

# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Fall 2013

Dear Students,

With the country on the brink of default coupled with a partial government shutdown this autumn, there was much to occupy the minds of government professors and students. The Department is planning to hold a panel discussion on the budget and debt crises in the coming months, given how our elected representatives in Washington have "kicked the can down the road" and will confront this winter another deadline to cut debt or face default (the new normal?). On the international scene, all eyes are on the Egyptian *coup d'etat* and what it means for democratization; on Syria for its humanitarian disaster, the trenchant civil (now international) war, and use of chemical weapons; and on Iran, where a new government appears open to a settlement on its uranium enrichment program in exchange for lifting international economic sanctions, although the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

As we study a changing America in a changing world, there is still good news to savor if we just look for it: e.g. --the successful democratization of Poland since 1989 and now Myanmar/Burma since 2012, new Israeli-Palestinian agreements to lessen the burden of economic isolation on the Palestinian people, and hints of modest economic revival in the depressed Irish and Greek economies. To help us bring the Middle East to Skidmore, the Department held a well-attended talk on Syria led by Dr. Feryaz Ocakli. The Department also cosponsored the visit of six Israeli professors from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev to give lectures on Islamic exile literature and regional and Israeli political issues on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relationship between Skidmore and Ben-Gurion. On Constitution Day the Department hosted Dr. Jeremy Bailey, who spoke on the Jeffersonian Constitution; the talk attracted wide attention.

Against the backdrop of opportunity and crisis at home and abroad, Government majors remain intrepid as they apply what they learn in the classroom and library to the political world. Our students and recent alumni have interned or are interning for Members of Congress and other governmental/nongovernmental organization; teaching English or studying Mandarin in China; and studying or working in countries across the world (Guatemala, Israel, Russia, Somalia, and South Africa, to name a few) and in our own nation's capital (where students and alumni are working at the German Marshall Fund and the American Bar Association, among other places). Others are thriving in law school and graduate school. As alumni inspire current students, students are active in club activities that enrich their educational and social lives on our lively campus, including the Franklin Forum and College Republicans and Skidmore Democrats. Efforts are afloat to recreate the International Affairs Club, while Model EU and Model UN are offering amazing opportunities for their members. Inside this issue of the newsletter you can read all about how our students who own their education are putting what they learn into practice.

Your professors remain active in the field of political science, as you can read in the newsletter. For example, Dr. Flagg Taylor published *The Contested Removal Power, 1789-2010*; Dr. Ocakli is researching the formation of institutions of law in Mandate Palestine and has presented numerous papers at scholarly meetings on civil society, citizen participation, and electoral strategy; and Dr. Knowles has published articles on constitutional issues in *Law and History Review* and the *University of Missouri-Kansas City Law Review*. While Natalie Johnson works on her doctoral dissertation, she is engaged in a project on social movement organizations that bring cases to courts to forward an agenda that increases visibility for sexuality-based cases.

Our students have done a great job producing the Fall newsletter and deserve our appreciation. Have a close look inside to read about student experiences, your new Academic Council representatives, upcoming events, and Spring course offerings, especially our topics courses. They include Political Islam; Freedom of Speech; Politics, Marriage, and Family; Czech Politics and People; Understanding Globalization; and Media and Government. Last but not least, special thanks go to Jack Mallory for designing and releasing the Department's new Facebook page. Check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/Skidmore.Government>

In closing, we recognize that it takes professors and students together to make the classroom an exciting place to study, learn, and grow. We also welcome students to continue to learn and debate in the hallways, dorms, dining halls, club meetings, panel discussions, guest speaker occasions, and faculty offices. Indeed, as this newsletter demonstrates, our Department is a driving engine of intellectual energy for students and faculty alike.

Sincerely,  
Roy H. Ginsberg,  
Chair, Department of Government

# FACULTY NEWS AND UPDATES

*Matt Choi '14*

**Professor Bob Turner and Tyler Reny** (12') presented a paper, "Guillermo Horton: When Do Gubernatorial Candidates Go Nativist?" at the State Politics and Policy Conference at the University of Iowa in Ames. The paper conducted a quantitative analysis of the immigration content of gubernatorial campaign commercials as well as qualitative analysis of six states gubernatorial elections. Professor Turner and Tyler's findings suggest that nativist campaign commercials are relatively rare. Moreover, they found the decision to go nativist is driven primarily by political circumstances, specifically, the Republican candidate's relative electoral position, than not by demographic or economic factors.

**Professor Flagg Taylor's** book, *The Contested Removal Power, 1789-2010*, was published in September. He continues to research Czech dissidents for his new book. In January Professor Taylor will travel to Prague and Brno for more interviews, and will also conduct research in the archives of the StB, the Communist secret police.

This past summer **Professor Natalie Johnson** took a trip to New York City to conduct research for a post-dissertation project on New York and New England based social movement organizations such as GLAD and Lambda Legal. Her project will look at the efforts of organizations to bring cases to the courts that forward an agenda increasing the visibility for sexuality – based claims. This project examines areas such as same-sex marriage, adoption and custody and the rights of transgendered persons. Professor Johnson's research should be completed next semester and ready to write during the summer of 2014.

**Professor Feryaz Ocakli** is currently working on a paper that focuses on the formation of legal institutions in Mandate Palestine between 1920 and 1948. This paper investigates why the British colonial administration, which wanted to implement the British common law system in Palestine, ended up forming a pluralist legal system dominated by French civil law institutions, Rabbinical courts, and Islamic-sharia courts and argues that colonial admin-

istrations could not simply impose their will on the colonized, and had to respond to the availability of human resources. Professor Ocakli has presented several scholarly papers and over the summer conducted fieldwork in Diyarbakir, Turkey and Ankara, Turkey.

**Professor Helen Knowles** traveled to Shippensburg University in September to deliver a Constitution Day Lecture entitled "You'll Know It When You See It: The Constitution According to Justice Kennedy" and she shared the following about a chapter of her next book project: "Joel Tiffany (1811-1893) devoted himself to the practice of law, including the 'vigorous and fearless prosecution of horse thieves and other lawless characters,' during his three terms as the prosecuting attorney in Lorain County, Ohio in the 1840s. He only dabbled in antislavery activities (as much as it was possible only to "dabble" in such reform work in this "extraordinary nursery of abolitionist and Radical Republican theorists"). Nevertheless, Tiffany is the subject of one of the chapters of *Parchment Slaves*, the book project upon which I am currently working. This is because he is one of only five men to have written a treatise-length exposition on the unconstitutionality of slavery in the 1840s. It is my analysis of that idiosyncratic argument – that slavery violated the U.S. Constitution prior to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment – which is at the heart of *Parchment Slaves*. If you stop by my office and ask me, I will be happy to tell you why this will not be 'just another book about slavery.' And maybe, just maybe, sometime next year I will offer a legal history course in which we will spend considerable time discussing whether those who made the unconstitutionality-of-slavery argument were of sound mind!"

**Professor Kate Graney** truly enjoyed sharing her love of Russian food and culture with her GO 227 and SSP-100 students earlier this semester, and was very impressed with how many of them ate the caviar blini she served! She is looking forward to traveling to the Netherlands in January with Skidmore's fabulous Model EU club, and to traveling to Prague in May with Prof. Flagg Taylor and 22 lucky students. She is also trying, not terribly successfully, to resist the constant pressure coming from her children regarding the issue of adding a puppy to the household. Wish her luck.

*Thank you to the following students and alumni who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter:*

**Ilona Abramova, Spencer Bersteller, Cara Cancelmo, Matt Choi, Jane Dowd, Geoff Durham, Connor Grant-Knight, Anna Graves, Marcella Jewell, Olivia Kinnear, Andrew Lowy, Jack Mallory, Danny Meyers, Alex Miller, Ellie Nichols, Ben Polsky, Jesse Ritner, Jeremy Ritter-Wiseman, Aaron Shifreen, Abby Silverman, Jimmy Stanitz, David Solomon, Ellie Wood, Jeremy Woods**

# BEHIND THE PH.D. WITH PROFESSOR FERYAZ OCAKLI

*Jack Mallory '15 and Ben Polsky '15*

Professor Ocakli's main line of research focuses on how Islamist political parties build social networks, and specifically how these parties attract and maintain support at the subnational level. His summer research focused on state-tribe relations in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey. Professor Ocakli also has a second research agenda that focuses on political party-business relations in Turkey's hydroelectric and housing sectors. This research has implications for comparative political development in the Global South.



## **Why have Islamist parties emerged in the past decade as political contenders in the Middle East?**

There are a few reasons. One has to do with the fact that more Muslim majority states are adopting democratic procedures. Turkey is an exception, as it has had these democratic procedures at the institutional level for some time. If you look beyond the Turkish

case, we are seeing more and more participation by Islamist groups in the democratic process. While Islamist organizations have existed in the past, the democratic institutional platforms have not. As these platforms continue to emerge, organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots are participating in national elections.

## **When you say the emergence of democratic processes, are you referring to the Arab Spring?**

Yes. Even before the Arab Spring, however, Islamist party politics existed on a smaller scale. They took part in local elections. The Islamist parties had no chance of winning on the national level, and they knew it—these elections were rigged and controlled by the incumbents. When national elections began to emerge in Tunisia and Egypt—spearheaded, in large part, by revolutionary movements—they started taking part in the national electoral arena. By examining the Turkish case, we can potentially learn a lot about how Islamist parties might behave in the future.

## **What was the process by which Islamist parties emerged in Turkey?**

Islamist parties were traditionally influential in peripheral provinces. In the 1980s and the 1990s, they began reaching out to the cities—mobilizing voters within poor neighborhoods and shantytowns. Here we saw a split within Islamist organizations. The old guard wanted to retain their radical interpretation of the religious texts, as well as the radical directions of the economy—social redistribution, rejecting globalization. The young Islamists wanted more integration with the west—global capitalism. My focus is on how these young Islamists usurped and increased the vote share of the old guard, which had never acquired more than 25 percent at the national level, to more than 50 percent. The existing theories of Islamist parties effectively reduce Islamist politics to different groups voting for their own religious interests.

## **What factor does religion play in Islamist party politics, and why are the existing theories flawed?**

Political Islam is a political project. It has references to religion, but don't think of Islamist political parties as religious movements. Just like other political parties, they have to deal with many factors—

including state institutions and their electorates. State institutions in Turkey have been quite wary and hesitant to allow the Islamist organizations to run in elections because they challenge the basic notions of secularism in a very secularist country. As for the existing theories, the growth of the vote share in Turkey for Islamist parties is too large to be accurately explained by existing theories. Second, and more importantly, these explanations are supposed to work at the national level, so they do not account for the discrepancies at the provincial, subnational level. Long story short, if you look at the subnational distribution of the support for the new Islamist party, these existing explanations cannot account for why they are doing so well in some provinces—up to 70% of the vote share—and not so well in other, similar provinces.

## **What strategies do Islamist parties employ at the subnational level?**

Islamist parties are not merely affected by macro-social developments—whether it's economic development, state policies or state institutions. They shape their own fates. Success of Islamist parties at the subnational level hinges on how they interact with local social forces—characteristics of the local party organization, and how the party forms linkages and networks with the local society. In places where the party has found networks and maintained cohesive party structures, they do well. Equally, where alliances with the local notables fail, we see relatively less support.

## **What has your summer research done to aid your existing understanding?**

In my original research, I looked at the parties' relationship with local notables. To conduct this research, I went to eight Turkish cities and analyzed how the parties were organized and how they interacted with the local population. Three of these cities were in Kurdish regions. An important insight I found in these cities was that the local notables were tribal elites. Over the summer, I sought to enhance this research by looking at a more specific, yet prior question: how is the relationship between the state and the tribal elites constructed? By looking at the tribe-state relations, not only do I add a logical step to my previous research, but I also gain insight into Islamist party politics, politics in Turkey in general, minority party politics, and Kurdish ethnic politics.

## **How have modern nation states dealt with tribes within their borders?**

Modern nation states are defined as entities that have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, or physical force within a given area. Tribes can be understood as subnational authority structures. They may have the capacity to challenge the power of the state—given the influence they command at the local level. State relations with the tribes range from assimilation and incorporation, to coexistence, and even empowerment. In a word, state-tribal relations are informed by the states' political needs.

*Continued on page 9*

## A CONSTITUTION DAY LECTURE WITH JEREMY BAILEY

*Cara Cancelmo '16*



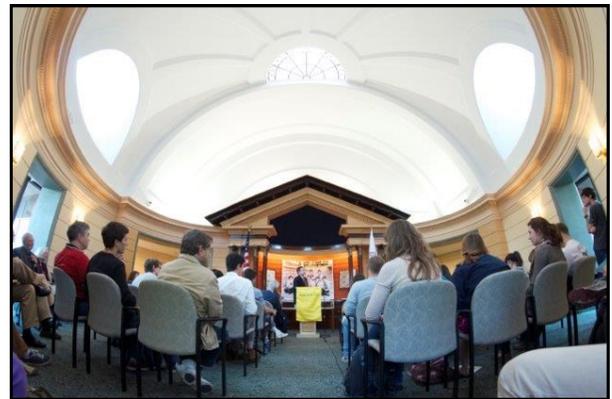
Professor Jeremy D. Bailey visited Skidmore on September 17th to give a Constitution Day talk entitled, "Jefferson's Revolutionary Constitution: Paradox and Potential." Professor Bailey spoke about Jefferson's Constitution and how it relates to the paradox of our modern political circumstances. Currently, President Obama and groups like the New Libertarians interpret the Constitution in radically different ways, yet both sides agree that the Constitution should be seen as a restraint on authority that protects and serves those who do not hold political power. How can both sides suggest that the Constitution must govern us, while also knowing that they have fundamental disagreements about its meaning?

Professor Bailey explained that this paradox is not a new one; Jefferson's view on the Constitution was in many ways very different from that of other founding fathers. Most importantly, Jefferson famously believed that the document belongs to the "living." He meant that constitutions should only be binding

through mechanisms where real consent could be registered, and registered fairly often. Thus one generation's consent should not necessarily bind the next generation. But Jefferson did find things in the Constitution that he liked. When Jefferson first read the Constitution, he liked that Congress was given direct power to lay taxes, that the president had veto power, and that the large and small states had compromised on the House of Representatives and the senate. According to Professor Bailey, this clearly shows that Jefferson was a Federalist in some sense, in that he agreed with principles of the document that gave power to a strong national government.

What Jefferson did not like about the Constitution was the omission of a bill of rights, and the lack of a term limit for the office of the president. Jefferson predicted that people would be likely to continue to re-elect a president because the incumbent would have experience and reason. He wanted to protect the people from their inherent willingness to side with an incumbent. Professor Bailey then went into discussing the process of impeachment. He talked about impeachment as either political or legal, stating that today, legal impeachment is merely a thin cover for political impeachment. Jefferson wanted the process of impeachment to be about politics, he wanted to give the power of impeachment to each branch of government. Bailey said that, "For Jefferson, the problem always was that self-evident truths are not evident to most people." This contradicts the widely held view that Jefferson was a democratic optimist. Bailey explained throughout his talk that Jefferson was concerned with safeguarding liberties for the people because he knew the people have a limited capacity. They would tend to side with tyranny, and so they would need their liberties secured at the time of the writing of the Constitution before they became too concerned with other, non-political, every-day concerns. Bailey mentioned that in Tocqueville's "Democracy in America", Jefferson is quoted as saying that the problem in 1789 was legislative tyranny, and that executive tyranny could easily follow. Jefferson wanted a bill of rights and term limits because he wanted to protect the people from the government - but also because he wanted to protect the people from themselves. Jefferson's demand for a bill of rights was his way of explaining that public opinion can be inadequate, and that people need a concrete text to support an awareness of their inherent rights.

Bailey ended his talk by returning to what Jefferson's Revolutionary Constitution has to do with America today. He proposed that we currently have a dilemma of constitutionalism - we are governed by laws rather than by men. Men are more flexible, and laws cannot anticipate the future. Jefferson understood that the Constitution would need to be updated to the needs of different generations, and Bailey suggested that while this has not happened officially, political scientist so speak of different Constitutions and associate them with certain eras and presidencies. Different presidential views and interpretations of the Constitution have shaped different political eras (The New Deal Constitution, for example). The Constitution, therefore, has become more Jeffersonian because it has become more political. Professor Bailey's talk was followed by questions from students, professors, and other members of the Skidmore community. The discussion was continued at dinner, hosted at the Surrey and attended by Skidmore faculty and students.



## UPDATE ON SYRIA AND EGYPT WITH PROFESSOR OCAKLI

*Jack Mallory '15 and Ben Polsky '15*



On Tuesday, September 24, 2013, Assistant Professor of Government Feryaz Ocakli led a discussion on the uprisings and conflicts in Syria and Egypt. Given the developing nature of this topic, as well as Dr. Ocakli's expertise in the region, a standing room audience of students, faculty and community members packed the Inter Cultural Center to capacity.

Professor Ocakli provided updates on the recent developments in the Middle East, but mostly sought to advance a contextual understanding of the conflicts and their origins. With regards to Syria, he illustrated that it is not isolated in its experience of conflict; and argued that theories of political science and sociology can be used to understand what is often categorized as sectarian conflict.

Hafez al-Assad's Ba'ath party in Syria was a self-identified socialist party. He sought to expand his support by developing coalitions with broader parts of society—namely, with the workers and peasants of predominantly Sunni affiliation. Subsidies for food, farming and housing were used in a state led populist bargain: welfare in return for support. Professor Ocakli argued that Hafez al-Assad was able to sustain this statist model until the early 1990s—many statist economic policies faced similar challenges during this time—as globalization threatened to dissolve the economic vitality of national development programs.

On the heels of his father's death, Bashar Al-Assad—a young and European educated would-be reformer—assumed power. Bashar pursued conflicting objectives: to retain the support of his father's broad coalition and to erect a liberalized Syrian economy that could compete in global markets. In an effort to increase attention on foreign investment—most notably in the oil sector—and revamp his struggling economy, he alienated much of his father's coalition. As Professor Ocakli noted, this liberal economic evolution was not matched politically; Syria remained a single

party state. This neoliberal transition afforded the upper echelon of Syria—technocrats and business leaders, predominantly Assad's family, as well as the Alawite minority—sustained economic growth, while slashing the social welfare for the workers and peasants. Bashar Al-Assad sought to effectively emulate the Chinese model—liberalizing the economy without liberalizing policy: safeguarding his power from the debates and concessions of democracy.

The efforts to liberalize the economy, however calculated, could not account for what would happen in Tunisia—the beginning of the Arab Spring. “[Bashar Al-Assad] wasn't counting on this, nor was anyone.” When the uprisings erupted in Syria, and the military—a patrimonial institution, meaning its fate is tied to the regime—“clamped down on the opposition, effectively distributing the uprisings everywhere.” What transpired after the initial unrest soon escalated into civil war. The pro-regime forces—upper classes (the party's clients), the urban middle classes, minorities and the army—supported by Russia, Iran and China, are currently in conflict with the anti-regime forces—workers, peasants (the losers of the economic reforms), defectors from Bashar's regime and various radical religious groups—supported by the United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the European Union.

While various religious sects are involved in the Syrian civil war, Professor Ocakli stressed that this conflict cannot be attributed to simmering religious contempt. As religion often permeates the western conceptions of Middle Eastern politics, it is easy to understand the Syrian civil war as a solely sectarian conflict. However, it can more aptly be explained through an examination of history—a history of economic transformation. The revolutionary atmosphere has given a platform for the economically and politically disenfranchised to unite in the face of an oppressive authoritarian regime.



## SPRING 2014 SERVICE LEARNING AND TRAVEL OPPORTUNITY TO GUATEMALA

Jane Dowd '14



Photo by Rodrigo Abd

Did you know that Guatemala City is home to the largest landfill in Central America? Or that this dump receives one third of the nation's garbage--over 500 tons daily? Over 3,000 workers, 80% of whom are women, work in the landfill, selling bags of paper, plastic, and other recyclable goods and earning roughly \$6 a day. The largely autonomous society surrounding the landfill or "basurero" has been formed by a variety of historical factors, the most important of which being the Guatemala civil war. This brutal war was fought from 1960- 1996 between the repressive military government and the reform-minded guerillas. Most affected, however, was the rural Mayan population as the government committed numerous crimes against humanity in these mountainous regions, including the genocide of over 200,000 civilians. This horrific violence instigated a flood of people into Guatemala City, leading to spikes of population growth and therefore rampant unemployment. The basurero became a place of work for thousands of people who had no other viable options, and it still employs over 2,000 Guatemalans.

A one credit colloquium course will be offered in the spring of 2014 through Latin American studies to any student interested in learning more the recent history of the Guatemalan civil war, the unique formation of Guatemala City, and the rural poverty afflicting over 1.5 million citizens. The class is being offered as a companion to the alternative spring break trip to Safe Passage in Guatemala City. Safe Passage (Camino Seguro)

is a non-profit organization that offers healthcare, educational reinforcement, as well as an alternative work source in a jewelry cooperative for the women who work in the basurero. The program works with over 550 children, from 2 to 21 years, coming from nearly 300 families in the surrounding neighborhoods, and a group of Skidmore students will be going on a week-long tour of the organization during spring break of 2014.

### PRAGUE TRAVEL SEMINAR

with Professor Kate Graney  
and Professor Flagg Taylor

#### PRAGUE: THE TRAGEDIES AND TRIUMPHS OF A CITY AND ITS PEOPLE TRAVEL SEMINAR TO PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



Prague: The Tragedies and Triumphs of a City and Its People is a 1-credit, 300-level travel seminar (TX 301) that will take students to Prague, Czech Republic, from May 19 to 29, 2014. It is the companion course to GO 326 Coasts of Bohemia: The Politics and History of the Czech Lands and People.

#### WHY PRAGUE?

As cultural historian Richard Burton argues, "No European city's intellectual and artistic life—not even Paris—has been so thoroughly political as that of Prague, and not just under Communism, but from the very birth of the so-called Czech national revival in the early nineteenth century." The city offers itself as a witness to the trials and tribulations of the Czech people over many centuries.

Our stay in Prague will accentuate and deepen the knowledge gained during the required semester-long companion course, GO 326 Coasts of Bohemia: The Politics and History of the Czech Lands and People. We will visit historic sites such as the Prague Castle and the National Museum to grapple with questions of Czech national identity and to witness the rich and diverse cultural streams of the city—you will see memorials and buildings from every one of the periods of Czech history. We will also attend the theater and the opera, and absorb the city's rich architectural heritage.

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY & EXCHANGES

# SKIDMORE'S SOLAR PANEL CONTROVERSY

*Andrew Lowy '15*

Sustainability is frequently raised when discussing the future of Skidmore. Implementing geothermal technology around campus, a bike share program, and seeking sustainable food sources are among some of the recent projects undertaken by students, faculty, and administrators. But Skidmore's latest initiative has proven to be more ambitious and not without controversy.

The college intends to convert an 8-acre plot of land on Denton and Bloomfield roads into a 6,950 panel solar farm. Funded by a \$2.35 million grant from Governor Cuomo's NY-Sun Initiative, the solar panels would produce up to two mega-watts of power and could supply approximately 12% of the campus' energy. However, the power would not exclusively serve the college. Skidmore plans to sell some of the energy to the larger community.

This arrangement differs from some other educational institutions that have recently built solar farms. Smith College, for example, is in the process of building panels on campus rooftops to supply power to the campus, but Smith's solar energy would not be sold as Skidmore's would. Hunter College has also built rooftop panels and has had a similar approach to Smith with great success albeit limited to the campus community. Skidmore's plan while more visible (and perhaps intrusive) to the community by nature of its location, also intends to include the community more than some of its peer institutions, and aims to benefit the community beyond the campus fence.

Yet despite the potential benefits of Skidmore's solar farm, such as clean energy available for the community, some local residents have spoken out against the project. Saratoga newspapers report that approximately 200 people have signed a petition protesting the development. These residents have voiced concerns about whether a residential area can support a solar farm and have also criticized the impact the panels will have on their view. Right now, most of Skidmore's 100-acre Denton plot (which includes the 8 acres proposed for the panels) is clear of any developments save for a few athletic fields. Opponents argue that the installation of these panels—and an occupation of the largely empty fields—would be burdensome to the surrounding community.

The concerns raised by the public focus on the location of the panels, not the college's implementation of them. In fact, some outspoken residents have said that they do not oppose



A sign on Denton Road protesting the Skidmore solar farm project

bringing solar panels to Saratoga, just in the Denton Road residential area. Some have even gone as far as to say that Skidmore should be building the panels on campus or near its property by the stables—keeping out of sight. Despite these concerns, Skidmore is continuing with its plan to develop the Denton property, pending approval by the Greenfield Town Board.

It should be noted, however, that Skidmore, if approved to start construction, would be purchasing two bonds—one to plant and maintain trees around the panels in an effort to preserve a natural view, and a second devoted to completely dismantling the project should it ever become inactive. Both of these investments address the two main concerns of local residents. The trees would be planted to disguise the panels and maintain the aura of a residential neighborhood; and the dismantlement bond would be a safeguard if it were found that the area could not, as some fear, support such a project.

Perhaps it is because of these two bonds, or because the project promises green energy that the Greenfield Planning Board has recommended approval to the Town Board. While having the blessing of the Planning Board is not a guarantee that the development will be approved, it certainly is a good sign for Skidmore, as it will ultimately be factored into the Town Board's final decision. At some point in the near future, the Town Board will be having open meetings to discuss the solar panels before issuing their verdict. But as Skidmore waits for the Town Board decision, the college also feels the pressure of potentially losing the NY-Sun grant money if the panels are not built soon. Indeed, a timely decision from the Town Board may in fact be just as important as its approval.

# ***JUST FOR FUN: Meet the Department Pets!***



Adam \_\_\_\_\_



Doc \_\_\_\_\_



Curious \_\_\_\_\_

Toffee \_\_\_\_\_



Robbie \_\_\_\_\_



Jack and Dewey  
\_\_\_\_\_

Molly \_\_\_\_\_



*Answer key on page 16*

# BEHIND THE PH.D. WITH PROFESSOR FERYAZ OCAKLI

*Continued from page 3*

## **What is the history of state-tribal relations in Turkey?**

During the Kurdish insurgency of the 1980s and 1990s, the insurgent group, the PKK—a Marxist Leninist group with socialist goals—sought to destroy feudal structures within Kurdish society in Turkey. Here the state saw an opportunity to coopt the Kurdish tribes against the nationalist movement. The Village Guard system was a product of this political alliance. Essentially, tribes become Village Guards—acting to protect their population from nationalist sentiment. In addition to coopting tribes, the state also forced non-tribal Kurdish villages into this Village Guard program.

## **What is the current standing of the Village Guard System?**

Turkey is currently in the process of peace negotiations with the PKK. As of now the negotiations are stalled, but within this context, the Village Guard remains a thorn in the state's side. The Village Guards are still being paid and remain in control of their weapons. If these negotiations are successful, the state will have to find some way of disassembling the Village Guard. I have conducted interviews with civil society activists, academics and state employees, and no one seems to have a clear notion of how this will play out. The Village Guard system is now a massive social welfare program,

on which hundreds of thousands of people are dependent. As there is no established retirement scheme in place, this is, in the eyes of many, a ticking time bomb. The future of the Village Guard system is critical to the study of state-tribe relations. It is a question for which I do not have an answer, nor, as it seems, does the state.

## **What is the current status of your research?**

This summer I traveled to the Kurdish regions of Turkey. I formed relationships with local non-governmental organizations, the most prominent of which was the Human Rights Association. Additionally, I formed connections with bureaucrats at the sub-provisional level. My plan for the future involves in depth research on the Village Guard system. I will conduct interviews with state personnel who work with the Village Guards and, if possible, the Village Guards themselves. There has been only one legitimate study of this program, and it hasn't even been published yet. Every one wants to learn more about the Village Guard system, but it is nearly impossible to gather data as it is a still a very dangerous subject to pursue in Turkey. However, with potentially successful negotiations between the state and PKK, this could open the door to a vast number of previously unexplored opportunities.

## SAVE THE DATE AND PLAN TO ATTEND

The Ronald J. Fiscus Lecture in Constitutional Law

**JEFFREY ROSEN**

*President  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Constitution Center*

## THE FUTURE OF PRIVACY AND FREE SPEECH

Translating the Constitution  
in the Age of Google Glass  
and Wikileaks

Friday, November 1, 8 p.m.  
Gannett Auditorium

**SKIDMORE**  
C O L L E G E

CREATIVE THOUGHT MATTERS

# SKIDMORE CLUB NEWS



## COLLEGE REPUBLICAN

### NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SkidmoreCollegeRepublicans@gmail.com

twitter.com/SkidmoreGOP

facebook.com/groups/SkidmoreCollegeRepublicans crnc.org

#### Look for our announced meeting times

- Chair: Spencer Berstler, Morristown, NJ - 2015, Biochemistry
- Co-Chair: Brock Bakewell, Tuscon, AZ - 2015, Exercise Science
- Treasurer: Spender Sodokoff, Greenwich, CT - 2015, Business/  
Economics
- Social Media Director: George Gelzer, Philadelphia, PA - 2014,  
Chemistry
- Recruitment Director: Gordon Bray, New Canaan, CT - 2015,  
Business

## Skidmore Democrats

*Dan Meyers '16*

This semester for Skidmore Democrats has been very interesting—from the national level to the local level. We have led many spirited discussions on the state of local and national politics in the United States and around the world and are planning a Candidate Forum night with College Republicans. Our discussions have ranged from the debt crisis, to what the United States should do in regard to the Syrian civil war to the worldwide disparity of wealth.

Many of our members have volunteered their time on the local level; in September Skidmore Democrats helped register students to vote on campus. To the surprise of many, students found that they could vote in Case Center in the local, state and national elections. Club members volunteered their time (on Saturdays no less!) to canvass Saratoga Springs for the local candidates. Canvassing entails going door-to-door asking residents which candidate they are inclined to vote for and the experience allowed Skidmore students meet local residents that they otherwise would never have met.

## REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT ON ACADEMIC COUNCIL

*Jesse Ritner '15*

This year Academic Council is working on a number of initiatives to better the experience of Skidmore students at large. Academic Council is comprised of student representatives from all the academic departments on campus. We meet together once a week on Thursday nights and we also attend the department faculty meetings. This year the council has taken on four main initiatives. We want to increase inter-departmental interactions by creating a common place for students to get help and input on projects from those in other departments. For instance, a business major may need help from an art student to design a mock advertising campaign. There will, for the first time ever, be an academic banquet this year for students and professors to attend to increase the interdepartmental liberal arts discussions of the Skidmore community. We are also attempting to raise the support of academic clubs across campus. It is our feeling that these clubs are an essential part to a liberal arts education. This is especially close to me, considering the large number of government majors who participate in academic clubs, as well as the governmental focus of many of these clubs. Lastly, we are working to create a winter academic fair in order to provide a place for undergrads to show work that they have done over winter break.

Even with all of these projects in mind, however, one of my favorite parts of Academic Council is our specialized fund. It is money specifically set aside for students to take professors out to lunch or coffee. Up to four students can go with one professor and each person receives ten dollars. In order to get the money you must first ask the professor, then email Andrew Lowy ([alowy@skidmore.edu](mailto:alowy@skidmore.edu)), the Vice President of Academic Council, tell him who you are taking out, where you are going, and what the topic of conversation will be. Everyone in the government department should take advantage of this opportunity. The money is never completely used up, and it would be great to see it put to better use.

Finally, as your government representatives to the academic council Marcella Jewell and I are always happy to field any questions about what is going on in Academic Council, or to listen to any concerns that you want us to bring up to either Academic Council or to the government department faculty. Our primary job is to represent the students of the government department and input from you can only increase our effectiveness.

## Model United Nations

*Olivia Kinnear '15*

Model UN sent ten delegates to Washington DC from October 25-27, Dorothy Parsons '17, Jessica Torres '17, Rashan Smith '17, Aryan Von Eicken '17, Jacob Reiskin '17, Abude Alasaad '17, Lulu Li '17, Will Trigg '15, Michael Casagrande '15, and Anya Hein '15. It was our first time at this particular conference (last year we went to McMun, hosted by McGill University). The club spent most of this fall preparing—talking about our country (Poland), mock debates and position papers.

When we were not focusing on the conference, we discussed the UN in current events, and there was plenty to keep us occupied! From discussing UN action in Syria, to possible future UN endeavors outside of the military—the environment and education for example. We hope to continue educating the greater Skidmore community about the United Nations and about Model United Nations.

## Model EU to Netherlands

*Jimmy Stanitz '15*

This winter break, the Model European Union club will be traveling to EUROSIM 2014, held at the University of Twente located in Enschede, Netherlands. Eight delegates from Skidmore will prepare vigorously to portray their European Union alter egos that may include members of the European Parliament, heads of government, justice ministers, among other positions. The topic for EUROSIM 2014 will be the minimum wage policy. This topic will require delegates to develop and use their negotiation, debate, and research skills as they discuss minimum wage policy in the EU in committee. Additionally, club members hope to participate in activities at European Union governmental institutions around the Benelux region organized by the EUROSIM 2014 conference staff. The club members are very eager for this trip, and are excited to begin preparations for the trip. The club would like to thank Professor Graney for all of her support as the club moderator.

## The Franklin Forum

*Connor Grant-Knight '15*

The Government department continues this fall to provide essential support for The Franklin Forum student-led reading group. The Forum, now on its third semester, is currently reading Herman Melville's masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*. This is the group's grandest undertaking yet; whereas in semesters past the group read short essays, stories, and speeches, it is now tackling its first big work—and a challenging one at that.

The group's twelve members have risen to the occasion. Each Sunday evening, the Forum meets to discuss a portion of the text. We attend to the wisdom of Melville and take great pleasure in conversing with one another about beautiful and human things. At a time when the humanities are obliged to defend themselves on the battlefield of practicality, having at their disposal only a knife to fend off the swords of the more useful disciplines, members of the Franklin Forum testify to the depth and worthiness of humanistic inquiry.

The Forum's members, though never failing to laugh and have a good time together, nevertheless take themselves seriously. They question one another, build on one another's points, and commonly flip back in their books one or two hundred pages in order to back up their arguments. All of this certainly will not have been in vain come November 14<sup>th</sup>, when University of Dallas Professor of English John Alvis will visit the group and engage with them about the book. Professor Alvis will deliver a talk on Melville's "Quarrel with America"—and afterward will join the Forum's members and faculty advisors for dinner and discussion.

The Franklin Forum's continued success would not be possible without the Government Department's help. In particular, head faculty advisor, Professor Flag Taylor, has worked hard to plan the structure of the group, to secure funding for it (this semester, from the Alexander Hamilton Institute), and occasionally to offer his presence and insight at the group's meetings.

**The Franklin Forum always welcomes new members. Meetings are each Sunday at 8:30pm in the Honors Forum lounge (Ladd 321). For more information, please contact me at [cgrantkn@skidmore.edu](mailto:cgrantkn@skidmore.edu).**



## Interning at Food and Water Watch in Brooklyn

*Alex Miller '13*

This past summer, I was placed as an intern at the grassroots advocacy organization, Food & Water Watch, in their Brooklyn office. The organization's headquarters are in Washington, D.C. however, Food & Water Watch conducts public interest campaigns in states across the country including California, Illinois and New York. Food & Water Watch is dedicated to ensuring that the food, fish, and water we consume are safe, accessible, and sustainably produced. The organization also works fervently to prevent the privatization of our country's bountiful natural resources. Its members and employees believe that the most effective way to create change in our modern democracy is to utilize both grassroots public education and government lobbying.

As a Government Major, I have become deeply interested in mass politics and the ability for individuals to effect substantive change in a political system dominated by moneyed interests. This internship engaged that interest directly by putting me at the forefront of a campaign to educate the public about the dangers of unregulated hydraulic fracturing. My work this summer granted me with invaluable experience working for a public interest organization that has had success in lobbying state governments to make progressive change in environmental policy. I learned the strategies advocacy groups like Food & Water Watch employ to create and maintain an active group of donors and members. During my ten week employment I worked at events created to educate the public of the dangers posed by hydraulic fracturing.

I was hired for the internship because of my academic record at Skidmore College, as well as skills I have learned from my prior work experience. When I worked as a server at a popular family restaurant, I acquired the strong interpersonal skills necessary for the organizing internship this summer. The position demanded that I balance friendly and informative table service with efficiently serving customers their meal. I also developed strong oral communication skills while canvassing for Public Citizen's campaign finance reform efforts during the past-election. As a canvasser, I was given the sole responsibility of collecting signatures on Skidmore's campus during the polling period; I was able to collect over 80 signatures from students and faculty to change New York State's campaign finance laws by successfully convincing the signatories of the urgent need for action.

I believe that this experience has stimulated my strong interest in progressive, pro-environment politics and has helped me transition from college into my professional life.

*Alex was awarded a Responsible Citizen Internship Award for his work in Brooklyn*

## Interning for Senator Warren in Washington D.C.

*Ellie Wood '14*



This summer I interned in the DC office of Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). I was one of 15 interns in the office. Senator Warren was only recently elected to the Senate which meant her office was in the midst of getting settled and organized. The staff included about 25 highly educated and skilled professionals, most of who worked on her campaign. I worked most directly with the Staff Assistants who delegated work each morning to all of the interns. On any given day I would be sent to a briefing, committee hearing,

or lecture. These were always interesting and I learned about a wide range of issues by attending these meetings.

Committee hearings were often crowded with staffers, press, and the public. The line of questioning for the witnesses from Senators serving on the committees often provided fascinating insight into the Senators' individual concerns as well as party affiliation. After each hearing, I wrote a memo to the Legislative Assistant responsible for that issue-area, summarizing the arguments and main points of the session. In addition, interns were in charge of reading all written correspondence from constituents that came into the office. Once the information was input into the computer, a Legislative Correspondent would contact the person regarding the question or concern he/she had written about. As an intern I also took turns sitting at the front desk answering the phone and greeting people who visited the office. Another service that each Senate and House office provides is staff-guided tours of the Capital Building. After a five-hour training, I was certified to give tours of the Capital. Over the course of the summer I gave approximately ten tours, which often broke up the tedium of correspondence and allowed me to interact with MA constituents visiting DC.

Senator Warren serves on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee as well as the Housing, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. While I was working for her this summer she introduced two important bills: Bank on Student Loans Fairness Act and 21st Century Glass Steagall Act. Warren was previously a professor at Harvard Law School and spearheaded the effort to create the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Her expertise in banking and consumer protection is beautifully reflected in her most recent work on the Hill in protecting the middle class from unfair banking practices. Interning for Warren was very educational, and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to see many powerful public officials at work in our nation's capital.

*Ellie was awarded a Responsible Citizen Internship Award for her work in Washington D.C.*

# STUDENT SUMMER EXPERIENCES

## POLITICS NOT INCLUDED

Andrew Lowy '15



I had a politics free summer. Now don't get me wrong, I enjoy politics and political science just as much as the next Government major. But sometimes recharging deep within the Adirondacks is necessary before returning to Skidmore for a semester full of Constitutional Law, John Locke, and a multitude of classroom discussions on the government shutdown. Yes, working at summer camp certainly was a break from the excitement of being a student of politics.

Since I was eight years old, I've spent all of my summers—except one—at North Country Camps in Keeseville, New York. While the camp is oriented around the outdoors with no particular focus on one specific activity, the sailing program has always peaked my interest. As a camper, I would frequently neglect the opportunity to engage in archery, horseback riding, and tennis in favor of going sailing all day; and now, as a counselor, I find myself doing the same thing. Rarely do I spend activity periods away from the boats. In fact, I now teach the campers, ages eight to fifteen, how to sail.

A day in the life of a camp counselor begins at the wake-up bell. The job description details that I should be making sure the kids get out of bed and up to breakfast on time. Yet at 7:30 in the morning, it's usually the campers dragging me out of bed. Next, it's time to clean the cabin before heading off to activities—in my case, the sailing dock. After two hours of sailing with two different groups of kids, I, along with the rest of the staff, head over to the swim dock to lifeguard a pre-lunch swim. Then, a rest hour

follows lunch before campers once again head to two hours of activities. Swim again, eat dinner, have a relaxing evening activity, exercise Lockeian prerogative to get the kids in bed, and then the rest of the night is free—that is if you still have energy. 7:30 comes around awfully quickly.

Add in hiking trips, canoeing trips, and special, crazy events that you would expect from a summer camp and you basically have my summer in a nutshell; no internship, just paid fun. And while I don't know if next summer I'll surrender to an internship or career-related job, I do know that the allure of sailing on Augur Lake yet again will certainly be on my mind.

## INTERNING AT SENATOR WARREN'S BOSTON OFFICE

Abigail Silverman '14

For the first time, the State of Massachusetts has a female Senator in Elizabeth Warren. And, this summer, I had the honor of interning in her Boston office. Senator Warren, a former Harvard Law professor, is one of the smartest women I have ever met. I decided to apply for a summer internship in the Senator's office because I wanted to experience working within the American political system. I had heard many stories from family and friends about what working for a politician was like, and I wanted to experience it for myself.

I came away from my summer at Senator Warren's office with a changed view of the American political system. Everyone sees the glitz and glam that is portrayed in Hollywood or reported on the news. But there's much more to it than that. One morning, I sat in the Senator's office while she explained the intricacies of the New Glass-Steagall Bill she was working on with Senator McCain. After listening to her for thirty minutes, I understood this piece of legislation for the first time. She then moved to a more casual note, first doing an impression of Senator McCain and then discussing what she was going to order from Chipotle for lunch. I often feel like the belief among Americans is that politicians are a special group of people within our society that do not have actual lives. Senator Warren frequents Chipotle and McDonalds, and can talk about *The Wire* for hours. She is also an authority on the financial crisis. There is more to these politicians than we think.

Senator Warren does more than speak about policy issues; she sponsors legislation and can give her opinion on the situation in the Middle East, she is there to represent the constituents of Massachusetts, and that is exactly what she does. Her Boston office is an amazing display of our political system at work, people with problems ranging from immigration to healthcare to veteran's issues call and write to the Senator's office on a daily basis pleading her to help them with their case. And she does. As an agent of the Senator, I was truly able to make a difference in the lives of people throughout Massachusetts. I had a first-hand look at what happens behind the scenes.

I ended my internship with the most positive view of the American political system that I have ever had. There may be a plethora of problems, and Congress might still have an all-time low approval rating. But these politicians do care about their constituents, and I can vouch for that.



## JULIA'S NOT HERE

Jane Dowd '14

Working at "the famous" Mystic Pizza this summer I was on the receiving end of a lot of incredibly cheesy customer banter. Questions like, "When is Julia Roberts' next shift?" "Did Julia make it in today- I was hoping she'd be our waitress!" were commonplace and taking photos of tourists in front of the restaurant's sign was a daily chore.



Summer in Mystic, CT is always flooded with tourists, and a place like Mystic Pizza is bound to catch visitor's attention. It was not, however, the tourists that defined this summer experience for me, but it was the regulars that made my summer bearable. Each ten hour shift that I worked was marked by a select few faces and interactions; whether it was the nuclear engineer Mike, who lived behind the restaurant, bringing in his freshly laid chicken eggs, or George the UPS driver ordering his Sprite and grinder to go, it was the kind and patient *interactions* with the Mystic locals that I loved. It is these people who truly keep the restaurant in business, as they were the ones who were in rain or shine, summer or winter, to keep the waitresses well-tipped and the kitchen busy. Leaving my temporary post as bartender/ phone-tender at Mystic Pizza I take away with me the knowledge that while tourists can be a total pain, there will always be a friend next in line to help brighten your day.

## On Becoming a Mermaid

Jimmy Stanitz '15

Determination ran through my veins during the Spring 2013 semester as I ferociously filled out one application after another in hopes of landing the perfect internship in my hometown of Cleveland, OH. That determination ran strong interview after interview until I remembered that Cleveland doesn't really have an economy. When my attempts at getting a summer internship became futile I applied to be a lifeguard at a private all-girls summer camp down the street from my home. Little did I know what I got myself into, and what would unfold this summer.



When I walked into work on the first day, I learned that I would be helping out with a mermaid class which took place twice a week in the pool. Helping out with the mermaid class consisted of pretending to be a mermaid, making crafts with the campers, dumping glitter into their hair and, yes, swimming next to the campers during their seahorse races.

At the end of the summer, I participated in a theatrical mermaid performance. Dressed as Poseidon, a male teacher read a story written by the Mermaid class teacher, while we lifeguards acted out the story in the water. Though I may have sold every last shred of manhood that I had, this past summer was great. I enjoyed every second of getting paid to have fun in a pool whose bottom literally sparkled from excess glitter. My job was certainly better than sitting at a desk or carrying my boss's coffee around all day long!

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## Working with The Breakthrough Collaborative

Anna Graves '14

This summer I worked in Austin, Texas for an organization called Breakthrough Collaborative. Breakthrough works with first generation students from 6th grade until they graduate from college. I was part of their summer enrichment program that worked with middle school students for 6 weeks on core subjects, mainly teaching social studies to 6th graders. I wanted to work for Breakthrough because I wanted to try my hand at teaching and because I, as an avid hater of Teach For America, was hoping to critique the "student teaching student" model from the inside. I headed into the 2 weeks of training, (it's worth mentioning that I received 2 weeks of training for 6 weeks of teaching when Teach For America has 6 weeks of training for 2 years of teaching) knowing little about what classroom management was and what lesson plans looked like. I had 20 students and 5 advisees, the majority of them newly emigrated from Mexico. Each teacher is given a mentor teacher who has worked in the profession for a minimum of 5 years, allowing teachers to be guided throughout their summer as they encounter new experiences.

Breakthrough has a culture that demands hard work and dedication, infuses academics with joy and excitement, and builds enduring leaders. I was amazed by the honesty of the organization and the transparency of the program. I was extremely lucky to be able to spend my summer with the students that I did and be part of their journey towards college. I was humbled by my colleagues who constantly amazed me with their dedication. We woke up at 6 am, spent our days cheering students on and running experimental classes, and we then went home to re-vamp curriculum till the wee hours of the morning. I recommend Breakthrough to anyone who is potentially interested in teaching because of the skills you learn and the network that Breakthrough provides. They are pipeline partners with Teach For America, Boston Teacher Residency, KIPP schools, etc. which is fantastic if you are trying to go into education. I took away from my Breakthrough experience that I love Austin, TX, that my path right out of college will involve borderland and immigration issues, and that I still believe there are better options (that give you more support and training) than Teach for America for new graduates.



# STUDY AWAY AND ABROAD



## A Cape Town Experience

*Ilona Abramova '14*

Studying abroad in Cape Town was truly one of the most incredible experiences I've ever had. The University of Cape Town is large research university with over 40,000 students located in the middle of a huge city--essentially as far from Skidmore as possible. By spending my semester there and integrating into the academic and social life at such a school, I felt like I really gained a stronger sense of understanding about who I am as a student and a person. I was able to identify what I really appreciated about Skidmore and utilize the experiential and cultural knowledge that I gained during my time there when I returned. Moreover, politically, Cape Town is fascinating -there are more protests and rallies

than you can hope for and an extremely engaged and passionate citizenry. I would strongly recommend any Government majors/minors interested in studying abroad to consider Cape Town as their destination. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or want to know more about my experience! My e-mail is [iabramov@skidmore.edu](mailto:iabramov@skidmore.edu)!

I want to ideally go into Education Policy work and continue my education by working towards a PhD in Public Policy! If all goes well, I'll be personally ensuring that a quality education is granted to every single child in our nation (any help with that plan is welcome!).

## AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERNSHIP

*Ellie Nichols '14*

This past spring semester, I did an internship in NYC under the guidance of Professor Elzbieta Lepkowska-White (Management & Business) with the company *Art + Commerce*. My work was with *PRODn*, the production company within *Art + Commerce*. My internship was in fashion photography production so in other words, my jobs included: being a production assistant on photo shoots, a location scout prior to photo shoots, a "travel agent", a translator (at times), an office worker-bee and a Polaroid camera photographer.



As suggested above, my work was very interdisciplinary and differed on any given day. Ironically, it was the perfect internship for an International Affairs major, Government minor. The fashion industry is an incredibly international business and having a handle on international relations and cultural norms proved very useful while on the job. I also found my knowledge of government and political structures to be useful in the office, both in understanding micro-political structures, as well as international structures.

Although it was an ambitious move to take the semester to intern in the city, I found it to be an incredibly fruitful experience. Not only did I grow as an individual, but I also appreciated having the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. Nonetheless, I think the benefits of my internship were only truly enforced by now coming back to Skidmore to finish my last semester this fall. The combination of having theoretical practice, as well as hands-on experience is incredibly useful, and I encourage it among my peers. After interning with *Art + Commerce*, I was lucky enough to be asked back as a freelancer for *New York Fashion Week*. This was a treat for me, especially because I ran into fellow Skidmore Alumni from the Government department, Edward Brachfeld '97, backstage at one of the shows!

## ‘Externing’ with The Washington Semester

*Jeremy Ritter-Wiseman '15*



Here in DC, the title of the organization I work in spans longer than my name, which is saying a lot. Currently I occupy an “extern” position at the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, Middle East North Africa Division, or ABA ROLI MENA for short. Located at the cross section of Connecticut Ave and K Street just north of the White House, the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative is a branch of the American Bar Association that provides legal assistance to countries around the world that desire to advance their legal systems. ABA ROLI sends out specialists whose expertise range from judicial reform, to clinical professionals, to human rights experts. In the MENA division of ABA ROLI, countries receiving assistance include Morocco, Jordan, Libya, Bahrain, Turkey, and even Egypt still.

At the office, my primary task is provide my supervisors with a news update of the region by summarizing articles on significant events that could potentially compromise the safety of those operating in MENA. Alongside news updates, I also look into US assistance to Egypt in particular, and how it is affected by the turmoil currently plaguing the country. I also occasionally attend speakers and panels downtown and provide summaries of those events. Generally, the internship is engaging and allows me to focus on the region I wish to work in, in the future.

While I spend Monday and Tuesdays at the office, I attend my seminar on International Law and Organizations at American University, Wednesday through Friday. About half of the classes are lectures by the professor, while the other half involve either hosting a speaker at American, or going somewhere downtown to hear a speaker. The program also has travel components. I just got back from a trip to the United Nations in New York City where among other UN organs, we visited with the Saudi Arabian Mission to the UN, as well as the Iranian Mission to the UN – both offering extremely unique opportunities to hear views from prominent international actors directly from the source. In November, my class will be traveling to Europe where we will make stops in The Hague, Brussels, Geneva, and Strasbourg, to visit various international organizations.

Despite only having spent a little over a month in DC, I can say confidently that the Washington Semester Program offers rare opportunities to expose oneself to the inner workings of government, no matter the subject. It is an exceedingly beneficial tool for anyone from government majors, to IA and even business and economics – the most popular seminar in the program is the Global Economics one which boasts three different classes due to the high demand. Overall, the program has allowed me to network extensively, which will undoubtedly benefit me in my job search following graduation, as well as gain vital experience working in an active office of experts and professionals on topics that I have direct interest in – an opportunity not easily accessible in the greater Saratoga area.

### **Pet Match [pages] Answer Key:**

Adam Ginsberg, Curious Vacs, Robbie Seyb, Molly Turner,  
Doc Knowles, Toffee Knowles, Jack and Dewey McDonough

# ALUMNI NEWS

**Jackie Saltzman '12** is attending the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University with a merit scholarship!

**Samuel Glickstein '10** (GO major) has been accepted into the University of British Columbia's Master of Asia Pacific Policy Studies (MAAPPS) program. Sam looks forward to beginning the program and improving his Mandarin Chinese.

**Adam Schmelkin '12** (GO major) is enrolled in a joint MA and Law program at Vermont Law School and made Law Review. Adam just finished a course on US-China comparative environmental policy that featured ten days in China studying environmental law and the limited role of NGOs in the implementation of such law. Adam also volunteers as a "board fellow" at a local nonprofit, Global Campuses Foundation (GCF). GCF creates educational spaces for adults with developmental disabilities living in Vermont.

**Tyler Arnot '08** writes "I am currently working as Education Cluster Coordinator for the UN in Somalia. Actually, I am based in Nairobi but spend much of my time travelling from ministry to ministry inside Somalia. It is a fascinating position. I work to bring together the government, international NGOs, and local communities to ensure education is provided even during the worst of emergencies. It combines my passion for education with my deep interest in states and failed-states."

**Lauria Chin '12** has completed her first year of law school at Boston University and by all accounts is doing well and enjoying it. She spent her summer interning at the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office – Domestic Violence Unit. This semester she is working for the *Journal of Public Interest* and participating in "Legislative Clinic."

**Aaron Shifreen '13** is currently interning at the German Marshall Fund, helping with event planning for diversity and inclusion practices in U.S. foreign policy and militaries.

The University Of Michigan Law School reports that **Amy Bergstraesser '11** is a member of their 2013 entering class for which Michigan received nearly 5,000 applications for a class of fewer than 350!

**Julianna Koch '06** successfully completed her dissertation: "States of Inequality: Government Partisanship, Public Policies, and Income Disparity in the American States" and earned her Ph.D. from Cornell University earlier this year.

**Jean-Ann Kubler '13** is currently working as a Community Relations Coordinator for Success Academy Prospect Heights, a small charter school in New York City that serves kindergarten and first grade students. In her role, she's responsible for organizing co-curricular activities for students and their families, and manages all school communication and neighborhood outreach.

## O H , T H E P E O P L E T H E Y M E E T !



Beth Schoenbach, Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY)

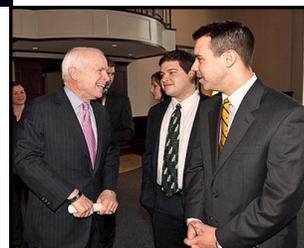


Tom Qualtere with President Bush

Eli Turkel (left) with Rhode Island Governor Jack Markell



Tom Qualtere with Senator McCain



Case Button (red shirt, blue blazer) with Hilary Clinton



Ryan Greer with President Obama

# OH, THE PLACES THEY GO!

## Return to China

David Solomon '13

I am currently living in Beijing, China, where I am enrolled in the Inter-University Program (IUP) at Tsinghua University for intensive Mandarin study. I am enrolled for the 2013-14 academic year, seeking to strengthen my Mandarin language facility in order to be used in a professional capacity. Each day, I memorize 80-100 new words, split between two courses (the first, a comparative study of Mainland China and Taiwan regarding modern social issues and, the other, a study of the evolution and development of Chinese culture, language, and history from ancient times through the present). I attend class from 8:00-12:00 each day and have about five-six hours of studying every afternoon/evening. While the experience is quite busy and often tiring, I am surrounded by a number of fascinating classmates, each motivated to improve their Chinese language skill set for use well into the future.

Unlike my last stint in Beijing—during which time I lived with a non-English speaking homestay family of modest means, this time around I'm living in an apartment not too far from Tsinghua's campus, with four Australian housemates, including two classmates. Socially, I've been able to maintain a nice balance of time with my housemates and other IUP students, as well as friends from my junior year in Beijing and a good friend from my summer 2013 program in Suzhou, China, who is also living in Beijing this fall.

While I'm quite busy by week with my program, I do find time to get out on weekends to explore new pockets of Beijing culture. Further, I returned recently from a wonderful week trip in Henan province, where I explored the ancient cities of Zhengzhou, Kaifeng, and Luoyang with three friends. We also spent a couple days in Xi'an, China's ancient capital, where we walked for miles along the ancient city wall and saw the terracotta warriors—built during the Qin Dynasty (210BCE). I'm currently planning a trip to Yunnan province with another good friend from my program for a week off from class during the first week of November. A very special place—I've visited once before for two weeks—Yunnan is the geographic, ethnic, and cultural crossroads to Southeast Asia, India, and Tibet. I very much look forward to the trip.

The climate in Beijing is generally quite nice during autumn and it's been a pretty time to be back here overall. Unfortunately, pollution issues continue to plague China's major

cities, an increasingly obvious cost of unprecedented rapid economic development. As a consequence, I've had to take necessary precautions to deal with this reality, running an air filter in my room and wearing a filtered facemask during my commute to and from class on my electric bike. Recognizing I may spend extended time in China into the future, I've come to terms with the reality that taking these precautions will continue to be necessary into the future. It just comes with the territory!

Having graduated this past spring, my time back in China reflects a new kind of phase for me—one that remains open-ended and intriguing. As I consider job and research opportunities for post-spring, it's exciting to know that such a wondrous and fascinating country will serve as the backdrop for this pursuit. Though I certainly don't know where this adventure will take me next, I remain confident it will provide interesting new stories and details. In the meantime, I wish a fantastic school year to my professors and peers at Skidmore, so many of whom have enthusiastically supported my China dreams!

## SKIDMORE IN RUSSIA: TIMES TWO!

Geoff Durham '12

I was lucky. I had confirmed my post-Skidmore plans weeks before graduation. In fact, it was on Fun Day in 2012 that I learned I would be going to St. Petersburg that August to work as an English teacher. I promptly threw up my arms and ran around the lawn by the pond screaming ecstatically (needless to say I wasn't the only one touting elation). Exactly thirteen months later I walked into the office tucked behind the sprawling Kazanksy Cathedral for a meeting to greet the recent and hires. I introduced myself to the group of new teachers. It's not that I wasn't interested in meeting them—it's always interesting to meet the different characters that this place beguiles—but there is a relatively high rate of attrition with teachers here, and so I had no expectations about how long they might be around. Moving around the semi-circle I shook two hands before getting quite a shock from the third, a young woman.

"Hi, I'm April. You're the one from Skidmore, right?" Now, it seems to me that Skidmore attracts an adventurous sort, but it's such a small school that the last thing you'd expect to see while working for one of about twenty English schools in St. Petersburg, one with a staff of twelve teachers, is a Skidmore alumnae. But that's exactly what happened.

"Um. What?" I ineloquently mumbled, shocked.

April Bukowski graduated in 2009 when I was just a freshman. We don't know any of the same people—not a

*continued on page 19*

# OH, THE PLACES THEY GO!

*Continued from page 18*

single one. We've taken different routes to reach Petersburg, but still, it's incredible that we've both ended up here; not only because Skidmore is so small, but especially owing to the fact that Skidmore has no Russian department and only one full-time faculty member who teaches courses on the subject (this being professor Graney, of course).

The first time I came to Russia was in the summer of 2008 as a tourist. After two weeks, I knew that I had to come back. The second time I came to Russia was the spring semester of my junior year as a student. After four months, I knew that I had to come back. I've decided that I'm leaving mid-summer 2014—but not because I've satiated my appetite for Russian experiences: I'm leaving to pursue an MA in Russian studies with the ultimate goal of going on to get a PhD in Russian history.

For me, the decision to cram a year's supply of clothes into a suitcase and move to a country where the inevitable first reaction to your arrival is pure incredulity at the fact that you left the U.S. to come to Russian *voluntarily* came easier than deciding what kind of cheese I wanted on a Roma's sandwich. It seemed—and still does—like the natural continuation of a trajectory whose arc is rooted in my Skidmore experience. I wanted to continue studying the language, learn what this place is like on a human level, outside of literature, history books, and the news. My time at Skidmore amply put me in a position to pursue this curvature with inquisition and confidence.

Even if you're not motivated by the drive to learn a foreign language or to steep yourself in another culture (though especially if you are), teaching English provides the opportunity for an important transition between university and whatever it is that you might be seeking from life more broadly. When else in your life can you selfishly—and at this age, I maintain that selfishness is diametrically antithetical to being a vice—leave everything so seamlessly and move across the world? Life altering experiences aside, it's a fulfilling job: you provide a service that can help your students improve their lives, whether they're learning English for travel or career purposes. At a more basic level, teaching does provide a comfortable lifestyle: I've been able to rent an apartment in the center of Petersburg, cover general living expenses, travel around during (paid!) vacations, and still manage to save money every month. Whether you're contemplating graduate school, struggling with job searches, oppressively undecided regarding your next steps, or on the precipice of accepting a job you don't want, a well-paid one even, just because of the simple fact that it's a job, I'd recommend giving teaching English abroad a moment's thought.

## China Calls

*Jeremy Wood '13*

你好 to all of you back in the Government Department! Fall is underway here in Qufu, China where I am teaching English at Qufu Normal University for the year with Skidmore's Teach In China program. So far, I love living and working here. China is an incredibly lively and vibrant country to experience after studying international politics for several years.

My students are almost all first year students, except for my class of 95 juniors who show up bright and early for English Film Appreciation every Friday morning. They are all excited to learn, and they often start studying before class as early as 6 or 6:30 AM! It is refreshing to start my first post-graduation job and to be around students who are eager to learn and take advantage of their time in class. Because of this, they have a buoyant sense of humor and they eagerly look forward to their language classes!

My job as an English teacher has not always been easy. I accepted this job as a way to refine some skills because I want to become a more attractive candidate for future jobs and internships. My fear of speaking in front of large groups of people is steadily fading away. I cannot teach without dealing with this. I can tell that they have appreciated my efforts to become more comfortable in front of 30 people every class period. In addition, teaching almost 300 students has forced me to work on staying organized all the time. It is doable, but difficult, to do this for multiple classes that I teach throughout the week. I am starting



to appreciate the professors over in the Government Department more as I realize what it takes to stay organized and, at the same time, have a thoughtful and engaging class!

Living and working in China has expanded my comfort zone leaps and bounds. As a normal person, I crave comfort in things that are familiar. Traveling, living, and teaching abroad defies that axiom. It involves going out and trying new things, eating new foods, and meeting new people who (sometimes) share your interests. It can, and usually does, involve some discomfort as you expand your boundaries. But, that is the upside. Without testing what I am comfortable doing and seeing, I will never experience the world that is just beyond my fingertips.

Besides the teaching, which is the reason why I am here in China, travelling is my second love. Some highlights so far include hiking and camping on The Great Wall, visiting my two close friends in Beijing (David Solomon, '13; Sam Schultz, '13), and spending the Mid-Autumn Festival seaside in Qingdao. I look forward to visiting other places in China, like the panda reserve in Chengdu, Tiger Leaping Gorges in Yunnan Province, and the ice sculpture festival in Harbin. In addition, over our six week break, I hope to visit Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.

If you find an opportunity to work and live abroad, seize it. The moment before you make that leap is one of the hardest decisions you will ever make it. But, you will never look back on it. There is no such thing as the fear of missing out.

# Spring 2014 Topics Course Descriptions

## **GO 251A: Political Islam**

**Instructor: Feryaz Ocakli**

What is political Islam? How did Islamist movements become key political forces in Muslim majority states? This course introduces students to the sources of political Islam. It examines domestic sources, such as poverty, inequality, and government repression, as well as international sources, such as the Iranian revolution, the financing of radical madrasas by Saudi Arabia, and the consequences of great power politics during the Cold War. Special attention will be paid to the various strategies that governments of Muslim majority states have adopted toward political Islam. The course will provide students with an overview of the rise of political Islam and the main reasons behind its success, or failure. It will then examine how states have responded to Islamist movements, ranging from incorporation to exclusion, and the effects that these state strategies had on the evolution of Islamist groups. Students will debate, among other topics, the role that Islamists can play in governance – both as alternatives to the existing governments in Muslim countries and as elected officials.

## **GO 251C: Freedom of Speech**

**Instructor: Helen Knowles**

What types of speech does the U.S. Constitution permit the government to prohibit/regulate? Are we free to produce virtual child pornography? What about burning Old Glory? Can newspapers publish materials informing the nation's "enemies" of the details of upcoming troop movements? And what about those folks who want to make animal "crush" videos for those who derive entertainment from watching stiletto-wearing women inflict pain (and ultimately death) upon helpless kittens? Over time American judges have confronted all of these questions in the context of First Amendment lawsuits. This course will study their answers, and the historical evolution of the theories they have employed to address these controversial and complex issues. Assessment will be writing intensive, and students will be expected to make extensive contributions to in-class discussions focusing on free speech hypotheticals.

## **GO 251C: Politics, Marriage and Family**

**Instructor: Natalie Johnson**

This course examines the intersection between women's marital and familial role through the lens of American politics and law. We will take a historical approach to examine the role women have played in the home, and in the paid labor force, and how this has changed over time. By looking at the terms dominance and dependence we will examine the ways in which women have shed their subservience to men through the law, and broader political changes in society along with the ways in which women's roles as wives and mothers have become separate and distinct. In other words, we will examine the ways in which conceptions of woman/womanhood and man/manhood have changed over time. Issues we will examine include sexual intimacy, adoption, custody, divorce, alimony and same-sex marriage. The context will largely be based in the American system, but there will be some opportunities to explore women's position throughout the world.

# Spring 2014 Topics Course Descriptions

## **GO 367: Media and Government**

**Instructor: Natalie Johnson**

Nearly everything we learn about politics comes through the media because we experience directly very little of what we “know” about politics. The American media are charged with the dual task of acting as a “watchdog” for government while also existing as a profit-driven industry. The media has changed dramatically over the last half century and to that end we will examine how non-traditional media fit into and compare with classic media and politics discussions. We will consider the connections the media has with the executive, legislative and judicial branch, elections, movements, policy and public opinion. To bring these relationships to life, we will use major historical and current events that underlay many of the controversial discussions in political science related to the role of mass media and government.

## **GO 326: Coasts of Bohemia: The Politics and History of the Czech Lands and People**

**Instructors: Kate Graney and Flagg Taylor**

This course examines the political fortunes of the Czech people from the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the founding of the First Republic after World War I, the periods of Nazi and Communist rule, and the return to democracy in 1989. Students study key figures such as Jan Hus (15<sup>th</sup> century religious reformer), Tomas Masaryk (founder of the First Republic), and playwright turned communist dissident, who became president of a reborn Czech state – Vaclav Havel. Students read the narrative history of the period and explore relevant political analyses; they also watch films by famed Czech directors such as Milos Forman and Jiri Menzel.

*Prerequisite:* one of the following courses: GO 103, IA 101, HI 104, HI 105 or HI 106.

## **GO 366: Understanding Globalization**

**Instructor: Aldo Vacs**

A critical examination of globalization as a political, economic, technological, social, and cultural phenomenon, which has wrought fundamental changes to our lives by making the world smaller and more interdependent. The course will explore the meaning, features and impact of globalization on the role of states, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and transnational corporations; the transformation of national sovereignty; the expansion of liberal democracy; the changes in international economic relations (trade, finance, investment) and institutions (GATT/WTO, IMF, World Bank); the promotion of social progress and backwardness; the rise and decline of nationalistic, ethnic, and religious confrontations; and the development of cultural diversity and homogeneity. Special attention will be devoted to analyzing the ideologies, actors, and interests promoting and opposing globalization as well as the risks and opportunities associated with globalization from the perspective of different groups.

## Spring 2014 What Counts for What?

American	Comparative	International Relations	Political Theory
GO 222: State and Local Government	GO 209: The Latin American Puzzle	GO 228: U.S. Foreign Policy	GO 204: Classical Political Thought
GO 231: Environmental	GO 251A: Political Islam	GO 301: Contemporary	GO 354: Feminist Political
GO 251C: Freedom of	GO 326: Czech Politics	GO 366: Understanding	
GO 251C: Politics, Mar-			
GO 314: Civil Liberties			
GO 367: Media and			

## GOVERNMENT COURSES: SPRING 2014

**GO 101-001: Introduction to American Government**

Helen Knowles M W F 1:25—2:20pm

**GO 101-002: Introduction to American Government**

Natalie Johnson T TH 11:10—12:30pm

**GO 102: Introduction to Political Philosophy**

Natalie Taylor T TH 2:10—3:30pm

**GO 103-001: Intro to Comparative and International Politics**

Kate Graney M W F 9:05—10:00am

**GO 103-002 Intro to Comparative and International Politics**

Kate Graney M W F 10:10—11:05am

**GO 204 Classical Political Thought**

Flagg Taylor W F 12:20—1:40pm

**GO 209: The Latin American Puzzle**

Aldo Vacs M W F 1:25—2:20pm

**GO 222: State and Local Government**

Bob Turner T TH 12:40—2:00pm

**GO 228: U.S. Foreign Policy**

Aldo Vacs M W F 11:15—12:10pm

**GO 231: Environmental Politics and Policy**

Bob Turner T TH 9:40—11:00am

**GO 251A: Political Islam**

Feryaz Ocakli T TH 11:10—12:30pm

**GO 251C: Freedom of Speech**

Helen Knowles M W F 12:20—1:15pm

**GO 251C: Politics, Marriage and Family**

Natalie Johnson T TH 2:10—3:30pm

**GO 301: Contemporary International Politics**

Roy Ginsberg T TH 12:40—2:00pm

**GO 314: Civil Liberties**

Helen Knowles M W 4:00—5:50pm

**GO 326: Czech Politics and People**

Kate Graney and Flagg Taylor M W 2:30—3:50pm

**GO 354: Feminist Political Thought**

Natalie Taylor T TH 9:40—11:00AM

**GO 366: Understanding Globalization**

Aldo Vacs M W 4:00—5:20pm

**GO 367: Media and Government**

Natalie Johnson T TH 3:40—5:00pm