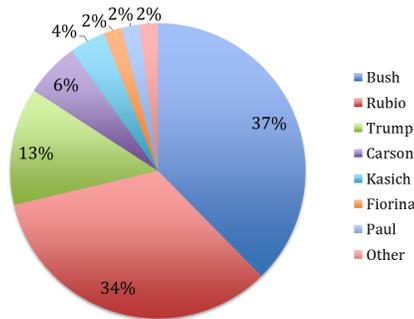
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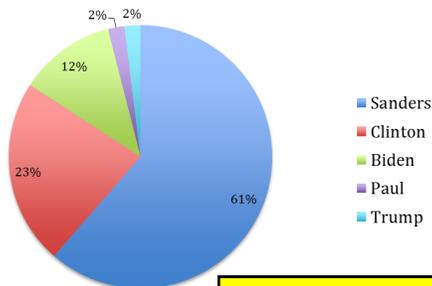
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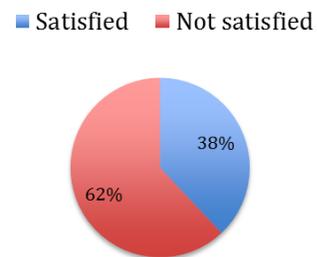
Government majors and minors student Poll Results (53 responses)



Who is your personal preference to be the next president?



Are you satisfied with the candidate choices?



Go to online version to view the color pie charts <http://www.skidmore.edu/government/newsletter/index.php>

CAMPUS EVENTS

Roger Scruton Delivers Constitution Day Lecture

Rick Landry '16

On October 15, Skidmore welcomed Dr. Roger Scruton to give the annual Alexander Hamilton Lecture on Constitutional Studies. Professor Flagg Taylor introduced Dr. Scruton, describing him as a philosopher with an expertise in aesthetics and emphasizing his diverse and multidisciplinary background. While Dr. Scruton's lecture would be mostly religious and political in nature, he has written over thirty books on a wide range of subjects – music, architecture, conservatism, and wine, to name a few.

Dr. Scruton's lecture, titled "Law, Territory and Migration," aimed to highlight the problems arising out of increasing migration from Middle Eastern Muslim-majority countries into Europe. He began by differentiating two types of identity, religious and territorial. In the United States today, most individuals would identify themselves as an "American" before identifying as a Christian, Jew, atheist, etc. In general, the territorial identification is superior to the religious. However, this is not the case in much of the Muslim world, where many would identify as Muslims before anything else. Dr. Scruton argued that as large numbers of Muslims are immigrating into Europe, their religious identity is clashing with Western European life and creating unpredictable problems.

Dr. Scruton traced this issue back to the ancient problem of religious versus territorial law. Western Europe struggled for centuries with this very debate; who has the final say on a matter of law, the Pope or the monarch? Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, this issue has generally been settled with territorial law winning the fight. Modern immigration trends into Europe have reignited this debate, but this time Islamic law is at the center. Dr. Scruton emphasized the importance of the Quran in dictating the behaviors of every day life for European Muslims. Islam is a religion based in law. Specifically, the Quran is the primary source of law, while Sunna (Islamic traditions), religious analogy and consensus among religious elites all contribute as sources. The Quran is understood as the direct command of God; therefore, many Muslims believe it should overpower all other potential sources and types of law. Dr. Scruton asks, "Can Islamic Law adapt to changes in social circumstances?"

Dr. Scruton concluded his lecture by arguing that territorial law must be primary in order to restore peace in Europe. Contrary to the Muslim Brotherhood's method of "struggling against the nation-state," Europeans (both Muslim and non-Muslim) should unite under their national identity and not allow religious differences to separate them. Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood believe Islamic law is primary and superior to territorial law, and their radical interpretation of Islam further escalates this problem. In contrast, Dr. Scruton praised Americans for placing immense value on our national identity and the unifying nature of our Constitution. Overall, the eloquent lecture illuminated the foundations of an undeniable dilemma in modern Europe. We applaud Dr. Scruton for a riveting talk, and also Professor Taylor and the rest of the government department for putting together a wonderful evening.

Thank you to the following contributors to this edition of the newsletter

Jonathan Awad '16, Addison Bennett '16, Rachel Castellano '16, Elise Duffy '18, Marc-Eric Ernestus '16, Sydney France '16, George Gelzer '16, Orr Genish '16, Corinna Goodman '16, Nosheen Hotaki '18, Will Hird '16, Hulwa Khaleel '16, Eliana Kosova '17, Rick Landry '16, Misha Lanin '18, Jeremy Lockett '16, Emily Mangan '16, Matt Marani '16, Danny Meyers '16, Maddy Morency '16, Luca Mobilia '17, Kelly O'Donnell '17, Ben Polsky '15, James Rider '16, Jack Rosen '16, Carolyn Shapiro '16, Rebecca Stern '16, Jason Sutherland '18, Noah Tananbaum '16, Graham Van Korff '16, Elena Veatch '16 and Mende Yangden '16.

STUDENT NEWS

Matt Marani '16

Jonathan Awad '16- I'm the President of the Investment club and recently interned at JPMorgan this past summer. I plan on pursuing a career in banking and owe a lot of my analytical skills and global mindset to the Government Department.

Marc-Eric Ernestus '16- I worked at a Swiss bank over the summer and am currently applying to a few firms as a post-graduate.

Sydney France '16- This year I will be working on a thesis about immigration, public education, and national identity in France. I will also be baking lots of bread.

George Gelzer '16 - I spent my summer in DC interning with Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut's third district. After graduation, I plan to spend a few years pushing the job opportunities of a political science major to the limit before buckling down and heading off to medical school.

Corinna Goodman '16- After studying abroad in Jordan last semester, I spent the summer at home in Munich, Germany. Because the Syrian refugee crisis hit Jordan especially hard and I was able to meet and talk to refugees in Jordan, I decided to do some volunteer work back in Munich. So I volunteered at an organization that offers a variety of programs and classes to refugees (including literacy classes where I helped out) and at an initial reception center for refugees. This semester I'm excited to be back on campus doing all sorts of things like log rolling, playing in chamber ensembles and the orchestra, and riding!

Nosheen Hotaki '18 - I spent this summer in Istanbul, Turkey, working with Afghan, Iranian, and Syrian refugees. Being in the legal realm and providing legal assistance allowed me to further my passion for international law. I am looking forward to next summer and further pursuing this fervor of mine around the world.

Graham Van Korff '16- This summer, I worked for an organization called Grassroots Campaigns, which advocated and fundraised for progressive non-profits such as Planned Parenthood and Doctors Without Borders.

Eliana Kosova '17-This semester I'm studying abroad in Scotland at the University of St. Andrews. One of my courses is an IR course, and learning about global politics while I'm out of the country has been so amazing. It's definitely exposed me to new perspectives and ideas.

Kara Kraus-Perrotta '16- I am the president of Skidmore Vox: Voices for Planned Parenthood, and this semester we are focusing on combating the myths the media keeps spewing about Planned Parenthood. Additionally, we are working on campaigns to address the issue of sexual assault at Skidmore. After graduation, I hope to go into the field of public health policy and continue to work on reproductive justice issues.

Rick Landry '16- This semester I am interning for Joanne Yepsen's reelection campaign for mayor of Saratoga Springs (remember to vote on November 3rd!). I am also working on a government thesis with Professor Seyb and am very excited about the subject area; I am looking into why both libertarianism and progressivism appear to be increasingly popular ideologies among millennials, especially when it comes to social media output.

Jeremy Lockett '16- I'm very into poetry, living writing prose! The past two summers I've worked as a child advocate helping children that have gone in and out of foster care with the SPARK Center organization, working in part with Department of Children and Families in Massachusetts. I also worked at a political firm in Boston called Liberty Square Group.

Emily Mangan '16- I spent my summer doing the typical unpaid intern experience at the Council on Foreign Relations. I'm not writing a Gov thesis, but am working on my ES Capstone - ask me about oil transportation policy in the US! Unfortunately, I haven't made any post-grad

STUDENT NEWS

plans yet because I've been too hypnotized by videos of the terrific Donald Trump, preventing me from doing anything else in my spare time.

Matthew Marani '16- Over the summer I worked at the New York Landmark's Conservancy, primarily aiding in the research of buildings seeking a place on the National Register of Historic Places as well as visiting said candidate buildings. This semester I am starting my own opinion newspaper, Agora Magazine, with a handful of other students. After graduation I hope to be employed for a year and then hopefully head to graduate school.

Danny Meyers '16- Danny is currently interning on Mayor Yepsen's reelection campaign, and is hopeful for positive results come November!

Maddy Morency '16 - After spending my summer in Mallorca, Spain, I am glad to be back in the ~cold~ upstate NY weather. This semester I'm working on a thesis looking at modern dissident movements through Vaclav Havel's political philosophy.

Luca Mobilla '17- I'm the student government's Vice President for club affairs, so if you have a cool idea for a club come find me! This summer I interned in the constituent affairs department of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's New York City office. It was great real world government experience.

Kelly O'Donnell '17- I'm a junior government and business double major. I am a member of the women's soccer team and plan to study abroad in Cape Town next semester. This summer while interning for wealth management firm, Lenox Advisors, I was put into contact with Congressman Joe Wilson of South Carolina's 2nd district. I was invited to sit in on a meeting when the Congressman came to New York and talk to the Congressman and his chief of staff after.

James Rider '16- Senior year is crazy. Currently looking at fellowships in DC and jobs with the Peace Corps for after graduation. This semester, I am interning for the re-election campaign for Joanne Yepsen, the mayor of Saratoga Springs, and working for Bob Turner as a research assistant. When I'm not doing Gov things, I sing and play sax with the gospel choir, lead hikes for the Outing club, and work with Democracy Matters, a club on campus focused on campaign finance reform.

Jack Rosen '16- Hoping to go into either comedy or politics. Also, trying to figure out what the difference between them is.

Carolyn Shapiro '16- My name is Carolyn and I am a senior government major. Although I was supposed to graduate last semester, I'm actually very happy that I'm still in Saratoga Springs. As a part time student I've had much more time to do things I love like climb mountains, cook food, and play my banjo. When I'm not at school I work at 9 Miles East and Saratoga Apple selling delicious food to people. After I graduate in January, I plan on taking a three-month trip to Hawaii to live on a farm and learn more about agriculture and sustainability. I'm not really sure where I'll be after my travels, but I really like parks and local government and aspire to be a real life Leslie Knope.

Rebecca Stern '16 - Most of my time this semester is spent as General Manager of WSPN 91.1 FM, Skidmore College Radio. We are working on major renovations to the station, including a NEW library and recording studio. Come check it out!

Jason Sutherland '18- This summer I split my time between interning at a law firm in Boston and hiking around New England. I am super excited about getting back into the swing of things at Skidmore, particularly helping lead the Model UN club (as part of its fantastic E-Board) and hiking in ADKs!

Elena Veatch '16- Elena Veatch had a wonderful summer at Skidmore conducting research on North Carolina immigration politics with Bob Turner. She is now entirely enthralled in presidential primary dynamics (when she is not actively mourning the "loss" of Jon Stewart), and is excited to be working with Chris Mann on a senior thesis that explores the forces that determine the ultimate party nominees.

STUDENT TRAVELS

REFUGEES IN BERLIN

Maddy Morency '16

When I first got to Berlin, there were riots nearly every day regarding refugee rights and attacks on refugee shelters were a daily occurrence. These riots were in response to the Senate in Berlin, which shut down the largest refugee camp in the city shortly before I got there. Hurt and betrayed, many of the refugees found shelter in an abandoned school nearby, only to be kicked out shortly after. Ten of these refugees protested these inhumane conditions on the roof of the school, threatening to jump off if any police came up. In this game of cat and mouse, the police cut off all food and drinks going up to the roof. The refugees lived off of smuggled bread for about two weeks before eventually coming down, defeated. I worked with eight of the ten refugees that were up on that roof. Despite a seemingly hopeless situation, they remained in their battle for basic human rights.



Fast forward to nearly a year later. There are close to 10,000 migrants going into Germany every single day. A large majority of them will be subject to the same treatment, the same denial of responsibility by the state. I was particularly shocked at the treatment of refugees in Germany. Given its prominence in the EU and Angela Merkel's influence, Germany has an undeniable responsibility to lead and provide an example for other European nations. Enter Merkel's recent declaration that opens Germany's borders to all refugees. This happened after I left Berlin, and I excitedly emailed my mentor essentially congratulating her for Merkel's policy. Merkel finally realized that her position of power needs to be utilized to help these refugees.

Or so I thought. Merkel's announcement has caused a massive influx of migrants, from all over Europe as well as from Africa and the Middle East, to come to Germany with hopes of a bright future. Merkel is giving hope and encouragement to refugees to make the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean, when, in reality, many of them will not be granted asylum, leaving them in a country where they do not speak the language and have no way to work.

While it is certainly not feasible, or even advantageous, to grant asylum to anyone that applies, at the very least Germany needs to make it possible for them to work and to be able to build a life for themselves. Many people believe that refugee and asylum seekers are merely exploiting the system and are extracting state resources. By allowing denied asylum seekers to gain appropriate work visas, they will be able to build lives for themselves and integrate themselves more into each respective community.

VODKA WITH GENNADY

Misha Lanin '18

In late May, 2015, my father and I travelled to the provincial town of Ustyuzhna, Russia to deliver the gravestone of a deceased relative. Nested 500km east of Saint Petersburg, in the agro-industrial region of Vologda, Ustyuzhna has remained relatively untouched by the cosmopolitan transformations occurring in Russia's urban centers. Politically speaking, Ustyuzhna natives are informed by, and only by, Russian state radio and television; and, as my brief stay in Ustyuzhna revealed, the collateral propaganda of the escalating information war between the Kremlin and the West has had a profound effect on the hearts and minds of ordinary Russians. We found a bed and breakfast in a village just outside Ustyuzhna. The host, Gennady, a stinky Ustyuzhna native, greeted us in the front yard. Glancing at our car, Gennady grew visibly nervous; my father and I appeared and, in some ways, behaved like foreigners, yet our Russian was completely fluent. As we arranged our night's stay, Gennady avoided any extra interactions with us -- cutting any and all small talk short (in retrospect, Gennady's nervousness was, perhaps, justified. We arrived unannounced in a flashy borrowed BMW. Stuffed into the hatch of our BMW was a 400-pound granite gravestone.) Needless to say, Gennady was convinced we were mafiosi of a particularly high level.

That same night, I threw together a simple dinner, and offered Gennady to join us. Gennady blushed heavily, profusely thanked me for the offer, and, in an expectedly nervous manner, politely declined dinner. It became clear to us that Gennady was in fear; and it was at that point my father and to make a difficult decision: Would it be less awkward to maintain our mysterious mafiosi facade than to reveal to Gennady that we were, in fact, American citizens?

"Well, then join us for vodka." My father insisted.

Gennady, like a true Russian, caved in on the vodka offer. Three shots of "Tsarskaya Vodka," accompanied by "Zakuzkas" (chasers) of pieroshki (the Russian equivalent of baked pizza) and pickled peppers, lightened the mood, and Gennady's anxiety marginally subsided. After our fourth shot, Gennady gathered the courage to engage us in conversation.

"Gentlemen! I can't seem to figure you guys out! I have to admit, your appearance, your vehicle, and body language makes you all appear very suspicious."

My father let out a chuckle, followed by a deep sigh, and proceeded to pour our fifth shot.

"Gennady," my father replied, *"we aren't mafia. We're American citizens. I left Russia in 1979."*

"My son," my father continued, pointing his shot glass toward me, *"was born in America."*

After our fourth shot, Gennady gathered the courage to engage us in conversation.

"Gentlemen! I can't seem to figure you guys out! I have to admit, your appearance, your vehicle, and body language makes you all appear very suspicious."

Gennady, both surprised and somewhat relieved, struggled to gather his response. Uncle Sam had been exposed, and Gennady didn't know what to say.

In an awkward silence, we decided to have our fifth shot.

Suddenly, the silence was broken.

"Do the Americans really hate us that much?" Gennady asked sincerely.

Our response to that question evoked a passionate geopolitical discussion -- during which nearly two bottles of vodka were consumed between the three of us. It wasn't discussed which side "right" or "wrong" on the subject of, say, the Ukraine crisis. Instead, the social

STUDENT TRAVELS

CIEE's Diplomacy and Policy Studies Program in Amman, Jordan

Corinna Goodman '16

Last semester (Spring 2015) I studied abroad in Amman, Jordan, through CIEE's Diplomacy and Policy Studies program. As the name entails, it was focused on Political Science, International Relations, and Middle Eastern Studies. While some of the other American students lived in apartments, I was in a homestay. Of course it took me some time to adjust to the Jordanian culture (for example, family is extremely important, so there's very little privacy) but overall my host family was really nice. We took daytrips to the Dead Sea and we often made visits to the extended family.

The classes were all offered through CIEE and both my Modern Standard Arabic and my Colloquial Arabic class took place in the CIEE office. Apart from those courses, I took a class on Development Economics of the Middle East, a case study on Jordan, and I audited a class on the Arab-Israeli conflict. I also interned at a Jordanian NGO called *Jordan Visions Center for Strategic and Development Studies*, which conducts a variety of programs to foster social and economic development in Jordan.

One of the academic highlights was meeting the former Crown Prince of Jordan (he didn't end up becoming King), Prince Hassan, who is also the brother of the late King Hussein. He talked a lot about the importance of cross-cultural discourse and not viewing people from other cultures or with other opinions as "the other", but rather as fellow human beings – it was very inspiring and different from the talks or discussions we had with other people (including American Diplomats, the Jordanian Foreign Minister, and a Sheikh of a tribe in northern Jordan).



Studying is of course important and fun and stuff, but what's even more fun is learning while travelling! One of the best parts of my abroad experience was a rural retreat which was part of our case study and a mix of learning about economics, history, and environmental issues, meeting interesting people, and seeing some of the most important and amazing places in Jordan. We first visited the Dead Sea to discuss environmental issues and visit a Potash company, then we went to Wadi Rum (my absolute favorite), a huge valley in the desert. We stayed at a Bedouin camp, went on a sunset camel ride, ate delicious Jordanian food, learned some new dance moves, and went on a 4x4 truck ride through the desert. The next stop was Aqaba, which is all the way in the south, where we visited the Navy, learned about Aqaba's special economic zone, and snorkeled in the Red Sea. The final part of the trip was visiting Petra which is considered one of the Seven New World Wonders. It's a city that was carved into stone by the Nabataeans as early as 312BC and it is quite impressive.

Another great experience was my Spring Break which I spent travelling through the Balkans and Turkey with 7 other people from my program. We only stayed in each country for about a day, sometimes a little longer, but this enabled us to see 6 different places in 6 different countries in 9 days. We went to Belgrade (Serbia), Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Kotor (Montenegro), Sofia (Bulgaria), and finally, Istanbul (Turkey).

Although there were definitely ups and downs, and some days were quite rough (let's just say, as a young German girl, you do stand out and many men like to make sure you know they noticed you...), but overall I had an incredible experience and I would do it all over again if I could. It was great spending a semester in a country with a culture so different from my own and it enabled me to get a new perspective not only on the Middle East, but also on the West and the US' involvement in the region. You always hear about the Middle East in the news and I had taken many classes on the Middle East prior to my semester abroad, but it makes a huge difference if you are actually in the region and are able to talk to people and see their responses to current events first-hand (concerning the refugee crisis, for example). To sum up, I would encourage everyone to study abroad because I had an extremely valuable, educational, and amazing experience, fell in love with a culture and a country, and had the best Falafel of my life.



SEE BEYOND

SWIMMING WITH THE BIG FISH: A SUMMER INTERNSHIP IN THE MALDIVES

Fathmath Hulwa Khaleel '16



Internships in the policy arena have an exciting feel to them, mostly because your political views that are usually only voiced on the couch in debates with your parents or in the classroom with other Government majors, finally see the light of day in the pond where the big fish swim. It is exciting to hear these big fish talk about the exact same conspiracy theory that your dad came up with, except they have a lot more insider information than your dad. This was how I felt as I began my internship (with the SEE-Beyond award) as a Civic Participation Project (CPP) Intern at Transparency Maldives this summer.

Transparency Maldives (TM) is a non-partisan organization that calls for anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability in all walks of life, engaging with stakeholders from all sectors of the government. It is the National Contact of Transparency International (TI) in the Maldives.

Part of my work at TM involved compiling daily political updates for TM's international partners, which helped me keep up with Maldivian politics more than ever, especially with the confidential access I was granted to previous political updates by TM.

My main work was to help plan and implement the Civic Participation Project, focusing on 2 of its many parts. With the sponsorship of USAID and UNFPA, we conducted Civic Education Workshops and a Democracy Camp during my time at TM, both targeted towards 16-18 year olds from all over the Maldives. The Civic Education Workshop was a one-day workshop about democratic concepts and how they relate to civic participation and responsibility; this program was later reworked and extended into a week-long workshop. The project was extremely successful, and I was able to connect what I was learning about current politics to broader democratic concepts through conducting workshops for the participants.

One of the most memorable moments from my internship was when one of the democracy camp participants said to a Member of Parliament that was visiting: "I used to think all parliament members were the devil, but listening to you and being in this camp made me realize that this was me being judgmental, and that not all politicians are bad. And I just want to apologize." Bringing in examples of people being accountable and transparent was an important learning experience for many of the participants. It showed many of them the importance of more people taking personal responsibility in continuing a corruption-free democracy.

It was an eye-opening experience to work with an organization as small as Transparency Maldives with big goals of making dents in society in terms of anti-corruption work at local and political levels by supporting grassroots movements, youth programs and youth leadership, etc. Working with them reminded me of the numerous challenges that organizations face while trying to do independent pro-democracy work in an Islamic country, where democracy is failing and education is closely monitored by the central government and those acting in its political interests.

Back at Skidmore, I am continuing with my exploration of Maldivian politics and the issues that plague it through an independent study with Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocakli. My focus is the relationship between climate change and Islam, specifically the tensions that arise in the political arena due to the secular nature of climate change finance relationships and the Islamic nature of society, politics and policy-making in the Maldives.

Hopefully, this study will be one of my many small steps towards being a medium-sized tuna in the complicated pond that is Maldivian politics!

Vodka with Gennady, Continued from Page 13

implications of Washington and Moscow's geopolitical disagreements came to light. Gennady assumed, based on state-media reports, mounting US-led sanctions, and the propagandistic rhetoric that has recently infiltrated Russian political thought, that the relationship between the US and Russia had irreparably deteriorated. With regards to the Ukraine crisis, Gennady feared the inevitability of war between the US and Russia. "This is not Iraq, Libya, or Syria," Gennady said, "The Donbass [the war-torn region of Eastern Ukraine] is far too close to home."

The Donbass (Ukraine's Southeastern Russophone region) has been mired in a civil war that has left over 8,000 people dead. The turmoil has led to a massive refugee crisis; according to Russia's Federal Migration Service (FMS), 1.034 million Southeastern Ukrainians have crossed into Russia since the eruption of civil war. A small number of those refugees, according to Gennady, ended up in Ustyuzhna, where locals have struggled to house and provide work for the displaced.

There we were : two American citizens and Gennady, a retired police chief and a veteran of the First Chechen War, discussing geopolitical crises that have led to the highest levels of tension between the US and Russia in decades.

As our supply of vodka steadily decreased, so did the clarity with which conversed. Inevitably, our conversation took an emotional turn : Gennady revealed to us his dream of visiting New York City, and asked us if it would one day be possible for a retired police chief from Ustyuzhna to visit the US -- to which we drunkenly and confidently replied, "DA!"

I offered Gennady what remained of the second vodka bottle.

He politely refused. "No thanks, I'm driving tonight."

SEE BEYOND

SEE Beyond Makes Field Work Possible

Rachel Castellano '16

This time last fall, I had no idea how life changing the topic of my research paper for one of my government classes would be. After an article in Politics of Modern South Asia intrigued me, I chose a research topic I knew very little about – the Liberation War in Bangladesh. I had never learned about Bangladesh before, let alone the war in 1971 and the genocidal violence that took place during it. I distinctly remember working on the research paper for a few weeks before realizing how contested these historical events were.

Looking back, I now disagree with some of the points I made in that research paper. However, Professor Biberman became interested in the topic and saw potential for something bigger. She asked if I would like to co-author an extended version of the paper with the intent to get it published. We spent all of spring semester last year gathering evidence and discussing our methods. Finally, we sat in her office for 6-8 hours a day during senior week and began to write. We developed an argument regarding why there was genocidal violence towards the Hindu minority during the Liberation War. Our evidence is based on interview material, archival evidence, and secondary sources. We will be presenting our paper to a panel at the Conference on South Asia in Madison, Wisconsin on October 23.

While planning and discussing the paper last year, I was also focused on getting to Dhaka, Bangladesh to further our research. I realized that it would be nearly impossible for me to support an argument with such conviction unless I went there and spoke with the people who were involved. Luckily, I was awarded a SEE-Beyond grant to pursue this fieldwork and have an internship with BIPSS, the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies. Throughout the seven weeks I was there, I helped with various projects and presentations regarding extremism and climate change. My favorite aspect of my research internship at BIPSS was getting to know the other interns and young employees. Naturally, I became particularly close with the two who spoke some English, Plabon and Zahman. We would spend all day working on projects together, talking about world news, and comparing life goals, something that was more similar than I would have guessed.

Even though I had an internship I was expected to be at six days a week, I found a lot of time for independent research for the paper I am working on with Professor Biberman. This extraordinary experience was extremely difficult and pushed me in ways I had never considered. I developed skills such as interviewing and gathering archival material – both of which I am sure will be beneficial to my future. I interviewed former freedom fighters, academics, and a woman who had worked as a nurse during the war. I also gathered archival material at the National Archives and at the Liberation War Museum.

HAPPINESS IS A PLACE

Mende Yangden '16

Since the 1970s, Bhutan, a small country situated on the foothills of the Himalayas, has rejected the notion of Gross Domestic Product, believing that a country's worth should not be defined by monetary wellbeing. Instead, the country adopted a holistic philosophy of development known as the "Gross National Happiness" or GNH.

Spearheaded by the fourth king of Bhutan, Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck, this measure was based on four pillars: sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, conservation of the environment and good governance. GNH expands beyond the GDP measures (consumption + investment + government spending + net exports), and Bhutan acts as a living example of a successful developing country. It shows that economic growth alone is not enough to further the advancement of a country.

Although this development philosophy is integrated into the small kingdom, growing up in Bhutan I was unaware of it, like many others. It was not until I left the country that I started understanding what set us apart from the rest of the world. At Skidmore, in my government and economics classes, I was intrigued by how concepts such as capitalism had not completely reached Bhutan. Wanting to understand my country better, and with the support of the See-Beyond Grant, I interned for the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) this summer.

GNHC is the central government body responsible for coordinating and creating policies that align with the GNH philosophy. My position as an intern included working closely with the chief planning officer of GNHC, and I was given the opportunity to attend meetings where policies were GNH screen tested. I had a first-hand experience of observing how GNH is implemented at the grassroots level. In the process, I became aware that solving inequality lies in the heart of GNH. It made me a true believer in the phrase "GNH is more important than GDP."



RCIA FUNDED INTERNSHIP

INTERNING FOR CONGRESSMAN TONKO

Noah Tananbaum '16

When I interned in DC in 2014, a number of people told me that a congressional internship would be a crucial experience if I wanted a career in that city. When I went back to school last fall I decided that my goal would be to secure a congressional internship for the following summer. Fortunately I met that goal and had the privilege of interning in Congressman Tonko's office --by far the most satisfying internship experience I have had.

Most of my internship experiences have been positive, but I always felt that it wouldn't make much of a difference if I didn't show up. Working in a congressional office made me realize the sheer enormity of staffer responsibility and the important part interns play in easing the workload for them. I don't yet know if I would prefer a career on the Hill or working for a non-profit/think tank, but I do know that the skills I acquired on the Hill will hold me in good stead in any job I have.

One of the greatest strengths of the Hill internship program, and of Congressman Tonko's office specifically, is that it provides so many different tasks for interns. The variety allows us to discover which jobs we prefer but also forces us to improve in areas we don't like as much or where we aren't as adept. The staffers were always happy to provide help and guidance whenever we sought it. Talking to constituents on the phone and giving tours were definitely job components that made me nervous because I had less familiarity with them. Ultimately, improving my oral communication was the most valuable aspect of this internship. Most jobs provide ample opportunity for writing experience, but this internship had both writing and speaking opportunities. My favorite job was researching legislation, particularly issues falling under the judiciary category. I was asked to conduct independent research on the *King v. Burwell* case and I really enjoyed researching the details of that case.

As part of the internship, we had the chance to talk to many staffers throughout the summer, picking their brains and learning more about their career trajectories. It was always helpful to hear different decision-making processes and all the different jobs that people had as stepping-stones to their next job. I also found attending briefings a highly informative experience and enjoyed summarizing what I had learned for the staffers. Some of the briefings I most enjoyed focused on financial transparency of the judiciary, racial discrepancies in pre-school, and the need for an over-the-counter oral contraceptive. The judiciary, education, and reproductive rights are some of the topics I feel most passionately about and present much-needed opportunities for reform. The pre-school briefing, in particular, was eye opening because I never truly realized the impact that pre-school has on children and the vast racial divides for children even at such a young age.

The oral communication aspects of the internship that were personally challenging also provided the opportunity to learn the most. Perhaps my acknowledgement of the discomfort helped me grow in those areas. It was a true privilege to intern in Congressman Tonko's office and regardless of what I end up doing in the future, I feel confident that the skills I acquired there will serve me in good stead.

Editor's note: Noah applied for and received financial assistance through the SGA's Responsible Citizenship Internship Award fund.

**THE 67TH ANNUAL
STUDENT CONFERENCE ON US AFFAIRS
WEST POINT, NEW YORK
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**Rachel Castellano & Maddy Morency will serve as our delegates at this prestigious conference.
Look for Rachel and Maddy to report on their experiences in the Spring newsletter!**

LEVINE INTERNSHIP AWARD

INTERNING AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Addison Bennett '16



This fall, the White House launched a new blog called “Letters to President Obama,” a Tumblr page that displays particularly poignant messages written to the President by the American people. While most who come across this site may find it interesting, my relationship with the blog posts is far more personal, as I had the honor this past summer of reading these messages all summer as an intern in the White House Office of Presidential Correspondence. As an intern at the White House this summer, I was tremendously fortunate to spend my time not only interacting with citizens on behalf of the President in the Correspondence Office, but also having access to the White House campus and experiencing first-hand what it means to play a small role in the Executive Office of the President.

My daily tasks in my internship included reading messages sent in to the President from the American people, which as one can probably imagine, contain quite a range of emotions, opinions, and comprehensibility. This task, however, was never mundane, as we were always on the lookout for messages that could be used in speeches, displayed online to promote stories or policies, or even sent to the President himself. Each day, President Obama reads ten letters and emails, which are chosen by the interns and staff in the Correspondence Office. It is clear that throughout the whole White House, the administration is committed to transparency and communication with citizens. As the summer progressed, I was fortunate to be assigned more substantive tasks,

such as analyzing data on trending topics in letters and emails and assisting in the writing of certain responses from the White House. Seeing for myself the impact that a letter from the President or being mentioned in one of his speeches can have on a struggling citizen makes this kind of work immensely worthwhile.

In addition to my daily tasks, perhaps the best part of my summer was simply having access to the White House and being surrounded by the people running our country. The internship program, which spans most departments and offices in the Executive Office of the President, ran an excellent speaker series that allowed us to meet and ask questions of top-ranking administration officials, including the President, Vice President, and First Lady (I now proudly display my pictures with all three in my apartment, despite some light teasing from housemates and guests). Interns are given considerable access to the offices in the Executive Branch, which allowed me to meet officials, attend meetings, and see some of what I’ve learned in the classroom in action. Some highlights include bowling in the Truman Bowling Alley, working at the White House Fourth of July Party (which included a performance by Bruno Mars and appearance from the President), and getting to watch the Marine One helicopter land on the South Lawn and pick up the President. I found throughout the summer that the staff in the White House are tremendously capable, dedicated, and happy to go out of their way to make an intern’s experience valuable. It really is a special place to work, and I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

I applied for the White House internship on a whim. Assuming that most positions are offered to the sons and daughters of cabinet secretaries or big donors, I made other summer plans after submitting my application. However, within just a few months, I was living in DC and scanning an ID badge at the entrance gate to the White House each morning. I feel very lucky and honored to have spent a summer working in such a special place, and I am grateful for the Levine Internship Award, which helped me get through nearly three months in a not-so-reasonably-priced city. I would encourage anyone who is interested to apply for the White House internship and the Levine Award. I certainly never expected to receive either.



Summer Internship

Summer Internship at Council on Foreign Relations: Thoughts on Working at a Think Tank

Emily Mangan '16

This summer, I interned at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City for their Geoeconomic Studies program. During my time there, I worked for Michael Levi on Energy and Environment research. On the surface, it entailed dressing in business formal to sit at a computer for eight hours a day, Googling at lightning speed, churning out research memo after research memo, and drowning in Excel datasets. But while I was doing all of this, I came to better understand one of the most prominent and influential think tanks in the country.

CFR is a membership organization and think tank that publishes the magazine *Foreign Affairs*. As separate but connected entities, most fellows working for CFR occasionally contribute articles to *Foreign Affairs*, but are more likely to publish on their own blogs, in national newspapers, or in peer-reviewed journals. Founded in 1921, the organization has grown substantially over the years creating a complex bureaucracy, the topic of many grumblings among the staff. There are essentially three levels of employees who contribute to the academic side of the organization: the fellows, who are experts in their field, the research associates, who are typically fresh out of college or grad school, and the interns. It is impossible to be promoted from a research associate to a fellow, creating a constant turnover of young research associates. Because employees can't move up the hierarchy in the company, they build out by expanding their departments or hiring more people under them. I heard from many of the research associates that after working at any think tank for two years, you've learned all there is it's time to move on. Most of the research associates use CFR as a springboard to move onto law school, grad school, or consulting.

As a membership organization, CFR hosts events and off-the-record roundtables on various topics. I attended every event relevant to my interests (not just for the free lunch), including roundtables on lifting sanctions on Iran and carbon pricing. Days after the Iran nuclear deal, Secretary Kerry spoke at CFR in front of a completely packed audience, with the eager interns hidden from sight in the back. This event was meant to be a discussion between Kerry and CFR's president Richard Haass, who had been vocal in his

opposition to the deal. Kerry instead seized the opportunity to speak for almost an hour to this powerful group of New Yorkers to sell the deal, preventing Dr. Haass from getting a word in edgewise.

While the topic of my internship was more directly related to my Environmental Studies major, I found myself diving into all sorts of academic disciplines. I researched topics including fiscal breakeven oil prices, the price of silicon solar modules, and the intersection of trade law and clean energy development. I worked closely with Michael Levi's research associate, a recent Yale graduate. Together, we tried to keep up with all of Dr. Levi's research requests and tangents. There really was no typical day. Environmental policy news is released sporadically and major events or announcements can be infrequent. Obama's announcement of the Clean Power Plan was perhaps the biggest news of the summer, and it was interesting to see how swiftly prominent thinkers like Dr. Levi moved to weigh in on it. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from my time there was to write clearly, concisely, and quickly.

In spite of my constant high stress level and overheating from wearing a blazer every day in the city, I really loved working there and would recommend working at a think tank to all Government majors. I made great connections, had the wonderful opportunity to be published on CFR.org, and received a lot of career advice (both solicited and unsolicited) from some of the smartest people in my field.

On the last day of my internship, I spoke with one of the few female fellows about the male-dominated field. Most of CFR's fellows and research associates are men, reflecting the gender distribution in our broader political system. Despite being a Rhodes Scholar and going to Yale Law, she was consistently paid less than her male counterparts. To the other young women in the Government Department: do not despair! Men may dominate the political field right now, but out of twenty-five interns at CFR, only three were men. And this particular fellow went on to be one of the lead architects of Hillary Clinton's Economic Statecraft agenda. This summer really affirmed that I want to be working in environmental policy, and just because the field is currently dominated by men doesn't mean it won't shift in the future.



Summer Internship

Seeking Refuge in Istanbul

Nosheen Hotaki '18



He was about six feet tall, but his crooked back made him appear shorter. He stood by the Refugee Rights Turkey's (RRT) entrance every day, smoking a cigarette. He looked proud, yet lonely; satisfied, yet broken. His eyes were filled with melancholy. He wore the same outfit every day: a ragged white shirt, dark blue jeans, brown belt, and an old mahogany vest. His unkempt facial hair was turning gray, but he didn't look any older than forty years old.

"Would you like some tea?" I would ask every day.

His response was always "No," the first time. Having been raised in an Afghan household, I knew I had to ask three times before it would be polite of him to accept. As soon as he would say "yes," his hands would start trembling, his eyes would wander, and he would start stuttering.

"Back in Iran, I was tortured in a prison for twenty-five years. I wasn't allowed to accept tea. It was an extravagance not destined for people like me. It still seems like I am dreaming," he would say in a shaky voice.

"Please don't tell your colleagues what I just said. I don't want anyone to pity me," he would continue our conversation in Farsi.

RRT's senior lawyer, Sinem, whom I had been shadowing for about three months, informed me that Yusuf had been deported eight times. He had managed to cross the border over and over again because he feared political persecution in his homeland. He was fifteen years old when he was first arrested. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee Advocacy (UNHCR) had recognized Yusuf as a refugee, but the Turkish government had not. It had filed eight deportation orders against him. This would be the ninth. Yusuf couldn't be resettled in a third safe country due to a disagreement between the international and the Turkish authorities. He was stuck on foreign soil without family or friends. He no longer had a home. His new home was Gezi Park, where he slept at night. His friends were the stray cats he fed every night.

He had been a client of RRT long before I started interning there this past summer. When he was first rejected by UNHCR, RRT (a non-profit NGO) helped him write an appeal letter, which later resulted in the UNHCR's recognition of his refugee status. Unfortunately, that was the extent of the organization's help. After eight deportation orders, none of our skilled lawyers could do anything to help him. The law was there, but justice was nowhere to be found. Yet, he came every day and sat quietly as I assisted other refugees and asylum seekers. He didn't say much. One of the supervisors, who had come to speak a little Farsi due to the large numbers of Iranian and Afghan refugees in Turkey, spoke to him in broken Farsi. She explained that there was nothing we could do for him. Every time he heard that, he would look at me. I could tell he was trying to suppress his tears.

"Sister, do they understand what twenty-five years of physical and mental torture does to someone? I cannot go back. Please. I cannot. I cannot."

I would usually sit idly, but sometimes I would sneak to a smoke-room and cry. Eternal homelessness was his present and, most probably, his future.

What Happens Outside of the Classroom

Orr Genish '16

I am a junior government major and currently I am interning for Congressman Paul Tonko in his Albany Office. This summer I worked as a Tour Guide and did research with Professor Biberman-Ocakli. Here are a few of the things we did this summer.

We created a database of militias around the world that are funded by the state to fulfill different responsibilities and actions. The database primarily focuses on whether the regime funds and trains the militia and whether it has Administrative or Operational Control. It was very interesting to see that the majority of states trained and used militias, whether it was internally or externally to accomplish their goals. We wrote then wrote a paper about this topic that got published in the Small Wars Journal.

We used GIS to map election data in India, specifically the regional state of Jammu and Kashmir. This data analyzed whether militants participated in democratic elections and won those elections. The party we looked at was JKAL (Jammu and Kashmir Awami League) which was comprised of former militants trained and funded by the Indian Government. No longer having a purpose for the Indian government the former commanders of this militia banded together to create a political party. Using the data, we mapped the information depending on participation of the party in the election and how it did in the elections.

ALUMNI

In the Think Tank World

Ben Polsky '15

Since graduating in May, I have been working in various capacities at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center, a think tank in Washington, DC. In my short time at the Council, I have had the opportunity to research and write about pressing issues and interact with many of the most powerful people in the world. Before saying anything else though, I want to thank Professor Biberman-Ocakli for recommending me to the Council and for taking an active role in my future during my most frantic search for direction.

When I tell people I work at a think tank, they usually respond with a head nod that I have come to realize means they don't know what a think tank does. I have found that the best way to describe what a think tank does is to describe it in relation to its competitors. Most institutions in DC, if they are not part of government, battle to influence what government does. Whether it be a consulting agency, lobbying group or advocacy group, a union association or a think tank, each tries to get its ideas listened to, and its policy preferences implemented. The difference between these non-governmental institutions lies in the tactics employed and the resources used. A think tank generally uses its network of former government officials and scholars to influence decisions. Just last week, for example, working with the former Ambassador to Afghanistan and other luminaries, we produced a strategy paper that called for the exact approach President Obama announced with regard to maintaining US troops in Afghanistan. I can't say for sure how much the paper influenced the President's decision, but I can tell you it had an impact (and was cited in the related New York Times article). Success in the industry is usually intangible and un-quantifiable, but the work can still be gratifying.

In some ways, working at the Atlantic Council has allowed me to continue living the life of a student. I research and write a fair amount, but on a host of issues from the Iran nuclear deal, to India's burgeoning economy to Megacity security concerns. I also am invited to attend lectures, although they call them "briefings" or "conversations" with the world's foremost experts on their given subject. At least part of the Atlantic Council operates like Skidmore's Speaker's Bureau except with more resources and more conveniently located (no offense to upstate New York).

By far, the coolest part of my job is the people I get to interact with on a semi-regular basis. I hate to name drop, but I will anyway. I had the opportunity to discuss the rise of Donald Trump with former Governor of Utah, Presidential candidate and Ambassador to China, Jon Huntsman Jr., and I had an even weirder interaction with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that involved my accidentally stealing her food.

At the risk of sounding condescending, I'd like to conclude with a bit of advice. As an active government major throughout my Skidmore career, I have read my fair share of these post-grad check-ins. More often than not, they left me more anxious about my future career. I sincerely hope my check-in has the opposite effect. Yes, the job market is flooded with qualified applicants with flawless resumes. But I can tell you from experience that there is a dearth of competent, reliable recent grads, and there is no strong correlation between those qualities and a pristine resume. I guess the positive way to phrase that is there is always a way for a hard-working, competent person to stand out and flourish.

Leading A Local Election

Elise Duffy '18



As the November 3rd election date draws near, residents of Saratoga Springs are becoming familiarized with the candidates. Lawn signs decorate the yards on the majority of blocks, newspapers keep citizens updated on the campaigns, and debates have begun to take place. Even the most politically inactive residents could

probably conjure up a handful of candidate's names. But there is one person who, although less well known, has been as dedicated to this race as any of the candidates: his name is Will Sharry. Sharry is a Skidmore alum who graduated in 2011 with a degree in government. He now works in Mayor Joanne Yepsen's office as her campaign manager for her reelection. He dedicates his time to fundraising, dealing with the media, overseeing field operations and overall campaign strategy. On top of working with myriad staff members and local volunteers, Sharry also manages six interns who are current government majors at Skidmore.

When he first came to Skidmore in 2006, Sharry did not know what he would choose to be his major. After being placed in a Scribner Seminar with government professor Bob Turner, Sharry began to gravitate towards it as a perspective major. In the true spirit of a liberal arts student, he says what drew him to the major is that "it is an interesting combination of history, theory, science and writing." He spoke highly of the staff and the courses they offered, as well as his peers, who were equally as influential. The community within the department is what he attributed to shaping his experience. During his years at Skidmore he had an internship at an immigration advocacy firm in Washington DC called America's Voice. After school his advisor suggested he look into campaigns. That summer he got an internship for a political consulting firm called New Partners. From there was offered a job on a United States Senate campaign in Connecticut, and he has stuck with the profession ever since. He's moved around to work on a variety of campaigns at the federal, state, local and judicial level.

Sharry is now happy to be back in Saratoga to see the city from a different point of view. He works constantly, but still finds time to go running most days. While he's been here he participated in the Palio Half Marathon. He's also enjoyed being involved with Skidmore again. It's fun for him to work with the interns who are eager to learn and helpful to have around. Seeing Skidmore students grow has been especially rewarding for him. He recently went back to give a talk at Bob Turner's "Real Democracy" class, where he spoke about his specific campaign strategy and the challenges he's faced. He says the most important thing he's learned on this campaign is to "always keep an open mind and try to learn from everyone, even if you think you know better."

Spring 2016 Topics Course Descriptions

G0251C: So You Want to Be a Judge?

James Sieja

This course analyzes the "judicial life cycle." We will examine who goes to law school, who gets picked to be a clerk, what clerks do, running in state judicial elections, the federal nomination process, the day-to-day life of a judge, workload issues, getting along with judicial colleagues, moving up in the judicial hierarchy, retirement, and death. Though primarily a political science class, we will tackle some of these questions from alternative approaches, including sociology, history, and economics.



GO 351A: Tocqueville's America

Flagg Taylor



Tocqueville's classic work *Democracy in America* has been called the best book ever written about America *and* the best book ever written about democracy. This course will be devoted to an analysis of this great text but will also make use of Tocqueville's letters. We will investigate the nature of modern democracy as it emerged in America, focusing on Tocquevillian concepts such as equality of condition, popular sovereignty, tyranny of the majority, individualism, the science of associations, and soft despotism. Tocqueville is an unparalleled analyst of modern democracy because he fully understood its depth and power. As Pierre Manent has written, "Democracy is the regime most intrinsic to human nature when it is finally free to express its wishes, but democracy is also something that happens to human nature without its knowing or really wanting what happens. The greatness of Tocqueville was his capacity at one and the same time for promoting the clear hope that democracy entails while deepening a sense for its doleful secret."

GO 365: Presidential Nominations

Chris Mann

The Presidential Nomination process can seem complex and confusing. Candidates pursue different strategies to secure delegates. States use different rules for conducting primaries and caucuses. The calendar changes every four years. The central focus is studying the dynamics of the 2016 nominations in both parties as they unfold from Iowa to the end of the semester (and beyond?). To understand 2016, we will examine candidate bios, campaign strategies, party factions, fundraising, the origins of the nomination process, the impact of sequential primaries, how and why rules and calendars are changed, and more.



Spring 2016 What Counts for What

American	Political Theory	International Relations	Comparative
GO 231: Environmental Politics and Policy (BT)	GO236: American Political Thought (NT)	GO 228: U.S. Foreign Policy (AV)	GO 209: The Latin American Puzzle (AV)
GO 251C: So you want to be a Judge? (JS)	GO 323: Dissident Political Thought (FT)	GO 340: The International Human Rights Regime: Promise and Peril (KG)	GO 348: Politics of Modern South Asia (YB-O)
GO 314: Civil Liberties (JS)	GO 351A: Tocqueville's America (FT)		
GO 362: Politics of Congress (RS)			
GO 367: Presidential Nominations (CM)			

GOVERNMENT COURSES: Spring 2016

GO 101-001: Intro to American Government

Chris Mann M W F 11:15am—12:10pm

GO 101-001: Intro to American Government

James Sieja M W F 12:20pm—1:15pm

GO 102-001: Introduction to Political Philosophy

Natalie Taylor T TH 11:10am—12:30pm

GO 103-001: Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Kate Graney M W F 10:10am—11:05am

GO 103-002 Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Kate Graney M W F 9:05am—10:00am

GO 209: The Latin American Puzzle

Aldo Vacs T TH 11:10am—12:30pm

GO 228: U. S. Foreign Policy

Aldo Vacs M W 2:30pm—3:50pm

GO 231 Environmental Politics and Policy

Bob Turner T TH 2:10pm—3:30pm

GO 236: American Political Thought

Natalie Taylor T TH 8:10am—9:30am

GO 251C: So you want to be a Judge?

James Sieja M W F 1:25pm—2:20pm

GO 314: Civil Liberties

James Sieja M W 4:00pm—5:50pm

GO 323: Dissident Political Thought

Flagg Taylor W F 12:20pm—1:40pm

GO 340: The International Human Rights Regime: Promise and Peril

Kate Graney W F 12:20pm—1:40pm

GO 348: Politics of Modern South Asia

Yelena Biberman-Ocakli T TH 12:40—2:00pm

GO 351A: Tocqueville's America

Flagg Taylor M W 10:10am—11:30am

GO 362: Politics of Congress

Ron Seyb T TH 9:40am—11:00am

GO 365: Presidential Nominations

Chris Mann W F 8:40am—10:00am